

Charles Wesley In-Correspondence (1761–65)

Center for Studies in the Wesleyan Tradition, Duke Divinity School

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1761

From Thomas Butts¹

London
January 28, 1761

Dear Sir,

I am greatly obliged to you for what you have done.² If I should succeed, shall be very thankful; if I should not, I trust I shall be resigned, and conclude it is for the best, and your good will towards me will be the same. I purpose to wait a few days, and if I hear nothing from her Ladyship, to wait upon her.

The particulars that I have been able to gather of poor Mrs. [Susanna] Clarke's death, are these.³ She had dined and ordered the servants to their dinner, and told her maid not to come up stairs till she knocked for her. When they had been at dinner some little time, they heard her up about the room; and presently after she knocked with her stick against the floor, not in a hurry, but as usual. Her maid ran up, but when she came to her chamber-door was struck with such a panic (she could not tell why) that she could not go in, but called up the other servant. They went in both together, and found her standing up right in the middle of the room, all in flames. They endeavoured to smother the fire with clothes but could not, so were obliged to call up the man with a pail of water. Upon which she complained, and asked them if they intended to starve her to death. She was burnt in a terrible manner, and died early the next morning, but never complained of any pain, only at the tip of her tongue. She was earnestly entreated by the apothecary and other people about her to tell them how the accident happened, but would not give them the least satisfaction. She expressed no concern about her soul, though conscious that she should die. Nor any desire of being prayed by. Her greatest uneasiness was about a purse of money that she had left behind her chair. These circumstance of her death I think are as disagreeable as the nature of it. But we must leave her to the infinite mercy of God. And may our souls be profited by this and every other alarming providence.

I delivered your message to Mr. Franks.⁴ My wife [Hannah] joins in love to you and Mrs. [Sarah] Wesley. I remain

Your sincere friend and humble servant,

Tho. Butts

Endorsement: by CW, "Jan. 28. 1761 / Butts of M. Clark's / end."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/501/31.⁵

¹Thomas Butts married Hannah Witham (1720–62) in 1746. Around 1755 Butts was replaced in his role as JW's book steward, and set up on his own as a music publisher.

²CW's letter helping initiate some type of arrangement between LH and Butts is not known to survive.

³Susanna Clarke of Newington Green, CW's long-time friend, was buried Jan. 30, 1761 at St. Bartholomew the Great in London.

⁴Samuel Franks, see his letter of Dec. 28, 1764.

⁵For 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

Madeley
March 10, 1761¹

My Dear Sir,

I thank you for your elegy upon Dr. Middleton.² It is touching and Christian. I could not prevent myself from shedding tears while reading it, tears more gentle as they had their source in a secret hope that I would be able one day to strip off the soiled rags of my own righteousness and clothe myself in the Lord Jesus as well as the Christian hero of your poem.

I sense more and more that I do not dwell in Christ, nor Christ in me. And yet I do not feel it enough to seek it without interruption. O wretch that I am, who will deliver me from this heart of unbelief? Blessed be God who has promised me this deliverance through our Lord Jesus Christ.

You ask me for details of the trials which I mentioned to you in my last.³ They are so singular, and so new to me, that if you had said to me that you had passed that way before I passed there myself, I would have suspected you of being in some small degree a visionary. There are things in religion that a man will never believe without having had some experience of them. The power of the devil and the virtue of Christ are of this kind. But so as not to waste my paper in reflections that you can make better than I, I pass to the matter in question. Several weeks ago, before I retired, when I was commending my soul to God at the foot of my bed, an infernal shiver, an unspeakable horror capable of making trails of cold sweat run down the length of my back, suddenly seized me. This horror was accompanied by a vivid conviction that the devil was close, and by a particular vehemence to run again to the blood of Christ and to save myself at the feet of my Saviour—by the same instinct as a child, on sight of a snake, letting out a cry and throwing itself into the arms of its mother. This type of agony lasted until being superior in confidence in the blood of Christ caused (as I conclude) the angel of destruction to pass over. I suffered the same tribulation on several nights, with this difference: that sometimes my fear prevented me from opening my mouth and rendered me immobile; at other times, by bounds of heart, of voice, and of body I freed myself from that dark veil and I had sufficient presumption to defy Satan and all his legions in the name of Christ.

Several days after these inward sensations were joined by an outward. I was sleeping very deeply (as I usually do) and I suddenly sensed myself awake without myself being the least degree sleepy. Never does sleep leave me in this way. I hardly had begun to ponder what could be the cause when I sensed something settle upon me. The name of Jesus delivered me in the twinkling of an eye, and I was rid of it, suffering only what I term a devilish shiver which passed through all my bones like a shock from the electric machine. I immediately attributed my awakening to providence (perhaps to the ministry of a guardian angel), and the shock to the lion which prowls about us. The following night I was awakened in the same manner. The noise of something which approached beat my ears, and the sensation of something which settled itself along the length of my back beat upon me physically for several minutes, so that I was more dead than alive. I often have experiences of this kind. And if my good angel does not waken me, which happens sometimes, the incubus profits by the occasion and falls upon me again in my sleep, and sometimes gorges me at his leisure for a part of the night. The day before yesterday, in all the assaults he made upon me, I heard (or I thought I heard) that which Bunyan calls in his *Holy War* the drum of hell—a

¹Fletcher misdates as “1760,” following old style; but mention of the elegy for Middleton makes clear that it is 1761.

²MS Death of Dr. John Middleton; Middleton had died on Dec. 16, 1760. CW’s letter conveying this elegy is not known to survive.

³The letter mentioning these trials is not known to survive.

terrible noise and worthy of its author.⁴ Last night this hostile guest paid me a terrible visit. But the Lord shortens its chain when it is too furious, and up till the present I have got away with a fright. In another letter I will tell you why I believe that the Lord gives free rein to the dragon in this way.

My new convert has escaped with great difficulty the strategy of the devil, who by fifty visions set her upon the parapet of the temple. She is come down from there, thanks to God, before he threw her down. I have had more difficulty with her visions than with her unbelief. Two others declare that they have received the consolations of the love of God. I am awaiting the fruits of this. Last Sunday all the aisles of my church were full, as were the pews. One part [of the congregation] came from neighbouring parishes. Someone has written to me from Shrewsbury that your brother is awaited there. If he is passing here, I think that I will not request him to preach in my church. Thomas Maxfield notes to me that 32 new witnesses [of perfection] are come into the ranks in London.⁵

Send me by our brother, together with the books of which I have spoken to you, (if you are able to do so) *Tokens for Children* (two dozen) and *Lessons for Children*.⁶

Farewell. The Lord be with you and with your dear wife and the little family. The messenger is waiting for me and the paper is running out on me.

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

Endorsement: by CW, “J. Fletcher Mars 10. 1760.”

Source: holograph (in French); MARC, MA 1977/495/10.⁷

⁴John Bunyan, *The Holy War, Made by Shaddai Upon Diabolus, for the Regaining of the Metropolis of the World* (London: Newman & Alsop, 1682), ch. 14.

⁵See the note in William Briggs to CW, May 1, 1761, about the “blessing” controversy.

⁶I.e., JW’s abridged form of James Janeway, *Token for Children* (1749); and his four-volume *Lessons for Children* (1746–54), an abridgement of the Old Testament, structured in lessons.

⁷A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher’s original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 123–25. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith’s English translation (pp. 125–27). See also the earlier (and looser) translation in Fletcher, *Posthumous* (1791), 106–07.

From Dr. John Robertson¹

Pitcombe
March 16, 1761

Reverend and Dear Sir,

It would be a great act of charity in you to make one—and I believe your last—visit to your poor dying friend, who is earnestly desirous to talk with you concerning the world he is going into, having very little to do in the present.² I wish Thursday morning could suit your conveniency and that you could spare me one night or two if you possible could.

Kind compliments to Mrs. [Sarah] Wesley and Mr. [George] and Mrs. [Susanna] Stonehouse. I have not spirits enough to invite any more. But I am

Your obliged, faithful servant,

J. Robertson

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

Endorsement: by CW, “Dr Robertson’s Dying / Summons / March 16. 1761.”

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/501/124.³

¹On Robertson, see his earlier letter to CW, Sept. 23, 1747. He would die on May 1, 1761.

²Robertson died on May 1, 1761.

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

Rebecca Gwynne to Sarah [Gwynne] Wesley

[London]
Thursday, April 23, 1761

[initial part of letter missing ...] Brother Roderick [Gwynne] set out from here last Friday night. He told us how surprized and delighted he was to hear your dear little boy [CW Jr.] play on the harpsichord, who would be quite angry with himself (Rod said) if he happened to strike a wrong note. I long to see and hear the little fellow, also your dear little girl [Sarah], who I imagine resembles poor Jacks,¹ as I am told she is very like you.

We every moment expect your acquaintance Mr. [Henry] Venn to spend the evening with us. He breakfasted here a few days ago and enquired very much after you, brother [Charles] Wesley, and little ones. My brother [James] and sister [Elizabeth] Waller and Tommy join me in kind love to each, also Mrs. [Elizabeth] Vigor, Mrs. James,² and every enquiring friend, which concludes this from
My dearest sister's ever affectionate and obliged,

Reb. Gwynne

Source: holograph (fragment); Duke, Rubenstein, Frank Baker Collection of Wesleyana, Box WF 4.

¹I.e., CW and SGW's first child, John, deceased.

²This is almost certainly Mary (Samuel) James (c. 1705–75), a widow living in Lewin's Mead (very near the Wesley family home on Charles Street), whose son John James (b. 1726) is mentioned in CW's letters.

From the Rev. John Fletcher

Madeley
April 27, 1761

My Dear Sir

Your friend has only just arrived and I am taking your advice to be on my guard. I have received the two packets of books,¹ one by him and the other by Beard; the whole amounting to 27 shillings, 6 pence, which I have sent to him for you with my thanks.

Reply to your questions:²

1. I eat meat four or five times if my teeth allow it.
2. I eat for my supper bread and butter or honey.
3. I am still the same or slightly better.
4. I drink beer.
5. I pay the butcher each time I buy meat.
6. I keep my accounts sufficiently accurately.
7. I have not yet looked at what my outgoings will be, having had several unforeseen expenses which I hope will not recur.
- [8.] I have bought a horse.

I do not know what to say to you about my parish. I began to preach three weeks ago on Sunday evening after the catechism, but I do not preach my own sermons. Twice I have read a sermon of Archbishop [James] Ussher and last Sunday a homily, taking the liberty of repeating and further elucidating those points which confirm what I put forward in the morning, which shut the mouths of several adversaries.

I have often had a desire to exhort at Madeley Wood and the dale (two villages in my parish), but I did not dare to run before I saw the door open. It is now opening. A little society of about 20 or 30 people has come together of its own accord in the first of those places; and another of some 20 in the second. But the devil seems resolved to turn it all about. A young person, daughter of one of the wealthiest of my parishioners, has fallen into a depression, which has made everyone think that she has lost her wits. And I had thought so also. Consider what triumph for the adversaries. I was tempted to unfrock myself and take to my heels. I have never had such tribulation. I humbled myself before God on this subject last Saturday by fasting and prayer, and I believe that the Lord has heard my prayer, and the invalid found herself well enough to come to church yesterday.

Mr. [Thomas] Hill has written me a very obliging letter, to urge me to go to Switzerland with the elder of my pupils. If I had another country than that in which I now am I would perhaps have been tempted; but I am not in any way, and I got out of it by a polite thank you.

I have written only one letter to Mr [Thomas] Maxfield since I came here.

Last Sunday I saw for the first time several people under the windows in the churchyard who were not able to get into the church.

Mr. J—ngs has set me right about Charles [Jr.]. I believed that he was striking random notes on the harpsichord. I was very far from imagining him able to play the first bar of an air. Take care that this little Orpheus does not draw out too much of your heart. The son whom providence promised will act as a counterweight and will hold you in equilibrium. You give me a commission hardly necessary in respect to your dear wife, and I beg you to greet her on my part.³

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

¹See Fletcher's request for books in his letter of Mar. 10, 1761.

²CW's note with these questions is not known to survive.

³The bottom third of page 3 is torn away; it is unclear whether any text is missing.

Endorsement: by CW, “Apr. 27. 1761 / Fletcher.”

Source: holograph (in French); MARC, MA 1977/495/13.⁴

⁴A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher’s original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 128–29. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith’s English translation (pp. 129–31). See also the earlier (and looser) translation in Fletcher, *Posthumous* (1791), 108–09.

From the Rev. Vincent Perronet

Shoreham
April 29 [1761]

My Very Dear Brother,

After enquiring after your health the last week in London, I received the disagreeable account of your being ill at Bath.¹ It would be a great pleasure to hear that God had given success to those waters, and that your health was in a fair way of being restored. This must certainly be the prayer of all your friends, especially of those who have the advancement of Christ's kingdom sincerely at heart.

Your Lord has made you not only a very labourious but also a very successful labourer in his vineyard. And therefore may it be his blessed will thus to continue his faithful servant for years to come! However, I doubt not but his divine grace has long since taught your heart to say, "Not *my* will, but *thine* be done."² He certainly knows best when that work is finished which he has given you to do.

It has pleased the divine goodness to exercise me, for some months past, with sore afflictions in my family. This is the fifth time within forty years that my dear wife has laboured under deep distress of soul, mind, and body. But I trust through the prayers of her friends (amongst which I hope for yours) she will once more be delivered. My son Jacky was given over several times since last Christmas in a violent complicated fever.³ But through the blessing of God and the great care of skill of Dr. Turner,⁴ he is restored again.

May the Lord Jesus ever be with all of us, both in life and in death! I am, with sincere respects both to yourself and your very dear spouse, my very dear brother,

Yours most affectionately

Vin. Perronet

[note on address side by William Briggs]

If you have any letter to send to my father[-in-law], please to enclose it to me at Thomas Smith's, Esq. Genl Cort office, London."

Address: "To / The Reverend / Mr Charles Wesley / at / Bath."

Endorsement: by CW, " Mr Perronet and Briggs / April 29, 1761."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/472/4.

¹CW was in Bath to take the waters, in hopes of improvement with his gout.

²Luke 22:42.

³John Perronet (1732–67) was the youngest child of Rev. Vincent and Charity (Goodhew) Perronet. He would die on Oct. 29, 1767.

⁴Dr. Turner died in 1785; see CW to John Fletcher, May 21, 1785.

From William Briggs

[London]
May 1, 1761

Reverend and Very Dear Sir,

My father's letter being enclosed to me unsealed,¹ I could not refrain adding a line to assure you that I and many of your friends are greatly concerned at your indisposition and pray most sincerely for your recovery.

I imagine you are not unacquainted with the new society that has lately been raised at the Foundery, which I am informed consists of about fifty members who profess to have experience a divine work not generally known before.² We have great reason to be thankful for such signal visitations of God's love; yet many who wish well to the cause of religion are under painful apprehensions, lest some of these worthy people should make professions that have no foundation but in their ignorance of the state called "perfection." Your experience and discernment might have been productive of great good, could you have been a week or two in London. But as that cannot be, I doubt not but your letters to Mr. [Thomas] Maxfield will temper his zeal for this particular work and prevent him from speaking to us as dead—or at best but lukewarm—Christians if not in the state of this society, or in agony after it. God grant we may all be in earnest after such a state as is agreeable to his will and gracious dispensations! But was I now in the happy state some speak of, I very much query whether I should be authorized from Scripture or primitive example to affirm that I had a "clean heart"—unless through grace I had conquered the last enemy and was entering into paradise.

Mrs. [Elizabeth] Briggs joins with me in due respects to yourself and Mrs. [Sarah] Wesley, and I am, dear sir,

Yours,

W. Briggs

Address: "To / The Reverend / Mr Charles Wesley / at / Bath."

Endorsement: by CW, "Mr Perronet and Briggs / April 29, 1761."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/472/4 (included with previous).

¹The letter of Apr. 29, above.

²Methodists had embraced from the earliest days of the revival emphasis on the (first) blessing of assurance of justification and the new birth. And, once they sorted through the distinction of the new birth and entire sanctification, the Wesley brothers consistently encouraged Methodists to seek the "second blessing" of deliverance from the fallen nature, or inward bent toward sinning, *in this life*. In the late 1750s JW increased his emphasis on the importance of seeking this second blessing *now*, in part by quietly setting aside his earlier claims that one who attained the blessing of entire sanctification would never again be seriously tempted or fall from grace. While this reframed the life of the entirely sanctified as dynamic and relational, it left open a possibility of final loss. What was beginning to emerge by the early 1760s, particularly in a cohort of the London society, was insistence on the possibility and testimonies to having received a *third* "blessing," a "sanctification of the mind" that freed one from serious temptation and even from wandering thoughts. While JW entertained this possibility for a time, CW rejected it. The criticism of "witnesses" and "perfectionists" in letters after 1759 is aimed particularly at those claiming the third "blessing." For more on this controversy, see David Thomas Stark, "The Peculiar Doctrine Committed to our Trust: Ideal and Identity in the First Wesleyan Holiness Revival, 1758–1763" (University of Manchester Ph.D. thesis, 2011).

From the Rev. William Grimshaw

Ewood
May 23, 1761

Dear Sir,

I received your last with great pleasure,¹ though sorry to understand that you labour under such an affliction as renders you incapable of either preaching or writing. But I know it is of the Lord; worthy is he to do what serviceth him good. Or otherwise I would say, “Lord, is it time to lay aside useful hands?” But if you are not, as in times past, to cry aloud and spare not;² may you not, must you not, stand in the gap in the power of the Spirit of prayer and intercession? And may you not in this manner put an helping hand to the tottering ark? I hope you may. I hope you do! And that this at least is the will of the Lord concerning you. Nor men nor angels may be able to comprehend the benefit that may this way redound to the church of God our Saviour. This I dare say you deem your duty at present, wishing strength for your former calling—which, God grant!

Some of our preachers, I’m informed, are driving at wonderful Christian attainments in their preaching. There are [those] of our societies that at least imagine they have so attained. They assert it and the preachers love to have it so. I wish, as you presaged and accordingly precautioned the flock in London, it terminate not in gross enthusiasm with some, and cause not contention and division among others. I have some reasons to suspect it. There is something like it here. Lord help you to pray, and hear you for Jerusalem’s peace and prosperity. The Lord help poor me too. Who knows but he will.

[May] he not forget dear Mrs. [Sarah] Wesley, neither you. Is her time accomplished?³ Then is it not both time and duty to return thanks? Your brother [JW] will be at my church July 12th. May the Lord bless his coming among us. My sincere respects in the Lord to your dear spouse, and please to accept the same from

Your sincerely respectful and affectionate friend and brother,

W. Grimshaw

Address: “For / The Reverend Mr. Charles Wesley / at the New Room / Horsefair / Bristol.”

Endorsement: by CW, “May 23. 1761 / Grimshaw.”

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 6/7.

¹This letter is not known to survive.

²See Isa. 58:1.

³The fifth child of CW and SGW, a daughter they named Susanna, was born in early June, being baptized on June 8, 1761 in Bristol; unfortunately, she would live only eleven months.

From Howell Harris

Bideford
June 20, 1761

My Dear Old Friend,

You see my end by the contents of the enclosed letter, which I beg leave to forward to your brother through you, as I do not know where he is just now.¹ I trust an interview between your brother, yourself, and Mr. Johannes,² who is now in London, and some others may greatly promote our Saviour's interest in this nation. I am persuaded your real regard to unity and the general good will make you not only forward the enclosed immediately to your brother, but also endeavour to hasten the interview. And if anything of that kind be settled, I beg the favour of a line as soon as you can, that if possible I might have the blessing of being present at such a meeting, where I believe our Saviour would much display his grace. This is the coming of his kingdom. This is honouring him indeed, by coming together as near as possible, removing misunderstandings and jealousies, so as to leave an opening for those of all parties that love our beloved Redeemer and his cause to come in likewise.

Why may not such concessions be made, and such toleration of spirit be showed, that all the evangelical friends of the Church may be invited to some union or nearness together? Then all might be better acquainted with each other, and with what our great Master and Builder is doing among his various classes of labourers everywhere. And then all hearts will be more enlarged towards him and his great cause here on earth.

Source: published transcription; Edward Morgan, *Life and Times of Howell Harris* (London: Hughes and Butler, 1852), 225–26.

¹For Harris's letter to JW, encouraging him to meet with Johannes de Watteville, see Morgan, *Howell Harris*, 223–25.

²Johannes de Watteville (1718–88), the adopted son of Baron Frederic de Watteville and husband of Count Zinzendorf's daughter, was elevated to the role of Bishop in the Moravian movement in 1747.

Sarah (Evans) Gwynne to Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley

[Brecon]
June 25, 1761

I am thankful for my dearest Sally's letter, and glad to find you was so well recovered as to be able to oblige me with a line.¹ I am also pleased your youngest child is put to nurse. I think you have been enabled to do wonders by suckling the others.

My cold (as I call it) is still bad and I have a constant pain in my left side. I assure you I am so weak that it is what I can hardly do to keep on my feet. Poor Mr. [Marmaduke] Gwynne complains much, but I thank God his stomach holds good, which must be a good symptom of strength, and which I hope will support and preserve his valuable life. As you mentioned nothing of Mr. [Charles] Wesley's being ill, I hope he is perfectly recovered. An account of his and your welfare would always be satisfactory to us.

I trust this night will bring your sisters and Tommy Waller safe to Bristol.² I shall be glad to hear from them or you by the return of the post. I received a letter dated the 9th instant from poor Rod. He was then well. He acquainted me that they had not then taken the field, but expected orders daily. I find two junior ensigns have been made lieutenants over his head, which is hard. Pray tell my daughter [Elizabeth] Waller that her dear little girl is pure and well, and her eye recovers daily³. She can now open it and look full at the light. I have been here three weeks, but have not seen your sister Price.⁴ Neither she nor I can move without a carriage and your brother's horses and servants are otherwise employed. I hired a chaise to come here. Your aunt Harvey has been at Glanbran near this fortnight.⁵ We expect her back here soon. Your aunts at Brecon are well. Your eldest brother [Howell] is [away] from home.

Lady Rudd, her son,⁶ your brother Duke and his girls⁷ join your sister, myself, and cousin Molly [Musgrove] in due respects to Mr. [Charles] Wesley, to you, your young ones, with your sisters and Tommy Waller, which must conclude this from

My dearest Sally's truly affection mother whilst,

Sa. Gwynne

Mrs. Prosser of Errow yr Crydd presents her service to all above named.

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 7/6.

¹SGW's letter to her mother is not known to survive. SGW was recovering from the birth of a daughter, Susanna, in early June.

²I.e., Rebecca Gwynne and Elizabeth (Gwynne) Waller, along with Elizabeth's son Thomas.

³Rebecca Waller (b. c. 1757) was being cared for in Brecon by her great-aunt Joan Gwynne.

⁴Joan (Gwynne) Price.

⁵Anne (Gwynne) Harvey. Glanbran, Carmarthenshire was the estate of Roderick Gwynne (1695–1777), the oldest sibling of Marmaduke Gwynne and Anne (Gwynne) Harvey.

⁶Lady Mary Rudd, wife of Howell Gwynne, and their son Marmaduke Gwynne (1741–84).

⁷Marmaduke Gwynne Jr., SGW's brother, had lost his wife Jane; he had two daughters, Sarah (1744–1809) and Jane (1746–1816).

Mary (Gwynne) Baldwyn to Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley

Ludlow
July 14, 1761

Thanks to my dearest sister Wesley for her kind letter,¹ and am sincerely glad to find that my sisters and Tommy are recovered their bruises.² Miraculously indeed have we been preserved. May we always be truly thankful to divine providence for all his mercy to us.

I rejoice to find that my goddaughter thrives,³ and that Charley has not suffered through my persuasion and your caution, and that your namesake [Sally Jr.] is in health. A long continuance of it I wish you all. I heard a few days ago that our parents and relations were all well at Garth (not from any of them but) by a young lady who has been at Llandrindod. She says the house is quite crowded with company. All my father's family are there, even Miss [Mary] Musgrove. Sister [Joan] Price was there, but I don't find that she accompanies my father, etc., etc. to Llandrindod. There they are all going to spend some weeks. Poor Beck, I dare say, is better pleased and contented where she is than amongst them.

I hope Tommy Waller will reap the benefit of the hot well water. Mrs. Poole and her spouse are going there this week to see their daughter, who married young parson Taylor of Clifton.⁴ She has desired my commands, but as I don't know whether it would be agreeable to sister [Elizabeth] Waller to send any by her, I shall let it alone. They know each other and if agreeable they may renew their former acquaintance. I own I should have been glad I could have stayed longer at Bath, just to have seen my sisters, but am content as our journey had the desired effect. I still feel my hurt from the overturn, but that I don't mind, nor do I myself wish for another journey to that place. But I shall do all in my power to persuade Mr. [Edward] Baldwyn to take one; and if he does not, he will be highly to blame.

Great have been the enquiries after you, your family, and my sisters, by all in Ludlow. Charley's surprizing performance on the spinet has not been forgot. I hope brother [Charles] Wesley has got a small one to his satisfaction. The Captain joins me in love to him, yourself, sisters, nephews, and nieces, with our children's duty conclude this from, dearest sister,

Yours most affectionately,

M. Balwyn

Mrs. Botevyle and honest Betsey desire service.

Oh sister Wesley, I did long for a few hours longer conversation with you. My compliments to Mrs. [Mary] James, Mrs. [Elizabeth] Vigor, and Mrs. Farley.⁵

Source: holograph; MARC, DDCW 1/72.

¹This letter is not known to survive.

²Apparently Rebecca Gwynne, Elizabeth (Gwynne) Waller, and her son Thomas Waller suffered a mishap in travelling from London to Bristol; see previous letter.

³CW and SGW's new daughter Susanna.

⁴Rev. John Taylor (c. 1730–92) married Ann Poole (1733–90) in Jan. 1760 in Clifton.

⁵Elizabeth (Grace) Farley (1714–79), the widow of Felix Farley.

From John Downes

[London]
[July 30, 1761]

You desire my opinion of “the cloud of perfect witnesses,” and the reason of “my mysterious silence,” etc.¹ I beg the pardon of my dear friend if to him (above all people) I have seemed mysteriously silent. I thought to him I had worn a window in my breast; at least I am sure I never drew the curtain.

You and I were of a mind when you were last in town, and since that I have seen no cause to change my opinion. The numbers that are daily justified, as well as etc., shows evidently that God is at work among his people. I only contend for a proper name to the higher attainments, and that God should be glorified in telling what he has really done, and not for what he very probably has not. My friend Thwaite (to me at least) talks like a reasonable man.² He is unspeakably happy and continually in temptation. He simply tells me what God has done for his soul—but give no name, draws no inferences. I am to suppose he speaks as humbly of himself to others, and yet this does not hinder the blessing, for he carries fire wherever he goes. If the rest that have attained should go and do likewise, should speak thus humbly, should act thus zealously, could they be said to hide their light under a bushel? I know not. But they would take a stumbling out of the way of many honest souls, as well as open for themselves a retreat if they should prove to be mistaken.

My very kind respects to Mrs. [Sarah] Wesley, Miss [Rebecca] Gwynne, Mrs. B[ataylor?], etc.

Your affectionate son and servant,

J. Downes

Address: “To / The Revd Mr. Chas. Wesley / in the Horsefair / Bristol.”

Postmark: “30/IY.”

Endorsement: by CW, “J. Downes on Perf[ection]n / July 30 1761.”

Source: holograph; MARC, DDPr 2/19.

¹CW’s letter with this request is not known to survive. On the “witnesses,” See the note in William Briggs to CW, May 1, 1761, about the “blessing” controversy.

²James Thwaite; on whom, see his letter to CW, Jan. 5, 1765.

Rebecca Gwynne to Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley

[Brecon]
Friday, August 15, 1761

I take this first opportunity of acquainting my dearest sister Wesley that we got safe to this place about 9:00 last night, but had a fatiguing journey from Abergavenny here owing to the worst chaise I ever was in, which tired us much and occasioned poor sister [Elizabeth] Waller one of her violent headaches. So that I guess she'll not be able to enjoy even her little girl's company today,¹ but is much pleased to find her so grown as to be quite as tall at her age as your dear little boy [CW Jr.] is at his, for she is by measure and what we can perceive by our eye about half the head higher.

I must now inform you that we were almost three hours in crossing the Passage, so that we could get no farther that night. I long much to know how you and your company got home, and whether my dearest Charley and his sister miss their maiden aunt. Tell my dear little boy I have a thousand times wished for him since we parted, and that it almost broke my heart to hear his little cry by the waterside when, if it had been possible, I should have obeyed his summons. Poor aunt Juggy has been to see us this morning and has so detained me that I shall not be able to add much more.² She is very particular in her enquiries about you and yours, and begged to join aunt [Mary] Leyson and the rest in kind love to you and my dear brother [Charles] Wesley.

I hope to see Mr. Griffith Price by and by, and am determined to follow his advice in every particular. But the writings I find are in my mother's custody, who I hope will return here ere he quits the country. If not, I must either send or go over the hills myself, to give him a sight of them. I hope Mrs. [Susanna] Stonehouse has not suffered by her kindness to us. Be pleased to give our respects to her, my dear Mrs. [Elizabeth] Vigor, Mrs. [Susanna] Boulton, and every enquiring friend; which concludes this from

My dearest sister Wesley's ever affectionate and obliged,

Re. G.

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 7/25.

¹Rebecca Waller, now 4 years of age; who had been staying in Brecon.

²I.e., Joan Gwynne, Marmaduke's unmarried sister.

From the Rev. John Fletcher

Madeley
August 19, 1761

My Dear Sir,

I have at last received your dear news,¹ and although belated I thank you with all my heart for what you have with goodwill given to me. I fear lest you may still give yourself up to melancholy because of the poor state of your health, or at least that you will not endeavour to rejoice with joy full of the glory of the remembrance of the glory that Christ has won for you. I still hope that we will see together the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living, and that his providence will bring our bodies closer at the same time that his grace unites our spirits in Jesus. Your hymns will in no way be condemned to oblivion. If their printing is further delayed, it is to give you more time to put the finishing touches to them and multiply their number.² Faith never rushes anything, and the patience that we gather by these delays is worth more than the most brilliant successes. The day before yesterday I received the parcel of books that you mentioned in your last. They are in good condition, and they are all there. I am entering myself into my family book as your debtor in money as well as in kindness.

Your brother has done me the goodness to write to me very recently.³ The extract from his letter is: “You are not fit to be alone. You will do and receive much better among us. Come, and if you do not want to be my equal, I will be below you, etc.” In my last I mentioned to him that I was prepared to quit my benefice without repugnance should providence give me the signal, far from feeling myself attached here by particular views. But I make a distinction between his obliging invitation and the ordering of providence. I don’t care to leave my post before I have been relieved by the sentry. I came passively, I will go in the same way.

I do not know if I spoke to you of the sermon preached at the archdeacon’s visitation.⁴ It was almost all against the points which are called Methodist doctrines. The clergyman who preached it is only separated by a parish from mine, and he surely it seems had me in view. One other clergyman came up to me after the sermon with a triumphant air and demanded of me what I had to say in reply. And many of my parishioners, among them the churchwardens, were there. I believed that it was my duty to call attention to the discourse, and I have done that in a long letter which I have written to the one who had preached, in which I touched upon the principal errors of his discourse.⁵ I had wanted to have your advice before sealing the letter. I have shaded it so as not to expose myself. I have secreted myself in it as well as I was able behind the ramparts of the sacred books, of our homilies, and of our articles.

Last Sunday I made a visit to Mr. Stillingfleet, Lord Dartmouth’s chaplain and minister of Bromwich.⁶ I offered him my pulpit, as if to a deputy who also preaches Christ with daring. He is on close terms with Mr. [George] Downing and resembles him by his gentleness and his modesty. He is so afraid

¹This letter is not known to survive.

²CW had been working on his *Hymns for Children* for some time. They would be published in 1763. He was also currently at work on a collection of short hymns on Scripture that would appear as *Scripture Hymns* in 1762.

³This letter is not known to survive; Fletcher’s extract is all that remains.

⁴This sermon was preached by “Rev. Prothero.” This was likely Fletcher’s phonetic spelling of the name of Rev. Stephen Prytherch (1720–86), who was currently vicar of Much Wenlock where the visitation was held.

⁵Fletcher’s letter, dated July 25, 1761 survives in the Archives of Drew University; for a summary and extracts see Patrick Streiff, *Reluctant Saint? A Theological Biography of Fletcher of Madeley* (Peterborough: Epworth, 2001), 100–03.

⁶Rev. Edward Stillingfleet (1729–95).

of acting the part of a Methodist, although he preaches their doctrines, that I doubt if he will accept my offer. He took me to dine at Lord Dartmouth's,⁷ who was that day with my Lady [Huntingdon] at his country seat. If I converse often with him, he would soon render me a churchman in all respects. What a difference between Mr. [John] Berridge and him! He read me the details of Mr. [Samuel] Walker, his close friend.⁸ What a loss for the little flock of Christ!

I do not know what to say to you of the state of my soul and of that of my parish. I struggle always in the slough of despond, and I attempt always to climb the hill difficulty.⁹ I have need of grace, of wisdom, of gentleness, and of courage. Noone has less of these than I do. Jesus my Saviour, draw me forcefully to him who gives wisdom to all those who ask without reproaching them for it! New scandals come in the place of those which fall away. But it is necessary that it is so. Happy if they never arise by my fault. The churchwardens talk of preventing strangers from coming into church as well as to the sacred table. But I want to oppose them upon this matter. A club in the next parish comprised of 80 workmen is asking me to preach a sermon to them. Their minister refuses them his church, and in their wrath to spite him they want to come in procession to mine. I have opposed it, which has put me a little in the good grace of the clergyman for a brief time. Mrs. H[eritage?], the cheerful widow, has written me a letter by which I conclude that she is numbered among the 300 perfects. And I believe her, especially as she talks no more of coming to Madeley this summer. Perfection is good for something.

We only have one post day each week, on Monday; and I was at Bromwich last Monday, and the Monday previous at Tern, so that I beg that my delay of a fortnight does not result in such a long one on your part. I conclude in begging you to assure Mrs. [Sarah] Wesley of my respects, I hope that she is also perfectly recovered and that all the little family are as well as I hope them to be, embrace them on my behalf.

Farewell.

Do not write to me any more care of Mr. Hinton.¹⁰ He is become my fiercest enemy, as well as his son, who is in orders.

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

Endorsement: by CW, "Fletcher / August 19. 1761."

Source: holograph (in French); MARC, MA 1977/495/14.¹¹

⁷William Legge, 2nd Earl of Dartmouth (1731–1801).

⁸Walker had recently died.

⁹These are two of the obstacles in John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*.

¹⁰William Hinton; his son the Rev. William Hinton (b. 1768) graduated Oxford and was ordained deacon in 1760, priest in 1765.

¹¹A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher's original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 131–33. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith's English translation (pp. 133–36). See also the earlier (and looser) translation in Fletcher, *Posthumous* (1791), 110–11.

From Peter Jaco

⟨Lond¹⟩on
Saturday noon, September 5, 1761

Reverend and Dear ⟨Sir,⟩

I ha⟨ve just⟩ time to inform you that our Conference relating to doctrine and discipline is finished,² to the satisfaction of (I believe) every preacher in connection with you and your brother [JW]. In particular [concerning] perfection: it is determined that there are no texts of Scripture which will absolutely support instantaneous perfection; that there is no state in the world which will absolutely exempt the person in it from sin; and that therefore they have need of caution, etc. These are some of the conclusions we are come to. The rest I suppose your brother will tell you soon. Whether he and the rest of the contenders on the other side of the question will abide by these concessions, time will determine.

As my health is extremely precarious, it has been thought good by Mr. Wesley and the preachers to fix me in Canterbury and London til Christmas, and then if Mr. [Nicholas] Gilbert with exchange with me, I shall in the spring go to Bristol in order to make a fair trial of the Hotwell water. If you will forward this to your brother when he comes to Bristol, I shall be greatly obliged to you. I hope you get strength by degrees and that the Lord will once more raise you up and restore you to his praying people. Amen.

I am, dear sir, with love to Mrs. [Sarah] Wesley,
Your affectionate son and servant in the gospel,

P. Jaco

P.S. [I] should be glad of a line from you.

Address: “To / the Revd. Mr Chs Wesley / at the New Room / Bristol.”

Postmark: “5/SE.”

Endorsement: by CW, “P. Jacco Sept. 5. 1761 / of Conference denying instant[aneou]s P[erfectio]n.”³

Source: holograph; MARC, DDCW 2/2.

¹A small portion was torn away by the wax seal; the missing text is supplied with confidence.

²The Conference ran from Sept. 1–5, 1761. No formal Minutes survive, only the summary in this letter and comments in JW’s letter to Samuel Furly, Sept. 8, 1761, *Works*, 27:273. For the focus on perfection, see the note in William Briggs to CW, May 1, 1761, about the “blessing” controversy.

³There is also a financial ledger on the address page, unrelated to the letter.

From the Rev. John Wesley

London
September 8, 1761

[[Dear Brother,]]

Our Conference ended, as it began, in peace and love. All found it a blessed time:

*Excepto, quod non simul esses, caetera laeti.*¹

The minutes John Jones can help you to, who sets out hence in two or three days. The right hand of the Lord bringeth mighty things to pass.² Not the least of them is that [[my wife]] cordially loves Thomas Maxfield.

Why should not Bath be supplied from Bristol? Order it so. I have no objection. They will by that means often have a more able preacher than they would otherwise have.

If he does not linger by the way, a preacher may be at Bristol on Thursday night.

I do not at all think (to tell you a secret) that the work will ever be destroyed, Church or no Church. What has been done to prevent the Methodists leaving the Church you will see in the minutes of the Conference.³

I told you before, with regard to Norwich, *dixi*.⁴ I have done at the last Conference all I *can* or *dare* do. Allow me liberty of conscience, as I allow you.

On Monday sennight I hope to set out for Bristol.

My love to Sally.

[[Adieu!]]

I know not what you will do with an exceeding honest mad woman, Mrs. Greer, of Newry, in Ireland, who, I hear, is embarking for Bristol. She comes without her husband's consent.

Peter Jaco desires to take a journey to Canterbury before he returns to Bristol.

I doubt not the Moravians will be courteous. And I fear that is all. Pray tell brother Sheen I am satisfied with his letter.⁵ He may stay at Bristol till I come. And be so kind as to tell Isaac I approve of his reasons, and think he ought to go home; but have the stewards found one fit to succeed him?⁶

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

Endorsement: in CW's hand, "Sept 8. 1761 / B[rother] dixi!"

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 3/15.⁷

¹Horace, *Epistles*, I.x.50; "Happy on all counts, save you are not with me."

²Ps. 188:16 (BCP).

³Unfortunately, these minutes do not survive.

⁴"I have spoken."

⁵Sheen was a book steward in Bristol and likely keeping records for Kingswood School.

⁶Isaac Duckworth (d. 1791) originally from near Bradford, Yorkshire, was currently serving as an assistant to the Wesley brothers.

⁷Transcription published in JW, *Works*, 27:276–77.

Hugh Price to Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley

Hendre [Wales]
September 28, 1761

Dear Mrs. Wesley,

I have the pleasure to inform you that my wife has delivered of a boy last Saturday,¹ and continues, I thank God, in as fair a way as can be expected. Mr. George Williams died three days before she was delivered, which was very alarming to me; but as this was secreted from her, the event was very favorable.

Mrs. [Sarah] Gwynne is with us, and joins in dues to Mr. [Charles] Wesley, yourself, the *little musicians* I long to see, and your daughter. I am, dear madam,

Yours affectionately and faithfully,

Hugh Price

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWF 24/14.

¹Joan (Gwynne) Price gave birth to Marmaduke Price on Sept. 21, 1761; he was baptized in Llanynys, Breconshire, Wales on Oct. 7.

From the Rev. John Fletcher

Madeley
October 12, 1761

My Dear Sir,

You always have the goodness to encourage me.¹ And your encouragement is not out of season, as discouragements follow one after another without much intermission. Those which are inward are well enough known to you by experience. Several of the external are peculiar to me, above all those I have had in the eight days that Madeley wake has lasted. I have done what I can to curb these bacchanals,² seeing that I cannot suppress them. But my efforts have been almost useless. The impotent dam made the torrent foam and swell, without stopping it. You would hardly believe how the animosity of my parishioners was strengthened and with what boldness it grew against me, and that because I had preached strongly against drunkenness, entertainments, and bull-baitings. The innkeepers and brewers will never forgive me. They imagine that preaching against excess and cutting their purse is the same thing.

My church begins not to be nearly as full, which I attribute to several reasons. 1) The curiosity of several of the hearers is satisfied. 2) The talk about it has scandalised several others. 3) The roads are less passable. 4) If the hour is to come when the Lord revives his Spirit upon us, it is not yet come. In place of saying that we are going up to the house of God, they say why should we go to hear this Methodist? I would lose patience with my flock if I did not have more reason to be content with them than with myself. My sterility gives me excuses for theirs. I await the time when God will give the seed to the sower, and of the increase of the seed scattered in his fields. In awaiting I am learning to believe the value of that prayer, “Your will be done.”³

I think that you may be unable to prevent yourself from communicating to your brother the plan of accepting a church.⁴ If he has some material and conclusive objection to make, it is well that you stop and pursue those thoughts. If it is not weighty, you can say to him that you do not find it conclusive. You are always your own master, after showing him the confidence of a colleague and the cordiality of a brother. As concerns the nature of the offer, I have nothing to say other than that providence and prudence are two infallible guides, if you abandon yourself to their direction without consulting flesh, blood, and self-love.

You have a pupil! That surprised me. But my surprise ceased when I read his name. And for all that, I doubt if Master L—n could reconcile me with the view that I hold about tutoring and the unease that goes with it. Tomm. March,⁵ perfect as he is, with his £60, did not tempt me in the least. And the two children who I was so strongly pressed to board a year ago are both dead, and confirm my view that taking pupils is to set oneself in the path of temptations and the keenest of worries—above all for myself, who has had such misfortune until now. If ever I take upon myself the cross of which I speak, that will only be for Charles [Jr.] and that when you are no longer able to discuss the matter yourself. I have had the mortification of seeing this last week one of my pupils altogether stupefied.⁶ He drinks himself sotten everyday, etc. He boasts only of having drunk in 23 days 302 bottles of wine, to the great astonishment of the whole of the Hague, without going to bed during a prolonged debauch. His father knows of it, but does not know what to do about it. His brutality and his atheism make him laugh at men and at God. I

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

²Drunken revelries; named for Bacchus, the Roman god of wine.

³Matt. 6:10.

⁴It is unclear which living CW was pondering at the moment.

⁵Almost certainly Thomas March (b. 1747), brother of Jane Catherine March (1744–1820), who was part of the cohort stressing perfection in London at the time. The family was well-to-do.

⁶Samuel Hill (1743–66), son of Thomas and Susanna Maria (Noel) Hill.

doubt that England could produce another such total monster of his age. He is just 18 years old. O let us pray, let us pray for Charles [Jr.], the devil will demand a double portion of the body of this little Moses because he belongs to you. I am glad that you are having your hymns printed. You are too scrupulous in respect of an Aristarch.⁷ Your sacred muse and prayer will stand in his place. May the Lord bless the undertaking! And he will bless it. Mr. [Thomas] Hill has given me my allowance of 8 franks. So long as they last, I prefer to use them to write to you rather than send some of them for your use. Make no more apologies in that respect. I would not have regretted twenty delivery charges for one of your letters. I beg you to greet Mrs. [Sarah] Wesley from me and to embrace the little family, whom I hope grow in grace, in power, and in stature. Write to me, if you so deem it, as to what Lady Hungtingdon and your brother think of a church. Believe me

Your sincere, although unworthy friend,

Farewell

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

Endorsement: by CW, "Oct. 12. 1761 / Fletcher."

Source: holograph (in French); MARC, MA 1977/495/84.⁸

⁷Derived from Aristarchus of Samos; denotes a severe critic of poetry.

⁸A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher's original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 136–38. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith's English translation (pp. 138–40). See also the earlier (and looser) translation in Fletcher, *Posthumous* (1791), 111–12.

Rebecca Gwynne to Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley

[Brecon]
Friday, October 16, 1761

My dearest sister Wesley's favour should have been answered by the return of post but that I had no franks at that time to enclose the prescriptions I promised Mr. Osgood; which I now shall do and hope he will (as my mother has) find great benefit by them. She returned to us the beginning of this week and had the satisfaction of leaving sister Price and her four children quite hearty.¹ I am sorry to hear your youngest [Susanna] comes on so slowly, which I imagine has been owing to her Kingswood nurse, but hope she will yet get the better of it and that I shall soon have the pleasure of hearing that poor little Sally [Jr.] has got through the pain of cutting her jaw teeth, which is a troublesome time for the poor little creatures. I hope my dear Charley is perfectly well as you mention nothing of the contrary, and am glad to find my dear brother [CW] was then pretty well; also that Mrs. [Elizabeth] Farley is recovered.

Becky Waller and the parrot are so extremely noisy that I scarcely know what I write, but hope you will excuse it. My poor sister was very ill last Tuesday with one of her usual headaches, and hysteric fits which the violence of the pain through her into.² She is likewise much afflicted with the rheumatism and, I fear, something of the gout also in her chest and stomach.

I read the four lines you sent me for poor Peggy's³ tombstone to Mr. Maund, who thought them very suitable and is much obliged to my brother and you, for he imagines they were made by him.⁴ His wife had those that were intended for Jacky,⁵ which he cannot find anywhere and is ashamed to be further troublesome, but if my brother has kept of copy of them should be glad you would send it.

Brother Duke has been with us since last Monday. He goes tomorrow into Glamorganshire to see his little boy,⁶ who we hear is now very well, and from there, I fancy, toward Bristol; which if he does you will certainly see him, and doubt not but he will entertain you with a very comical adventure that happened between him and Mrs. Barnsley the other day, where he went (with her consent) to make his address. The particulars I cannot her mention, but am sure you will laugh when he relates them to you, which I am certain he will do if he has an opportunity.

My mother has given me a couple of franks that I might write and hear from you, and desires me tell you that it is business alone that prevents her writing, and begged to join my aunts, sister, children, etc. in kind love to you, my brother, and dear little ones. Accept the same from

Dearest sister Wesley's ever affectionate and obliged,

Reb. Gwynne

Be so kind as to remember sister [Elizabeth] Waller and myself to dear Mrs. [Elizabeth] Vigor and every enquiring friend. I should be glad if you could enclose me a tune or two from Mr. Milgrove.⁷

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 7/11.

¹Sarah (Evans) Gwynne had been to see Joan (Gwynne) Price, on the birth of Marmaduke Luke Price, bap. Oct. 7, 1761. He joined John (b. 1756), Howell (b. 1758), and Charlotte (b. 1759).

²Elizabeth (Gwynne) Waller.

³Margaret Gwynne (1733–52), SGW's sister.

⁴Andrew Maund (b. 1722) married Elizabeth Price (1734–96), a cousin of Hugh Price, in Brecon in 1759. Their firstborn, James, died in infancy. They were seeking lines to add to his tombstone.

⁵CW and SGW's first child John (1752–54).

⁶Marmaduke Gwynne Jr.'s surviving son was also named Marmaduke (1749–86).

⁷Benjamin Milgrove (1738–1808) married Sarah Naylor (d. 1781) in 1763. Benjamin owned a music shop in Bath and published tunes for guitars in particular.

Rebecca Gwynne to Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley

[Brecon]
October 19 [1761]

My brother Duke,¹ who set out yesterday for Glamorganshire, desired I would direct and send a frank of his by the next Sunday carrier to your house, where he will shortly call for it and pay you the carriage, if you will be so kind as to discharge it to Mr. [Abraham] Wigginton, where I shall forward it as usual. And [I] should be glad to know what sister [Elizabeth] Waller's and my debt to him is; which you may remember we could not have an account of as we left Bristol, therefore we agreed that Mr. [James] Waller (who we thought would have returned that way) should discharge it. But now we must wait an opportunity, which shall be the first that happens after you acquaint us how much it comes to.

My brother, I am sure, will be highly taken with dear little Charley, who I hope will not be backward in playing to him when he is told that it is to one who understands and love music. Poor Sally Gwynne² has lately been confined two days to her bed with the rheumatism, which she and sister Waller are often afflicted with. The rest of us are pretty well at present and join with them and myself in kind love to you, my dear brother [CW], and the little ones, which concludes this from, my dearest sister,

Your most affectionate and obliged,

Reb. Gwynne

I hope you have received my last letter ere this.

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 7/9.

¹Marmaduke Gwynne Jr.

²Sarah Gwynne (1744–1809), the daughter of Marmaduke Gwynne Jr.

From John Nelson

Clayworth
October 31, 1761

Dear Sir,

This is with my best love to you and earnest prayers for you and yours, and all the Church of God in that place. I received your letter a long time after the date of it, wherein you ask if I have forgot you.¹ I answer, No. I do not know that there hath one day passed since I left Bristol but you have been brought to my mind when I bow my knees before the Lord to pray in private. But I omitted writing to you when I was about to write, through Mr. [Henry] Venn sending a letter from London, in a triumphing manner, that Mr. [Samuel] Walker had converted you to his notions and that you was contradicting what you and your brother, and all of us, had been preaching for two and twenty years. It put a stop to me, though in my heart I did not believe him, for men of his principles will do all they can to keep people from perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

But God will work in spite of all his opposers, and I think I never saw a greater work than we had in York round last year. There was four in and near Thirsk that died as great witnesses that Christ had saved them to the utmost as ever I saw, or ever read of. And in three months we had three score and seven professed to have received forgiveness of sins, and twelve that professed to receive the full liberty of the sons of God. And upward of a hundred joined in the round in the same time. Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Christ be all the glory given. I was in hopes to have seen you at London and to have told you of these things.

When I was last near Hulton Ridley, in York round, there came an old man into the house where I was, with hair as white as wool. He pulled off his hat, kneeled down on the floor, and lifted up his hands and said. "O God I bless thee. I praise. I desire to give thanks unto thee with my whole heart for sending thy servants to this place to preach the gospel. But above all for sending thy Son to save such a poor hell-deserving sinner as me. O Lord, I have provoked thee to thy face for fourscore and four years. And after all I had done to damn my soul by infecting them with cursing and swearing, by drunkenness and Sabbath-breaking, thou hast blotted out all my sins with the blood of thy dear Son." I think it would have made the hardest heart in the world to melt to hear him, and to see the tears drop off his chin to the ground that made marks on the floor as big as a shilling. After he got up he told that the first time he heard he was pierced to the heart, and that hour he received power over drunkenness and swearing, and all outward sin. But he never had assurance that God for Christ's sake had forgiven his sins till Sunday noon preaching at Richard Dobson's. But now he was as sure it was so as that he had ever sinned against the Lord.

The same day a girl of eleven years talked with me and gave as clear account of God convicting and converting her soul as any woman could do. Indeed I found it good for my soul to be in that round, and God was good to me in supporting my body, for I was not hindered by affliction from preaching once in the whole year. And I bless his holy name that I find him present in this round, for several professes to have found pardon since we came from the Conference. And in Epworth God is both deepening his work in the souls of them that have been from the beginning, and widening his work by increasing the number of believers. On Sunday three weeks, one that had been joined 16 years received a clear sense of pardon, that used to say she was like Gideon's fleece, always dry when the whole floor was watered. "But," she said, "I have not waited in vain. For God hath poured his Spirit into my heart like a well of water. O that I may praise him to all eternity."

A young man belonging to Epworth died last Saturday in full triumph. He had professed faith two years. He had always attended class and band. His name was Michael Sutton. Sunday before he died he declared that the Lord had finished his work, and that there was nothing between God and his soul. He

¹This letter is not known to survive.

believed that that promise in our Lord's sermon belonged to him, for he said the Lord had appeared the second time, and had broke in upon his soul in such a manner that his tongue could not express. But he was sure that by his blood and his Spirit his heart was made clean, and he should see the King in his beauty, and sing praises to the great Three-One for ever and ever. Sister Smith and sister Seasons was with him when he died. A few minutes before he expired he took sister Smith by the hand and said, "Help me to pray and to praise." She kneeled down and besought the Lord to receive his soul, and he said, "Amen, amen," and sweetly fell asleep in the arms of God.

There is two more dead at Amcotts, near Crowle, since I came into the round, David Hill and Thomas Belton,² and they finished their course with joy, and their deaths hath stirred up many to hear the word that would not hear before.

My wife [Martha] joins with me in love to you and yours, and all friends at Bristol. She is at Epworth. Mr. Hutton and Mrs. Hutton,³ and brother and sister Smith,⁴ joins in love to you, and would be glad to see you once more in the land of the living. And I desire you to give my kind love to Friend Vigor and all her father's family;⁵ they are often brought to my mind at the throne of grace. And I beg an interest in all your prayers, and all the church to pray for me as I do for you all, and I should be glad to hear from you. I shall but stay two weeks at Epworth, and then go to Grimsby and stay till Christmas.

This from,

Your unworthy brother in Christ and as a son to serve in the gospel,

John Nelson

I pray you tell our son we give our blessing to him,⁶ and love to all at Kingswood, and tell them we are all well. I should be glad to hear how sister Jones and brother Gee⁷ finished their course. May God bless you and yours. Amen.

Address: "To the Rev Mr / Charles Wesley at / the New Room the horse / faire / Bristol."

Source: holograph; MARC, PLP 78/53/5.⁸

²Thomas Belton was buried Oct. 19, 1761 in Amcotts.

³William Hutton (1712–82) was a grocer and active member of the parish in Epworth. He married Etheldred ("Betty") Jenny (d. 1793) in 1732. The couple are buried next to the grave of Samuel Wesley Sr. in the Epworth churchyard. They hosted Methodist preachers when at Epworth; see Stevenson, *Memorials*, 348.

⁴CW preached in the yard of Edward Smith, of Epworth on June 22, 1743 (see MS Journal).

⁵I.e., Elizabeth (Stafford) Vigor and her four sisters.

⁶Charles Nelson (b. 1747); see Nelson to CW, Nov. 11, 1763.

⁷Thomas Gee was buried in Bristol Feb. 1, 1761; he was the husband of Mary (Deacon) Gee, who found assurance under CW's preaching on Apr. 24, 1746 (see MS Journal).

⁸Cf. the previous transcription published in Laycock, *Haworth*, 225–27.

From Francis Gilbert

London
November 7, 1761

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I am just returned from Leeds. In my way thither I stopped at Sheffield. But the morning I left it, I went to see Mary Midgley,¹ who was happy though in much pain and near death. Her life for the last five years as well as her death being somewhat remarkable, the particulars may give you some satisfaction.

She was of Halifax society, but about five years ago she removed to Sheffield, was very trifling and far from being in earnest. However she was much at last stirred up, and about three years ago received a sense of the forgiveness of her sins. Her trials were uncommonly great, but she bore them with uncommon patience. Her husband, often coming home drunk, would draw her out of the bed in winter when his clothes have been wet, would beat and threaten to kill him and then say, “Where now is thy God?” But she would reply, “Blessed be God, I can turn the other cheek also,” and with much sweetness would embrace him and say, “Billy, I love you.” Yet this would not quiet him, for he would say “Thou art a civil devil,” and then would try various ways to ruffle her, though to no purpose. Her behaviour would be as remarkably loving as his was rough. He would sometimes be idle for two or three weeks together, wherefore by his indolence they were much involved and were in continual danger of losing all their household goods—though had he been industrious he might have maintained his family very well. These were no small trials to her, who had three children. Her neighbours were surprised at her thriftiness, frugality, and cleanliness. She walked so uprightly that even the wicked who lived near her would say she was a saint. And though they hated the Methodists, would give her some relief.

She carried all her troubles of every kind to the Lord, and would say “The Lord will deliver me. he will do it somehow or other. I know not how, but he will do it.” And thus by faith she rested in his protection. And according to her faith it was unto her. She trusted in the Lord and was not confounded, for money was frequently brought her by or from unknown persons. They also by some means or other preserved their goods. So that by her frugality, prayers, faith, and holy life they were supported. Nothing could shake her confidence in Christ. She was remarkable for a heavenly look which forced the wicked to acknowledge that she was a Christian. She was remarkable also for interceding with God for her husband (and she believed God would save him) and others. She was diligent in the means, fond of the preachers, and loving to the children of God. But notwithstanding all this, she complained much of the evil of her heart and pleaded much with the Lord to purify it.

About seven weeks before she died, she found a deliverance from all sin. But the scripture which was applied to her at the time the person who gives me the account forgets. After this she was much assaulted by the enemy. but she would say that he found nothing in her. And at times she has been in such raptures of joy as has much weakened her body. About three weeks after she took to her bed and was in much pain, feeling herself as if knives were cutting her all over. But she was resigned, without the least degree of murmuring. A day or two before she kept her bed her husband, coming home drunk, threatened to stick a knife into and kicked her. But this did not in any measure disturb her. About a week before she died, she said the Lord had made her spirit with himself, that she was his bride, and that the promises were all sealed to her. The Mr. Wesleys and the preachers were much laid upon her mind, that she has been in such an agony of prayer for them as has much weakened her. From the time she declared her sins were all destroyed she has felt none. So after living seven weeks in the full assurance of faith, she sweetly resigned her breath, her pains abating in some degree a day or two before she died. And though she could not upon account of her pain and weakness show much joy, she declared that she was rejoicing inwardly. She died of a Saturday, and the Wednesday before when I saw her, she could not speak but it put her to pain. And I think she told me that she was willing to die for the Lord had purified her. The Tuesday

¹Mary Haigh (b. 1729) married William Midgley (b. 1728) in Halifax, Yorkshire, in Dec. 1747.

following, in my way back to London, I stopped at Sheffield again a little before she was carried out of the house, and I followed the corpse.

This account I had of sister Ryder, who had been intimately acquainted with her ever since her coming to Sheffield. I have read the above to several others who knew her, and they all agree it is a just account.

The Lord blesses me much with his presence. But I have not lost my evil heart yet. Pray my respect to Mrs. [Sarah] Wesley, and may the choicest of God's blessings rest upon you both. I am, reverend and dear sir,

Your unworthy son,

Frans. Gilbert

Address: "To / The Revd. Mr. Chas. Wesley / in / Bristol."

Postmark: "7/NO."

Endorsement: by CW, "Nov. 7. 1761 / F. Gilbert / a blessed death!"

Source: holograph; MARC, DDP1 1/32.

From John Downes

[London]
[December 14] 1761

My Dear Friend,

Mr. Norris has 50 sets he tells me.

I cannot give any account what books are wanted. The demands are so various. Neither can the good woman who sells for you. I know not that we have a run of any books in particular.

Music books £1.14; i.e. three at nine pence and one at seven.

I must not have any time set for John Jones's watch. I shall make all the haste possible, but if he cannot allow me my own time, be it longer or shorter, I won't have anything to do with making it. I suppose it will come to about £6.10 schillings. But I can give a certain account when it is done. The Dr. can pay the odd money.¹

Mr. Southcote will soon pay you seven or eight pounds, if you will be so good as tell him if you see him.² I believe I must send your things, if you need them, by the wagon. You are extremely welcome to my service if you can dispense with my forgets and omissions and delays.

Yesterday morning my old friend spent fifteen minutes with me, and upon me, to get me once more to try my strength in the good work.³ I half consented, which will be sufficient reason to put me down for Bonners on Thursday sennight.⁴

In talking of the present work,⁵ we agreed much better than I expected—in general, that it is evidently a work of God, by whatever name you call it, perhaps best without a name. But that the subjects thereof have great need of wisdom to make a right use of it, both to themselves and others. Which last article of want of prudence in their words and behaviour he enlarged upon much to my satisfaction. He seems to take the affair in my point of view. And while they are weakly imagining that they are above every stumbling, he endeavours to remove it out of their way, and by degrees to bring those to a more sober way of thinking who are mistaken. By this means he hopes to let them down to a just conception of what they really have received, and what they have not. And in the mean time they receive no harm under the operation. This I gather from his exhortations and preaching.

He seems to have a very high opinion of several, and tells me that a few he can find no fault with. I suppose he means those of a moral kind. I wait for more proof as to the name, but reverence them for the real grace they have received.

Yours is just come to hand.⁶ Many thanks for H. Floyd. I will endeavour to observe your directions. Mr. and Mrs. A.'s love and duty. I am quite tired, and

Yours affectionately,

J. D.

Address: "To The Revd. Mr. Chas Wesley / at the New-room / Bristol."

Postmark: "15/DE."

Endorsement: by CW, "Dec. 14. 1786 / J Downes of B[rother's] palliating."

Source: holograph; MARC, DDP 2/20a.

¹John Jones had an M.D. degree.

²For more on John Southcote (c. 1739–1777), see his letter to CW of July 23, 1771.

³I.e., JW tried to convince Downes to return to circuit preaching.

⁴Bonner's Hall was the former palace of the bishop of London; and a regular location of Methodist preaching at this time.

⁵The heightened emphasis on and claims of perfection in London and beyond.

⁶This letter is not known to survive.

From the Rev. John Wesley

London
December 26, 1761

[[Dear Brother,]]

Spend as many hours in the congregation as you will or can. But exercise alone will strengthen your lungs. Or electrifying, which I wonder you did not try long ago. Never start at its being a quack medicine. I desire no other; particularly since I was so nearly murdered by being cured of my ague *secundum artem*.¹ You should always (and I hope you do) write standing and sloping.

We are always in danger of enthusiasm, but I think no more now than any time these twenty years. The word of God runs indeed, and loving faith spreads on every side. Don't take my word or any one's else, but *come and see*. It is good to be in London now.

It is impossible for me to correct my own books. I sometimes think it strange that I have not one preacher that will and can. I think everyone of them owes me so much service.

Is it right that my sister Patty should suffer Mr. Hall to live with her?² I almost scruple giving her the sacrament, seeing he does not even pretend to renounce Betty Rogers.³ Was it right for William Baynes to carry on his affair with Sammy Whittaker without consulting either you or me?⁴

Pray tell brother Sheen I am hugely displeased at his reprinting the *Nativity Hymns* and omitting the very best hymn in the collection,

All glory to God in the sky, etc.⁵

I beg they may never more be printed without it. Omit one or two, and I will thank you. They are namby-pambical.

I wish you would give us two or three invitatory hymns. We want such exceedingly. My love to Sally. My wife [Mary] gains ground.

Adieu!

Endorsement: by CW, "B[rother] Dec. 26. 1761 No danger / of enthusiasm."

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 3/16.⁶

¹"According to the art"; that is, by standard medical practices.

²Westley Hall, the unfaithful husband of JW and CW's sister Martha, having run off with one of his mistresses to the West Indies in 1755, had now returned and was seeking reconciliation with Martha.

³Elizabeth Rogers was one of Westley Hall's mistresses, with whom he had a child.

⁴William Baynes (d. 1778) served as a master at Kingswood School for several years (see JW, *Journal*, Oct. 25, 1757, *Works*, 21:129). He obtained ordination in 1771–72 and moved to assist JW as a curate at the chapels in London (see JW, *Journal*, Dec. 27, 1777, *Works*, 23:73).

⁵Hymn 18, the concluding hymn of *Hymns for the Nativity of Our Lord* (London, 1745), 23–24.

⁶Transcription published in JW, *Works*, 27:281–82.

1762

From an Unidentified Correspondent

[1762]

Memorandum concerning the most noble Margaret, Lady Marchioness of Lothian¹

It would be hard to say whether this peculiar favourite of heaven shared more largely at the hands of the author of every good and perfect gift in these endowments which he bestows as the God of nature, or these of infinitely greater value that he so freely gives as the author of all grace and consolation in Christ Jesus. But no character of this Lady of distinguished eminence is intended. An Apelles² could not do justice to every face.

It's only to be remembered concerning this saint of the first magnitude that there is the best ground to believe the first seeds of grace were planted in her nature betimes, and that by the blessing of God upon the example and instructions of pious parents she was an early convert. Certain it is that in a period of life spent by the bulk of a guilty, accountable race in vanity and thoughtlessness, her tender mind was deeply impressed with a concern about matters of eternal and infinite consequence and moment. At the 13th year of her age she was a devout communicant. Every part of her after-conduct in that high sphere where infinite wisdom called her forth to move witnessed not only the sincerity of her Christian profession, but was highly ornamental to it. All that had the honour of being near her person must know with what pleasure and lively zeal she performed the duties of the Christian life; and with what resignation and Christian fortitude she was by grace enabled to sustain any trying dispensations in her lot. And any who were blessed with the advantage of intimacy with that favourite of heaven had an opportunity of hearing from her own mouth the praises of God's grace, and of his faithfulness to his words, that to her sweet experience all had been made to work together for her good.

How ravishing was it to any indulged the rare privilege of hearing this hid saint, this modest, humble, self-denied Christian speak freely of spiritual things, and of the happy temper of her devout soul! With warmth, energy, and devotion almost peculiar to herself, she has been heard say, years since, "Blessed be God, even the God and Father of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I have been long since made to see the vanity and naughtiness of all that this world can afford, and to bestow my heart on things within the vale. Blessed be God, my treasure is there, and my heart is there. What I have here is his, and given in trust. O for grace to be a faithful steward!" There are not wanting in her handwriting standing evidences of her spiritual attainments, and that God in Christ was the chosen portion of her soul. God was indeed greatly glorified in the whole of her life by her bearing much fruit. And the Christian temper, ever prevailing in her soul, made it conspicuously appear whose workmanship and whose disciple she was.

Yet it may do peculiar honour to the grace of him who has said, "Blessed are the poor in Spirit";³ it may be confirming to the meek and humble that would fondly hope in his mercy; that it be remembered of this favourite daughter of Zion that her fears were great she should not be honoured to finish her warfare with that credit to the Christian profession she could wish. True it is that her Ladyship for some of the last years of her precious life laboured under a bodily indisposition of that kind which has a tendency to make the human mind consider every object that is gloomy as doubly so. Yet seldom or never could this her infirmity be so improved upon by the assiduous enemy of the salvation and peace of precious souls, as to make her entertain any doubt that her's should be bound up in the bundle of life, and given her as a prey in the day of the Lord. With confidence and joy could she almost on every occasion

¹Margaret (Nicholson) Kerr; wife of William Kerr, 3rd Marquess of Lothian (1690–1767), died Sept. 30, 1759.

²Apelles (4th cent. BCE) was considered the greatest painter of antiquity.

³Matt. 5:3.

say, “I know in whom I have believed, and that he will keep what I have committed to him unto that day.”⁴ But it is as true that bitter complaints were drawn from her pious soul; that she was afraid that she sinned in not bearing her present bodily trouble as she ought to do; that her dead heart was not warmed as it ought to be with a sense of redeeming love; nor such gratitude to be found in her for the great things God of his grace had done for her soul as ought ever to be found there; that the pangs of natural death were represented to her mind as very frightful; that she was sadly afraid lest she should turn her back in the day of battle; that she might then be left to speak impatiently or unadvisedly, and not be honoured to glorify God in dying as she could wish.

Plain indeed it was to all about her that while the outward man decayed, the inward was renewed and invigorated. And that day by day love to Jesus, who came to seek and to save lost sinners, seemed to occupy her whole heart. If any instance of remarkable gratitude was spoke of, even in full company, she would say, “Oh what gratitude do we owe to him who hath saved us from the second death, by shedding his precious blood a ransom for many, and that while we were yet enemies!” Notwithstanding, these fears lay with uneasy weight upon her Ladyship’s devout mind till within a short time of her happy and triumphant exit.

This appeared from the petitions she was heard to put up through some restless nights she had in the body, particularly the Friday night before her death. In the intervals of her pious conferences with those about her, such ejaculations as these were sent up from her heart, and heard uttered by her tongue: “Oh that I may be enabled to bear all that I have to suffer with Christian patience, and that God may keep me from offending with my tongue, that unruly member. Oh that I may be honoured to glorify my God in my death, and to speak to the praise of free grace in my last moments” Then [she] said, “I’ll go to bed and fear no evil.”

That all the fears of this pious, exercised, eminent saint were disappointed, her fervent petitions heard and answered, and perhaps her largest hopes and wishes exceeded, appeared in the whole of her frame and conversation the last day of her distance from her Father’s house. How shining the last act of a life spent in love to God from her first entry upon ye stage! A life replenished with uninterrupted Christian offices to all his offspring especially to such as her charitable sentiments led her to believe were of the household of faith. All who had the happiness to witness her triumph must be convinced that God truly gives power to the faint, that he is truly good to Israel even to each that is of a pure heart, that the consolations of the Spirit are neither few nor small, and that he does strengthen and comfort the souls of his saints when heart and flesh fail.

On Saturday morning, after a night mostly spent in prayer, she was heard [to] put up this petition early and earnestly, “O that God may open my mouth to speak his praise in the hour of death.” After this she seemed to sleep quietly about half an hour. When awake, her Ladyship, looking up for some time with a pleased and serene countenance, broke silence by uttering these remarkable words, “Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.”⁵ “Oh the views I now have of the adorable perfections of my God, in the face of Jesus Christ, my Lord God; my God, my Sanctifier and Redeemer.”

She then desired a minister that was present to pray with her. She was silent for some minutes after prayer was ended. Then raising herself up, said, “I know not what it is to die, but his rod and his staff will comfort me.”⁶ Then uttering some words so low as not to be heard, but accompanied with the outward gestures of earnest prayer, she again spoke out with vigour and a countenance full of life and joy, “He’s gone, the adversary is gone. He dare not set up his head. Oh wonderful! Wonderful! The amazing goodness of God to my soul! I am overcome with love! It is too much. I cannot bear it. I’m brimful! I can hold no more! Amazing! Amazing! Praise him, praise him all his angels! Love and praise him all his

⁴Cf. 2 Tim. 1:2.

⁵Luke 2:29.

⁶Cf. Ps. 23:4.

saints! O my soul, praise the Lord! I'll bless and praise his name while I have being. Amazing goodness, amazing goodness! Praise the Lord, o my soul, who pardoneth all thy iniquities, healeth all thy backslidings, and crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies. Amazing mercy and condensation to such a poor worthless worm a I! Adored, for ever adored be his name, for his love and mercy to the miserable, forlorn race of apostate Adam! O that I could adore redeeming love! I cannot do it as I ought. I shall do it better by and by."

It was said to her Ladyship by her weeping Lord [William Kerr], "My dearest life, that will be your delightful employment to all eternity." Then taking him by the hand, she said, "Yes, and I trust yours too." She added, "May God bless and spare you; make your life comfortable, and remarkably useful to the church of God! We must part, but I hope shall meet again in eternal bliss. I cheerfully give up all things for Christ." Then withdrawing her hand from his Lordship's, she added "Last time I partook of the sacrament in England, I was enabled to receive it on these terms. Let Christ be mine and I renounce and give up with health and all things. There is nothing but I part with for him; and I hope ever to say, 'His blessed will be done.' Praises to his grace, he has enabled me to faithfulness in this covenant. I have been helped to bear afflictions, and now I can easily part with all things. I desire to go to be with Christ which is far better. He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure. This is all my salvation and all my desire. Come Lord Jesus, come quickly! Come, o thou bridegroom of my soul, and receive my immortal spirit, that I may be with thee through the endless ages of eternity. When God comes, then it will be finished, then it will be complete. O come, tarry not, come and receive me to be forever with thy self."

After a little pause, and having called for a drink, she added, "Bless, bless, o my God, my dear, dear children with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. I have ever prayed for them. He will bless them; yes, yes, I trust in his mercy he will. All my nearest and dearest I commit to God. May all here present be taken into the bosom of the everlasting covenant. Praises to God's grace that so many of my dear concerns have tasted that the Lord is gracious." She continued, "Pity them o God that have not heard of this loving and almighty Saviour. Pity, pity the blind miserable part of mankind that have heard of his name but go on in sin; that see no comeliness in Christ, nor need of him. Turn them by thy Spirit, oh my God, and they shall be turned. Make them to think of their ways and turn their feet to thy testimonies. Draw them and they shall run after thee. Praises to free grace that such a poor, blind, polluted worm as I has been made to see the worth and need of his blood and righteousness. O let his name endure for ever. Let all account it as ointment poured forth, and fly unto him for salvation. And now, oh my God, pity and support a poor worm, weak in body and in mind. May I glorify thy name in dying. May my mouth be opened and I will show forth thy praises. May the grace that is in Christ be sufficient for me. May his strength be perfected in my weakness. May the Captain of my salvation be with me and I will fear no evil. Hold thou me up and I shall not be moved. And the praises shall be thine through the ages of an endless eternity. Amen and Amen. Glory to him that cometh in the name of the Lord to save. Amen and Amen. Praises, Praises to him that washeth me from my sins in his blood. Establish, strengthen, and settle me and my soul shall bless thee. Amen and Amen. Be not far from me when trouble is near, o my God, for I will hope for thy salvation. Take not thy Holy Spirit from a poor worm, but may everlasting arms be underneath me, and the praises shall be ascribed to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost through an endless eternity. Amen and Amen. Amen and Amen."

She remained silent for a considerable time. Then looking round with a pleased countenance, she said, "I now fear no evil; no, fear is gone. Sin is taken away. All temptations are removed. Praises, praises, eternal praises to God and to the Lamb, who has washed [me] from my sins in his blood. O amazing mercy! Amazing! Amazing! I cannot praise enough, but I shall do it better soon."

Her constant employment through the afternoon and evening was, with a low voice, to be saying, "Praises, Praises to him that loved me and hath washed me in his blood. Come Lord Jesus, come quickly, and make no stay."

Strength abated, the asthma increased, and frequent short sleeps took place. When awaking out of one of these, and under great distress, and wanting a posture in which she might breathe more easily, she

said, “My body and mind are weak. I am afraid of impatience. I dread losing what I have attained.” One present suggested to her that it was a sure covenant she had been enabled to give her consent to. That death could not deface the image of God received on her soul by the Holy Ghost. That Christ would keep what she had committed to him, for none was able to pluck out of his hand. That none could tell how a falling tabernacle might cramp and overwhelm the precious soul, maul its operations for a time. Perhaps it might be to such a degree as to incapacitate it for rational or devout exercises for a season, but that he who knew her frame and remembered that she was but dust would keep his hold of her when heart and flesh failed. Immediately she said with great affection, “Yes, yes, he will hold me up, and I shall be in peace and safety still. O the love of Christ to a poor worm! Praises! Praises to his holy name forever and ever! Amen and Amen.”

When awaking out of one of these sleeps, she was heard [to] say with a low voice, “That enemy would yet tempt, but he’s a liar, a liar. I will trust.”

Whilst the severe asthma made her Ladyship seek a posture that might favour breathing, she said to one present by name, “Can you give me no ease?” She was answered, “Your Lady well knows that it’s the hand of your dear Redeemer that lies upon [you]. That it was by death he himself entered into his glory. That it was the uniform way by which his disciples [are] behoved to follow him into those mansions. That it not only behoved the body to be destroyed because of sin, but we had seen, and her Ladyship had felt, that fitness for the enjoyment of heaven was not compatible with its present imperfections. That she longed to be with him, and surely wished to drink this cup that he had given her to drink, and would not desire to fly from him. She then said, with all the strength she possessed, “No, no, it is the Lord. I would not fly from him. I will wait for him. This cup I will drink; yes, I’ll drink it. Yes, yes. My light afflictions, which are but for a moment, shall work for me a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Shortly I shall be in the place where none say they are sick. Praises to God in the highest and to the Lamb for ever and ever!”

She often prayed; “Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly; and make no stay.” And referring to her bodily distress, said, “Take me out of this horrible pit, out of this miry clay. Set my feet upon a rock and establish my goings.” Her distress still growing, she said, “Lord preserve me from impatience. I am weary of this world. O welcome death.” It was said by one present, “Your Ladyship will shortly be in a new and better world.” She answered, “You have not seen it. No, I know eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive what is there laid up for them that love him.”⁷

Her mind so greatly ravished with the love of a redeemer dwelt much on that expression, “Christ our righteousness; our righteousness. Wonderful! Wonderful!” It was suggested by one of her friends present that he would be her strength. “Yes, yes,” (said she) “and my portion for ever.”

The last expression her Ladyship uttered was, “Come, come, Lord Jesus, and take my soul to be with thyself. Come quickly and make no stay.” That instant she shut her eyes and fell asleep in Jesus. Like the devout women that were early up on the first day of the week to express their regard to their dear Lord, so on that day, by 1:00 in the morning (being September 30, 1759), she was taken up to see him in his glory and kingdom. By the hand of the Spirit her soul was indeed prepared for the presence of the Lamb, as a bride adorned for her husband. Her temper was entirely suited for those pure and peaceful mansions.

Her seat must be near the throne, and few of the happy inhabitants can be supposed to sing the song of Zion on a higher note than one that enjoyed so much of heaven while on earth.

Endorsement: by CW, “[[Death of Lady Lothian]]” and “Death of L[ady] Lothian 1762.”

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/501/103.⁸

⁷1 Cor. 2:9.

⁸For a digital copy and “as-is” transcription, see:
<https://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/services/digitisation-services/projects/rapture-and-reason/>

From an Unidentified Correspondent

Basque Road [Ireland]
March 2, 1762

Dear Brother and Sister,

There being a paquet[-boat] here about sailing for England, I take this opportunity of letting you know how the work of God increases. I bless the Lord who has indeed given us to see that it is only for the sake of Jesus Christ that salvation ever came on earth. And that as of old, so now, he sendeth by whom he will send. The Lord is arisen to work, none can let [i.e., stop] it! Before we left Passage, a town near Cork very profane, we had been there some time before we could see one that had the fear of God before their eyes. But now, blessed be God, through the instrumentality of Captain Taylor, they have a society formed and many are seeking to be saved on Christ's terms. We expected to have went to Bellile, so we provided ourselves with several little books entitled *A Word of Advice to a Soldier*.⁹ Notwithstanding, we gave them to the sailors when we arrived here. And the good they have done is very great indeed under God. Two or three days after we arrived here, having disposed of a few of them among the common men that came on board us, it reached the officers' ears and the purser of one man-of-war sent a billet to Captain Taylor with Sir Thomas's compliments (the Commodore) and hearing Captain Taylor had some useful sermons to dispose of, begged the favour of one or two for his perusal. We sent Mr. Charles's *Awake Thou That Sleepest*,¹⁰ and other such as we had. The next day another such message came from another ship and I think the next day another. Then the officers came themselves and invited Captain Taylor to dine with them. All the men are exceeding eager for reading them. [Some] have several times offered money for them. Our second mate, having business on board some of them, generally carried some with him. And he says the people are ready to jump overboard for them, into the boat, striving who shall get them first. Many I trust have left off outward profanity, as well officers as men, and some I humbly hope have gone farther. I never heard or read or saw such work before. Surely the day of the Lord is at hand. One of our brothers, a shoemaker, came over in a transport carrying upwards of 40 hands. He asked the captain, who had no fear of God before his eyes, if he might pray with them. He left the cabin and gave him liberty. He (our brother) told the boatswain and called them together. He prayed and intended to conclude, but they stood still as if wanting something to be said to them. He then exhorted them to repentance, told them the misery of dying without Christ, and the happiness of a Christian here and hereafter. They eat the Word, and some of them are under strong convictions he says. The Lord end it in a sound conversion. He has been on board most of the men-of-war and the condescension of the officers is amazing. They are desirous to be taught by anybody, as are the men in general. O what is the Lord doing! Our people seem very earnest at present.

Address: "For the Reverend Mr. C[harles] Wesley."

Endorsement: by CW, "Christ in the Flesh / March 2, 1762."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/501/145.¹¹

⁹I.e., JW, *A Word in Season; or, Advice to a Soldier* (1743).

¹⁰I.e., CW, *A Sermon Preached on April 4, 1742 before the University of Oxford* (London: Strahan, 1742).

¹¹For a digital copy and "as-is" transcription, see:
<https://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/services/digitisation-services/projects/rapture-and-reason/>

From an Unidentified Correspondent

[Bristol]
[c. March 20, 1762]

A Brief Account of the Conversion and Death of Joanna Mussel

About the year 1742, Mr. Charles Wesley preached in Mr. Moon's tanyard near St. Phillip's plain upon the parable of the prodigal son, "I will arise and go to my father,"¹ and under which sermon she was deeply convinced of her lost state and felt the need of a saviour. Under deep convictions she laboured more than six months and was often heard to say, "Oh I have a precious immortal soul, and know not whether it will be saved or lost."

Mr. John Wesley about this time preached in the Malt house on Temple Back on these words, "Be not afraid it is I."² Her sorrows rather increased during the sermon, but after, she came home and threw herself on the bed as one bereaved of all comfort, she continued pouring out her broken complaints to the Lord, when on a sudden, a profound silence seared her spirit, and she saw as it were a bright cloud presented before her, and in the midst of the cloud the form of a man with his hands and eyes lifted up to heaven, and it was revealed to her that it was Jesus making intercession for her. At this her burden was much lessened but not entirely taken away. The next day she related this to one of her sisters, doubting what would be the meaning of this impression, who advised her to go on and the Lord would do for her greater things than these.

About three days after this as she was walking in the street crying and praying (for prayer was now her constant exercise) she heard a voice saying, "Daughter be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee."³ Immediately her soul was set at liberty, and forgetting the business she was going to do, returned home praising and glorifying God and calling on all that came near her to join in that work. Nay, [she] could scarcely refrain from telling the birds that flew, what God had done for her soul, that they might also warble out his praises.

Thus she went on for many months admonishing everyone she conversed with to turn, repent and live. And her labour was not in vain for a young man in the same house, but not of her family, was taken sick and it proved unto death, whom she attended. He was very ignorant and hardened at first, but God wrought [so] wonderfully with her exhortations and prayers that he was soon deeply convinced of sin and in less than a week found pardon, and soon after died triumphantly.

Her gifts and knowledge of the Scripture increased and her life seemed harmony and love; but not suspecting an evil heart within ready to join with Satan on all occasions; [she] was not sufficiently watchful and humble. Satan whispered to her how highly favoured she was of God who had made such an alteration on her, showing the gifts she was endowed with, and what good she had already done, etc. This bait she too readily swallowed and by ascribing that honour to herself which belongs to God only, fell into great darkness, and all her gifts with her memory and health was taken away from her. Satan, now continually accusing her of infidelity and bringing texts of Scripture to increase her condemnation, made her conclude she was lost to all eternity and that all hope of salvation was vain. Satan not only abused her with many things, but stirred up her husband and near friends sorely to persecute and threaten her, during which she constantly attended the word morning and evening. Though [she] found but little encouragement, she would often say when returning home from the [New] Room hearing the birds sing, "See how these warble out their Maker's praises; but I hang my head like a bullrush. Oh that it was with

¹His sermon on Luke 15:11–32.

²John 6:20; likely one of JW's sermons while in Bristol Sept. 15–25, 1742; his texts are not listed in his *Journal*.

³Cf. Matt. 9:2.

me as in the months that are past.”

Thus it continued till the year 1745, when Mr. John Wesley came to Bristol. She conversed with him about her deplorable state, who talked to her closely and comfortably, after which the darkness a little dissipated and she cried out with great earnestness, “Rejoice not over me O mine enemy, though I am fallen, I shall rise again.” And taking courage, she pursued this glimmering light. And soon the Lord returned to her saying, “I will heal thy backsliding and love thee freely, I will be thy God, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee, nothing shall be able to pluck thee out of my hand. From that time she held her confidence in God, though often in much weakness and heaviness, being led through many cross providences, particularly the death of her husband in 1746,⁴ which laid her open to much adversity, especially as her bodily health or memory never returned to her again to that degree which she before enjoyed.

The beginning of December last it pleased God to afflict her with a lingering illness attended with violent pains of body. Those pains were often so great that human nature sunk under them and life could scarcely be perceived in her. And Satan, her potent enemy, watched all occasions to inject hard thoughts of God telling her if God loved her he would mitigate her pain, and endeavoured to persuade her that she was deceived and her hope was only that of a hypocrite, and her past experience a delusion, etc. She struggled with those temptations and kept close to God in prayer, often in these words, “Lord [grant] more faith and patience, now is the time. Satan is nigh, look upon thy feeble dust. Save me or I shall rebel against thee. Make me more than conqueror through the blood of the Lamb.” And her gracious God, who knows how to succour those that are tempted, came seasonably to her relief applying those promises, “My grace is sufficient for thee.”⁵ “Fear not only believe.”⁶ “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee,”⁷ and many other parts of Scripture; which so strengthened her confidence, and refreshed her soul, that she often forgot her pain of body.

Mr. Charles Wesley administered the sacrament the fifteenth of February under which means she was much refreshed and strengthened. The conviction of the necessity of being fully renewed after the image of God took deeper root in her heart than ever, and was her constant petition, for the sin she was most addicted to was a quick, impatient spirit leading to anger. This in time past did very much trouble her and too often got power over her which has given her many hours of sorrow and often [she] would complain, “Lord shall I perish at the hands of Saul.”⁸ This sin she now particularly watched and prayed against, and not without an expectation of deliverance; for being asked if she expected full redemption from this and all sin, she answered, “I firmly believe it as though I now enjoy it, for the sin that murdered God shall die, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it and he cannot lie.”

About a week before her death, she felt this quickness taken away, for which mercy she continually thanked God, and was enabled more cheerfully to give herself up to do and suffer the whole will of God.

Sunday the 28th, February. The pangs of death approached and violent pains attended, and about ten o’clock in the evening, her pains being exquisite, Satan came upon her with great violence. She struggled for some time and then broke out in this complaint, “My agonies must end in death, Lord Jesus pity my distress.” He soon fled from her, and about twelve o’clock her pains abated also and came no more on her, by which means she was enabled to spend her time in silent communion with God.

The next day, as she lay in this composed frame, these words came so loud that she could scarcely be persuaded but what the person who attended her must hear them, “Thy life is hid with Christ

⁴William Mussel was buried June 10, 1747, at St. Philip & St. Jacob, in Bristol.

⁵2 Cor. 7:9.

⁶Mark 5:36.

⁷Heb. 13:5.

⁸Cf. 1 Sam. 27:1.

in God.”⁹ Wednesday morning, early, the third of March, she called for her two children,¹⁰ and after joining in prayer, her son asked her, “How is it now between God and your soul?” She answered with a faltering tongue, “Beautiful, my Jesus supports me wonderfully, I have no doubt.” He asked if Satan troubled her, she answered, “No, he makes attempts but cannot hurt me.” She then took them both by the hand and gave them their last charge, prayed for them and commended them to the grace of God, and then added “Glorious Saviour of my soul, I lift it up to thee.” Her speech failing, [she] could proceed no farther. She continued in prayer and praise (though her words could not be understood) till near five o’clock in the evening, when she calmly breathed out her soul into the bosom of her Redeemer.¹¹

Endorsement: by CW, “Joanna Mussell’s Death 1762.”

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/501/112.¹²

⁹Col. 3:3.

¹⁰Mary Mussel (b. 1725), daughter of William and Joanna, married John Wilson in 1745.

¹¹Joanna Mussel was buried March 7, 1762 at St. Philip & St. Jacob, in Bristol.

¹²For a digital copy and “as-is” transcription, see:

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

From Thomas Haynes¹

[Wick, Gloucestershire]
[c. April 1762]

Upon Mr. Haynes's offer to Mr. [Richard] Giles for receiving one of his daughters for a little time at Wick,² he brought over his eldest (Polly, near 14 years old³) on Monday, 22 February. But Mr. Giles intimating it had been whispered by the witch in the ear of the younger (called Doppy, between 8 and 9 years of age⁴) that if they were parted for two nights the eldest would be in danger of her life, and that Polly cried and said the witch had whispered her also that Doppy had not told lies. So then it was consented for Doppy likewise to come over; and next day, Tuesday, she was brought.

It was said the witch had given them notice they should be quiet for a fortnight, and so they continued. At the ending of the fortnight, Monday night, Mr. Haynes being absent on a journey to London, the maid-servant, who was with them in their room and warming their bed, observed them to whisper much; and Polly said, "Oh Doppy, tomorrow the fortnight is out!" The other answered, "Ah sister, so it is." They went to bed and slept well all night. Tuesday morning the maid rose and left them, as she thought fast asleep; and about half an hour after, being in a parlour below near the foot of the stairs, she heard them trampling in the passage by their chamber door. At the same time Mr. Haynes Jr.⁵ heard one or both of them come out of the room. And one Mrs. Berrow, lying in an upper chamber close to the head of the stairs, heard them treading near to her door. Immediately, within a minute's space, the eldest came down to the maid as much dressed as she used to come to her breakfast, with her stays full laced, etc. and asked if she had taken away her sister Doppy, for she had missed her when she waked. They both ran to seek for hers. And not finding her in her own chamber they went to an upper room next to that where Mrs. Berrow lay, and found her under a bed, naked to her shift. The maid asking how she came there, she said the old woman, meaning the witch, carried her thither. And being further asked why she did not wake her sister, she answered, she stopped her mouth with the sheet. Presently after Mrs. Haynes asking why she did not cry out,⁶ she said the witch stopped her mouth with her dirty hand, and that her hand was very sweaty and clammy. But soon after, speaking of it, said she did not wake till she was carried to the stairs. And being asked in what manner she was carried, she described it as though the old woman lifted her under both arms. Being then told it was impossible she could stop her mouth with her hands [while] carrying her in that manner, she replied, "No! it was not with her hands; my mouth was against her stomach." Likewise saying the witch had ragged stockings, it was asked, how could she see them. She said she stooped down and peeped at them. But being objected how could that be as she was

¹Thomas Haynes (1698–76) was lord of the manor for Wick and Abson, and a JP. He was referred to as "our dear friend Justice Hains of Wick" by John Cennick in a letter to JW, July 7, 1740, published in *Collection* (1797): 30–31.

²The daughters of Richard and Anne (Elmes) Giles—married in Bristol in 1743—began to exhibit odd behaviour in late Nov. 1761, gaining public notoriety (see JW, *Journal*, Mar. 27, 1762, *Works*, 21:352). A detailed account of their behaviour, derived from Henry Durbin, appeared in 1800: *A Narrative of Some Extraordinary Things that happened to Mr. Richard Giles's Children, at the Lamb, without Lawford's-Gate, Bristol: supposed to be the effect of Witchcraft* (Bristol: Hazard & Brown). CW's rejection of any diabolical agency in the behaviour (in some contrast to JW!) is evidenced by his retaining this letter.

³Mary Giles, bap. Apr. 19, 1748.

⁴Dorothy Giles, bap. June 19, 1752.

⁵Thomas Haynes Jr. (1739–1814), of Wick.

⁶Thomas Haynes married Sarah Clarke (1702–88) in 1734, in Oxford.

carried in the manner described, she afterwards said she saw them as the witch lay on her under the bed. Thus she varied much in giving account of this matter; and was found to be warm, as though she had but just come out of her bed. Presently after they had in their room fits of striving, which soon passed over, and Dobby being dressed they both came downstairs. Their agitations were repeated in the parlour—some times together, at other times by turns—crying out the witch did pull them by the legs and by their necks. And they often slid from their chairs upon their knees, and so fell to the ground. Dobby took her breakfast well. Her sister flung the tea about—sometimes by jogs of her elbow, at other times by jolting her head down. And thus it continued till near eleven o'clock. But from first to last, there was no appearance of any preternatural distortion, strain, or marvellous bodily motion or gesture, but all within their own power to act. Neither were any marks impressed of bites, scratchings, or pinches on any part of their body. And Mrs. Haynes thereupon, persuaded in her mind the whole was deception, but not letting the children then know she thought so, ordered that none should hold them, telling the people if they were left to themselves she might possibly see the witch come to them, And this expedient put an end to the affair for that day. They eat their dinner very hearty, and were merry the afternoon, and all night slept sound. Mrs. Berrow and the maid both lay with them that night. Next morning early, the maid being up, Mrs. Haynes went into the room and inquired how they were. Mrs. Berrow answered Miss Dobby had been down to the foot of the bed three or four times, and that the eldest said the witch had struck her twice on the sides of her head. Whereupon Mrs. Haynes went towards Polly and talked with some severity to her, telling her she should not be suffered to be acting more of her tricks here, and gave her to understand it was well known she had conveyed her sister up stairs the day before. From that instant Polly rose and came downstairs, And for all the time they stayed at Wick afterwards, which was three weeks and some days, they continued well, being most tenderly used, and lived in a high degree of cheerfulness; the family avoiding all discourse in their presence concerning witchcraft or any matters relating thereto.

Endorsement: by CW, “Mr. Haynes / witches 1762.”

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/501/85.⁷

⁷For a digital copy and “as-is” transcription, see:
<https://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/services/digitisation-services/projects/rapture-and-reason/>

From Dr. John Jones

[London]
April 10, 1762

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I really did not know that your coming to town depended upon my being in the meantime at Bristol.¹ Otherwise I should not have done what now cannot be undone. I think Peter Jaco will be more useful than I can be to the people. I hear T[homas] M[axfield] will come to Bristol whether you come to London or no. I am fully persuaded your not coming to London will be a great loss to the people. I shall call upon brother [John] Downes sometime today. I am well nigh quite worn out.

John Maddern² has preached twice for Mr. Outen.

Sister Hendrick has finished her course with joy.³ She complained of a sore throat last week, but no one apprehended any danger till Sunday morning. Between 5:00 and 6:00 in the afternoon she fell asleep. In the forenoon her son asked her if she was happy. She replied, "I am happy." About 10 minutes before she died she said to her son, smiling, "Let me feel thy face"; and then added, "Farewell." Then she said, "Now Lord, I shall be with thee forever," and died singing "Hallelujah." She has left but few like her behind her. I hear her death has a good deal affected her son.

It is not a easy matter to prevent evil. I hope the Lord, who alone is able to do it, will taken the matter into his own hands.

One Mr. Piele, a very humble exemplary young man, and who is well qualified for it, is desirous of getting a clerk's place in the Excise Office. Mr. Nugent could very easily procure it for him. Now Mr. [Henry] Durbin and his brother, by writing a letter to Mr. Nugent, could assist one who, I am fully persuaded, would never give them occasion to repent on account for having recommended him. I shall take it as a great favour if you will speak to Mr. Durbin and desire him to do all he can. The opportunity of doing good will soon be over.

Please to remember me to all my friends. I am, with respects to Mrs. [Sarah] Wesley and the little ones, reverend and dear sir,

Your affectionate brother,

J. Jones

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

Endorsement: by CW, "April 10 1762 Jones / s[ister] Hardwick's blessed death."

Source: holograph; MARC, DDP 2/27.

¹CW's letter making this point is not known to survive.

²John Maddern (d. 1770) became an exhorter in 1746, and a travelling preacher from 1747. In 1751 he married Mary Francis, mistress of the girls' school at Kingswood, and served as English master at Kingswood 1756–57. The couple then moved to London, where John became a respected local preacher. See Atmore, *Memorial*, 247; and Vickers, *Dictionary*, 220.

³Elizabeth Hendrick was buried Mar. 1, 1762, in London.

From the Rev. John Fletcher

Madeley
May 16, 1762

My Dear Sir,

I have received your letter and the sad news of Suky's death.¹ What can I say to you about it? You know too well the dangerous world from which the Lord has recalled her to long envy her that early joy into which he has taken her. We are still in the vale of tears and misery, and God has wiped away every tear from her eyes. Let us wipe away ours as best we may and hasten to follow in her footsteps. I hope that the weariness and the sadness will not altogether beat down your wife. Greet her from me and tell her that I would with my heart bear a part of her burden. What am I saying, a part, the Lord Jesus is ready to bear all. Let us go to him, worn down by the weight of our worldly and spiritual afflictions, and we will find the rest which he has so dearly bought for us. Let us not forget to mingle our deeds of grace with our sighs; the one will be taken by the Lord, and the other will be left. He has taken one, and two are left.² May his name be blessed, his mercy triumphs again over his justice. When you come you will tell me the particulars of her illness.

I will go before you to Ludlow when you come. If the time is of no matter to you, the day which suits me best will be a Monday and the Tuesday we could come to sleep at Madeley. Whitsun week I shall be occupied by the festivities. Be at Ludlow, if you are able, Monday the 7th of June and (as you advise) I will meet you there at midday, God willing.

Our troubles are increased since my last. A young man, having enforced the act for the suppression of oaths against one of the officers of the parish, has aroused all the rest of the half-gentlemen to throw him out of the parish. I am opposed to it, and so that I may succeed I have engaged the young man. By the grace of God I have conducted myself in a manner which has not given them any hold over me in this affair, and despite all their cabals I have defused it. What has most encouraged them is the conduct of the magistrate, who at first favoured me but who has turned himself against me with particular malice, to the extent of threatening to throw me into prison with all my flock of the rock church.³ The lord of the manor still says that he will make me pull my gown over my ears. My greatest opponent after him is a clergyman who lives in Madeley wood. But up to now the Lord has been on my side. The little difficulties are nothing to me—but I fear I am enduring them rather as a philosopher than a Christian. We were to have been mobbed with a drum last Tuesday at the rock church, but the captain, a papist, behaved himself so badly that the rest are ashamed and hold their peace for the present. Cry to heaven for me for wisdom, resolve, and charity.

If your book appears in London when you are there, you will be best placed to refute the objections that can be made there.⁴ A father loves to accompany his son when he goes into the world for the first time.

It is not surprising that the new witnesses who are sincere have not yet given as many proofs of their perfection as the ancients. A young tree cannot have produced as much fruit as an old one. Your preface is just as I would want, it pacifies and reconciles.⁵ St. Paul and St. James extricate you from the difficulty most excellently. I could not change any of it but for the worse.

Farewell. The Lord give you resolve and power, and a happy journey.

¹Susanna, the fifth child of CW and Sarah, was buried on April 13, 1762. CW's letter informing of this death is not known to survive.

²I.e., Charles Jr. and Sarah Jr. remain.

³A cottage meeting held in the home of Mary Matthews, which was built onto a rock.

⁴CW was preparing to publish his two-volume set of *Scripture Hymns* (1762).

⁵*Scripture Hymns* (1762), 1:ii.

Address: “To / Mrs Vigor / St. James’s Square / Bristol.”

Endorsement: by CW, “Fletcher May 16. 1762.”

Source: holograph (in French); MARC, MA 1977/495/16.⁶

⁶A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher’s original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 140–42. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith’s English translation (pp. 142–43). See also the earlier (and looser) translation in Fletcher, *Posthumous* (1791), 113–14.

Richard Baldwyn to Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley

Ludlow
May 18, 1762

Honoured Aunt,

My mamma returns you many thanks for your kind letter,¹ which she would have answered herself but that she's very indifferent with the fashionable cold. All our household are troubled with it, but she has a cough that has stuck by her a considerable time. She is concerned for your loss,² but rejoices and the health and welfare of my cousins Charles and Sally. We are glad to hear aunt Beck is with you and should have been glad she had done us that favour. I have enclosed a few franks, that there may be no pretence of not being favoured with a line. My brother and sister³ join me in duty to my uncle [CW], yourself, and aunt Beck, our love to my cousins, with pappa and mamma's to each, concludes this from, honoured aunt,

Your dutiful nephew,

Richard Baldwyn

Miss Botevyle desires her service to all.

[added on flyleaf by Mary] Tell Beck and sister Wesley that I am tolerable. Thank both for their letter between them. Glad to hear that sister Waller, brother, and children are well.⁴

Address: "To / Mrs Wesley in Charles / Street near / Stokes Croft / Bristol." Free H Bridgeman

Postmark: "Ludlow."

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

¹This letter is not known to survive.

²The death of CW and SGW's youngest child, Susanna.

³Capt. Edward and Mary (Gwynne) Baldwin had three surviving children at this point, Richard (b. 1748), Edward (b. 1752), and Mary (b. 1753).

⁴James and Elizabeth (Gwynne) Waller, and their children.

From an Unidentified Correspondent

c. June 6, 1762

The Dying Words of the Reverend Mr. [Thomas] Jones, June 5, 1762¹

Looking at his hands, he said, “He will soon take away these filthy garments and give me changed of raiment. Blessed be the Lord for that degree of faith he hath given me. Though it hath operated in so weak a manner, yet I have many blessed and comfortable marks in my soul of his love to me! An eternal life of glory, for a life of misery! For me to live is Christ, to die is gain! Lord give me an easy dismissal into a happy eternity! I shall have a Sabbath of Trinity² before I thought of it to worship a Triune God!”

He frequently cried out, “Lord feed thy sheep. Lord feed thy sheep.” “What an unfelt, what an unthought of corruption is here, both in soul and body!” “Secure a soul thou hast died to save!” Then after a pause, he cried, “He will! He will! I have part here, but I shall have all soon! The silver cords of life are broken and man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets. Lord guide me home in safety, and lead me through the shadow of death. This mortal shall soon put on immortality!”

“Though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold and not another. Come Lord Jesus, come quickly and give me my dismissal. Before this time tomorrow, it may be I shall be where all sorrow shall be done away! I shall be purely refined in this furnace, even as gold.”

Looking at Mrs. Jones he said, “Don’t be surprised at any alterations you may see in me, for death makes strange alterations. When the Lord is pleased to give me my dismissal, rejoice over my corpse and praise God for what we have suffered together here, and what we shall enjoy together hereafter. Who would not change misery for happiness? Hasten, hasten, dear Lord! I have had a glorious view of the love of Christ to my soul this morning! I am of the church of the first born, who shall stand on Mount Sion. One chosen from among my brethren. A sinner saved! A sinner saved! Now let thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation! Now Lord I can lay me down in peace and safely take my rest. A covenant of mercy; free grace in the Lord Jesus! My heart and my flesh faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever! It is not dying out of the world, but dying in the world. To part with all one’s toys and trifles, and that not with[out] sickness or pain.”

Upon looking on those who stood by he said, “Be ye also ready. I am highly favoured of the Lord, who have borne so little of the burden and heat of the day. But I believe I am taken away from great evils that shall come in the Church of Christ. They that love sin are preparing for misery; they that love holiness, for heaven. ‘I am the resurrection and the life,’ saith the Lord. ‘He that believeth on me, though he were dead yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth on me, shall never die.’”

Endorsement: by CW, “June 5 1762 / Mr Jones dying” and “Dying Mr Jones.”

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/501/96.³

¹Rev. Thomas Jones (1729–62), vicar of St. Saviour’s, Southwark was a leading Evangelical clergyman in the Church of England. He died the morning of June 6, 1762; so this record of his last words was taken starting the day before. See *DEB*, 625.

²A note is added here: “He died on Trinity Sunday at 2:00 in the morning.”

³For 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

Madeley
June 8, 1762

I counted on having brought you to Madeley today, but you have deprived me of my hopes by your last letter.¹ You have promised me a visit, and when I am disposed to receive it you turn it down. I am tempted to consider that your offers are tests, and that you only speak of coming to see me to discover whether the abject fear of which you accused me last summer still rules my heart. Be that as it may, if you go to London with all your family you have a reason not to come to Madeley immediately. But remember that I in no way release you from your promise and that I await its fulfilment as soon as providence opens the way for you to do so.

In porta navigas,² with your brother's opinions in your pocket, with which I agree.³ At Wednesbury several have professed perfection and have fallen, lacking such advice. Brother Mather (one of the perfects) is almost ashamed to preach perfection and his wife (a perfect) has not honoured her profession.⁴ No more have many others.

As far as concerns myself, I have trials of all kinds. First, spiritual. My heart is hard. I have none of that contrition which trembles, that gentle humble distress which I believe essential to Christianity. Sometimes I hope that the Lord will break my heart through suffering. At other times I believe the matter so difficult that my hopes vanish. I am sure that I am not born of God I am dead among the dead.

Second, these inward troubles are accompanied by domestic difficulties., I have found in Sarah Wood a modest and faithful housekeeper, but haughty and suspicious, taking offence at everything and fitted to make me see the justice of the advice of Kempis, "*bonas mulieres Deo commenda*."⁵ My family consists of five people: a valet, a servant, a housekeeper, a septuagenarian companion, and myself. You will think me a little mad to have so many dependents, but the circumstances which explain my extravagance are too lengthy for a letter.

Third, the opposition people make to my ministry grows. A young clergyman who lives in Madeley wood,⁶ where he has much influence, has openly declared war on me by affixing to the door of the church a paper in which he accuses me of rebellion, of schism, and of being a disturber of the public peace. He puts himself at the head of the gentlemen of the parish (as they call themselves) and supported by the squire, and the recorder of Wenlock (that magistrate who seemed to favour me a few months ago). He wants to enforce the Conventicle Act.⁷ Three weeks ago the widow who lives in the rock church [Mary Matthews], and a young man who read and prayed one day that I was not able to be at the meeting were arrested. I appeared before the magistrate with them. The young clergyman and his band were present. They called me Jesuit, etc. And the magistrate, to frighten me, told me that he would enforce the act even if it were in my house that we assembled. I pleaded my cause as well as I could, but seeing that

¹This letter is not known to survive.

²"You sail into port."

³JW had just published *Cautions and Directions Given to the Greatest Professors in the Methodist Societies* (1762); see *Works*, 13:83–91.

⁴Alexander Mather (1733–1800) married Mary Duncan in Feb. 1753. He was converted under JW's preaching in 1754 and became a class leader at the Foundery. In 1757 he was accepted as a traveling preacher (the first one married at that time) and emerged as one of JW's most trusted Assistants.

⁵Kempis, ch. 8; "Commend good women/wives to God."

⁶Rev. William Hinton (b. 1768), ordained deacon in 1760 but not yet serving a regular living.

⁷See JF to JW, Nov. 22, 1762.

he would listen to no reason I told him to do with us as he wanted. And I assured him that we were prepared to bear the severity of the law if it applied to us. In his rage he went next day to the [court] of Wenlock, of which he is the director, and proposed to grant a warrant to apprehend me. But the other justices of the peace declared that the matter was not within their jurisdiction and fell under the spiritual court. He was obliged to champ his bit all alone. Mr. [Martin] Madan, whom I consulted on the facts, tells me that the Conventicle Act can be put into force against the mistress of the rock church and the young man who prayed that night I was absent; and against 20 or 30 people who met together.

The two churchwardens talk of bringing me before the spiritual court—for meeting in houses, etc. And what is worse, three false witnesses offer to prove by oath that I am a liar, etc. And some of my followers, as they call them, have been behaving in such a way that the world will triumph.

I weary you by this detail of my difficulties, and I end it in wishing you a good journey, and every success as regards the publication of your hymns. They well deserve it. May divine grace accompany you and all the family, to whom I pray you to give my tender love. I approve Mrs. Wesley's journey. London and the absence will contribute to alleviate her sorrow or to dissipate it. Oh do not forget me in your prayers.

In the midst of these difficulties I have reason to bless the Lord that my heart is not troubled. But alas, if a worldly sorrow does not rend it, it is perhaps by the same reason that a sorrow according to God can make no impression on me.

A month ago Mr. Hinton (the fiery parson) assembled the parishioners to instigate them to chase my valet from the parish. After much argument he was obliged to desist.

Address: "To / Mrs. Vigor / St. James's Square / Bristol."

Endorsement: by CW, "June 8. 1762 / Fletcher."

Source: holograph (in French); MARC, MA 1977/495/17.⁸

⁸A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher's original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 144–46. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith's English translation (pp. 146–48).

From Mary (Francis) Maddern¹

Bristol
June 29, 1762

Reverend Sir,

At your request, I am going to give you a few particulars of God dealings with me, a poor unworthy creature.

Almost from my earliest infancy, he seemed to drag me to himself, and I had strong desires at times. When I was eight years old, I surely had a taste of the love of God though I knew not what it was, but felt such love to Jesus Christ that I longed to be with him. But I soon lost it and at times was uneasy where I should go if I was to die. At twelve years old that uneasiness greatly increased through a very awful dream that I had. I attended upon the means of grace but could find no comfort.

Sometime after, Mr. [George] Whitefield came to London. I attended constantly on his preaching in the churches and often found great sweetness, but was not awakened to any sense of unbelief. In this way I went on till you and [your] brother's first preaching in the churches. I heard Mr. [John] Wesley several times but did not much like him. At that time there was a report spread that both you and him had dr[iven] many to despair through your pernicious doctrine. My parents, on this, laid their commands on me not to hear you any more, and I believe I promised to obey them. But my God, who knew best by what way to work on me, brought me to Cread church to hear,² as I thought, a preparation sermon preached by the minister of the church. He read prayers. After he had done, you came up in the pulpit. I was locked in a seat or otherwise should have gone out of the church. But I thought; however, I would not listen to anything you said. But when God's will works, who shall hinder? I well remember your text was: "Ye serpents, ye the generation of vipers, how shall you escape the damnation of hell?" The Lord was pleased to send every word home to my heart and I went away crying out, "What shall I do to be saved?"

I then felt the burden of sin indeed intolerable. But God soon showed me a saviour; though it was several months in deep distress of soul before I could lay hold on him by faith. And often times, like one without hope, I attended constantly upon the preaching; but saw myself worse and worse, and farther and farther, as I thought, from God. And never more so than the night when God was pleased to speak peace to my troubled soul in your prayer at Mr. Axel's at the Seven Dials. (You, sir, know how long that is since.) Oh! what [an] unfaithful wretch have I been to the grace of God; otherways how much more of his presence might I have enjoyed. My heart then seemed filled with peace and joy in believing and I could do nothing but tell of his goodness to poor sinners.

But alas, I soon lost it by listening to the temptations of the devil, who preached stillness to me before I ever heard it preached by any human creature. It was some time before I saw my loss, inbred sin, which had been covered for a season, again revived. I reasoned with the enemy till I was like one in despair, thinking there was no mercy for me as I had fell from the pardoning love of God. And I believe I was six months or more in this way before I mentioned it to any one, though I attended upon the word preached as often as I could.

As my friends was utterly against my going, I could not have the opportunity that many had. I happened one day to meet with your brother, he advised me to meet a band, which I did for some time before I found any relief from that deep distress of soul.

But that God who is gracious to all that call upon him, as I was in private prayer, returned again unto my soul; and not only gave me back my former peace and love, but much more abundantly when those words were applied to my heart, "Have I not loved and sealed thee for my own?" I could then truly

¹Thomas Maddern and his wife Mary had come to Bristol, to care for the society there while CW and SGW went to London; see John Jones to CW, Apr. 10, 1762.

²I.e., St. Katherine Cree church; The date would be Apr. 1, 1739; CW was actually preaching the second half of his sermon on 1 John 3:14, which quotes near the beginning the text from Matt. 23:33.

say I lived to God alone, and was in all things perfectly resigned to his will; finding no evil of any kind in my heart, nor any inclination to sin of any kind for near four years. My whole soul was dedicated to him and every desire of my heart was to glorify his holy name.

I must own [that] I thought myself in the full sense born again of God, and never thought of seeing evil more. But his thoughts are not as our thoughts. He gave me to taste of the good land. But there was a larger measure of sufferings for me before I am made an inhabitant of that; though it is what I both look and long for; and I believe I shall be made a living witness of that great truth, as it is his free grace, for I have nothing in me to merit it. But I daily experience so much of his tender care and love towards me, unworthy as I am, that I cannot doubt. O sir, pray for me. My trying hour is at hand. Oh may his strength be made perfect in my weakness. And may the Lord strengthen you in body and soul and teach you wisdom secretly, is the prayer of

Your unfeared friend and servan[t],

Mary Maddern

If you please, with my love, to inform Mrs. [Sarah] Wesley that I have just been to see Miss [Sarah Jr.], and she is exceedingly well and very cheerful. All the family is also well and desire their duty. Mrs. [Elizabeth] Vigor and Miss Staffords³ desire their love and are glad to hear you got safe to London.

I must beg you, sir, the incorrectness of this as I am obliged to write surrounded with children.

Address: “To / The Revd Mr Wesley.”

Endorsement: by CW, “May [sic.] 29, 1762 / Maddern / undeceived.”

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/501/105.⁴

³Elizabeth (Stafford) Vigor’s unmarried sisters.

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

Madeley
July 19, 1762

Your letter, my dear sir, is come several days too late to prevent me from making the false move of presenting the papist in question.¹ I was obliged to go to Ludlow three weeks ago, to the bishop's visitation, and I believed the occasion favourable to my plan. The churchwardens, when we were there, refused to second me. And the court so far has not given any attention to my presentation. Thus I have gained some experience, although at my own expense. The sermon did not touch any of the cord with which I was whipped at the preceding visitation. I had the boldness to go to dinner with the bishop, and the satisfaction of seeing Mrs. Baldwyn,² who was in excellent health as were her family. She charged me to assure you of her tender greetings.

Many of my parishioners are disconcerted that I have brought back my gown from Ludlow.³ As far as the magistrate is concerned, who was as good a legal expert as judge Foster,⁴ because for two years he exercised the office of judge in this circuit, he contents himself at present with menaces. He proposed in court to have me arrested, but the other magistrates told him that the case was not in their province at all. He was wise enough to recall his warrant. I met him the other day and, after calling me Jesuit, etc., and menacing me with his cane, he assured me anew that he would suppress my assemblies etc. How ridiculous is an impotent rage!

I have tried to form a society in the parish, and notwithstanding the hindrance of several difficulties and plenty of scandal I hope to get there after several months, by the grace of God. I preach, I exhort, etc. But until now the net is thrown on the left side of the boat.⁵ Come Lord Jesus, and give me yourself in divine communion!

I have for several months been tormented by an unbearable heaviness. I could sleep day and night. And the hours which I should employ with Christ on the mountain I spend like Peter in the garden. My soul is empty of the power of religion, or rather I see more clearly than ever that it has never been so filled. What can be done in such a case? If faith is a communication of this power, participation in new life, and the opening up of the spiritual paths and of the soul, it is as ridiculous for me to try to believe as to try to resuscitate a corpse. If it consists in embracing the promises of the gospel and in believing against all hope, I could often believe in this way. But this faith does not give me any solid satisfaction. It does not procure for me communion with God. And I am often ready to curse it as a device of Satan to prevent me from gaining true faith. Have you read *Theron and Aspasio*, 16th dialogue?⁶ What do you say of that sort of assurance? Is it possible to believe evangelically, without having had a particular manifestation of the Spirit of Christ? Without sensing the forces of the world to come? Without having that which you describe in your hymns on "The Marks of Faith"?⁷ I am uncertain on this article and my preaching reflects it. If he who believes is entered into rest, the faith Mssrs. [Edward] Stillingfleet,

¹This letter is not known to survive.

²Mary (Gwynne) Baldwyn.

³That is, that he was not defrocked.

⁴See SGW to CW, Mar. 10, 1749; may be Sir Michael Foster, recorder of Bristol 1735–63.

⁵See John 21:6.

⁶James Hervey, *Theron and Aspasio*, 2 vols. (Dublin: Robert Main, 1755).

⁷See the set of five hymns thus titled in *HSP* (1749), 2:220–28.

[James] Hervey,⁸ Haweis,⁹ etc., etc., preach is not the true faith. The soul cannot be at rest without a full assurance and without communion with God, Sometimes I am ready to say with Count Zinzendorf, “Imitate Thomas, believe nothing unless you have at first felt it.” At other times it seems to me that believing and seeing and feeling are the way. After all if St. Paul truly defines faith in Heb. 12:1, “You feel thy sins forgiven or be damned” is right enough.

I have not received your books. I congratulate you on having arrived in London without accident. May the Lord strengthen you in body and in soul. May he fill you with wisdom and with patience. You have great need of it to pull up the tares without uprooting the wheat. I approve your plan to examine the state of things yourself before setting your hand to it. May the Lord bless the fruits of your body and those of your spirit. May the little family and the books appear in the world under the distinguished protection of the most high.

Farewell

Pray for me and give me of ⟨...¹⁰⟩. I thank you for ⟨...¹¹⟩ accompanying ⟨...¹²⟩ I will be much obliged to you if you follow it - prove that your yes is yes, and your no no. Renew attending the little assembly at Paddington, and allow me to be there in Spirit.

Who has succeeded Mr. [Thomas] Jones; is it [Thomas] Maxfield or [Thomas] Haweis?

Address: “To / The Revd. Mr Charles Wesley / at Mr. Lloyd’s / in Devonshire Square / Bishops Gate Street / London.”

Postmark: “23/IY.”

Source: holograph (in French); MARC, MAW Fl, 36.5.¹³

⁸James Hervey (1714–58) had been part of the Oxford Methodists and a good friend of the Wesley brothers. In later years he had endorsed Calvinism, and emphasized the doctrine of the imputed righteousness of Christ, leading to a growing rift with JW in particular. See CW’s hymn on Hervey’s death in *Funeral Hymns* (1759), 61–63. Fletcher spelled “Harvey.”

⁹Rev. Thomas Haweis (1734–1820), ordained in 1757, was curate at St. Mary Magdalen’s church, Oxford. He was eventually removed from this role for his Methodist sympathies and became Martin Madan’s curate at the Lock Chapel, London.

¹⁰The bottom of page 3 is frayed, removing one line of text.

¹¹One word is illegible.

¹²About four words are illegible.

¹³A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher’s original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 148–50. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith’s English translation (pp. 150–52). See also the earlier (and looser) translation in Fletcher, *Posthumous* (1791), 114–16.

From the Rev. George Whitefield

Norwich
July 29, 1762

Hearing that you are yet in London, I drop you a few lines upon my arrival from Holland. Surely the cloud of divine providence pointed thither, and the glory of the Lord was my hereward. Deep impressions were made by the word preached at Rotterdam among the English. Sunday sevennight was a day much to be remembered. How did I lament the confusion of tongues! Could I have preached in Dutch, ministers and people would have heard most gladly. Friends accompanied me to the Hague, Gouda, Haarlem, Leyden, Amsterdam, etc. And ere long I hope death will be ready with his packet-boat to carry me to glory. Oh that it may find me itinerating! What say you to a sea voyage? I find the sea air very bracing.

Blessed be God, I have hopes now, if I must live, of taking another trip to America. At present I am going through Lincolnshire, Yorkshire, etc. At Yarmouth, Braintree, and this place we have been favoured with good seasons. But I assure you the house here is like the Carved Head—no furniture at all. Not a book, bed, or table in the prophet's room when I came. All was barren, and now whilst you and yours lie at ease in London, remember a poor pilgrim lying on a nasty, stinking, matting bed and continually disturbed and bit by fleas at Norwich. In heaven we shall have better fare. This is better than I deserve. Complain I do not, but I am sure such management hurts the cause. You may give a hint to your brother. A line remitted to the care of William Shent may find me perhaps at Leeds. I hope this will find you and yours panting after and filled with all the fulness of God. That this may be your happy lot is the earnest prayer of, my dear old friend,

Yours in our common Lord,

G. W.

P.S. I do not write to the noble Countess [of Huntingdon] because I expect to see her in Yorkshire. Brethren, pray for us.

Address: "To / The Revrd. Mr. Charles Wesly / at the Foundery near Moor- / fields / London."

Postmark: "31/IY," and "Norwich."

Endorsement: by CW, "G. Whitefield / in Holland July 29. 1762."

Source: holograph; Pitts Library (Emory), George Whitefield Letters (MSS 453), box 1, folder 9.

From John Walsh¹

London
August 11[–15], 1762

Sir,

The account you desired me to write, of my own experience and remarks on others requiring much haste, you will be sure to find it both irregular and inelegant as well as extremely short for such a subject. I can write nothing well unless I take time to compose, correct, and alter with such a degree of slowness and diffidence that an account of the Lord's dealings with me which I begun almost three years ago will probably not be finished in three or four more. But as in the present case you desire only truth and intelligence, I shall be content with making myself understood and thus hurry over the matter without any farther apology.

At the age of six years I was much given to swearing, drunkenness, and other sins. At seven the Lord strongly drew me by the cords of love and I delighted in his presence, abhorred sin, and thirsted after righteousness. I then suffered great persecution, especially from other boys. The Lord soon after hid his face and I forgot him a considerable time. He returned again convincing me not of actual but original sin. I knew his horrors a long while, sought his face, and was hailed by all or most about me. At ten I was justified, declared it, and prayed publicly. Great was my spiritual joy and so great my pride thereupon, that I would scarce acknowledge God my superior. [I] sinned against him by desire of the creature, which is yet my besetting sin and besetting temptation, made several vain attempts to gratify that sensual desire, and lost the knowledge of God.

I was alarmed soon after by a dream, sought him earnestly, was persecuted vehemently, and found his favour again; which I lost and found, loved and hated sin from time to time, till I was fourteen years old, when I was ashamed of all my past religion, went to sea, and inspite of innumerable visitations and providences, no weapon that was formed against me being ever able to prosper, I sinned against my God with a high hand. I counted my past experience foolishness and hated the remembrance thereof till I totally forgot it. I fell into such a state in the year 1747, as may be called indeed scepticism, but consisted more of atheism than either deism or Pythagoreanism; which were the only two systems I could ever adopt in those days beside atheism.

I then made a great mock of true religion, laughing at the glorious Trinity, challenging the God who died to save me, while arguing against his divinity. Once especially upon Consitution Hill [I called on God] to strike me dead with thunder and lightning if he were a God, and that being not done, I insisted on having gained my point with my antagonist.

But strange to tell I was yet favoured and visited night and day by the unknown God. Take the following instance which I copy verbatim from the description of a tour I made in Hampshire: "September 17, 1755. My companion stayed at Petersfield, while I visited Stonard Hill. This prospect entertained me above two hours and methought the solitude gave a keener enjoyment of this vision, the weather being the finest of the whole year, and "All things gilded by the clear sunshine:

Delightful solitude! Oh bright abode,
To think of Nature and of Nature's God!
Now sacred temples, altars, I despise;
And hail my God; and view the azure skies.
Then down to earth I turn my curious eyes,

¹John Walsh (fl. 1740–80) had an initial career in the navy. For years he suffered from a nervous disease, accompanied by religious doubts. He turned to JW for spiritual advice which gradually conquered his doubts and strengthened his faith. In gratitude, Walsh was largely responsible for reviving the Methodist cause at Bedford.

And still his footsteps all around me spy.
 No object touch me but his glory teach;
 No sounds are uttered but his Godhead preach.
 I'll in the chorus join my humble voice,
 Like the little buzzing flies rejoice.²

Thus from the scenes of unadulterated nature, my contemplation took wing to the great Architect: no reasonable soul arriving to take a proud offence at my lowly rhapsody:

While eager words their feeble aid impart,
 Mixed with the sighing language of the heart,
 God of all worlds! Thy glory to rehearse:
 Musing the vastness of the universe:
 How vast yon flaming sun! That glowing sky!
 How vast this earth! an what an atom I!"

Before the end of September 1755, my sister Leadbetter,³ whose turning Methodist about a year before made me wish her dead and think her mad, venturing to give me some kind advice, I proudly gainsaid, till her unaffected piety beginning to touch me, and God, being pleased to make her that instrument of my conversion, the strong chain of atheism began to loosen about me; so that I went with her to hear your brother whose words I thought incomprehensible but felt the sweet presence of my unknown God who guarded me then, as oft before, while I knew him not.

I was justified November 24, 1756. Before and after which, Mr. Swain often told me what difference of opinion subsisted among Christians.⁴ Wherefore I besought the Lord, both frequently and earnestly, to defend me from all opinions, be my only teacher, and keep me from all error: at which times he would dart these words into my mind "Come ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of."⁵

About the beginning of the year 1757, Mr. Swain surprised me with the first tidings of the strange doctrine of perfection in the flesh: wherefore I begged of the Lord to show me whether it was right or wrong; who, giving me no answer but continuing to bless me as usual, I was contented with seeking him alone as formerly and thought within myself of perfection, "Do you stand on one hand, while predestination keeps on the other, and I will go straight forward between the two to the God of my salvation." But the preaching of Thomas Walsh at last brought me over to the belief of perfection. I then sought it with extreme earnestness, counting my knowledge of God a small thing, because I had not found him out unto perfection. But generally when I prayed to be made perfect he would cause an idea of the room wherein I was justified to rise before me and a sweet repetition of these words to pass through me, "There he gave the blessing, and life for evermore." Yet would I not desist from seeking perfection. As to

²Walsh is apparently the author of this and the next stanza of verse; as he claims authorship of the hymn below.

³Mary Walsh (1733–1816) married Robert Leadbetter in June 1750. By Oct. 1758 she had been widowed, and became governess of the children of Nathaniel Gilbert, who had recently arrived in England from Antigua. She accompanied the family on their return to Antigua in April 1759, then returned with the children a few years later, to live with their uncle Francis Gilbert in Chester. On November 17, 1767 she married Francis Gilbert. See *WHS* 55 (2005): 16–18.

⁴Joseph Swain appears as a leader of bands for married men and in the select society in the Foundery Band Lists (1742–46).

⁵Isa. 2:22.

sanctification, a very great and astonishing degree of it was given me about six weeks before my justification. Perhaps there is no sin so strong as that which beset me; and yet in a single moment the mighty God, in answer to my request, so fully destroyed its power that for above three years I confidently believed it would subsist no more.

It seems needful in this place to break the thread of my narrative and insert a letter which I wrote to Mr. Berridge several years after, because that letter contains an account of experience which I had about this time. That gentleman, who had always protested against perfection, having sent me a letter in its behalf, I wrote this answer verbatim.

Walsh, John to Rev. John Berridge

Edgware
May 28, 1761

Dear Sir,

Seeing you give permission to write without reserve, and have never taken offence at the freedoms I use, my intention now is to set before you the chief observations I have made concerning such of the Methodists as call themselves perfect.⁶ I have had free conversation with eight of them and shall say something of each, I trust without partiality, when I have told you a little of my own experience therein.

About one half a year after my justification, I began to seek perfection with great desire; and expected it from time to time till I received “the gift” so called which I take for a kind of sealing or doubling the faith that preceded it. You may read in Mr. Wesley’s German travels of several at the Herrnhut receiving the same.⁷ But how are the mighty fallen! My great mistake about it was that after being so blessed I should sin no more because the propensity to sin would be taken away so as never to return. But surely the promises of God are still conditional, and he yet says to every saint of his, “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”⁸ I felt sin again in my heart at the end of twenty-seven hours and I spoke as freely thereof in band, as I did of the perfect gift. But the first person called perfect who heard me talk of sin being yet in my heart would have had me count it only temptation. I had often since that time felt the perfect love of God, I suppose more than 100 times, casting out all fear, and not seldom the whole propensity to sin. I believe also this to be the common experience of all real Christians; but have long suspected that many professors of justification had it not, or have surely lost it; and when the Lord manifests his love to any of these, it is no wonder they should mistake it for perfection. As to such whose experience resembles mine, I believe they are ashamed to retract their first declaration. Whether I am right or wrong in these thoughts, it seems to me certain that your preaching was not wrong at all in the year 1759. For the Lord owned it altogether; nor could I perceive any difference when you was at London except an increase of his talents. The good God increase them to you more and more.

I come now to the persons intended:

Mrs. Burrows of Deptford told me she rejoiced so much when made perfect as to shed many tears; and saw daily, sometime before and ever since, the air full of spirits; the good resembling stars or pieces of silver coin, and fewer in number than the evil; which resembled eels or serpents, and entered the mouth, nose, and ears of every person, or almost all she met with; and would frequently lay themselves across their eyes. But the good were far swifter in operation. The

⁶For more background on the early roots of the “blessing” controversy in London, which Walsh is discussing here, see the note in William Briggs to CW, May 1, 1761.

⁷See JW’s conversations with Christian David and other members of Herrnhut in his *Journal*, Aug. 10–14, 1738, *Works*, 18:273–97.

⁸Rev. 2:10.

shadows of the evil appeared to her also in the water when passing the Thames and I think the good with them. I could see nothing amiss in her life. But a boisterousness attended her zeal for God, whom I believe she really loves.

I met in band at Deptford with Mr. Joyce, a zealous loving person, who has long counted himself perfect.⁹ He said Satan brought the figure of a naked woman to tempt him every night; but on his praying it disappeared; and a round light, about a foot in diameter, then appeared till he fell asleep. I have seen no evil in him except it were his desiring me to make interest with Lady Huntingdon and get him the place of master sailmaker in Deptford Yard because of the great good a perfect man might do with such a salary.

The remaining six are in London.

Mrs. [Sarah] Crosby was desired to talk with me on account of her eminence among the perfect when I had experienced and lost what is called perfection.¹⁰ But being unable to speak of anything above what I know, she fled from me soon after in the chapel and refused to visit my sister [Mary] Leadbetter any more; lest I should bring her to a second interview.

I think it improper to name the next young woman who had not long declared herself perfect when she desired me to give two shillings on her account to another, for she had no change, and would return it the next time we met. I did so and often saw her afterwards without receiving it: whereupon I said at last, "I gave what you desired me." "No," said she, "for I gave it myself." Wherefore I went again to the person in distress; who, denying the matter, I returned to the perfect one who then said, "If I did not give her two shillings, I am sure I gave one." And so ended this trifling affair. I made no reply but could never since think her perfect, though probably justified.

Mrs. [Sarah] Clay you are no stranger to. I brought you her promise at Everton to speak no more against the work of God which was carried on through your ministry; but meeting with her afterwards at Bedford, she disputed one half an hour against it.

Mr. Bell, coming to tell me his perfection the day after your letter which favours that doctrine came to hand, I credited his assertion, sought the same, and hearing you was at London wrote a line to let you know thereof. But [I] have since had sufficient cause to think him less conscientious than I ever found him before. But as he was always ready to imbibe some new notion, I hope his faith will overcome this, even as it has the rest.¹¹

Mr. Wake, of the Life Guards, whom I always thought a well-meaning honest man, has told me that his perfection is complete with regard to his body but his mind still roves from God. And he feared that it was wrong to speak thus freely to me lest being weak I might stumble at his acknowledgment.

Mr. Langshaw, a stranger whom I met one hour in band, seems filled with love and zeal just as John Keeling was, and calls himself perfect which I dare not gainsay.

I can recollect no more persons whom I have had any particular knowledge of while counting themselves perfect; and I will not relate anything by hearsay. God give you discernment

⁹This is the Thomas Joyce who sent JW an account of his conversion c. Jan. 1758; see *AM* 4 (1781): 419–21.

¹⁰Sarah Crosby (1729–1804) had moved to London in 1757 after her husband deserted her, and boarded with Mary (Gardiner) Clarke. Here she met Mary Bosanquet and was active from the beginning in the emerging perfectionist controversy.

¹¹George Bell (fl. 1760s), a corporal in the Life Guards, converted in London about 1758. The noisy prayer-meetings over which he officiated in 1761 excited Methodists all over England. He increasingly claimed unique spiritual privileges, the power to heal miraculously, and predicted that the world would end on Feb. 28, 1763. When JW resisted these claims, Bell withdrew from Methodism, never to return. See *DEB*, 80; and Vickers, *Dictionary*, 26.

to set me right if this letter be wrong. I received much benefit by yours of March twenty-third and so have some of my friends, especially Mr. and Mrs. Swain;¹² but your allowing perfection, has caused me to write all the foregoing thoughts upon it.

Oh may God give me such perfection as chiefly consists in the height of love evidently seen in Mrs. Hardwick¹³ and the depth of humility evidently seen in Mr. [John] Fletcher! Yet these declare themselves poor sinners and utterly disclaim perfection, though not the doctrine. I strive to know the trees, my dear friend, by their fruit; for discernment is a useful part of Christianity.

The Lord guide you by his Holy Spirit, and suffer not your thoughts to err.

I am your affectionate brother in the hope set before us,

J[ohn] W[alsh]

This letter had such an effect on Mr. Berridge that he has ever since opposed the doctrine of perfection. Alas, alas!

I will now turn back to the year 1757. The fear of God prevented me from saying I was perfect, but evil was far away, and God continually with me. Once indeed I felt, in the process of time, upon a great provocation, that anger was yet in me; and at the end of fourteen months perceived the same again. But in respect of my besetting sin, it seemed as totally foreign to me as to an angel of God. Nor was the Lord ever, that I know of, absent from me or out of my thoughts. And I wondered exceedingly that my brethren who had known the Lord longer did not rejoice in him as I did. For none could I find, no not even among the boasters of perfection, who saw anything of my joy. Wherefore I would put them in mind of such scriptures as this, “Let the inhabitants of the rock sing; let them shout for joy from the tops of the mountains.”¹⁴ My talking thus would amaze them and make them stare as if they thought me distracted. But still I thought they might rejoice if they pleased, even as I, because they were also believers.

Nothing more delighted me than the seeming extirpation of my besetting sin—a strong temptation to which, began its assault in July 1759. The waters roared amain, the fires flamed exceedingly, but none could come near enough to touch me. A little presumption might have made me say like our present perfectionists, “Satan comes indeed, but finds nothing in me.”

Thus I went on to the middle of February 1760, when all things conspired to cast me down from the mount of God, but rather would I have parted from life itself than my great blessedness. I never ceased from watching and praying. I was free, to my thinking, from the very shadow of sin, and went about doing good with all my might, even at the frequent hazard of my life. And to this very day, the Lord has not shown me that ever I was remiss in following him. Yet in effect he then said unto me, “Go down also and possess the sins of thy youth. I give thy besetting sin dominion over thee, and thou shalt desire but not enjoy it.” Such has indeed been my lot, for on the 19th, sin and temptation [came] like two mighty robbers, while I resisted even unto blood, prevailed against me, and have ever since trampled me under foot. But as I have never committed any wilful sin, I cannot say that I have ever since fallen into any condemnation. Yet has my warfare been astonishingly great, nothing of the kind perhaps being more bitter than my temptations and nothing sweeter than my consolations. Take one instance of the latter.

August 4, 1760. Being alone in my house at Knightsbridge, I was inexpressibly harassed with my besetting temptation. This afternoon [I was] running upstairs and down as if distracted, and praying in vain to be delivered from corrupt desire, till I fell into a kind of despair and could say little more than this, “Lord, if I perish, be it at thy feet.” I could hardly reach West Street at the chapel time where the sermon,

¹²Sarah Swain appears as a married woman in the Foundery Band Lists (1742–46). Joseph Swain married Sarah Vincent in Oct. 1727 in London.

¹³Likely Jane (Garding) Hardwick (d. 1762) of Brentford, Middlesex, the mother of Thomas Hardwick Jr.; or else Sarah (Witham) Hardwick (1728–87), the wife of Thomas Jr.

¹⁴Isa. 42:11.

as customary, proved a dead letter to me. The temptation, however, ended with it and I wondered at my resembling so lately an incarnate devil; but when the two last lines of the hymn were sung, at least that I heard, as follows,

Thy warfares past, thy mournings o'er,
Look up, for thou shalt weep no more.¹⁵

To the best of my remembrance I heard only this: "... mournings o'er, / Look up, for thou shalt weep no more." And instantly lifting up my soul in strong hope, I wished for the repetition of those lines; but when sung again, could only hear: "... mournings o'er, / Look up, for thou shalt weep no more." But oh, what joy did I then feel! And what a visionary scene appeared to the eye of my soul! For it seemed as if I saw myself lying on a death-bed, and heard and saw the Almighty speaking to me from a cloud and filling my soul with as strong assurance as if he had even sworn by himself to me: "... mournings o'er, / Look up, for thou shalt weep no more." The first impression caused me to weep with a small audible cry. Then I leaned along for some minutes while the tears of gladness ran down my face, and I trembled much; for the same gracious words and appearance, though lessening by degrees, long visited my soul and I could scarce describe it with dry eyes till next day. I then counted it as firm a promise to me from the Lord as the following promise from the angel to Daniel: "... thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days."¹⁶ I believe also, from hence, that my temptations and trials will not entirely cease till I am going to expire.

Such being my general experience, I considered it altogether; even from my justification, and wrote these verses thereupon, September 19, 1760.

Oh, that I now could show thy peaceful ways,
And speak the wonders of redeeming grace!
But language fails, and utterance melts away,
Before the blaze of this my Gospel day.
O king of glory, stoopest thou to shine,
On such vile earth, and such a soul as mine!
I know, I feel, thy precious blood applied:
For me the great beloved Jehovah bled and died!
No guilty weight my conscience longer feels:
I still am sprinkled, and the blood still heals.
Oh matchless love, my trembling soul to save,
And bid me triumph o'er the dreaded grave!
If here thou lead, along the narrow way,
And after bring me to the realms of day,
I'll sing thy praises in the courts above;
The boundless mansions of eternal love;
Where thy dear saints, in blest communion sing
The ceaseless triumphs of their glorious king;
Beholding and resembling what thou art;
Thou, from whose presence I shall not depart,
But all the heaven of heavens be round me spread,
And everlasting joy upon my head!
Glory to God on high, my song shall be,

¹⁵CW, "Hymn on Matt.5:3–6," st. 5, *HSP* (1740), 66.

¹⁶Dan. 12:13.

And glory to the lamb, who died for me.

September 18, 1760. I went from Knightsbridge to live at Edgware.

December 31. I dreamed of going round Mr. [George] Whitefield's gallery at Tottenham Court, feeling great love to him and the people, and praying for them with strong joy. This very dream I was favoured with several preceding nights; wherefore, I cast away my prejudice and heard him the next day with a good will. And indeed it was time I should, though I knew it not, as the preaching at West Street was much altered, and the Shekinah would no more visit me while his word was preached in that temple except once while Mr. John Jones cried out, "O death, where is thy sting."¹⁷

January 14, 1761. I heard that Mr. [John] Berridge was persuaded to believe the doctrine of perfection at last Sunday's lovefeast.

February 25. The men bands at West Street were a greater number than usual and disputed much about perfection, which I counted a false doctrine founded on spiritual pride. They who pleaded for it were many and showed much warmth. Their opponents were few and cool, only Mr. [George] Bell spoke with vehemence against it.

March 5. I dreamed of hearing a large company sing hymns in the open air unintelligibly. Wherefore I went from them and cried to the Lord, "O let me hear thy voice and live!" My joy was then great before him and while I uttered some other ejaculations.

April 24. I rejoiced in the Lord greatly while walking through Hyde Park and shunning the common track. I felt a deliverance from the whole propensity to sin, as common in such visitations, praised the Lord with great thankfulness, and vehemently besought him to hasten the day of judgment, which has been for some years the most earnest and frequent of all my petitions.

April 26. I heard two sermons at West Street [chapel] maintaining the doctrine of perfection; moreover, the generality of the Methodists I conversed with are of that opinion; all [of] which could not alter mine of a propensity to sin being felt by the greatest saints on earth, at one time or other, when strongly tempted to their old besetting sin. Yet have I been acquainted with the perfect love of God at intervals; to whom I can truly say, "Lord, I am thine; and on thy side thou king of glory."

July 4, 1761. Mr. Bell, who called himself perfect, being abroad, I sat in his house meditating. And after desiring the Lord to show me his true state, opened a Bible and cast myself first on Second Chronicles 25:22, "And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart." About which time, (on account of my saying [that] neither he nor any other called perfect appeared to have so much of the mind that was in Christ as Mrs. Hardwick etc.) he went abruptly from me. And when we met again, he would have spoke to me no more if the Lord had not bid him receive me as a brother.

July 5. While Mr. Neal[e] preached at West Street,¹⁸ I thought several justified; especially one who sat next me. But he said he was justified before and now made perfect because he had wept with extreme joy as I have done one hundred times, though without presuming to call myself perfect, or anything better than a dog or swine. I was told by Mr. Bowen and Amos Copeland that their hearts were clean; the former in a week after justification. I went this evening to Mr. Bell's assembly by Grosvenor Square and felt a strange overcoming power without any joy while he prayed that God would make me perfect.

¹⁷1 Cor. 15:55.

¹⁸Rev. James Neale (1712–92), a graduate of Pembroke College, Cambridge (M.A. 1746), was Master of Henley-on-Thames Free Grammar School and curate in Bix, Oxfordshire (1747–62). Sympathetic with the revival, he began to assist JW's congregations in London (particularly on Sundays, for sacrament) This (and apparent comments about his associates) led to Neale's removal from the earlier positions, whereupon JW chose not to bring him on staff at the Foundery (see JW to CW, Mar. 6, 1763). In 1770 he was assisting the Calvinist Methodists in London at both the Tabernacle and Tottenham Court chapel. Finally, from 1783–89 he served as curate of Aldboure.

July 7. Having kept some time from Tottenham Court on account of Mr. Whitefield's illness and my great dislike to Mr. Davies,¹⁹ I forget by what means I was induced to go this evening where I heard Mr. Davies a full hour on, "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out."²⁰ And at the close, while I was in great heaviness, he strongly declared the faithfulness of God; to whom I lifted up this prayer, "Heaven and earth, I believe, shall pass away; but not one jot of thy word. O speak to me! Bid me live for ever. Let me be glad in thy love to all eternity, for Jesus' sake." Immediately the preacher cried out, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one jot of his word, and can he give thee up? No, for he hath loved thee with an everlasting love." All which the Lord applying, I trembled and wept with great joy and strong assurance of his everlasting love. This reconciled me to Mr. Davies, and so fully put an end to my bigotry that I have gone ever since with equal readiness to Tottenham Court as West Street.

July 9. Out of eight men with whom I met in private band, six declared they had clean hearts; and the chief of them, Mr. Langshaw, to whom I said, "Let him that standeth, take heed lest he fall and be not high minded but fear."²¹ Though he seemed to like these, and most of my words, [he] called me afterwards in his prayer an advocate for the devil. And likewise brought accusations against Mr. Vardin, the leader, who had no otherwise contradicted him than by recommending caution.

July 12. Received the sacrament at West Street and heard Mr. [Thomas] Maxfield, who confidently said to me and all such, "Oh fools and slow of heart."²² I heard Mr. [Martin] Madan at the Lock this afternoon,²³ fifty-eight minutes on, "Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king."²⁴ I rejoiced in the Lord several times; especially when he said, "He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye."²⁵

July 21. Mr. Davies was in his sermon when I came to Tottenham Court, on, "My grace is sufficient for thee."²⁶ Wherein he sharply preached against the doctrine of perfection, calling it the greatest blasphemy that he knew. The word came with power and I felt the Lord's presence from first to last, removing from my soul a great weight of distrust and anxiety. My rejoicings were so frequent and so many words applied that it would be tedious to write them. None came with so great energy as these, "Fear not thou worm Jacob."²⁷ I then so wept and trembled that several eyes were upon me.

July 22. I waked with a headache, probably from last night's joy in the Holy Ghost, a joy which several of my West Street brethren once vilified, entitling it a frame and feeling; but now, in the pride of their wisdom, call even a little degree of it perfection.

July 27. With full confidence in my God I went to Reading, as lieutenant of a press gang.

September 27, 1761. I received a letter from Mr. Bell, lamenting my imperfection, wherefore I wrote thus to him the next day.

¹⁹Rev. Howell Davies (c. 1716–1770) was a schoolmaster at Talgarth, Breconshire when he was converted by Howell Harris in 1737. He was shortly after ordained deacon and priest, serving churches and itinerating in support of the Calvinist Methodist cause in Wales. In the last years of his life he frequently supplied for Whitefield at the Tabernacle and Tottenham Court in London. Walsh consistently spells the name "Davis."

²⁰John 6:37.

²¹1 Cor. 10:12; Rom. 11:20.

²²Luke 24:25.

²³Madan was chaplain at Lock Hospital in London.

²⁴1 Sam 15:23.

²⁵Zech 2:8.

²⁶2 Cor. 12:9.

²⁷Isa. 41:14.

[September 28, 1761]

My Dear Brother,

You seem jealous for the salvation of my soul, and I thank you. The tokens of inspiration are in your letter, by which I know your soul must be alive to God, for whose honour I am jealous on your account. My own ears having heard you say, first, that you were perfect, then that you could not fall from your perfect state unless God himself could fall from his throne. Whereas I have passed through that delightful state wherein you now are and of which you presume to boast, but am safely brought down by the mighty workings of the Holy Ghost into the deep vale of humiliation where I see distinctly that you and I, though Christ be formed in us, are no better than dead dogs by nature, nor any more holy after the flesh than the fish of the sea or fowls of heaven. I surely dwell in a body of death and corruption even as they, nor is your body better than dust and ashes. The body of Christ was perfect indeed and therefore could not see corruption, but is your soul united to such a body? Or do you not lie with a woman to this day because your flesh lusteth against your spirit? Even a poor heathen, Alexander the Great, could tell his flatterers, “I am surely no god because I bled like a mortal man when wounded and because I desire women.”²⁸

You must likewise acknowledge that you are not changed into the clean, the holy nature of God, whose dwelling is not with flesh; or must deny that you desire your wife when you lie with her. I doubt not but your body is a temple of the living God, as I know that my own is; and yet, we must see corruption, having dead bodies already in God’s account because of sin, that original leprosy which is diffused through all creatures under the sun as long as they remain embodied. But I doubt not that you and I shall be clean at last, when taken away from the body and carried up to the company of spirits of just men made perfect. ...²⁹

I doubt not, my dear friend, of our taking sweet council together again, if God prolong my days, which sometimes I think are shortening apace. One scripture sign of them that believe is this, “If they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them.”³⁰ Why not? Because “underneath us are the everlasting arms.”³¹ You have certainly drank a large draught of spiritual pride. But the Lord will not let you fall I verily believe, nor even be hurt when the temptation is past. You perceive it not now because [you are] rejoicing in your first love, the time of the gladness of your heart.

My own espousals to Christ, or the celebration of them rather, continued about three years and I had the same power over sin as you have. Oh that our brother [Richard] Moss, or some other who has been upon the mount like me, and is come down again as I am, had such a zeal for the truth, if not love to a fellow disciple, as to glorify God by declaring freely, “That there is none good upon earth but one; that is God.” Isaiah says, “He will carry the lamb in his bosom.”³² And again, “Whom shall he teach doctrines, them that are weaned from the breasts.”³³ You are now a babe in Christ and must be weaned, as I have been, which is a grievous warfare, before you will understand the true, the lowly doctrine of every man being abominable by nature, and not one being ever made perfect on earth.

The Lord enlighten more and more, both you, and

²⁸Plutarch, *Life of Alexander*, 28.2.

²⁹Walsh indicated he was eliding some of the original letter by a long row of dashes and “etc.”

³⁰Mark 16:18.

³¹Deut. 33:27.

³²Cf. Isa. 40:11.

³³Cf. Isa. 28:9.

your ever affectionate brother in the glorious Gospel,

J[ohn] W[alsh]

P.S. My love to our brethren of the guards.³⁴ Advise them to rejoice with trembling. I cannot find time to write all I would, and I have scribbled over this upon a common five miles from Reading. You cannot imagine the number and greatness of my worldly trials. I have lain all night in a field. I have had a town-full of people rise up to destroy me. I have run as great risks in my strange employment as some men run in the service of God. I have often gone at the hazard of my life, in sickness and bad weather, to perpetrate what I approve not. And to the men I am connected with it may truly be said, “The best of them is as a brier.”³⁵ And almost all other men have declared a kind of civil war against me. Where would your perfection be in such temptations as mine? I have fightings without and fears within. But the grace of God has hitherto been sufficient for me and made me more than conqueror over the world, the flesh, and the devil.

November 30. I return to London having been hurt by nothing but my besetting temptation, which continued to increase upon me.

January 12, 1762. By Mr. Berridge’s desire, I brought Mr. Bell to converse with him at Mr. Whitefield’s in Tottenham Court Road; where I said little for my own part except the same observation which Mr. Berridge made, that Mr. Bell had then something dismal and shocking in his face—which indeed I had observed ever since March 27, 1761, when he first told me that he was perfect; whereas he had a remarkably good look before. What he now chiefly said was that God had given him the gift of healing, which he had already practiced, and of raising the dead which he should perform in God’s time; that the millenium was begun, and he should never die; that he and several other men had seen Satan bound and cast into the bottomless pit, and the angel had set a seal upon him that he should not come out to deceive the nations; and that all Mr. Berridge’s excellent observations did not at all shake his confidence of these things.

And indeed his whole deportment, calmness, and assurance wrought so much upon me that I had thoughts of asking him to heal my mother who was asthmatic, and should probably have credited all he said, for I had imbibed the doctrine of perfection a few days before, if the Lord had not brought to my remembrance a tedious and bitter delusion, showing me withal, how mightily Satan was permitted in these days to deceive the truly religious by appearing as an angel of light. Wherefore, I rejected once more the whole doctrine of perfection. As to the impressions which from time to time for the space of five years I had believed to come from God, every one I think did really prove to be from him; except the delusion I have just hinted, which added much to the affliction of my soul.

February 17, 1762. A man at West Street bands declared he had been made perfect by Mr. Bell’s laying his hand upon him. And on the 23rd much the same thing befell me; wherefore on the 26th your brother had s[elect] s[ociety] put upon my ticket.

February 27. I made little doubt of my being perfect till this afternoon, when I could not tell whether I felt anger or no[t] at the ignorance of another perfect man.

March 4. After dreaming of idolatrous temptations, the dream concluded with my praying

Where Jonathan his David meets:
There, where no frosts our spring annoy,
Shall thou alone my love enjoy.

March 20. I rejoiced before the Lord a considerable time in a dream with this and other

³⁴Bell was a member of the Life Guards.

³⁵Mic. 7:4.

triumphant experiences, “Thou givest me here thy hidden manna; wilt thou not give me thereafter the morning star.”

March 23. I wrote the following letter to Mr. Berridge.

Dear Sir,

Being sorely distressed in spirit the twenty-second of last month, I wrote the following verses:

Where, O almighty God, shall I find rest,
 If thou no longer wilt inspire my breast?
 Faithful and true, where is thy spirit flown?
 And thy rich mercy, oft to me made known?
 Why can I now no more prevail with thee?
 Ah, why this hiding of thy face from me?
 How, from thy dazzling height of happiness,
 How am I fallen into deep distress?
 Oh raise me up again, my soul restore,
 Let soul and body feel thy quickening power!
 Now as of old thy goodness let me see:
 Come Holy Ghost, thou well-known God, to me!
 Still condescend my longing soul to meet:
 Come Holy Ghost, eternal Paraclete:
 Still to my heart the Blood of Jesus bring;
 Thy precious Blood, Oh Salom’s peaceful king!
 Ransomed by thee from all the guilt of sin,
 But still defiled and longing to be clean,
 Come that I may from all its power be freed:
 Come, O my God, and make me free indeed!

Mr. Bell came the next morning unexpectedly and said, “Well, now let us pray together; and neither of you (for my mother was present) resist the Spirit of the Lord.” He then prayed, and I [prayed] when he had done, but all seemed unaffected. We then stood up and he sung several verses which I remember not, though some were significant of my name being written in the Lamb’s Book of Life; and on hearing those I felt a palpitation at the bottom of my stomach and a small giddiness in my head. The Lord also gave me his peace at the same time. And Mr. Bell, after singing, asked my mother how she found herself; who replied with tears of joy in her eyes, “Ah, Mr. Bell, it would be a happy thing if one could be always thus.” He then put the same question to me and I told him what an additional peace I had found. He then left us and in a few minutes the Spirit of the Lord so abundantly filled me that I sat down in an elbow chair, prayed silently for an entire deliverance from the power of sin, breathed short, and panted in the multitude of peace from seven o’clock till quarter past eight, when I seemed going to die suddenly and that I might resist it if I would. But the presence of the Lord being delightful, I said, “Let me fear only thee.” And casting my care upon him, I felt as if lightning, or a slower ethereal flame, had been penetrating and rolling through every atom of my body; which being past, I did not breathe so short as before but found a sweet composure, and ineffable calmness of spirit. I then walked about the room rejoicing and seemed to feel my body so light that I might choose whether to walk or fly.

Such has been my unaccountable experience; neither know I whether I have felt any sin or not, either spiritual or bodily, from that hour to this, only in dreams. But I think I have more than once, and would rather call myself the chief of sinner than a perfect Christian. How great is

the mystery of godliness! Oh that you and I may continually be taught of God and rejoice in his highness, world without end!

I am

Your affectionate brother in Christ,

J[ohn] W[alsh]

P.S. On hearing Mr. Bell another night sing the verses he sung February 23rd, I could recollect that the chief lines which the Lord then applied to my soul were these,

Sing, O my soul, for thou hast cause,
Thine enemy is slain:
Thy sin that late thy burden was,
No more may rule again:
The Holy Child the Virgin bore,
Delights in thee to dwell:
Sing, O my soul, for thou no more
Shall be afraid of hell.
Its stings, thy sin, he takes away,
The law is disannulled;
Thy pardon sealed in endless day,
And here thy name enrolled.

March 25. I rejoiced before the Lord in a dream while desiring and expecting his great day. Some of my words then were, “I know that thou lovest me with an everlasting love.”

March 30, 1762. I took Mr. Bell and Mr. Bowen to see a widow at Highgate who was near death and almost despairing of mercy. Mr. Bell asked her a few questions and bid her speak a few words after him. She did so and was justified, the Holy Ghost coming at the same instant upon us all and with such power that I cried for joy a considerable time.

April 10. After a mixture of deliverance and uncertainty for 46 days, I now clearly perceived my besetting sin to remain where it formerly was, even in me. Several other persons called perfect, though not Mr. Bell, from time to time acknowledged themselves to be in some degree as I was; but what I called sin, they counted temptation.

April 20. I dreamed of lewdness and of abhorring it; whereupon I rejoiced immediately in the Lord while uttering these unscriptural words, “I turn to thee, O Lord, as the loved flower to the sun.”

May 14. One woman roared and another cried out at West Street sacrament, but only once did I ever feel the Lord present at these Friday meetings of the select society—where often, according to my judgment, I have heard flat blasphemy, though I forget the particulars.

May 16. My soul being distressed above measure by my besetting temptation, I heard Mr. Davies at Tottenham Court, fifty-two minutes on Micah 6:5. I wept and shook several times with full assurance and joy in the Lord, especially while these or like words were spoken, “The Lord is thy refuge.” “There is no enchantment against Jacob, nor divination against Israel.”³⁶ “I know thou art ready sometime to conclude that a curse is come upon thee and that thy God will not visit thee any more. But thou will always find him a covenant-keeping God, whose love is everlasting. Satan may tell thee otherwise, but believe him not for he is the father of lies. Recollect the past favours of the Lord; knowest thou not that he who delivered thee out of the paw of the lion will deliver thee likewise from every accursed Philistine?”

³⁶Num. 23:23.

May 19. Being distressed again, I heard Mr. Madan, fifty-five minutes, on Job 19:25–27. I rejoiced in the Lord with great sweetness, tears, and shaking while these words were uttered concerning the beatific vision, “And the tears shall be wiped away from every eye.”³⁷

May 23. I dreamed of saying with a loud voice to a tempting devil, “I am Christ’s, Christ is God’s.” To which he replied, “I know it well.”

May 26. In W[est] Street bands, Mr. Jackson, who is called perfect, said Christ cut himself open with a knife and put him into his breast. Mr. John Jones disliked the expression.

May 31. After six hours disorder of body, and sadness of soul, I heard Mr. Davies at Tottenham Court, forty-two minutes on Romans 8:11. I rejoiced a little most of the time with deep humility; and once with great ecstasy, strong assurance, tears, and shaking, while he uttered these and like words, “Fear not; march, go on; thy God shall go with thee through fire and water.” So ended my heaviness.

June 22. I sweetly rejoiced in the Lord while hearing Mr. Dyer at Tottenham Court,³⁸ thirty-six minutes, on Philippians 1:2–3; towards the conclusion, especially when these and like words were uttered, “Believer, the day of thine espousals draws nigh. . . . and in that day, God shall wipe all tears from thine eyes.”

July 1. I wrote the following letter to Mr. Berridge.

Dear Sir,

I hope you received my letter of March 23rd, in which I related the deliverance God gave me from present distress after Mr. Bell had sung a few verses. That deliverance was not one day complete; and yet like Elijah’s cake, it proved a means of strengthening my soul above 40 days; at the end of which I became weak as aforesaid, and have ever since lusted as usual in my heart with frequent murmurings against God.

You have received in a former letter some account of a much greater and more durable blessing, though of the very same kind as that which I found after Mr. Bell’s singing. And I could mention several other visitations of God extremely different from either of those and exceeding them in point of sanctification as well as joy in the Holy Ghost. But it would be tedious to rehearse them and impossible to recollect them all. One of the first was on Sunday, May 22, 1757, in the fields of Risley in Derbyshire. So great and sweet for about an hour was my joy in the Lord that I could then compare my state to none but that of St. Paul when caught up into the third heaven. Oh, how much did I then desire to be dissolved and see my God without a veil! But he gave me to understand that his grace would be sufficient for me while upon the earth, and though I heard no voice nor saw anything I was well contented to wait for my appointed time, being fully assured that he spake such a promise to me. And why did I not after this, and 100 of the like unutterably joyful communions with God, cry out, “He has made me perfect!”? The reason is plain: a messenger of Satan was then, or about the same time, first sent to buffet me, two or three years, chiefly with suicide and afterwards a thorn in the flesh, which remains to this day and makes me seem to myself a perfect beast; as the former did a mere devil. Thus are the favours of God always guarded to me and from time to time he breaks the pride of my heart in pieces.

Now I will tell you what I think of all who count themselves perfect. They have tasted something of divine joy, but neither been used to it nor felt it a tenth part so strongly or ineffably as I have. They are neither buffeted by Satan nor have a thorn in their flesh like me, but are absolutely at ease in Sion. Pleasing as that state is, I believe it lays the soul open to the greatest snare of Satan, which is spiritual pride. Alas for me! That very state would be my choice if I did

³⁷Cf. Rev. 21:4.

³⁸John Dyer (1722–1804) was currently an associate of Whitefield (see *Lloyd’s Evening Post*, May 7–9, 1764); he served as curate at St. George the Martyr, Southwark, and in 1785 became rector of Llanbadarn Fawr, Radnorshire.

not fear God, who has led me through many a terrible fiery furnace, into none of which am I ever willing to enter. And of all the gospel ministers, none has been a means of such blessing to my weary soul as the Reverend Mr. Davies who speaks most of them all to the real saints that are tempted and afflicted, tossed with tempests and not comforted.”.... etc., etc., etc.,”

J[ohn] W[alsh]

July 11th. I felt evil desire at the table just before Mr. [John] Dyer and Green gave me the sacrament, which was the first I ever received at Tottenham Court Chapel.³⁹ I looked up to God and took it with these words, “Yet will I cast my soul on thee.” I rejoiced in the Lord after it for ten minutes with shaking and watery eyes.

July 16. I received a letter from Mr. Berridge. A small part of which follows.

July 16, 1762

Dear Sir,

I received your letter of July 1st and a former of March 23rd, to which I returned no answer because I know not how to speak or write to perfect people and therefore avoid correspondence with them. Many things I saw in them, when in London, which grieved me much; and many things here in the country which have grieved me more: such pride! such boasting! such censoriousness! such contempt of others! But what is mighty strange, these perfect people still talk of growing. If they are really perfect, what can be lacking except to continue in that state? As far as I can discern, they are unwittingly growing or grown out of Christ. They apply to the Lord for grace by prayer and faith, and grace is obtained. With this stock they set up and trade against the Redeemer; not seeking, as Paul says, to be presented perfect in Christ (Colossians 1:28), but to be presented perfect in themselves. etc., etc.

J[ohn] B[erridge]

July 29. Mr. Bell and Bowen spake and prayed as if I had not been justified.

July 30. I dreamed of triumphing in the favour of God and remember to have repeated these words in my dream, “Let the saints shout for joy; let them sing aloud upon their beds.”⁴⁰

Now sir, if you desire to know the present and general state of my soul, it is in my judgment, “suffering and temptations.” The opinion I have now, and at most times, of myself I cannot express more truly than by these few, which are my favourite words to God and man: “Behold, I am vile.”⁴¹

As to the papers, treat them as you please. You have the free consent of,

Your affectionate brother in Christ,

John Walsh.
August 15, 1762

Endorsement: by CW, “Walsh’s Ranters / Aug. 11, 1762.”

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/501/134.⁴²

³⁹John Green (fl. 1750–70) was ordained in 1745 (without a degree) and served as curate to Thomas Hough in Thurnscoe, Yorkshire for a year. He would be appointed perpetual curate of Sutton in Ashfield in June 1747, but was frequently in London supporting the revival.

⁴⁰Ps. 149:5.

⁴¹Job 40:4.

⁴²For a digital copy and “as-is” transcription, see <https://www.library.manchester.ac.uk>. Transcriptions have been published previously in *Wesley and Methodist Studies* 5 (2013): 129–51 and Robert Webster, *Methodism and the Miraculous* (Lexington, KY: Emeth Press), 209–25.

From the Rev. John Fletcher

Madeley
August 22, 1762

My Dear Sir,

I have received your last and I am delighted to see that Dr. Turner, whom God used to bring me back once from the edge of the grave, is undertaking to cure you.¹ May he have as much success with you as with me! Whatever comes of it, it is our consolation to think that God ordains all for the best.

I was at Shrewsbury for the assizes, to hear Mr. Talbot,² who gave us a good address. Nonetheless it would have seemed better to me if he had meditated more about it. He preached partly extempore. Your brother would not have had that confidence. He was putting forward a very bold proposition, which was that the gospel does not demand anything as a precondition of faith, not even repentance or amendment; and that in all the passages which state repent and believe, etc., it is necessary (to put the words in the order of events) to say believe and repent. After the sermon I said to him that the greater part of theologians admit at least a legalistic repentance, long or short, prior to faith. "Yes," he said, "Mr. Wesley does that, but the distinction seems to me frivolous." I invited him to come to Madeley. But he excused himself as he was engaged to stay with Lord [William] Dartmouth, who was also at Shrewsbury.

I saw there Mr. Shuts, a counsel, who went further than Mr. [Martin] Madan and assured me (as the magistrate still does) that I fall foul of the Conventicle Act [preaching] in my parish or my house, as well as elsewhere. Mr. Ireland, your acquaintance in Bristol, has written to me on the same matter and assures me that the case has been decided in a court of justice.³

I found at Shrewsbury a young minister friend of Mr. Brain of Bristol. His name is Leir.⁴ He serves a church for his father near Wincanton, Somerset. He seemed to me sincere, although a little superficial; just as I am in experience. He has spent four days with me and left this morning. He preached us three good sermons, which gained him the reputation of Methodist.

I have received the books from Bristol and will send you the amount when I know how.⁵ Although I would prefer that you come to receive it yourself. I have not yet distributed them to the subscribers, who are for the most part in Shrewsbury.

Your brother has mortified many people in these parts, who were hoping to see him pass through or go to hear him between Shrewsbury and Wednesbury, and myself in particular, but providence had ordained it otherwise. Was not his journey to London occasioned by the clandestine printing of his *A Word to the Perfects*?⁶ They are good, why should he be ashamed of them?

I beg you to give me a detailed account of the state of your health, and of that of the Methodist church. What do you say about [Thomas] Maxfield's scheme, "Believe this moment, etc."? It accords well with Mr. [William] Talbot's, "Please God that I will be able to put it into practice." Does the Spirit of God bless this method and accompany it? Have there not been days of Pentecost? Do you not find some apparently true witnesses [to perfection] among the crowd of 300? What do you say of [George]

¹This letter is not known to survive.

²Rev. William Talbot (1717–74), Vicar of Kineton, Warwickshire.

³James Ireland was a merchant in Bristol with commercial connections to France. See JW, Letter to the *London Chronicle*, Nov. 4, 1759, *Works*, 27:178.

⁴Rev. Thomas Leir (c. 1738–1812), son of Rev. Thomas Leir (c. 1703–81) of Ditcheat. Fletcher spells "Lear."

⁵Copies of CW's *Scripture Hymns* (1762).

⁶*Cautions and Directions Given to the Greatest Professors in the Methodist Societies* (1762); see *Works*, 13:83–91. This was apparently an exact reprinting by the initial publication by JW in the spring of 1762. There are no surviving copies of the tract with any variants.

Bell? Is he reformed? ⟨...⁷⟩

I reiterate to you my promise not to marry without your advice, and not to leave Madeley without consulting you. Who has put these suspicions into your head? It is certain that for some months I have from time to time had certain scruples. I think that I told an untruth in assuring that the infants that I baptise are regenerate. And another when I declare that I commit all my dead to the ground in sure and certain hope of resurrection to eternal life.

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

Endorsement: by CW, “Fletcher / Aug. 27. 1762.”

Source: holograph (in French); MARC, MA 1977/495/85.⁸

⁷A strip at the bottom of page 3, comprising two lines, has been torn off.

⁸A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher’s original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 153–54. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith’s English translation (pp. 154–57). See also the earlier (and looser) translation in Fletcher, *Posthumous* (1791), 116–17.

From the Rev. John Fletcher

August [c. 30] 1762

⟨...¹⟩ powerful and bitter, the sergeant as full of mischief as ever. That parish is in his liberty (of Wenlock) and humanly speaking he will come upon me with the Conventicle Act, if the Lord permits. Shall I run the risk and begin to act upon [John] Berridge's plan?² Or shall I exhort from house to house only in my parish? I find I am free to do either, but I know not which is most expedient. Lay the case before the Lord, and let your answer turn the scale.

⟨...⟩ I am so pleased that the little musician [CW Jr.] has played his part so well in London. When will he come to play it in Madeley? How old is he? Are you weary of being his tutor? Where will it all be after your death? Embrace him and his sister from me, and greet their dear mother.

Sarah [Wood] joins with me in congratulating you on the power which God has given to your preaching. Do not bury your talent. Your book is printed,³ you are again called to the promised work. The Lord rewards your last works more abundantly than the first!

Your brother has written to me at last and incessantly recommends me to form a society, in order that his preachers can take it into their circuit if I leave Madeley.⁴

I had wrote to you for two *Appeals*; my meaning was only two *Earnest Appeals* and you sent two sets of *Appeals*.⁵ They are too large a book for people to read here, so shall send them back if agreeable.

I want to know what money I owe at the Room and how I am to send it, and yours.

I wrote a month ago to my Lady [Huntingdon] and last week to Sir Charles [Hotham]. Is he very bad?

Pardon my French and English rhapsody. I am writing to you what comes into my head without thinking how.⁶

Source: holograph (in French and English); MARC, MA 1977/495/62.⁷

¹The first two pages of the letter are missing.

²In addition to preaching in his own church/parish, Berridge began preaching in surrounding towns, without the invitation or permission of the priests assigned to those parishes.

³*Scripture Hymns* (1762).

⁴This and the preceding two paragraphs are in French in the original. JW's letter to Fletcher is not known to survive.

⁵Fletcher wanted *An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion* (1743); not the longer three-part *A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion* (1745).

⁶This closing is in French in the original.

⁷A close transcription of the French and English original, showing Fletcher's original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 157–58. We reproduce here only the English and translated French.

From the Rev. John Fletcher

Madeley
September 4, 1762

My Dear Sir,

Uncertain whether you are still in London, I shall nonetheless risk these lines in case they find you there, to ask for news of you. The bearer, brother Cockcroft, who wants to retire from London, is come to Madeley to take a house here. He wanted at first to have a room under my roof, but he will perhaps be prevailed upon to be in the neighbourhood. To tell you the truth, I have a great fear of involving myself with brothers as well as with sisters.

Concerning sisters, Sarah Wood shows herself more and more a thorn in the flesh. She is of such a sour temper that my manservant, being unable to get used to her, is giving his notice, and the other servant seems disposed to follow him. I suffer her moods with patience, by the grace of God, and I would be able to bear them calmly to the end if that was expedient. But the quarrels that she causes in the house, and the bad example outside the house, make me suspect that I must saddle myself no longer with a spiritual Megaera.¹ This is what led me this morning to tell her my views. Here is a summary of our conversation:

“Sarah, how are you this morning?”

“I will not answer you. I wish you was never to speak to me. I wish I never saw you. I wish you was a hundred mile off.”

“What has put you into such a bad temper?”

“You, yourself. You do everything you can to mortify me.”

“Everything I can! And what have I done?”

“Last Sunday you asked Ketty to read a verse” (the milkmaid who begins to spell) “and you asked me not. And yesterday, when I read a chapter, you could not bear it. It was like poison to you. You interrupted me, etc.”

“It is true that I stopped you once to make an observation which I believed edifying for you and for me, but not to humiliate you.”

After several yet more trivial accusations I said to her, “If you can neither live in peace, nor allow me to live in peace, we must part company; and I repeat the offer I made to you 18 months ago, to pay the cost of your return to London and to continue your wages until you are able to recover your business.” I await her response. I think that I am born to be the plaything of the whims of that sex. Meanwhile I gain some experience by these little setbacks, and perhaps a little patience.

I am sending you by brother Cockcroft the money which I have received for your books: 1 pound, 16 shillings, and 6 pence. I would have paid the rest in advance if it was in my power. But having been obliged to buy a wagon and to put a new roof over a section of the church, I am not only penniless but actually in debt.

for three books of hymns

7 - 6

7 - 0

7 - 0

for six subscriptions in Shrewsbury 15 - 0

1 - 16 - 6

I pray you to give me your news by letters or in person. Here is the month of which you spoke to me in your penultimate. What do you think of the work of God? Are they all enthusiasts? Greet your dear wife and praise God you are not fallen into the hands of a Sarah such as mine. I hope that my goddaughter

¹The wife of Hercules. Their marriage was unhappy and in a fit of insanity Hercules massacred his children and wife.

is of her mother's temper and that Charles gives you pleasure. May the Lord direct his heart into the ways of peace.

Farewell

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

Endorsement: by CW, "Sept. 4. 1762 / Fletcher."

Source: holograph (in French); MARC, MA 1977/495/18.²

²A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher's original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 158–60. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith's English translation (pp. 160–61).

From the Rev. John Fletcher

Madeley
September 20, 1762

My Dear Sir,

It is well for me I have not an implicit faith in your half-promises of coming to visit me.¹ However, I am sorry that my delay has furnished you with a way out. But I comfort myself in thinking that you will have perhaps had another excuse, or that the pleasure of embracing you is not lost, but only deferred.

“*Crede quod habes and habes*,”² is not so different from the counsel of Christ, “Believe that you are obtaining the things you are asking for.”³ The humility of the believer and the presumptuousness of the enthusiast draw this doctrine to the right side or to the left. To split the hair here, *hoc opus hic labor est*.⁴ You are a pleasant casuist. What? “It hath pleased thee to regenerate this infant with the Holy Spirit, and to receive him for thine own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into thy holy church,”⁵ only signifies taken into the visible church? On this footing, could we not make those say “white” who say it is “black.”

Last year I let out my tithes and the poor man who took them earned some hundreds of curses. He is dead and no one has this year had the courage to expose themselves to the farmers’ malice, besides me.

My sour-tempered housekeeper has made me no response to the proposal which I mentioned in my last. But she has behaved herself better. If she continues I would prefer her not to leave, for fear of going from bad to worse. She is the plaything of the enemy and of her heart, like the poor Welshman in his illness, and I fear to act harshly towards those who are in tribulation.

I have 28 shillings, 6 pence⁶ of your money; which together with 1.16.6 sent with brother Cockcroft makes up the full price for nine of your books. I have another three of them to sell. I have forgotten to draw up the receipts, but I will take care to do so.

I am here alone like a sparrow. I have neither good nor bad preacher who cares to have anything to do with me. Perhaps providence will send me someone to take care of my cure. I think that a change would be agreeable and perhaps very useful to my parishioners. Mr. [Edward] Stillingfleet, Lord Dartmouth’s chaplain, and his vicar have never returned my visit. They preach Christ with success, but are greatly ashamed of the Methodists. I have for some time planned to go to see Mr. [Walter] Sellon; but being on the one hand ignorant of where his benefice is, and on the other fearing the expense of journeys that my circumstances dictate I should avoid, I have delayed until now. Do you know him? What do you think of the plan?

Whom you mean by the friend who has everything directly from me, I know not. I correspond with no one regularly but you. Your brother and [Thomas] Maxfield, Lady Huntingdon and my mother have one letter from me in six months. If Maxfield is the person, I cannot confess myself to be guilty without proof, seeing that my conscience does not convince me that I have revealed any secret to him. Nevertheless I would take care to benefit by the intimation. Whether well-founded or not, it is always seasonable. I have said to you that I am not a party man. I am neither for nor against the witnesses without

¹The letter to which Fletcher is replying is not known to survive.

²“Believe that you have, and you have it.”

³Cf. Mark 11:24.

⁴Virgil, *Aeneid*, vi.129; “This is the task, this is the toil.”

⁵BCP, “Ministration of Public Baptism” (post-baptismal prayer).

⁶Fletcher used “sols” for “pence.”

examination.⁷ I pity those whom are deceived. I honour those who bring honour to what they profess. And I wish that we could discover a means to reconcile the deepest humility with the greatest hopes of grace. I believe that you insist on the one and Maxfield on the other. And I believe you both sincere in your view. God blesses each of you, both one and the other; and if you go too far the Lord will recall you both. I have received two or three letters from him [Maxfield] since I have been here, and I promise that you can read them when you come to Madeley. Do not believe however that I am ready to kiss the hand of the 350 without examination. I have banished from my society two false witnesses who claimed to be without sin, being far from sharing in their delusion. At Broseley, a parish separated from mine by the Severn, around 14 people are joining in society and I met them last week in their own parish. The house was soon well filled. My going to them again might perhaps be a blessing to some. Shall I go? The minister is ⟨...⁸⟩

How came you to think of my going to leave Madeley? I have indeed had my scruples about the above passage, and some in the burial-service, but you may dismiss your fears, and be assured I will neither marry, nor leave my church, without advising with you.⁹

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

Annotation: “peruse, seal, and deliver the Enclosed.”

Endorsement: by CW, “Sept. 20. 1762 / Fletcher.”

Source: holograph (in French); MARC, MA 1977/495/1.¹⁰

⁷See the note in William Briggs to CW, May 1, 1761, about the “blessing” controversy.

⁸The surviving letter ends at this point, at the bottom of a page. Some text seems to be missing.

⁹This final paragraph is given in Fletcher, *Posthumous* (1791), 121.

¹⁰A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher’s original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 161–63. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith’s English translation (pp. 163–65). See also the earlier (and looser) translation in Fletcher, *Posthumous* (1791), 120–21.

From the Rev. Francis Okeley¹

[London]
October 9, 1762

My Dear Sir,

I received yours of the 28th ultimate.² I was in London about a fortnight ago, and went first to Mr. Boults,³ and then to the Foundery to seek for you, where I found to my great disappointment that you had set out that very morning for Bristol. I heard something of your conversation with the Brethren which you mention, and Spangenberg in particular talked to me about your visiting him, which was (I found) very acceptable to him.⁴ He is a pacific man and would, I believe, be very glad that all hostilities ceased between the Methodists and the Brethren. May his [Christ's] time soon come, when all the children of God of all denominations may be one, as he and the Father are one. Your expression, "let all fall, say I, which is not of Christ's building," gave me great pleasure because I am thoroughly persuaded that such a wish is the only ground and foundation for union in truth and reality.

With regard to your brother's *Journal*, I think he has been softer than usual upon such occasions,⁵ and I am very ready to ascribe something of it to your fast friendship to me. I am glad to hear of the renewal of your strength. I should be glad to meet you in London or anywhere else. But my present employ as well as low finances confine me very much at home. I have spoke to the bookbinder about the two guineas worth of cases, and have prevailed upon him so far that he gives me some hopes of having them against May next.⁶ You will please to remember that there is about £6.6 in arrears for the last. I have read the books you was so kind to make me a present of with pleasure here and there, but am just now so taken up that I cannot go through them regularly. I was pleased to find them acceptable to some of our folks in London. I wish you had the polishing of many of our Brethren's hymns.

You say the Methodist *divides* sanctification and justification, and the Moravian *confounds* them, in regard to perfection. I shall scarcely be able to adjudge⁷ this dispute. Yet give me leave to say a word or two on this head. I am very suspicious of all the so-called systems of divinity, and particularly of that termed Calvinistic (of all sorts). I think we seem to have been misled by nice logical and metaphysical distinctions, which have been more the creatures of the distempered brain than the genuine offspring of an experienced heart—which alone can give us the true sense of Scripture, and must therefore be always conformable to it. I have talked with a great many people about religion, and must say from all the

¹Okeley is continuing a conversation with CW that goes back to a letter he sent CW in 1760; see above, Francis Okeley to Howell Harris, Aug. 29, 1760.

²This letter is not known to survive.

³John Boults (c. 1693–1771), a director of the Pepper Warehouse belonging to the East India Company in London, married Susanna Davis in 1723. They resided in Christopher's Alley, Upper Moorfields, where CW often stayed when in London, CW preached John's funeral sermon on Nov. 12, 1771; see *Westminster Journal and London Political Miscellany* (Nov. 9–16, 1771). See also CW's funeral hymn in MS Funeral Hymns, 67–68.

⁴Rev. August Gottlieb Spangenberg (1704–92) was the Moravian pastor who welcomed JW to Savannah. In 1740, while in London, he encouraging a type of quietism, which contributed to the division in the Fetter Lane society. Spangenberg became a bishop in the Moravian Church. See *DEB*, 780–81.

⁵Referring to JW's comments about the Moravians in his *Journal*, which were very critical in the early 1740s.

⁶The small cases CW was obtaining from a Moravian book-binder used for "scripture cards." See Okeley to CW, Dec. 6, 1760.

⁷Orig., "adjust."

observation I have been able to make both upon myself and others that how plain soever justification and sanctification seem in themselves, systematically considered there is nothing in the world more intricate than the solidly (not enthusiastically or conceitedly) ascertaining *when, where, and how* one is justified and sanctified. I put them together because they are as inseparable in their own nature as light and heat. He that is justified is also in some degree sanctified, and vice versa—which the apostle gives good countenance to when he says, “but ye are sanctified, ye are justified . . .”⁸ I know I cannot rightly explain this thing in words, but I seem sure to myself that we in some way do not think and speak in common of justification and sanctification as the apostles and first Christians did. Their’s was an entire heart’s affair and experience, which directed the human understanding. Our’s begins with certain notions and conceptions of the understanding, which the heart must be strained to, and this seems to me the ground of all the wrong and foolish conceits which many well-disposed people have now and formerly fallen into about justification and sanctification. May the good Spirit of Jesus give us again the right clue in this matter, and help us out of a labyrinth of uncertainty in regard to the practice and experience of these things in the heart! O when will the time come that we shall be able to speak one to another of our own individual hearts with the same truth and uprightness as we can do of other indifferent things? Then the true divinity will appear without seeking, for which all the labour in the world has never been able to find out. James and Paul, gospels and epistles, and a thousand seeming inexplicable contrarities will then appear amazingly harmonious. O may Messiah come once again in Spirit and teach us all things!

My kind love to your dear partner and self. I am, with sincere affection,
Your poor brother and friend,

F. Okeley

P.S. I shall be obliged to you to forward the enclosed for me by the very first opportunity. He has made a proposal to me to board and teach two of his sons, and I herein acquaint him how impracticable it is for me in my present situation.

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

Endorsement: by CW, “Okeley Oct. 9, 1762 / of Justification and Sanctification etc.”

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/610/107.

⁸1 Cor. 6:11.

From the Rev. John Gambold

Nevil's Court, Fetter-lane [London]
October 18, 1762

My Dear Friend,

I don't know what you may have thought of me, that I have not answered your kind letter sooner,¹ but I know very well how it happened. I have been exceeding sick and weak now near three weeks. It began from a cold, but brought on a feverish complaint, straitness of the breast, etc. And I am now but beginning to creep about again. You are the first whom I wrote to.

And what shall I say? I well remember, and hope never to depart from, those notions of friendship which you quoted. I think we can love when we can do nothing else. No decay or want of strength can strip us of this pleasure. And to love is surely doing something. It is accounted so in our Saviour's kingdom, and he also affords the right foundation and fuel for it. I think we have that foundation, and that our love is of the right kind, and likely to be durable. To this I heartily say Amen, and remain

Your affections friend, servant, and brother,

J. Gambold

Please to remember me to Mrs. [Sarah] Wesley (also to your brother [JW], if he be with you) and to Mrs. [Anne] Grinfield. Mr. Nitschman is now in your part of the country and I suppose will by and by come to Bristol.² Brother Brodersen,³ who is just now by me, sends his kind love to you.

Address: "To / The Revd Mr Charles Wesley / at Mrs Viger's / in King's Square / Bristol."

Postmark: "19/OC."

Endorsement: by CW, "J. Gambold / Oct. 18. 1762."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/428/2/63.

¹CW had written Gambold about the same time as Francis Okeley, and on the same topic—an attempt to facilitate better relations between the Moravians and the Wesleyan Methodists. CW's letter is not known to survive.

²David Nitschmann (1696–1772), who had been consecrated as one of the first two bishops of the Renewed Church of the United Brethren.

³Christian Brodersen, of Denmark.

From William Briggs¹

London
October 28, 1762

Reverend and Very Dear Sir,

Your obliging favour of the 18th instant I received last Tuesday evening.² There is the appearance of its having had a wafer, but it came to me without the least fastening.³

It is utterly out of my power at present to inspect into the conduct of our younger brethren. And if I was free for such a service, I believe I should not be thought a proper person to be employed in it. I live retired from all concerns but how to work out my own salvation and to promote the present and eternal welfare of my dear family. Yet from my heart do I long for and rejoice in the prosperity of our Jerusalem, and whatever is a reproach to her I lament and pray may be removed.

You may think it strange, but so it is in fact, although I live in the midst of the elevated in heart, I have conversed with none of them and have been at none of their meetings till last night. I have heard strange things, but hoped in general that greater good was done than hurt, and was confident it must be innocent whilst your dear brother [JW] approved. I knew it was impossible for me to act if I saw anything amiss and was convinced I could be little benefited were I to attend their meetings from only hearing Mr. [Thomas] Maxfield at the Foundery. From these or the like considerations, I have kept myself from all disputes or any ways interfering in the present new schemes, and for my thus living in a peaceable retirement I found no condemnation.

I have often wished for an opportunity of being at a meeting, that I might be able to give my judgement about the spirit of it. For till I had heard for myself, I had no disposition but to receive every report with good allowance for prejudice, mistake, etc. in the relater, and could never offer my advice farther than “Hope the best. They mean well. And Mr. [John] Wesley affirms that great good has been done.” Your letter raised me into resolution. I made no hesitation, though it truly was a great cross. I took the first opportunity after I received your admonition, which was last night. I earnestly prayed that I might do and receive no hurt. I went disposed to rejoice in everything good, and expected to meet only my brethren farther advanced in the school of Christ than myself. In short, I had nothing but love and goodwill and a kind of reverence towards them. I have “now seen with my own eyes and heard with my own ears”⁴ what I am afraid I shall give you but a very faint idea of, and that the rather because I will keep myself to simple narrative, without any exaggeration.

The meeting is in Beech Lane. I was let in by an old woman and found a crowded audience singing with great alacrity. Amidst the crowd, at the farther end under the pulpit, I saw an hand waving about and soon found it was Mr. [George] Bell giving out the hymn (the speakers stood amongst the crowd without distinction). After the hymn he spoke a few minutes to explain the intent of their meeting, which he affirmed to be with a view to awaken those asleep in sin, whom curiosity should bring in; to offer milk to babes, strong meat to the strong; and that all might come up to a state of perfection.

He next prayed, and soon ran into such an extraordinary strain, screaming in such a violent

¹In this letter we see how the “blessing” controversy (see the note in William Briggs to CW, May 1, 1761) was intensified and fractured by the influence of George Bell and Thomas Maxfield. For more on these two, and JW’s eventual response to them, see JW, *Works*, 13:92–93.

²CW’s letter is not known to survive. The “wafer” missing would be the wax seal.

³Briggs tends to start a new paragraph almost every full sentence. We have reduced the number of paragraph breaks in keeping with the guidelines for this project. Also, Briggs was not careful in writing on the proper sides of the first page (folded into quarters), so he had to number them to show the proper order.

⁴Cf. 1 John 1:3.

manner to compel a blessing upon the present meeting, that he seemed to be in a rapture and in fact as one raving with agony. I could not help thinking of the Sibyl described in Dryden's "Virgil," and was under apprehensions of seeing him fall down with foaming mouth, wild eyes, and uplifted hair, [and] deliver a prophecy. These were my foolish apprehensions; but in a moment I was relieved by his voice sinking into a calm and familiar reasoning with God, why he ought not to be denied his supplication.

In the midst of his rhapsody, he fell into an hymn, which brought on an universal shout of singing. After some time spent in singing such expressions of their perfection and union with God as I never before heard of, he again ran into a kind of talk about the privileges enjoyed by those who had clean hearts. And in the midst of his discourse he fell into a prayer again, with most surprising familiarity and vociferation, screaming for some token of almighty power to work the mighty change in those present, and adoring that goodness which had redeemed so many from all sin, giving them an assurance that they should never fall by taking away the occasions of stumbling. In the midst of this vehement supplication and praise, they fell into singing the glorious state of being free from sin.

Mr. Bell being pretty well spent, Mr. Maxfield stood up and with great solidity and propriety explained the intent of their meeting and assured us they had no other scheme in view than to promote the work of God and to bring souls up to a state of perfection. He exhorted us not to be offended if high things were spoke of, and admonished everyone not to sing words that he could not utter with a safe conscience. What he said was truly serious and much to the purpose. My heart melted to see so worthy a man in such wild company. He from exhorting suddenly fell into a prayer which was not so solid as his exhortation. He ran into loud, familiar, and rapturous expressions and in a strain (though not so shocking as Mr. Bell's) bold and commanding. From prayer he ran into singing. And after the hymn was done a short silence ensued, when a zealous man in the gallery began with a becoming accent to find fault with what had been said.⁵ Mr. Bell immediately forbade him to speak, which made the man raise his voice, as much as to say he would be heard, crying out blasphemy and lies! The congregation fell to singing and soon drowned the opposer's voice. When the hymn was done, the man began again with, "If we say that we have no sin, ... [we deceive ourselves]";⁶ and another below bawled out in the same strain. Singing was the only remedy.

Whilst singing the opposers and some of the brethren kept arguing, and such a bustle there was that I thought they were fighting. But I believe it was only their eager shuffling among the crowd to get at the speech of each other. The opposers were Tabernacle brethren⁷ (so it is said), and the opposed made no impression. After this Mr. Maxfield warmly prayed for those who opposed this work of God. The zealot in the gallery calld out "Sir, it is false. I do not oppose the work of God, but these blasphemies. Ye blaspheme. Ye dishonour God! etc." Mr. Maxfield prayed the more vehemently and his friends echoed such clamourous "Amens" that nothing could be heard distinctly. In his prayer Mr. Maxfield spoke of the opposers being under the influence of the grand enemy. The friend above cried out, "You lie to God sir, I am a child of God and have been so these 20 years."

In short, the wildness on one side, the rage of the other, and uproar of all, made it a scene of the most diabolical frenzy. And finding my soul much oppressed with sorrow, and my poor weak head affected with the uproar, I quitted the place before it was half done and found a crowd in the street laughing us to scorn!

Thus dear sir I have fulfilld your request, and I hope you will never lay upon me such another cross as to go to such another meeting! Could I recollect some of the expressions that were used in the exhortations and prayers, they woud astonish you, as they did me. But I was obliged to keep my soul in an humble praying frame, lest I should be infected by the contagion, and therefore rather studied to forget

⁵This was apparently the Mr. Payne who later filed a criminal complaint against Bell; see John Downes to CW, Mar. 10, 1763.

⁶1 John 1:8.

⁷I.e., followers of George Whitefield, whose meeting house was the Tabernacle.

everything that was said than remember it. In fact I can give you but a faint idea of what passed.

Though the simple truth above related must greatly affect you and I will not add to your present trouble any farther, after begging your permission to make the following short observations:

1. The meeting itself in such a manner and upon such an occasion is very absurd and unscriptural.

Could anything be more absurd than our common bands meeting amongst all sorts of hearers? Nothing can be more innocent and scriptural than brethren unfolding to one another their different experiences. To those who have a real work of God upon their souls and find themselves still liable to vary from temptations within and without, such kinds of intercourse must be extremely edifying. But what can be said of these brethren, to meet in a mixed multitude, to talk of the highest attainments in the Christian race? The state itself should be treated of with great humility amongst one another. Yet here are a number who with a confidence savouring of presumption, spake of this last great operation of the Spirit as if the most common lesson in the school of Christ! Where can they find any scripture to support such a practice?

2. If one may presume to judge a tree by its fruits, the manner of this meeting is inconsistent with every scriptural idea of the truth that is in Jesus.

Mr. Bell's common discourses at this meeting was low and insipid, however loud and vehement. There does not seem to be the least depth or weight in the truths which he delivered. They are superficial in themselves, and delivered with an air of superiority that necessarily occasions disgust. But when his vociferation comes on, it is horrible beyond expressions! I thought I could distinguish a straining agony to raise himself to an admirable pitch. It was all so forced and unnatural that I could not esteem it so much as preternatural—supernatural it could not be if Holy Writ has left us any rule to judge divine interposition! However I must suppose this kind of address to have an effect upon some, as many seemed to labour with echoing groan for groan. And from the observation of many years, we are assured that the most noisy outrage is seldom the fruit of a deep conviction.

The manner and matter of Mr. Bell's prayer was loud, familiar, peremptory, and often extravagant—if not bordering upon audacity and blasphemy. It is horrible beyond expression when a poor creature can talk to the Almighty with less respect than to an earthly magistrate. I might have said “seemingly” talk so, for so it really seems; but I hope they had more humility and reverence in their hearts than their expressions implied. Not one word dropped that they thought meanly of themselves!

In short, from what I have seen of his letters and what I have now heard myself, I cannot but esteem Mr. Bell ripe for the most unscriptural extravagancies. I expect to hear of his prophesying denouncing judgements and calling himself one of the witnesses. I hope he is honest at heart. But to me he appeared to be acting a part—whether out of vanity or mere delusion, I am not able to determine. But whoever is unhappily led by his spirit will, I am persuaded, find cause to repent before God and their brethren, or sink into such a willful blindness as must be fatal in the end.

Mr. Maxfield did not seem to be so swallowed up in rhapsodies. As I said before, he spoke well at first, but in his prayer flew into expressions unbecoming his character. For many months I have been utterly in the dark what he was aiming at in his preaching at the chapels and Foundery. The general tenor of his discourses seemed to proclaim a God [who was] all mercy, therefore sin was as nothing before him; all powerful, therefore we might now be justified and sanctified. He seems to have lost all idea of a state of conviction. He makes light of the justified state, and with vehement solicitude insist[s] upon it that we may *NOW* believe and be sanctified without any previous experience. His vehemence is taken for power, and this power works on some to cry out in an agony for the promised blessing. Yet after all, I hope he has been blessed to some. Though to me (who esteem[s] him sincerely), he genuinely is as the sounding brass.

3. The consequence of last night's meeting was shocking.

And I think it could not be otherwise. Such strange discourses, prayers, and hymns in such a congregation could not be attended with any pleasing affect. It is true the zealot against was more angry than the zealots for perfection. But the point is not a subject for public debate. The subject itself is venerable and ought to be treated with great respect. If the subject itself was allowable in a private

meeting, yet Mr. Bell's manner of managing it was deplorable and was worthy of reproof. It cannot be but the like meetings will breed the like confusion.

4. The conduct of these brethren are a just reproach to our society, not only amongst those that are without but the sincerely devout in all societies.

We have long been reproached for our peculiar attachment to Christian verity and virtue. This reproach has been and still is honourable. But our principles and discipline had nothing in them from the beginning that had the least tendency to promote enthusiasm. Our love to God and one another, our indifference to worldly pursuits and joys, our zeal for the honour of God in his ordinances were the great stumbling blocks of unenlightened minds. Such offences real Christianity ever occasioned, and must do so whilst it remains upon earth. But this kind of rhapsody and wild ranting can never be from the Spirit of Christ, and therefore must be a grievous offence to every serious mind who wishes well to religion.

5. What remedy can wipe off the reproach?

Your dear brother is not very well qualified to govern those who will not be governed. His tender regard for the good of souls will make him bear with some evil where he thinks there is much good. Had he been at the meeting last night, he must have done violence to his conscience if he had not immediately called a solemn society and renounced the promoters of such indefensible extravagancies. But now he will hear all from second hand; and if from themselves, no doubt but he will lay the blame upon the opposers.

If I might presume to advise, it should be that a few select men and women who encourage this meeting and a few who disapprove of it should meet your brother upon the subject. Let him hear both sides and then let him judge in the name of God without fear and act with resolution.

If the brethren are right, let them be encouraged, without censuring those who cannot join with them. But if their scheme is big with such kind of rant as the French prophets,⁸ and likely to prove a reproach to everything serious, the brethren should be admonished. And if they submit not to wholesome counsel, our bishop [i.e., JW] should declare solemnly, "I can take no further care of your souls!"

But I would rather hope they will be advisable—if not to study the meek and lowly truths, yet at least to give over proclaiming their warm and lofty experiences to such a mixed multitude. If not, and our dear ministers connive at their conduct, the reproach will naturally fall upon them, though they in all things labour to be worthy of a "well done" both from God and good men.

Dear sir, don't you think I have vastly exceeded my commission? You desired I would see, and hear, and tell you all. But you little expected such a tedious answer to your short epistle. If I have exhausted your patience, forgive me. I mean to oblige. To thee, O Father of mercies, do I appeal that I mean not to injure my brethren! If my ignorance has led me into nonsense, it cannot, I think, be imputed to malevolence. I write freely, but I think with candour. And if I do no good, I hope I shall do no hurt. You will easily prevent my letter from doing hurt by burning it. But if it can do any good, I am so conscious that I have advised nothing but what it strictly true, that I have no objection to your showing it anyone.

I write in a hurry and have no time to write a fair copy, which I hope will be a sufficient apology if you meet with anything not fully expressed or legibly wrote. I write all my thoughts to you in hopes something may rebound to your dear brother. But nothing I can say to him will have any weight. He loves me for what I was, not for what I am. But I ever did and ever shall love him with the sincerest veneration.

⁸In 1685 Louis XIV repealed the Edict of Nantes, subjecting Protestants in France to renewed persecution. Protestants in the isolated Cévennes region of south-central France raised an insurrection, encouraged by some prophesying the soon return of Christ to set up a millennial reign. See Hillel Schwartz, *The French Prophets* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).

I will not begin another half sheet. We all in my little house unite in sincere love to you and yours. My dear mother is much as usual.⁹ Pray for us and believe me ever

Your most obliged and affectionate

W. Briggs

Endorsement: by CW, “Brig[g]s Ranters / Oct. 28 1762.”¹⁰

Source: holograph; MARC, DDPr 1/10.¹¹

⁹Williams own mother, Grace (Evered) Briggs (1688–1759) was already deceased; so he was speaking of his mother-in-law, Charity (Goodhew) Perronet (1689–1763).

¹⁰Also a few words of shorthand too obscured by a cross-out to expand with confidence.

¹¹A transcription was published previously in *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library Manchester* 80 (1998): 94–99.

From William Briggs

London
November 10, 1762

Reverend and Very Dear Sir,

I am weary of thinking and grieving about the subject of my past [letter]. And had I not some faint hopes that it might be useful to write, I would set down entirely satisfied with your excellent resource, “prayer and patience.”¹ But ought some of us who are concerned for the honour of God and the reputation of our society to set down indifferent to all that pass[es] amongst those who are called our brethren? I must confess, every time I hear of them it adds a wound to my affections. Yet I hope I shall never feel, much less show, any anger towards the men, however I am shocked at their behaviour.

Mr. Matthews² assured me that he had it from good authority that after I left the meeting the 27th, brother Owen declared that “Whosoever believed in what they now delivered should be saved, but whoever believed not should be damned.”³ There are seven at the other end of the town who meet in a dark room to see visions—as if they cannot see as well with their eyes shut at noonday as with their eyes open without any light at all! Whether these are males or females, or both, I could not learn. They have called upon a lame man to arise and walk, and afterwards to blind John to open his eyes and see. But without effect, which they heavily charged to the patient’s account, as wanting faith to be healed! One would think that these withholdings of omnipotence at their request (or rather command, their prayer in general having that style) would have been a weighty reproof and check to their infatuation. But when weak heads are filled with a persuasion of having a peculiar gift from above, it generally transpires in acts of obstinate folly. Could we always be inspired with humility and modesty, nothing could transpire even from the weakest of us, but what is excellent and honourable to the cause of genuine piety.

Every meeting since I was there seems to have increased in wildness and confusion. Dear sir, what good can be done in such an hubbub? To go again would, I think, answer no end but to add to my concern. It is not in my power to put the least check to such diabolical uproars!

Brother Charles [Perronet] says he shall print something to overturn the arguments of the jealous man in the gallery.⁴ Charles was there when I was and says that “brother Bell, to be sure, is an earnest enthusiast; but yet, great good has been done amongst them.”

Your dear brother [JW] at Spitalfield’s chapel last Sunday morning preached such a discourse that I could wish it was printed, and more especially imprinted on all our hearts. His text was “Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifyeth.”⁵ He spoke highly of knowledge and many other gifts—natural, acquired, or divine—all which he proved to have a natural tendency to puff up, if not under subjection to love. For love only buildeth up in every virtue that forms the perfect Christian.

¹CW’s reply to Briggs’s letter of Oct. 28, giving this advice, is not known to survive.

²John Matthews (d. 1764), a London woolery draper and supporter of JW, married his stepdaughter Jeanne Vazeille on July 24, 1757. JW was at Matthews’ side when he died on Dec. 28, 1764. See JW, *Journal, Works*, 21:497.

³Daniel Owen, a member of the London society active in the perfectionist party, withdrew with Bell in 1763.

⁴See [Charles Perronet], *A Letter to Mr. P[ayn]e; occasioned by the late frequent Disturbances made during the Time of Prayer and Exhortation in an Independent Meeting in Beech Lane* (London: np, 1762). The letter is dated Oct. 28, 1762.

⁵1 Cor. 8:1.

In the evening, at the Foundery, he preached upon “Look unto me all the ends of the earth and be saved!”⁶ He explained [1.] what it was to look unto Jesus; and 2. what it was to be saved. To be saved, he said was: 1) to be convinced of sin, 2) to be justified, [and] 3) to be sanctified.

1. Conviction he observed was the first work of the Spirit and was variable as to the means and degrees.

2. Justification, or the new birth, is an instantaneous work of the Holy Ghost, and is illustrated by the birth of a child.

3. He affirmed that sanctification is also an instantaneous work, being the death of sin. This he illustrated by the death of the body, which must be an instantaneous stroke.

4. He endeavoured to prove that these two operations in the souls were easily distinguished by supposing a professor of each to stand up. Ask the first, “Have you no pride or anger, or desire?” He will answer, “Yes, I find much of these boils in my heart and at times they greatly trouble me. But by the grace of God, I can keep them under and desire to press to the prize of my high calling.” Ask the other the same questions and he will answer, “No, by the grace of God I find no remains of any evil and have likewise the witness from above that they are all done away and the change was instantaneous.”

5. He affirmed that if sanctification is not an instantaneous work because not mentioned in the Bible, neither is justification. For we can only prove either from the reason of the thing and experience.

6. All this he declared was no new doctrine, but what he had preached from the beginning; for proof of which he referred us to his *Journal* about the year 1739, wherein in a comparative review, he describes his own state of soul.

I think I have set down his very expressions. And I am sure I am not mistaken as to the purport of them, as upon comparing thoughts with my friend Mr. [Thomas] Butts, who was present, we were equally surprised at the four last articles!

Although you had rather encouraged me to it, I had no thoughts of troubling your brother with my observations on what is now working. But this discourse, and his extreme tenderness and moderation (very judicious if he could not believe what he had heard every day since his coming to town) in the society, quickened my concern and forced from me as long, as loving, and as respectful a letter as I lately wrote you.⁷

And now I would leave the event to infinite wisdom. I hope I shall never decline anything wherein I can really serve anyone; much less decline any labour that might be for the glory of God and the public good. Yet after doing my best, I can do no more than commend the cause to God with prayer and patience. To run out into a violent opposition might only increase the disorder and hurt myself. But this I think, there must be a separation soon. And if your brother should once see it his duty not to countenance them, they will not long remain where all things will be brought to the light. If we will not join with them in meeting in dark rooms or immerse(?) in any of their meetings for rant and absurdity, they will of themselves separate from us and labour only to distract one another—and in the end sink into oblivion.

Mr. Matthews came up surprisingly mended, and gave us great joy by informing us how wonderfully God had raised you up and daily strengthened you for your daily labour. Surely it is a token for good that you should be able so to help in the cause of truth at a time when your help was so much wanted! May your health and happiness increase day by day, and every blessing attend you and your family! May you never cease to pray for

Your unworthy but affectionate friend and humble servant,

W. Briggs

Endorsement: by CW, “Brig[g]s Nov. 10. 1762.”

Source: holograph; MARC, DDPr 1/11.

⁶Cf. Isa. 45:2.

⁷Unfortunately this letter is not known to survive.

From the Rev. John Fletcher

[Madeley]
Tuesday, November 30, 1762

My Dear Sir,

Our young friend¹ has been here for several days in good health. He doubtless lets you know what he thinks of his present stay. He seems studious and calm, and conforms well to the character you gave me of him. We are already old friends. I am taking you at your word in respect of the proposal that you made in your letter to come to me for a visit in spring if he comes to bring you. I have never read Quesnel and so I have nothing to say on your offer, if not that I am also as ill-fitted to be editor or abridger as author.²

Our friend has surprised me in apprising me of the separation of some of the witnesses in London.³ I would not have believed that the rot had gone so far. Your brother has need of much determination and prudence, but above all of God's blessing, to stop the flood before it does any more damage. I have written a letter to him on the subject, but I have not sent it.⁴ I enclose it so that if you do not feel it too harsh, imprudent, or out of season you can pass it on to him. I believe that in these circumstances each must bear his own witness against matters which may have such sad consequences.

Amongst the books which make up my library I have a volume in folio which contains the works of Father Guilloché a Jesuit.⁵ I am surprised to find in them so many good things, and you also will be if you take the trouble to read them. Matters in my parish are *in statu quo si nonquam*.⁶ The Anabaptists have openly declared war on me on the question of election. Do you believe that it would be possible to agree with them without exposing oneself to internal conflicts? I have reason to fear that they sow discord among us so that they may fish in troubled water. I have expressly charged my society not to dispute with them.

I am delighted to learn that you find yourself a little better, and that all your family are well. May the Lord strengthen you all and make you grow in the knowledge of our great God and saviour Jesus Christ! It is that which I lack, and for which I sigh in secret. Only a faith accompanied by God's love poured into my heart by the first Spirit can make me happy and Christian. It's not there, and I know not where to find it.

Goodbye. Pray for me and my poor flock.

¹William Ley (1739–1803), a native of Exeter, was a Methodist preacher 1758–63, though his name never appears in the Minutes. This was likely because of Ley's intention to seek ordination. He was currently studying under Fletcher's direction. Ley matriculated St. Edmund Hall, Oxford in April 1764, completing his studies the following year. He was ordained deacon in Oct. 1765 and took a curacy in Lakenheath (Suffolk). In 1769 he was ordained priest, and appointed vicar of of East Tilsbury, a position he held until his death. He continued to support the Wesley brothers through the early 1770s.

²CW owned a set of Pasquier Quesnel's *Le Nouveau Testament en françois; avec des reflexions morales*, 8 vols. in 4. (Brussels: Henry Fricx, 1700); his set, with his inscription dated July 1, 1762 is held in MARC (MAW CW33). In CW's letter to Fletcher (not known to survive), he had apparently asked Fletcher to consider translating and abridging the set.

³See JW, *Journal*, Nov. 15, 1762, *Works*, 21:397–98; and JW to CW, Dec. 11, 1762, *Works*, 27:311..

⁴This letter is not known to survive.

⁵F. Guilloché, *Les oeuvres spirituelles du R.P.F. Guilloché de la Compagnie de Jesus* (Paris : Chez Estienne Michallet, 1684).

⁶“A state as never before.”

I pray you greet your wife, the little family, and John Downes. If I reply to him at present I fear adding affliction to the afflicted.⁷ My letter could be filled only with complaints about my state, which would not console him in his *forsan meliora videbo*.⁸

Endorsement: by CW, “Nov. 30. 1762 / Fletcher.”

Source: holograph (in French); MARC, MA 1977/495/21.⁹

⁷Downes was struggling with ill health, which would eventually lead him to cease travelling as a Methodist itinerant.

⁸“Hope for better things.”

⁹A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher’s original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 168–69. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith’s English translation (pp. 169–70).

From the Rev. John Wesley

London
December 11, 1762

[[Dear Brother,]]

For eighteen or twenty days I heard with both ears, but rarely opened my mouth. I think I now understand the affair, *at least* as well as any person in England.¹

The sum is this: 1. The meeting in Beech Lane, before I came to town, was like a bear-garden, full of noise, brawling, cursing, swearing, blasphemy, and confusion. 2. Those who prayed were partly the occasion of this, by their horrid screaming, and unscriptural, enthusiastic expressions. 3. Being determined either “to *mend* them or *end* them,”² I removed the meeting to the Foundery. 4. Immediately the noise, brawling, cursing, swearing, blasphemy, and confusion ceased. 5. There was less and less screaming and less of unscriptural and enthusiastic language. 6. Examining the society, I found about threescore persons who had been convinced of sin and near fourscore who were justified at these meetings. So that on the whole they have done some hurt and much good. I trust they will now do more good, and no hurt at all. Seven persons had left the society on this account; but four of them are come back already.

I bought the ground before Kingswood School of Margaret Ward, and paid for it with my own money. Certainly, therefore, I have a right to employ it as I please. What can any reasonable man say to the contrary?

I have answered the bishop, and had advice upon my answer.³ If the devil owes him a shame, he will reply. He is a man of sense, but I verily think he does not understand Greek!

I should be glad to see Mr. [David] Nitschmann. What is all beside loving faith! We join in love to Sally and you.

Adieu!

Address: “To / The Revd Mr C. Wesley / in / Bristol.”

Postmark: “11/DE.”

Endorsement: by CW, “Dec. 11, 1763 [*sic*] B[rother] slight-healer.”

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 3/18.⁴

¹“The affair” is the controversy over claims to instantaneous absolute perfection in the London society; see JW, *Journal*, Nov. 24–Dec. 8, 1762, *Works*, 21:398–400.

²JW had used this phrase before, but the quotation marks suggest it was not his own creation. It seems to trace to his associate William Grimshaw, *An Answer to a Sermon lately published against the Methodists, by ... George White* (Preston: Stanley and Moon, 1749), 27; who exclaimed in reference to Church of England clergy who are mere moralists: “The Lord in Mercy mend them, or end them, for Christ Jesus and his church’s sake.” JW’s first known use was in his *Journal*, Aug. 29, 1759 (*Works*, 21:226), about a society in Lakenheath: “I took knowledge what manner of teachers they had be accustomed to and determined to *mend* them or *end* them.”

³JW completed the manuscript of his *Letter to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Gloucester* (William Warburton) in late Nov. and sent it to CW to review; see JW, *Works*, 11:459–538.

⁴Transcription published in JW, *Works*, 27:311–12.

From William Briggs

London
December 16, 1762

Reverend and Very Dear Sir,

I have been constantly engaged, or I had before now answered your kind favour of the 27th ultimate. And now I must do it in great haste.

Grace is promised and grace has been given, sufficient for the trying day of our worthy friend Mr. [Thomas] Butts.¹ And I hope his trial has been blessed, more or less, to all of us his friends.

Blessed be God, I am better than I was, and can assure you that the disorder I labour under is a daily and profitable sermon to my soul. When I find any pleasing hopes with regard to the things of this life, one shake over eternity makes me return wholly to my best and serious pursuits of the one thing needful. The Lord is very gracious in all his dispensations towards me, but though my situation in mind, body, and estate is often such as nature groans under, yet grace convinces me that I could not contrive a more profitable plan for my immortal interests.

I have had the pleasure of lately being twice in your dear brother's company. On Tuesday, last week, he dined at Mr. Bird's;² and the Thursday following, with me. By what I can learn from him, he is determined (by God's help) to amend or abolish the present disorders amongst our wild brethren. He thinks of them as you do, and only bears with them in hopes something may turn out for their good. By all accounts their meetings are more orderly than before he came. And if he can, by moderating things, bring all into consistence, we shall all rejoice. On visiting the classes he has found above 500 who profess that they have attained; though he does not believe one in ten is arrived to that holy state. May the great Disposer of all events give an happy issue to the trying affair to him, to you, and most of your old friends and children!

In last Saturday's *Public Ledger* this disorder amongst us first made its public appearance under the important name of the Reverend Mr. D— or Dodd!³ But I believe this gentleman's zeal is more particularly, though indirectly, aimed at convincing the world that he is no Methodist. I have wrote a few lines by way of apology for your brother's conduct which, if published, I hope will do good.⁴ At least, it will rap the knuckles of Master Dodd for his ungenerous and unfriendly conduct towards the Methodists under the care of the brothers.

My dear father is neuter in the affair.⁵ He knows little but what he hears from Charles [Perronet] and me, and Charles has the ascendent. Though my father has freely lamented to me that Mr. [Thomas] Maxfield should be so closely engaged with such wild people.

Whenever you favour me with a line, it would add greatly to our pleasure if you could inform us that your little fireside⁶ are well in health. For as I am often asked after your health (which has been so

¹Thomas's wife, Hannah (Witham) Butts, had just died; see CW to SGW, July 12–14, 1763.

²Likely William Bird, who appears as a single man in the Foundery Band Lists (1742–46). If so, he was now married, and CW baptized his wife; see CW to SGW, July 1, 1758.

³Unfortunately, no copies of the Dec. 11, 1762 issue of the *Public Ledger* have been located. The writer was Rev. William Dodd (1729–77), a popular Calvinist-leaning preacher in London, especially from the pulpit of Magdalen House.

⁴No such published reply has been located.

⁵I.e., his father-in-law, Rev. Vincent Perronet.

⁶*OED* lists the first extended meaning as “home or domestic life.”

bad), I can give no answer to satisfaction. In February my dear companion expects her trying hour.⁷ O
pray for her and, dear sir,

Your affectionate friend,

W. Briggs

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

Endorsement: by CW, "Dec. 16. 1762 Briggs" and "Brig[g]s of Ranters."

Source: holograph; MARC, DDP# 1/12.

⁷Charity Briggs (1763–1835), the seventh child of William and Elizabeth (Perronet) Briggs, was baptized on Feb. 7, 1763.

From William Ellis¹

December 23, 1762

Reverend and Very Dear Sir,

Dear indeed are the ministers of the most high, who like St. Paul, guard not against evils only but also against the very appearance thereof, and with all his might against errors creeping into the Church. And I believe, yea, I know that many will have reason to bless God to all eternity that he gave you to tread in the apostle's steps, for errors indeed have crept in among us and abound. For as the people so are the priests, and with a great deal of truth the cry in London might be, "Where shall we go to hear a genuine Gospel sermon?" Oh that you would come to town, and I pray God that he would answer many of his peoples' prayers, and bid you get up.

Indeed I should like to open my mind to you. But how can I without either grieving or offending you, considering he who is near and dear to you is hereby concerned [i.e., JW]. Indeed when I read the fifteenth [chapter] of the first [book] of Samuel, and the twenty-fourth verse, my heart aches for him, for I think I see his picture.² But is he the only one that God had a controversy with for giving way to the same spirit. Nay there was Eli also, for not laying a restraint upon his sons, only telling them of their sins, upon whose account the ark of God was taken by the Philistines, at the news of which the anger of God was displayed against Eli by permitting him to fall and break his neck. Oh, how jealous is that God of Israel of his honour, with whom we have to do. How strict then ought his ministers to be and to the end that they may [discipline the people]. Christ himself has left another circumstance upon record which is to the angel of the Church of Thyatira in the second [chapter] of the Revelation.³ Now indeed there is great danger of being carried away with such a spirit, for there is a show or the appearance of meekness, long-suffering, patience, forbearance, and thinking meanly of myself, preferring another because he is wise and can command his own spirit better than I. But whether it is through pretence of seeming graces or any excuse whatever, God will not leave those unpunished who restrain not the sins of others, when in their power, and more so if they deceive or suffer his people to be deceived.

But if it is said God has placed Mr. John Wesley as head or leader of this people, therefore he knows best how to guide them and what to do better than any can tell him, how shall I contradict this when they were my own words and thoughts not long ago. But God has taken my idol from me, and now I am constrained to cry out, all men are failable, yea liable to fall into gross errors. So that the head cannot say to the foot I have no need of thee. So that saying God has made him leader of the people is just saying nothing at all, for God anointed Saul to be king but it does not appear that Saul executed God's command. Also God required or looked for Eli to restrain the wickedness of his sons; but he did not, though he was a prophet and, for aught I know, as wise and good a man as Mr. Wesley. Likewise our Lord gives the bishop of the Church of Thyatira a blessed character as touching many things, but threatens to punish notwithstanding for not removing errors or deceivers out of the church.

But is this all that lays against Mr. Wesley? I wish it was, but perhaps I have been too plain already; though I cannot tell how that can be if we consider the nature of the thing, especially if we see the dreadful effect it has. I mean in those who call themselves perfect. Even the very heads of them cannot bear a civil question to be asked without falling in a great passion, even to the calling of horrid names. I have met with this treatment from them myself, as well as many others. And on Thursday last in my band, it was insisted upon they could not say the Lord's Prayer for themselves, neither did they stand in need of the atoning blood. (Oh, what Socinianism is this!) But it does not stop here. Last night I heard a

¹William Ellis was one of the men entrusted by JW with supervision of the London society, who wrote JW about affairs in the society on Feb. 5, 1768.

²"Then Saul said to Samuel, 'I have sinned. I violated the Lord's command and your instructions. I was afraid of the men and so I gave in to them.'"

³See Rev. 2:18–29.

worse account of one of their principal ones, which was that he was ill upon his bed cursing and blaspheming. I, being willing to see and know for myself, went this day to his house and found it even so. O my God, lay to thy hand, stop the torrent of errors. I can add no more, my grief and sorrow overcomes me. Pardon the abruptness of this and throw a mantle of love over all you may see amiss, considering it comes from one grieved in spirit for the cause of God and for the souls of my brethren. I am reverend sir,

Your sincere friend and well-wisher,

William Ellis

P.S. It is through Mrs. Butterfield's informing me you would be glad to hear from any of your friends in London, made me take the liberty.⁴ If you are so obliging as to favour me with a line, please to direct me in Kings Gate Steet, Holborn, next door to a farriers.

Endorsement: by CW, "W. Ellis offended / Dec. 23, 1762."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/501/56.⁵

⁴Robert Butterfield (d. 1760), a wine merchant on Great Russell Street, married Millbery Gilby (b. 1714) in Jan. 1752, after the death of his first wife Mary Attey (d. 1751). Now a widow, she hosted CW and his family in her home many times, continuing to do so after she remarried in 1764 to Harrison Foottit.

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

From the Rev. John Wesley

London
December 23, 1762

[[Dear Brother,]]

But how to come to the speech of the colliers is the question, as there are an hundred miles between us, as this is too critical a time for me to be out of London.

I am satisfied with the learning of John Jones (as there is no point of learning in debate between us) and the judgement of John Matthews, Charles Perronet, and James Morgan. Yet it is certain his admirers will still think him unanswerable.

I believe several in London have imagined themselves saved from sin “upon the word of others,” and these are easily known. For that work does not stand. Such imaginations soon vanish away. Some of these and two or three others are still wild, though I think Mrs. [[Garbrand]] exceeds them all.¹

But the matter does not stick here. I could play with all these if [[I could but set Thomas Maxfield]] right. He is *mali caput et fons*;² so inimitably wrong-headed, and so absolutely unconvincible! And yet (what is exceeding strange) God continues to bless his labours.

My kind love to Sally!

[[Adieu.]]

I shall soon try your patience with a long letter.

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

Postmark: “23/DE.”

Endorsement: by CW, “Dec. 23. 1762 / B[rother] palliating.”

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 3/19.³

¹Edward Perronet identifies this as the “later famous Mrs. Garbrand of the Strand near Brentford—whose *chief* accomplishments were her intemperate love . . .,” and describes her as “a visionary enthusiast” (in a manuscript cited in JW, *Works*, 21:489 n. 35, and 21:428 n. 52).

²“The head and fount of evil.”

³Transcription published in JW, *Works*, 27:313–14.

From William Barber¹

London
December 27, 1762

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Yours I received.² I always find your letters prove a blessing under God for good unto my soul.

At this time I find such a sense of the divine goodness to my soul that tongue cannot express. I can truly say it has been a Christmas indeed to me, much to be remembered by me. The Lord has given me such a measure of divine light and love that I have never before enjoyed—I mean the same in quality, but a larger degree thereof. I find my love so enlarged that I can say

With open arms of charity,
Embracing all mankind.³

O dear sir, help me to praise my God that has done so much for me. O that I may be kept humble, that I may be always poor and vile in my own eyes, that I may lie continually at footstool of Christ, that I may be nothing, that Christ may be all in all.

The Lord as opened Mr. [John] Wesley's mouth to rebuke with all authority those many evils that has been creeping in amongst us. I hope and believe that all these things will work together for good to them that love and fear God.

I hope you love me so well that whatever you think amiss in my writing that you will correct me. Indeed I have need of help, I mean human as well as divine.

Dear sir, once more I desire your prayers that I may stand in the good old path. For I find none better. Neither do I desire to be found in any other. I trust though we are absent in body we are present in Spirit.

We join in love to your self and partner, and may the Lord bless you both in soul and body. And I hope it will be the good pleasure of our Lord that we may see once more each other again in the flesh, but the will of the Lord be done. Which is the hearty prayer of

Your affectionate son in the gospel,

Wm Barber

Address: "To / Revd Mr Chas Wesley."

Endorsement: by CW "[Barber] / Barber Dec. 27. 1762 / alive, humble."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/501/23.⁴

¹See Barber's conversion account to CW, c. Oct. 1741.

²This letter is not known to survive.

³CW, *Nativity Hymns* (1745), #9, st. 4, p. 13.

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

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

1763

From an Unidentified Correspondent

[London]
[c. January 1763]

I received yours a few days ago with great thankfulness, and had it not lain all this time I should have answered it sooner. I still find most assuredly that our souls are close united to our Bristol community. We are one in him who joins us. The Lord has been pleased to honour us with several glorious deaths of late. The most striking of which I have had on my mind to send you an account of, as Miss March took it down (who was with her the whole time).¹ For I always find when anything is profitable, I long for my Bristol sisters to partake of it. The person was Miss Cooper,² of whom I suppose you may have heard often. During life she was an uncommon steady walker and adorned her profession in all things. And a few years ago, misfortunes happening to her mother's husband, she gave up as soon as she came of age all her little fortune and went out into the world as a companion to a gentlewoman of our society. Here she was exceedingly tried, but proved that the way of the cross was the way to the kingdom.³

After God had spoke peace to her soul about two years, he began to stir her up to seek a farther blessing—convincing her she had been an unbeliever of his power; although she had tasted of his love, limiting the Holy One of Israel. She continued sometime seeking with much earnestness. Till at length the Lord gave her power to cast her whole soul by faith on Jesus, as made unto her of God wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. From this time she rejoiced, and loathed herself in her own sight, often saying, “I feel no desire but to please Jesus Christ and know not of anything in my will but what is sanctified to him. I depend on him every moment as my advocate with the Father and daily feel my short coming without condemnation. The blood of sprinkling speaks me clean, and if I could perform the obedience I desire I should still be ashamed before him. And though I do not glorify God as I would, I am not condemned but abased before him.” In sickness as well as health she lived in the will of God. She abode in faith, and dwelt in love.

A few days before her last illness she said to one of my band, “I have always, from a child, had a fear that at the hour of death I should have great conflicts and not be able to endure. But this day God has assured [me] and I shall finish my course with joy.” Soon after that she was constrained to sing,

When pain o'er my weak flesh prevails
With lamblike patience arm my breast.⁴

¹Jane Catherine March (c. 1744–1820), was the daughter of prosperous merchant Thomas March (1686–1754) and Jane (Lisle) March (d. 1703–64) of St. Peter Le Poer parish in London. By early 1760 she was connected to a circle of London Methodists, likely through friendship with Mary Bosanquet. Jane had a significant family estate, and never married. She eventually settled in Bristol, where she was buried Feb. 26, 1820.

²Orig., “Copper.” Jane Cooper, born in 1738 at Higham in Norfolk, was a devout Methodist domestic servant. In failing health for some time, she died of smallpox and was buried by JW on Nov. 25, 1762 (see JW, *Journal, Works*, 21:399).

³From this point the writer abridges the account of Jane Catherine March. It can be compared to JW's abridgement of the same source in *Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, §24, *Works*, 13:184–86.

⁴Cf. JW (translated from C. F. Richter), “In Affliction or Pain,” st. 3, *HSP* (1739), 145.

And when she sent for Miss March she wrote in her note, “I suffer the will of Jesus, all he sends is sweetened by his love. I am as happy as if I heard a voice say:

For me my elder brethren stay
And angels beckon me away
And Jesus bid me come.”⁵

When one told her, “You will not be frightened my dear, but it is the smallpox,” she answered, “I can’t be frightened at the will of God.” Sometime after she said, “I shall die a lump of deformity. But I shall meet you all glorious. I shall still have fellowship with your spirit.”

When Mr. [James] Morgan came in, he asked her what she thought the only way for souls to walk in, and what were their chief hindrances? She answered “I consider these dangers as partly constituti[onal].⁶ It was mine to be of a reserved temper of mind, to be very quiet, to suffer much and say little. [Others] are of a different disposition. Some may think the one more excellent, some the other. But I see the great thing is to live in the will of God. And for some months past, when my soul has been more particularly devoted to God, I have felt such a being guided by his eye, and the union which I have received from the Holy One teacheth me all things. ...⁷

He asked her if she had particular conviction she should die? She answered, “No, only from the nature of disorder. But I feel his will so precious that it is impossible to choose.” On Friday morning she said she believed she should die, and sitting up in the bed prayed, “Lord I bless thee that thou art even with me, and all that thou hast is mine. Thy love is greater than my weakness, greater than my helplessness, greater than my unworthiness. Lord thou sayest to corruption, ‘Thou art my sister’; and glory be to thee O Jesus, thou art my brother. Let me comprehend with all saints the length and breadth and depth and height of thy love.” ...

Some hours after the agonies of death came on her teeth were clean and her face at the same time full of smiles of triumph. She clapped her hands for joy and soon after said, “The enemy is as a roaring lion.”

Mrs. [Sarah] C[rosby] said, “But you my dear are more than conqueror through the blood of the Lamb!”⁸ She said, “Yes, O yes sweet Jesus. O death were is thy sting?”⁹

When Mr. Wesley came,¹⁰ he said, “Do you believe now you are saved from sin?” She replied, “Yes, I have had no doubt of it these many months. That I ever had [doubt] was because I did not abide in the faith. For while I believed, I always felt it. But I now feel I have kept the faith, and there is no fear in love, perfect love [casteth¹¹] out fear.”¹² ...

⁵CW, “The Pilgrim,” st. 8b, *Redemption Hymns* (1747), 68.

⁶There is a blank space in the text here and in the next instance of an editorial insertion. It appears the writer could not read March’s text and left blanks for the obscure portions. JW’s account reads “... generally from the natural constitution.”

⁷In this and the following instances, the writer used “Etc.” to show some of March’s text was being elided.

⁸See Rom. 8:37.

⁹See 1 Cor. 15:55.

¹⁰JW visited her on Friday and Saturday, Nov. 19–20, 1762; see *Journal, Works*, 21:398.

¹¹Here is another blank space in the text, where the writer could not read March’s text.

¹²Cf. 1 John 4:18.

She exhorted all that came in her way to be wholly given up to God. She was near 20 hours without swallowing anything and at the end of that time said she should be content to live a 12 month, for the will of God was so dear she could feel no complainings in her soul. ...

Sometime after Mrs. D— said, “My dear, we have not long to enjoy each other, or suffer together.” She replied, “My dear, our enjoyments are eternal, never to have an end!” On Monday she was lightheaded and sensible at times. One said, “Jesus is your mark.” She answered with a low voice, “I have but one mark. I am all spiritual.” Miss March once said “You dwell in God!” “Altogether,” said she. She then said, “The Lord keeps my soul above all, or I don’t know what would become of me. He is very good.” She was in strong convulsions 15 hours before she died. Her pain was extreme. She [Jane March] said, “You are made perfect [in] his sufferings.” “More and more so,” said she. She then lay sometime, and said, “Lord thou art strong.” Then pausing sometime, she said, “My Jesus is all in all to me. Glory be [to] him in time and to all eternity.” In half an hour after, she quietly fell asleep in him her soul loves. May we die the death of the righteous and our last end be as hers.

Having so much to write of this account (which indeed I have been forced greatly to shorten), I shall not have time to say all that I would.

Endorsement: by CW, “Jane Cowper’s death / 1763.”

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/501/45.¹³

¹³For a digital copy and “as-is” transcription, see:
<https://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/services/digitisation-services/projects/rapture-and-reason/>

From the Rev. Vincent Perronet

Shoreham
January 1, 1763

My Reverend and Dear Brother,

I thank you for the favour of your last visit,¹ and should have been glad if it could have been repeated. I doubt not but we however enjoy the benefit of your prayers, and I desire we may ever enjoy them.

The dear companion of my life is still in the fiery furnace, from whence I doubt not but she will be delivered like gold purified in the fire; or, as you express it in your obliging letter to my son Billy, “She will be gathered as a ripe shock of corn into the heavenly garner.”²

I have lately read over your last *Hymns*, with the same pleasure which your former always gave me. Does my friend enquire whether all his verses equally please? Let Horace answer for me:

*Verum ubi plura nitent in carmine, non ego paucis offendar maculis; quas aut incuria fudit, aut humana parum cavit natura.*³

But I will still add another cause to what Horace mentions, and to which he was certainly a stranger: a pious zeal for the honour of God and religion, and a pious fear lest delusions should overspread the Methodist church!⁴ These, my dear friend, are highly laudable and highly becoming the Christian divine and the Christian poet!

That there are some things which want setting to rights is most certain. But let us take care that whilst we root up the tares we root not up the wheat at the same time!⁵ Let us endeavour to preserve the latter, though it may be attended in a gracious heart with many of the former. Let not a pious soul deny a work of God in itself because it is either unusual, or in a larger abundance than we looked for or expected.

On the first dawns of Methodist surely there were many mistakes in many gracious souls. And how many zealots were there who condemned the whole together? Let this teach us that prudence and moderation, that coolness and discernment, which the present outpourings of the Spirit so plainly require from us. I am so thoroughly convinced that it is a work of God, and so desirous that it may proceed over the earth, but especially in my valley of dry bones, that I am quite grieved for any interruption it may meet with, either from those who give or those who take offence.

My dear brother will easily excuse this freedom from one that loves him, and which he uses because he loves him.

We rejoice much at your happy recovery, not merely for your own sake or that of your family, but for the sake of thousands who are yet unborn! I wish you dear spouse an entire freedom from her pain. And I wish all of you a safe and glorious journey through time to eternity! May the grace of our Lord

¹This was surely in Sept. 1762, when CW and SGW were in London.

²This letter is not known to survive. Charity (Goodhew) Perronet would die in Feb.

³Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 351–53; “But when there is a great majority of beauties in a poem, I will not be offended with a few blemishes, which either inattention has dropped, or human nature has not sufficiently provided against.”

⁴Many of the hymns in *Scripture Hymns* (1762) engaged those claiming instantaneous perfection. While CW continued to insist that entire sanctification was the Christian’s goal and hope in this world, he increasingly stressed that it was typically attained only late in life, after significant struggle and growth in grace; see S T Kimbrough Jr., “Charles Wesley and the Journey of Sanctification,” *Evangelical Journal* 16 (1998): 49–75.

⁵Cf. Matt. 13:24–30.

Jesus Christ be with all of us! Our love and respects are with each of you.
Thine, most affectionately,

Vin. Perronet

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

Endorsement: by CW, “Jan. 1. 1763 / Mr Perronet A pattern / of his moderation.”

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/472/5.

From the Rev. John Fletcher

Madeley
January 5, 1763¹

My Dear Sir,

I congratulate you upon the strength which the Lord has given you during the last year,² and I pray to him to supply the lamp of your days with fresh oil during the course of that upon which we are embarking. May he above all fill the vessel of your heart with his oil of joy, and prepare you for all the events that the time will see blossoming! May he make you bear the light of his gospel into a thousand hearts by your writings and your sermons, and by wisdom and grace into mine by your letters and your conversation.

My soul does not sense any new life in the renewal of the year. May the Eternal help me to finish it better than I begin it. What I lack is the light and the strong virtue of the Spirit of God. [I would be] happy if in the midst of my pressing needs I had the strength or the constancy of will to carry them to the feet of our Saviour. As regards my parish, we are on the same footing. We await a day of Pentecost, but we do not pray enough to obtain it. We are left quiet enough except by the serjeant who sends us a (constable) officer of the court to make enquiries concerning the life of his majesty's subjects, on the information that had been given him that someone had heard a cry of murder in my house on Christmas day. This rumour was founded on the cries of a 19 year-old girl who is of our society, and whom Satan had bound in chains for several months.

It seems to me that this murderer intends by this device to render my ministry in Madeley useless, as he did it in London among the French by Miss Amirauld.³ She is exhausted by fasting. She falls into convulsions—sometimes in the church, sometimes in our assemblies. She is continually tempted to suicide. Her constitution is considerably enfeebled as well as her reason. What is there to do in such a case? Those who are tried in this way are no more open to reason than are the poor inhabitants of Bedlam. Prayer and fasting are our only refuge. Help us by your supplications. We are planning to lay this particular case before God next Wednesday, and every Wednesday following. Support our feeble prayers with all the power of your own.

A question: To forestall the scandal, shall I prevent her coming to church and to our assemblies? William Ley believes that this will be enough to turn her mind completely, or to destroy her soul by despair or worldliness. For myself, I do not know what to think of it. Give me your opinion.

Our friend finds trials at Madeley as everywhere. He makes some progress, but not as much as he could make if he was less slow, and if he had a better memory. However his assiduousness and *labor improbus omnia vincet*.⁴

We learn nothing from London except through your channel. May the Lord give your brother the wisdom and resolution in these demanding circumstances. If the witnesses go a little further in their extravagances, he will be ashamed to be their advocate, and the remedy will at the last be born out of the magnitude of the evil.

The Baptists have sent me a pamphlet of 90 pages, full of personal judgements and sophisms. I have replied as an act of condescension on behalf of my society to the first 20 pages.⁵ As for those who are of the enemy, they are too desperate and infatuated to listen to reason or Scripture. We will try to follow your advice, we feel the necessity.

¹Orig., "1762"; Fletcher falling back into Old Style dating.

²CW's letter conveying this news is not known to survive.

³See Fletcher to CW, Mar. 22, 1759.

⁴Virgil, *Georgics*, i.146; "Persistent work will conquer all."

⁵The response was in manuscript and is not known to survive.

Where is Lady Huntingdon? I would be happy to hear news of her, and to know where I can write to her.

Farewell. May the Lord be with you and strengthen you in body and soul. Greet all your dear family from me and wish them from me a holy and happy year.

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

Endorsement: by CW, “Fletcher / Jan. 5. 1763.”

Source: holograph (in French); MARC, MA 1977/495/15.⁶

⁶A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher’s original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 171–72. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith’s English translation (pp. 173–74). See also the earlier (and looser) translation in Fletcher, *Posthumous* (1791), 126–28.

From the Rev. John Wesley

London
January 5, 1763¹

[[Dear Brother,]]

You take me right. I am far from pronouncing my remarks *ex cathedra*.² I only desire they may be fairly considered.

I was a little surprised to find Bishop Warburton so entirely unacquainted with the New Testament, and, notwithstanding all his parade of learning, I believe he is no critic in Greek.

If [[Thomas Maxfield]] continues as he is, it is impossible he should long continue with us. But I live in hope of better things. Meantime *festina lente*!³

I baptised two Turks two or three weeks ago. They *seem* to be strong in faith and their story is very probable, but I am not *sure* it is true. I wait for farther evidence.⁴

This week I have begun to speak my mind concerning five or six honest enthusiasts.⁵ But I move only an hair's breadth at a time, and by this means we come nearer and nearer to each other. No sharpness will profit. There is need of a lady's hand as well as a lion's heart.

Mr. [George] Whitefield has fallen upon *me* in public open-mouthed, and only not named my name. So has Mr. [Martin] Madan.⁶ But let them look to it. I go on my way. I have a sufficient answer as to George Bell but I will not give it before the time.⁷

We join in love to you both. My wife [Mary] gains ground. She is quite peaceable and loving to all.

[[Adieu!]]

Address: "To / The Revd Mr Chas. Wesley / in Bristol."

Postmark: "6/IA."

Endorsement: by CW, "B[rother] *festina lente!* / Jan. 5. 1763 / quot [illegible] *tot errores!*"⁸

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 3/17.⁹

¹Orig., "1762" [i.e., Old Style]; but both CW's endorsement and the content of the letter show that it was 1763.

²"From the cathedral"; or with the authority of a papal edict. CW was reviewing JW's manuscript of the forthcoming *Letter to the ... Bishop of Gloucester* (William Warburton).

³"Hasten slowly," i.e., aim for an appropriate balance of speed and diligence.

⁴The "Turks" turned out to have been impostors. See JW, *Journal*, Dec. 4, 1762 (*Works*, 21:399), and Jan. 5, 1763 (21:401–02); and JW to CW, Feb. 8 and Feb. 26, 1763.

⁵Referring to Thomas Maxfield, George Bell, and others.

⁶Martin Madan had published *Some Quaeries Humbly Offered to Those who Profess Sinless Perfection*; see both his queries and JW's responses in JW, *Works*, 13:591–96.

⁷See JW to the *London Chronicle*, Jan. 7, 1763, *Works*, 27:316–17.

⁸"As many [illegible] as errors."

⁹Transcription published in JW, *Works*, 27:315–16.

From John and Elizabeth Butcher¹

London
January 9, 1763

Reverend Sir,

I thank you for your fatherly advice to me and my wife.² And your brother dined with me on Saturday,³ when my wife took up her ticket according to your request.

I was with 20 of your friends, and your brother present, for to acquaint him of our proceedings with regard to you and of our request for you to come to London when your brother was absent, which we judged necessary at these trying times. And your brother desired for you to come before he left London,⁴ and that you would make him your first friend as soon as you come to London, for he thought he had so little of your company when you was in town last time. He preaches in such a manner now that the people's countenance seemed changed to what appears when Mr. [George] Bell is at Snowfields chapel on Monday evenings. I am glad that I can inform you that your brother has forbid Mr. Bell's teaching any more at the Foundery and the chapel. But my brother Arvin,⁵ notwithstanding that, did publish publicly that Mr. Bell would be there this night. I did not deliver your message to brother Arvin, and you may judge the reason why.

The scene is quite changed to what I wrote you last.⁶ I think there are but three men that seem to stand close, firm, and steadfast, but what in some degree withdraw or else renounce the common preaching for to hear Mr. Bell—who is so highly in their esteem that he is too much the subject of conversation in the room of Jesus Christ. I have seemed almost alone. Nay I have been told by Mr. Colley that I opposed the preachers,⁷ and set up my wisdom against the experience of 500 people. I said to him, “Well I might, when he could teach that true believers are changed in life but not in heart.”

I do search and study the Scriptures, day and night, and I thank God he doth increase in me every fruit of his Spirit. And I can speak as freely to my class as ever. I thank God that I now take nothing upon trust, and I prove the power of the word of God more than ever. The difference among the brethren in London seems to rise from those texts as follow—viz.: The word “flesh,” what it means; or “the deeds of the body” or “the body of sin,” what these meaneth with regard to true gospel believers. Some of my

¹John Butcher, a currier, had a shop in Bermondsay. He was one of the supervisors of the society in London (see John Collinson to JW, Feb. 5, 1768), and would be named one of the original trustees of City Road chapel (see Stevenson, *City Road*, 250).

²This letter is not known to survive.

³JW included no entry in his *Journal* for Jan. 8, 1763, which could have mentioned this dinner.

⁴CW did return to London by May 7; prior to JW's departure for a preaching tour in northern England on May 15.

⁵William Arvin (c. 1700–1779) resided in Southwark and took the lease of a chapel at Snowfield where he invited JW's preachers to speak until a disagreement in 1763. See JW, *Journal*, Nov. 2, 1751, Works, 20:406; JW to a friend, May 1763, Works, 27:330; and Thomas Maxfield, *A Vindication of the Rev. Mr. Maxfield's Conduct* (London, 1767), 9–10.

⁶This letter is not known to survive.

⁷Rev. Benjamin Colley (d. 1767), a resident of Tollerton, Yorkshire, was converted by itinerant John Manners and joined the Methodists in 1761. He received episcopal ordination and by early 1762 was assisting JW as a clergyman in the London chapels. He was briefly drawn in with the enthusiasm of George Bell and Thomas Maxfield, but reclaimed by Manners and appointed to Newcastle upon Tyne in 1763. By 1767 he was back in London, where he married Elizabeth La Croisette in June, but passed away by the end of the year. See Atmore, *Memorial*, 78–80.

brethren say they are in no danger of living after the flesh and have no deeds of the body to mortify. They have but the world and the devil for to war against, and that they can never sin more or be hurt by them. I cannot think but St. Paul was as free from sin as any of my brethren who say they have a different salvation from sin than most of their brethren and own them true believers in Jesus, when he Paul said, “I keep under my body”⁸ There seems to be something in nature that arises from animal life in consequence of the fall of man, that while man is capable of the actions of life he will not be long free from having some trial to the soul arising from the flesh or nature—as well as coming from the world or devils. Therefore it appears to me that Christians, if they are changed into holiness, to ever see a high degree, if they know whereof they are made and the nature of the covenant of grace, they will not think their souls entirely out of danger even from the flesh as well as the world and devil. I must own I have been too neglectful of the gift of God, but not so much as to give my brethren authority to say I have not grown in grace these 14 years. Whereof I know I have every year. But I am doubtful of saying I am a young man yet; but I hope to grow to a perfect man in Christ Jesus.

Dear sir, if you knew how the people seem to make light of your brother! Think if you are able to come. You would not be long from London, even for the sake of those that are weak as those that thought themselves so strong. I believe Snowfields chapel is Mr. Bell’s chief rendezvous. He said tonight that some called him a madman, and that John Wesley called him an enthusiast, but said he did not mind that.

I hope for to see you at London soon, if the Lord permit. My partner joins in duty to you and love to your partner and [we] remain

Your dutiful children,

Jn. and Elizh. Butcher

Address: “To / the Revd Mr C Wesley.”

Endorsement: by CW, “Jan 9 1763 / Butcher / faithful & humble / of Bell etc.”

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/501/29.⁹

⁸I Cor. 9:27.

⁹For a digital copy and “as-is” transcription, see:
<https://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/services/digitisation-services/projects/rapture-and-reason/>

From the Rev. John Wesley

London
February 8, 1763

[[Dear Brother,]]

I think now the sooner you could be here the better, for the mask is thrown off. George Bell, John Dixon, Joseph Calvert, Benjamin Biggs,¹ etc., etc., have quitted the society and renounced all fellowship with us.² I wrote to Thomas [Maxfield], but was not favoured with an answer. This morning I wrote a second time, and received an answer indeed! The substance is, “You take too much upon you. We *will not* come up.”

I know all the history of the Turk.³ I must leave London on Friday to bury Mrs. Perronet. She died on Saturday morning.⁴

The answer to the bishop (who has broke his leg) is forthcoming.⁵ Mr. Madan wrote the *Queries*.⁶ I let him have the last word. I should not wonder if a *dying* saint were to prophesy. Listen to Sally Colston’s last words!⁷

Molly Westall died last week in huge triumph.⁸

John Jones does good. I have seen the Colonel.⁹ James Morgan has lately been in a violent storm, and is scarce alive. I advise him to retire to Kingswood for a season. We need all your prayers. God is preparing thoroughly to purge his floor. O let us be instant εὐκαίρως ἀκαίρως!¹⁰

We join in love to Sally.

[[Adieu!]]

Address: “To / The Revd Mr C. Wesley / in / Bristol.”

Postmark: “8/FE.”

Endorsement: by CW, “B[rother] Feb. 8. 1763 himself / confirming my prophecy of the Ranters.”

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 3/20.¹¹

¹Benjamin Biggs (1709–78) served as butler to Sir James Lowther (1673–1755). He came under Methodist preaching in 1750 and was converted. While never listed in the Minutes, he traveled with itinerant John Murlin in the late 1750s. Cf. *AM* 3 (1780): 493–96.

²JW details several members withdrawing in *Journal*, Jan. 28–Feb. 5, *Works*, 21:403–06.

³Cf. JW to CW, Jan. 5, 1763.

⁴JW performed the funeral of Charity (Goodhew) Perronet Feb. 11; see *Journal*, *Works*, 21:406.

⁵JW’s *Letter to ... Bishop of Gloucester* was published in March 1763 in London and Dublin.

⁶*Some Quaeries Humbly Offered to Those who Profess Sinless Perfection*; see both Madan’s queries and JW’s (unpublished) responses in *Works*, 13:591–96.

⁷See Sarah Colston’s conversion narrative sent to CW, May 20, 1742.

⁸Molly was likely the wife of the itinerant Thomas Westall (whose last name JW often spelled Westall).

⁹Bartholomew Gallatin (1711–78) reached the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in 1759. See CW’s hymn on the occasion of his death; *MS Funeral Hymns* (1756–87), 79–80.

¹⁰“In season, out of season” (2 Tim. 4:2).

¹¹Transcription published in JW, *Works*, 27:318–19.

From the Rev. John Wesley

London
February 26, 1763

[[Dear Brother,]]

I perceive *verba fiunt mortuo*;¹ so I say no more about your coming to London. Here stand I; and I *shall* stand, with or without human help, if God is with me.

Yesterday Mr. [Martin] Madan and I, with a few more, gave the full hearing to the famous Turk and his associate.² He is an exquisite wretch—was originally a Spanish Jew, afterwards a Turk, then a papist, then a Jew again, then a Protestant, and now at last (under Mr. Lombardi's wing) a zealous papist! Concerning his companion we are still in doubt. *We fear* he is little better, though we cannot prove it.

Mr. Gausson tells us the stroke will come tomorrow evening;³ the rest say not till Monday.⁴ Let us live today!

I labour for peace; but they still make themselves ready for battle.

Peace be with you and yours!

Adieu!

Address: "To / The Revd Mr Wesley / in / Bristol."

Postmark: "28/FE" or "26/FE" (unclear).

Endorsement: by CW, "Febr. [[Fb]] 26, 1763; B[rother]'s [[of prophets]] / Turks and Prophets."

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 3/21.⁵

¹Cf. Plautus, *Poenulus* ("The Little Carthaginian"), Act 4, Scene 2 (l. 840) "*verba faciet mortuo*"; "They would be words for a dead man."

²See JW to CW, Feb. 8, 1763, referring to JW's baptism of two Muslims.

³Jean-Pierre (or Peter) Gausson, the husband of Anna Maria (Bosanquet) Gausson (sister of Mary Bosanquet).

⁴Referring to George Bell's prophecy of the end of the world.

⁵Transcription published in JW, *Works*, 27:320–21.

From William Briggs

London
March 5, 1763

Reverend and Very Dear Sir,

We are greatly obliged by your kind congratulations and rejoice to find your sentiments with regard to our dear mother so exactly correspond with our own.¹

The printed papers I have received from Mr. Fletcher, with a few affectionate lines which increase my love to him.

O sir, had you heard your dear brother last Sunday night in the society,² you would stood astonished (all we did) at the wisdom and love that inspired him. I hope it is not improper to say what I thought at that time—i.e., it was as if an angel from heaven was speaking to the assembly. such words of confutation to the wild dreams of our brethren I never heard. And in truth nothing could describe them, i.e., the prophets, better than the passage he read and made the foundation of his discourse, from the 7 or 8 first verses of Ezekiel 13.³

His words of comfort to the weak and fearful of heart were beyond all my expression. And he prayed in such an energy of faith that every heart seemed to be comfortably affected. He prayed particularly that, if it pleased God, there might be no storms or tempests, or any uncommon disorder in the air. And he added, “If it please thee, let the heavens smile on us the following day.”⁴ And Monday was throughout a very remarkable fine day.

He said he intended to have kept a fast and watchnight to supplicate for these deluded souls, but upon consulting with the leaders he had laid aside that design, for fear it might offend the weak or profane. In short, I have not been in a meeting when the presence of God was so sweetly amongst us these many months. And I thought it was a token for good, that good would be brought out of this terrible evil.

I should have told you that [George] Bell took a solemn farewell of [Benjamin] Biggs a few days before Monday, saying in farewell, “I shall see your face no more before we hear the last trumpet!” And he gave out on Friday that there would be two small preparatory shocks on Sunday evening at 5:00 and at 6:00.

Surely now [that] their dream is out they will begin to doubt of their mission and return to their sober senses. Bell sometime ago said, “If these things do not come to pass, I will shame the devil amongst you!” How shortening is it that with one breath he should speak of it as the revelation of God, and admit of a doubt but it may come from the devil! And how it adds to the astonishment that he did not say he would take shame to himself!

By what your brother said on Sunday night of Mr. [Thomas] Maxfield (though very tenderly), and about Dathan, Korah, and Abirim,⁵ I am inclined to think he is convinced that Mr. Maxfield will raise a separate party. Yet I hope I am mistaken.

I am forced to scrawl, being much engaged. But I hope you will excuse all defects from

Your most affectionate friend,

W. Briggs

¹CW had (characteristically) congratulated William and Elizabeth (Perronet) Briggs on the death of their mother Charity (Goodhew) Perronet. His letter is not known to survive.

²JW does not detail his activities on Sunday, Feb. 27, in his *Journal*.

³The passage condemns false prophets. CW transcribed Ezekiel 13:7–9 at the top margin of this page in shorthand.

⁴Monday, Feb. 28, was the day George Bell was predicting would mark the end of this world.

⁵See Num. 16:1.

P.S. I met Mr. [Martin] Madan in the streets this week, who shook his head and lamented, saying “Alas! All this confusion arises from Mr. Wesley’s encouraging so many people to believe they had attained to a state of perfection.” He said Bell was under a prosecution for raising unnecessary fears in the king’s subjects, for blasphemy, and for holding meeting in unlicensed places.

N.B. By a new order not but single letters will come free to me.

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

Endorsement: by CW, “March 5. 1763 / W. Briggs com- / mending B[rother].

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 2/61.

From the Rev. William Grimshaw

Haworth
March 5, 1763

Dear Sir,

God bless you and yours and brother [John] Downes. Who wrote last I know not, you or I. Judge as you please. This I know, I love you dearly. And as to the witnesses of perfection, you ask me three questions:¹

First, “What think I of their testimony that at such a time the root of sin was taken away and the Spirit witnessed, etc.” In answer to this I say they are strangers to their own hearts, or deluded by the devil. Or fantastically, if not wilfully, belie the Holy Ghost. And if they repent not, I fear at last the devil will have them.

Secondly, “That whereas they affirm that a newly awakened person may receive the promise of perfection before he has either done or suffered the will of God.” I answer to this they may as well take a shorter cut and affirm that a newly awakened person may receive the gift of sinless perfection before he has either done the will of God or suffered it. I ask further of these, where is such a thing promised in all the book of God?

Thirdly, “‘*Crede,*’ say they, ‘*quod habes, et habes.*’”² This I grant in a qualified sense, but not in theirs, I trow.³ Our Lord (Mark 11:24) says (and what he says, I’ll swear) that “whatsoever things ye desire, when pray believe that ye have them, . . .” But these [things] what we asked must be within compass of his promises, *non ultra*.⁴ But the things they aver or pretend to are *ultra*, I think, and therefore are not to be expected.

Then you say “I shall add no more at present.” But I’ll add more at present, and you may add more when you please. Last Monday should have been the day of judgment. Therefore, to have answered your letter sooner would have been waste labour, time, and paper. Something else should [I] be a doing when the Judge is at the door. Besides, the day itself would have revealed the verity or vanity of those perfectionists. But who was mistaken? God or Bell? Just as much truth, I suspect, is there in all their other reveries.

Scriptural (<...⁵) Christian perfection I allow and avow. *Sinless* perfection I disdain. *Sinless* is not only [an] unscriptural expression, but I fear (though I will not certainly affirm) has given birth and being to all those extravagant, presumptuous, scandalous, and egregious⁶ vagaries among our London brethren. I fear also that some soon of our own preachers, though honest, good, and well-meaning men, have through ignorance of the Holy Scripture, partial quotations of it, self-conceit, and blind zeal contributed no little to the birth and growth of these extravagancies. Where they will end I know not.

You said to me two or three years ago that you feared that the Spirit then appearing in them would drive them into ranterism; and so I think it is come to pass. I suppose your good brother [JW] has a trouble enough to reduce and suppress this wild spirit. It is my comfort to think and assure you that we know little of it in these parts. I hope we never shall. When you write again (and write soon) let me hear more of your sentiments of these witnesses, etc.; and I perhaps may also do the same.

I had some thoughts that brother Downes, as he had left off business in London on account of his health, might probably venture into the north and call on me in his way for the watch money. But I shall

¹CW’s holograph raising these questions is not known to survive.

²“Believe that you have [received the blessing], and you have.”

³I.e., I believe.

⁴“Not beyond” or outside of.

⁵A small portion is torn away by the wax seal, obscuring one word.

⁶Orig., “irregious.” He may have intended “irreligious.”

pay it in to Dicky Watkinson's hands, for his use.⁷ The work of God prospers in these parts. We have took above an hundred of Mr. [Benjamin] Ingham's scattered members into society, who behave well and are very solicitous for the life and power of godliness. I hope we shall pick up many more of them.

I rejoice and give God thanks that he hath so renewed your strength. May he long continue it for his own glory, his people's benefit, your own, and your family's comfort. I desire my sincere respects to your spouse and Mr. Downes, being

Your very respectful and affectionate brother,

W. Grimshaw

Address: "For / The Reverend Mr. Charles Wesley / at Horse-fair / Bristol."

Postmark: "5/MR," and "Bradford."

Endorsement: by CW, "March 5. 1763 / Grimshaw on ye Wit- / nesses."

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 2/58.

⁷Richard Watkinson (d. 1793), of Leeds, became an itinerant preacher, beginning about 1776. See *Minutes* (post-Wesley, 1793), 1:276.

From the Rev. John Wesley

London
March 6, 1763

[[Dear Brother,]]

Tomorrow I set out for Norwich, which I have delayed as long as possible. I am likely to have rough work there, but the turbulent spirits must bend or break.

That story of Thomas Maxfield is not true.¹ But I doubt more is true than is good. He is a most incomprehensible creature. I cannot convince him that separation is any evil, or that speaking in the name of God, when God has not spoken, is any more than an *innocent mistake*. I know not what to say to him or do with him. He is really *mali caput et fons*.²

Mr. [James] Neale has grievously peached his associates. But I shall not hastily saddle myself with him and his seven children.

The week after Easter week I hope to visit the classes in Bristol, or the week following. James Morgan is love-sick, John Jones physic-sick; so that I have scarce one hearty helper but Lawrence Coughlan! We join in love to you both.

Adieu!

Address: "To / The Revd Mr Wesley in / Bristol."

Postmark: "8/MR."

Endorsement: by CW, "B[rother] of Prophet Md / March 6. 1763."

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 3/22.³

¹CW's letter, containing the story, is not known to survive.

²"The head and source of [the] evil."

³Transcription published in JW, *Works*, 27:321–22.

From Elizabeth (Molland) Blackwell

Lewisham
March 10, 1763

Can you forgive me for not returning my thanks before for your good and obliging favour?¹ But alas the language of my heart was so different from what you charitably suppose and my spirits so sunk that I could neither write nor speak of my dear departed friend.²

Nor indeed can I now without that sort of feeling that you would blame, and especially when I shall (as I can) repeat to you a conversation we had about two or three days before my friend took to her bed. She was in a most sensible, composed state of mind and looked with such a countenance as she did when you last gave her the communion.

Led by the Spirit of his love
To springs of living comfort led.³

She told me she loved and forgave all mankind as she was forgiven herself, and that she had a pleasant path before her and that her way was strewn with flowers. Her nieces came to see her a few days after. They had lately been reading the *Pilgrims Progress*, which had a good deal affected them, so she took the opportunity from that (as I suppose she thought it might make the more impression) to tell them she had her roll in her hand and that it was signed and sealed.⁴ She gave good advice to all about her. She suffered much bodily pain with patience and great resignation. And when she could no longer speak for her Master (as she often called our God and Saviour), her actions spoke as if she saw the Great Invisible. If it should please God that I should have the satisfaction to see you again on this side [of] eternity, I could add to this imperfect account.

I hope your self and dear partner and children enjoy your health and every other blessing. My love and best respects wait on Mr. Wesley, who it would give me great pleasure to see. Mr. [Ebenezer] Blackwell is at London or I am sure would add his best respects to mine. I am sir, with great respect and esteem,

Your obedient servant,

Eliz. Blackwell

Endorsement: by CW, "March 10 1763 / Mrs Blackwell on her / blessed friend."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/501/27.⁵

¹This letter, surely sent in late November or December, is not known to survive.

²Blackwell's close friend, Hannah Dewell, died November 12, 1762. See CW's manuscript hymn eulogy: MS Death of Hannah Dewal. CW would have assumed the Blackwell was rejoicing in Dewell's release from this life.

³CW, Hymn 93, st. 4, *Hymns on the Lords Supper* (1745), 82.

⁴In John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, the pilgrim needed a signed and sealed roll to gain entrance to the Heavenly City.

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

From John Downes

London
March 10, 1763

My Dear Friend,

We got to the inn about 6:00, where I was met by brother [William] Barber,¹ who conducted me to Mrs. [Millbery] Butterfield's. In about an hour after came brothers [Richard] Moss, Crook, and Baker.² We prayed and conferred together about an hour. And last night they came again with Silas Told,³ brother Kemp,⁴ Rogers; and several more would have been [there], only by one means or other were prevented. After the meeting I heard Dr. [John] Jones at the [West Street] chapel, and met the bands with him. But how was I surprised! The room was full and would contain about 150; of these about six or seven were the speakers. But not one word that could be found fault with. Generally such solid and deep experience as made my heart rejoice. I could scarce believe my own ears. Self-knowledge, the daily cross, examination, rejoicing in tribulation, the goodness of God to poor unworthy worms, confession of faults in the late extravagancies, were the only subjects. Mr. Jones was greatly comforted, as well as myself.

Mr. [John] and Mrs. [Mary] Wesley will be back from Norwich Saturday sennight. He has told the society that about thirty, if I mistake not, have left us, and 150 more of those good people have not yet received their tickets; that he will bear with them till Easter and then let them look to the consequences.

Mr. [George] Bell is bailed. He is prosecuted by one [Mr.] Payne in Mr. Whitefield's society and also of the Society for Reformation of Manners. Mr. Jones has been with him and thinks he will not appear against him at the trial, and by consequence that he will be cleared.

The prophets associate together and encourage one another. It seems they were mistaken, and so were the apostles—that God has spared the wicked another year, for which they give him thanks. Others have talked of the 28th Old Style—as the New Style is only by man's appointment.⁵ Others make no other reply than wait the event.

As to your coming, the people as far as I have be able yet to learn are very exceeding anxious. Mr. [John] Matthews says you will never forgive yourself if you neglect coming. Dr. Jones speaks in strong terms to the same purpose. Mr. Kemp enlarges and gives his reasons: that your brother [JW] seems bewildered, and he believes is rather afraid of your coming, as he leans toward the disaffected brethren and yet wishes to be rid of them. He [JW] speaks against them in public, and yet in private bids his friends be tender of them. The same person [Kemp] adds that to his knowledge, if he [JW] should come nearer, he would most likely be entirely governed by them.

Mr. Kemp has proposed Nanny Dobson to wait on you. She is much recommended by sisters [Sarah] Clay and Aspernell,⁶ as a person in every respect very fit. Mrs. Butterfield and I would have gone

¹See Barber to CW, Dec. 27, 1762

²Likely William Baker, who appears as a single man; and John Crooke, who appears as married men in the Foundery Band Lists (1742–46).

³Silas Told (b. 1711–78), the son of a physician in Bristol, became master of the charity school in the Foundery in 1744, where he appears as a married man in the Foundery Band Lists (1743–46). Told later devoted his life to ministry to prisoners.

⁴Richard Kemp (1721–87) was a prosperous framework-knitter in Moorfields, a member of the Foundery society, and an original trustee of City Road chapel. See Stevenson, *City Road*, 530; and CW's epitaph on his death, MS Funeral Hymns (1756–87), 114.

⁵Referring to the change in England in 1752 from the Julian calendar (Old Style) to the Gregorian calendar (New Style), which would shift February 1763 to the following year.

⁶Orig., "Aspernell"; Bilhah Aspernell (d. 1774) appears as a leader of bands for single women and a member of the select society in the Foundery Band Lists (1742–46). She is frequently mentioned in

this day to Hampstead, to look after lodgings, only to make them sure they must be taken immediately or else they will be gone.

Mrs. Butterfield wishes you could stay at her house a day or two, and then you might please yourself with lodgings, or rather with a house to your mind. She assures me Dr. Turner reckons the air very good—only he thought if you stayed at her house when you were in town last, that you would kill yourself with preaching, and therefore blamed the air. You may have Mr. Meredith's stable.

I must beg the favour of you to let Isaac [Duckworth] send me back the watch you have received since I left Bristol. It may be directed to Mr. Iön, watchmaker, on Windmill Hill, Moorfields. He must lose no time, but send it by machine.⁷

In reading over your hymns, I folded down the corner of the leaf at the places which appeared to me exceptionable.⁸

Mrs. Butterfield remembers her duty. So does Mr. Kemp, sister Clay, sister Aspernel, etc. Love to Mrs. [Sarah] Wesley and blessing to your son [Charles] and daughter [Sarah].

Yesterday I waited on friends at Islington. Mrs. [Elizabeth] Waller last week was so ill that her life was in danger, but is now much better. The rest of the family are well. Mr. Gwynne is daily expected.⁹

With kind respects to Mrs. Wesley and a thousand thanks for all favours, I am

Your much obliged friend and dutiful son,

J. Downes

Respects to Miss Furly.¹⁰

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

Postmark: "10/MR."

Endorsement: by CW, "J. Downes's Report / March 10. 1763."

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 2/62.

JW's diary, and he performed her burial service on Jan. 28, 1774 (JW, *Journal, Works*, 22:397).

⁷I.e. the regular coach.

⁸Likely *Scripture Hymns* (1762), with its scattered criticisms of perfectionism.

⁹Likely SGW's oldest brother Howell Gwynne, MP, in London on Parliamentary business.

¹⁰Dorothy Furly (c. 1731–1807) was the sister of Rev. Samuel Furly (c. 1732–95), and both were correspondents with JW. She was currently in Bristol and in June 1764 would marry John Downes.

From the Rev. Vincent Perronet

[Shoreham]
March 14, 1763

My Reverend and Very Dear Brother,

The obliging favour of yours is come safe to hand,¹ for which you have my sincere thanks and acknowledgments.

I never indeed wanted so much consolation through a troublesome pilgrimage of near seventy years, though I have been frequently in the furnace of affliction and frequently tossed from wave to wave upon a boisterous ocean. However, my God was always my support, and constantly proportioned the strength to the day. But like an all-wise and gracious physician, he reserved the highest cordial for the time of deepest distress! All glory to his holy name!

How low did the Lord lay his poor afflicted child!² He laid her even in the dust, for two years together! Her constant moan was her bad heart, her want of faith and divine love, her want of every spark and shadow of goodness, and her want of Christ, which was the foundation of all her spiritual sufferings! But I know assuredly that her “God has abundantly supplied all her wants, according to his riches in glory, by Christ Jesus.”³ I often told her that he certainly would. But what she would not then believe, she now perfectly knows.

It is true that the time of our separation is only as a moment. But even during that moment, as you justly observe, I should be very desolate without the divine presence. I desire therefore that it may be a part of both your prayers that I and mine may ever enjoy it. I am greatly obliged to your dear partner for her tender and Christlike sympathy. May the good God fit every one of us for all events! And may he carry us all safe to his eternal kingdom of glory, through Christ Jesus.

My family joins in much love and respects to yourself and good Mrs. [Sarah] Wesley, I am, my very dear friend and brother,

Thine most affectionately,

Vin. Perronet

Endorsement: by CW, “Mr Perronet resigned Mar. 14 / 1763.”

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/472/6.

¹CW’s letter to Perronet, offering condolence on the death of his wife, is not known to survive.

²His wife, Charity (Goodhew) Perronet.

³Cf. Phil. 4:19.

From the Rev. George Whitefield

Comones(?),¹ 30 miles off Edinburgh
March 17, 1763

My Dear Friend,

Not want of love but leisure hath prevented my answering your last.² I have left all in safe hands, even in the hands of him on whose shoulder the government of all is placed—my society, my Church, my children must be seen at the great day.

As your brother [JW] wrote me an angry letter,³ without a cause, I thought best to make no reply. Nothing less than the Spirit of God can make him know and see his best friends. By my poor scribble in answer to the bishop,⁴ you will see whether I am his friend or not. You and he may recommend it or not, as you think proper. I had laid it quite by, but reread it upon the road. *Benedictus benedicat et bene dicetur.*⁵

Remember an amphibious itinerant. This I trust is yet the language of my heart: Blessed Jesus,

That life and all things casts behind,
Sprints forth, obedient to thy call,
A heart that no desire can move,
But still t' adore (and praise and⁶) love,
Give me, my Lord, my life, my all.⁷

Most cordial respect awaits your yokefellow. Ere long we shall meet

Where sin and strife and sorrow cease,
And all is calm and joy and peace.⁸

I am sorry poor [George] Bell is prosecuted. Surely no Christian hath a hand in it. Lord Jesus take the work into thy own hands for preachers and hearers. Sir Charles [Hotham] is at Geneva. The work prospers at Brighthelmstone.⁹ That grace, mercy, and peace may be multiplied upon you, yours, and all that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity is the hearty prayer of, my dear friend,

Yours, etc. etc. etc. in a never failing Jesus,

G. W.

¹The name of a ship; GW was sailing from Newcastle upon Tyne to Edinburgh.

²This letter is not known to survive.

³This letter is not known to survive; it may have dealt with the attacks of an associate of Whitefield, Mr. Payne, upon the perfectionist prayer-meetings in London.

⁴George Whitefield, *Observations on Some Fatal Mistakes in ... "The doctrine of Grace," ... by William Lord Bishop of Gloucester* (London: E. Dilly, 1763).

⁵"May the Blessed One bless and commend."

⁶A small portion of the page is torn away; text supplied from published hymn.

⁷Johann Freylinghausen (as translated by JW), Hymn 40, st. 6, *CPH* (1737), 39.

⁸Cf. Nicholas von Zinzendorf (as translated by JW), "From the German," st. 6, *CPH* (1738), 56
"Till toil, and grief, and pain shall cease,
Where all is calm, and joy, and peace."

⁹An earlier name for Brighton; and location of one of LH's residences.

P.S. I am likely to go from ⟨Greeno¹⁰⟩ck, near Glasgow in the Jenny ⟨...⟩ to Boston.

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

Postmark: “21/MR.”

Endorsement: by CW, “G. Whitefield sailing / March 17. 1763.”

Source: holograph; Bridwell Library (SMU), Manuscript collection.

¹⁰Another small portion of text is torn away; this first affected line can be reconstructed by context; but not the second.

From an Unidentified Correspondent

[Bristol]
[April 6, 1763]

Mr. Evans lived till about the age of seventy-five.¹ [He] was a sincere servant of God from his youth. When he was about 12 years old the convincing Spirit of the Lord wrought very strong on him, particularly on account of his breaking the Sabbath. And from that time he walked in all the outward ordinances blameless, seeking salvation (as it were) by the works of the law. When he was about 60 years of age,² the better hope was darted into his soul, so that he had then a clear sense of the remission of all his sins and the love of God shed abroad in his heart. And those words in particular were applied to his soul: “Thou has kept the good wine until now.”³ He never after lost sight of Christ, till he was called to his glory. He walked on, constant and steady, in true simplicity of heart and uprightness in his life and conversation. And [he] was particularly exemplary in regard to keeping the Sabbath day holy and in searching the Scriptures.

He bore his last illness with extraordinary patience and resignation, and yet longing to be dissolved, to be with Christ. The night before he died, when he found an alteration in himself for death, he say, “My eyesight fails me, but I shall soon see clearly. I am going to join the general assembly and church of the First-born. Jesus Christ has been my redeemer and preserver, and now he is come to be my deliverer. Praise the Lord, oh my soul, and forget not all his benefits. Praise the Lord Jesus Christ, my Saviour. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for all three persons are concerned in my salvation.”

The text he chose was 1 Peter, second chapter, verse 21, and desired his funeral sermon might be preached from the words.

Endorsement: by CW, “Evans bl[essed] death / April 6. 1763.”⁴

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/501/58.⁵

¹This is apparently Llewellyn Evans, buried Feb. 20, 1763 in Bristol. He had been active in Bristol Methodism from at least 1741, when his name appears as a married man in Bristol Bands (1741).

²The writer adds a footnote here: “When he heard the gospel preached at Kingswood he was convinced that by the works of the law he could not be justified.”

³John 2:10.

⁴The date is when CW received the account, no necessarily the date of death.

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

From Thomas Colbeck¹

[Keighley]
[c. April 20, 1763²]

Reverend and Dear Sir,

In compliance with your request,³ I have as below given you an account of the Lord's gracious dealings with the soul of dear Mr. [William] Grimshaw in his last sickness.⁴

Notwithstanding all who visited Mr. Grimshaw flattered themselves that his useful life would have been spared, he seemed to have had some intimation that the Master called for him. Accordingly, before he took his bed he gave directions in writing about his funeral, requesting that he might have a poor man's burial suit and a poor man's coffin, and that about twenty of his spiritual brethren and nearest relatives might pay their last respects to what of him could die in attending his corpse to the place of his interment. Requesting that a Methodist preacher at least might attend his funeral and preach upon Phil. 1:21,⁵ a scripture which he caused to be engraved upon the candlestick, pulpit, and walls of the church, and which was exemplified in the whole of his ministerial labours.

Our dear deceased friend was greatly supported in his affliction, for not withstanding his body was so inflamed by the disorder that his flesh burned as if he had been in an oven, he expressed himself to be as happy as he thought it was possible while clothed with mortality; and as fully assured that when the silver cords of life should be loosened his joyous soul should be admitted into the Holiest through the blood of Jesus, as if he had already been an inhabitant of heaven.

His discourse while he was able to bear company was very weighty. Few left his apartment without being deeply affected. To an intimate friend who visited him he gave strict charge to adhere close to his much loved Master and the Methodists.

The Lord's Day before he was translated, he prayed earnestly that the Lord would that day bless the assembled congregation. Speaking to some friends, he said "If any enquire of me, tell them I am happy. Be not discouraged, we shall all be in heaven soon."

Having had an extreme bad night, he was asked in the morning how he found himself. To whom he replied, "I have been entreating the Lord, if it pleased him, to mitigate my affliction, and it is only 'ask and have.' I lie in my Saviour's arms."

The day he quitted the mournful vale he said to some present, "I shall be better soon, or with my brethren above." His God sustained him in his final hour. His final hour brought glory to his God.

Endorsement: by CW, "Mr Grimshaw's death."

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 2/60.

¹While there is no signature, the handwriting matches Colbeck's letter of May 21.

²This account was sent shortly after the event; Colbeck repeats several of the details in his letter of May 21.

³CW's request is not known to survive.

⁴Grimshaw died on April 7, in Haworth, and was buried on April 9, at St. Mary Church in Luddenden, Yorkshire.

⁵"For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain."

From Joseph Jones

c. May 1763

Mr. Joseph Jones's Account of the Reverend Mr. [William] Grimshaw

I was taken ill at Mr. Grimshaw's house and confined there for six months, during which time he was more than a father to me. I had then the happiness of seeing the glorious life he lived, showing forth the power and goodness of his Saviour, God, and Master (as he was wont to call him whom he loved, honoured, and obeyed in every action and every breath).

He would often say "I love my God and Saviour, but how shall I love him enough?" He was so filled with love, that at only mentioning the name of God, he has stood still when I was walking with him, and not been able to speak for 10 minutes together. At last he said, "What shall I do, what can I do to love and serve my God better?" I have seen him so overpowered with love that he seemed as though he would have taken wing and fled from the altar to the throne of God. At the sacrament, in singing the psalm or hymn, his voice has been so raised that it seemed more than mortal. In prayer afterwards he had often these words, "Lord we have taken hold of the horns of the altar, and we will not let thee go till thou hast blessed us." There has scarce been a dry eye among the communicants, whose number was seldom short of a thousand.

His love to man was without bounds, and impartial to Christians of all denominations. He used to say, "I love my God first and best, but not enough. Next to him, I love my dear brothers Wesley, with whom I am heartily joined and hope never to be parted in time or in eternity. Next to them, I love my dear brother [George] Whitefield; and next to him, all the labourers, and all that love and desire to love the blessed Jesus. And I love all mankind as well as them."

If he rested a day from his outward labour of preaching, he spent at least six hours of it in private prayer, beside reading, meditating, and other Christian duties. In labours he was more abundant and quite indefatigable. He never preached less than twenty times in a week. I have known him preach 28 times. Once he told me he had preached that week 31 times. Indeed, his whole life was scarce anything else than preaching, prayer, and praise.

Yet he never exacted his dues of the people, but would often tell them in the church, "I will never have the curses when I am dead, for what I received for my poor labours among you. For I want nothing more than your souls for God, and a base maintenance for myself." This he made appear throughout his life. He wore very mean apparel, and lived upon very coarse food; which is "more," said he, "than I deserve."

I have often heard him tell his parishioners from the pulpit, "If you will be damned, it shall belong of yourselves, for I will be clear of your blood." He used every means he could to save them from the pit. When he knew any that would not come to church, he would give public notice there that, at such a time, he should preach at such a man's house. And when there he would say, "I know I am not welcome. But I will speak to everyone under my care concerning his soul. If you will not come to hear, you shall hear me at home. And if you will perish, you shall perish with the sound of the gospel in your ears."

When any such was sick and sent for him, he dealt very faithfully with them, and said, "The hand of God is upon you, and the devil is ready to take you and hell to swallow you up—and now it is, 'Send for Grimshaw in all haste?'" He has talked thus to the most hardened sinners, till their beds have shook under them, and many have been thereby brought to a knowledge of themselves and of Christ.

He told me once, "I have buried 18 of my parishioners this year, and I have good reason to believe that 16 of them are now in the kingdom of God." He used all means to make his people keep their church. When the law of God could not prevail, he made use of the law of man. While the clerk was singing the last psalm, he often stole out of church and visited the public houses, and drove all he found there to church before him. He informed against the alehouse-keepers and made them pay the fine for

drawing beer in time of divine service. As many as he found in the churchyard he sent to church in like manner, telling them, “You came here to go to church and I will make you hear me.”

If he saw any that were trifling, or sleeping in the time of service, he would shame them before the whole congregation. On sacrament days he continued in the church from 9:00 till 5:00 in the afternoon, and would then often go 3 or 4 miles to visit the sick, or some new-born infant likely to die; and at night say, “I have done nothing for God today.”

In his family duty he exceeded all I ever saw. He rose at 5:00. Began singing “Praise God from whom all blessing flow.” Spent an hour in private prayer. Then called the family and read the psalms and lessons for the day, sang an hymn, and went to prayers. He then took his leave of them, as if he should see them no more, with “God bless you in your souls and in your bodies, and in all you put your hands to this day; and whether you live or die, the Lord grant you may live or die to him.” He observed a like form going to bed, which he usually did at 11:00.

In his charity he was so liberal that his friends were afraid he would die in debt. I asked him about it. His answer was, “Were I to die today, I am not worth an halfpenny.”

When there was any quarrel among Christians, how would he labour to reconcile them. After he had taken much pains to make up a difference between two persons I heard him say, “I beg you upon my knees. I will put my head under your feet, if you will but love one another.” He then fell upon his knees, and broke out into prayers and tears, till all in the house were melted down into tears and perfectly reconciled. In short he aimed at nothing but the glory of God, and the good of all that came in his way.

If any had used him ill, as soon as he saw the least repentance in them, or heard the least confession from them, he would take them into his bosom again. I think in all things from the beginning to the end of my acquaintance with him I never saw a mortal man like him.

The mean opinion he had of himself is hardly to be expressed. He preferred every soul before himself, extolled the weakest messenger of God’s sending, praised God for all, and told his people if they despised any of them, God might justly take them all away. After hearing any one of them (Mr. [Nicholas] Gilbert in particular) he used to say, “O how shall I ever preach again after this man?”

He embraced Christians of all denominations, saying, “I love them and I will love them, and none shall make me do otherwise; and my house shall always be open to them all.”

He never stuck at any weather, or suffered it to hinder his labours. In the coldest he never complained of the cold, but thanked God for whatever he sent.

He was sometimes much afflicted in body, but bore it with invincible patience. He often said, “I expect my stay upon earth will be but short, and will endeavour to make the best of a short life; and so devote my soul to God as not to go creeping to heaven at last.” He fulfilled his word by redeeming his “precious, precious time,” as he justly called it.

He could not bear to hear people say they had faith, while their lives said the contrary. He hungered and thirsted after righteousness, and pursued it in all he did, saying, “Holiness is a precious gift and a precious privilege.” How would he bless God for Jesus Christ, and for all the benefits of his passion; for the gospel, and its being preached; for all the means of grace and the hope of glory! It seemed as if he could never praise God enough. “O God what hast thou done for us! Aand what wilt thou do for us hereafter! Surely there is no God like unto our God!”

He spoke of death with pleasure, as letting him into a better world, and bringing him into the arms of his Saviour.

In his conversation, he was edifying at all times. He was always happy in Christ, and never lost sight of him from the first day of his conversion. Yet no one groaned under the bondage of corruption more than he did. And he frequently said, “O if the people knew what an heart I have, they would not love and honour me as they do!”

God had showed him at the beginning of his course that he should endure unto the end—which he declared to a very few of his most intimate friends, but never preached perseverance as a doctrine or encouraged others to think themselves past danger of falling.

He used great plainness and simplicity in his conversation with all men, sparing neither poor nor rich, but boldly reproving all as necessity required.

He often prayed that at last he might give up his account with joy. And he now enjoys the fruit of his prayer in paradise.¹

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/501/9.²

¹Grimshaw died Apr. 7, 1763 in Haworth; and was buried on April 9, at St. Mary Church in Luddenden, Yorkshire.

²For a digital copy and “as-is” transcription, see:
<https://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/services/digitisation-services/projects/rapture-and-reason/>

From Selina (Shirley) Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon

[London]
May 14, 1763

It pleased our dear God and only Saviour to take from me, May 12, 1763, at three quarters after four in the morning, my dearest, my altogether lovely child and daughter, Lady Selina Hastings, the desire of my eye and constant pleasure of my heart.¹

April—she was taken ill of a fever which lasted obstinate till the 17[th.] day from the time it begun. On her going to bed she said she should never rise from it more and through her whole illness continued satisfied she should not live, by all she said to me. She said she did not begin to think about it then, and said she had no desire to live. “Therefore my dear mother, why not now? The Lord can make me ready for himself in a moment and if live longer I may not be better. I am a poor creature. I can do nothing myself. I only hope you will be supported.”

She desired me to pray often by her and with great earnestness accompanied me. At one time she called me and said: “My dearest mother, come and lie down by me and let my heart be laid close to yours and then I shall get rest.” She often called on the Lord Jesus to have mercy and complained of her impatience; though no one ever heard a complaint pass her lips, though her suffering was great. I said she was blessed with patience. She said, “O no,” with some tears. In the four last days these sentences at times came from her: “Jesus teach me.” “Jesus wash me, cleanse me, and purify me.” Lying quiet, she said two angels was beckoning her and she must go but could not yet get up the ladder. Another time, she said: “I am so happy as my heart can desire to be.”

The day before her death I came to her and asked her if she knew me. She said: “My dear mother.” I then asked her if her heart was happy. She said: “I now understand, I am happy, very happy,” and then put her lips to kiss me. She ordered her servant, Cath[erine] Spooner, to say how she would have some things disposed of, and she said she told her, lest it should shock her dear mother to tell her. She often said [that] to be resigned to God’s will was all, and that she had no hope of salvation but in the mercy of Jesus Christ alone.

Endorsement: by CW, “Lady Selina’s / blessed end / May 12. 1763.”

Source: manuscript copy by amanuensis; MARC, MA 1977/504/1/73.²

¹Lady Selina Hastings (1737–63) was buried in St. Helen’s Churchyard, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire.

²Cf. the previous transcription in Tyson, *Correspondence*, 103.

From Thomas Colbeck

Keighley
May 21, 1763

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I should have answered your letter sooner,¹ but expected having an opportunity of looking over Mr. [William] Grimshaw's papers; and if I could have met with anything for your purpose, intended giving you a copy. But I believe Mr. [Henry] Venn desired to peruse them before he published the sermon, and they are in his hand. I expect before now you have had an opportunity of seeing Mr. Venn's sermon, to which is annexed a short sketch of Mr. Grimshaw's life.² It would be an acceptable service to thousands in these parts to be favoured with an elegy on the mournful occasion.³ You cannot exceed in the humility, uprightness, unintermitted labours, and universal love of that great man of God, who is now inheriting the promises.

Our dear and much regretted friend was divinely persuaded that as life had not, so neither could the ghastly tyrant [death] separate him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. His consolations from almost the moment the fever seized him were neither few nor small. He frequently expressed himself as if he was as happy as it is possible to be while clothed with mortality, and as fully satisfied that when the silver cords of life should be loosened and abundant entrance would be administered unto his joyous soul into the Holiest through the blood of atonement, as if he had been already an inhabitant of the heavenly Jerusalem.

Notwithstanding the apothecary, and all who visited, Mr. Grimshaw was not in the least apprehensive of any symptoms attending his disorder, which seemed to threaten a dissolution; yet himself seemed to have had some intimation that the Master called for him. For before he was confined to his bed he gave directions in writing about his funeral, requesting that he might have a poor man's burial suit and a poor man's coffin, and that about twenty of his spiritual brethren and nearest relations might pay their last respects to what of him could die in attending his corpse to the place of his interment. Desiring that a Methodist preacher at least might be invited to preach upon Phil. 1:21, a scripture which he caused to be engraved upon the candlestick, pulpit, and walls of the church, and which was exemplified in the whole of his ministerial labours for above twenty years, not ceasing frequently oftener than he sat down to his own table to distribute to famishing souls the Bread of life. And truly he was an able scribe, not accustomed to deal in the false commerce of unfelt truths, but ready to bring forth out of the treasury of a rich experience things new and old. It was the meat and drink of dear Mr. Grimshaw to labour for God. And he never appeared to be so much in his proper element as when he was about his heavenly Father's business.

Dear sir, suffer me humbly to entreat it of you, when you have the King's ear, to supplicate that I may be found at the feet of our endeared and much regretted friend whose happy spirit questionless now shines as the sun in the kingdom of his Father. I am, with due esteem, humbly and respectfully

Yours in the best bonds,

Thos. Colbeck

P.S. You need not be in pain about what Mr. Jones has mentioned in his letter.

¹CW's letter is not known to survive.

²See Henry Venn, *Christ the Joy of the Christian's Life, and Death his Gain: the substance of a sermon preached April 10th, in Haworth church, on the death of the Reverend Mr. William Grimshaw. ... To which is added a sketch of his life and ministry* (Leeds: G. Wright, 1763).

³CW wrote an elegy, but did not publish it; "On the Death of the Revd. Mr. William Grimshaw," MS Funeral Hymns (1756–87), 63–64

Address: “To / The Rev. Mr. Charles Wesley / at Mrs. Butterfields / in Great Russel Street / Bloomsbury / London.”

Postmarks: “25/MA” and “Bradford.”

Endorsement: by CW, “T. Colbeck May 21 / 1763 / of Blessed W. Grimshaw.”

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 2/59.

Sarah (Evans) Gwynne to Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley

Garth
May 30, 1763

My Ever Dearest Sally,

I hope you will excuse my silence and accept of my sincere thanks for your letter by Mr. Bold,¹ soon after which (having just a sight of my dear Rod²) we hastened here and he to his post of assistant to the Radnorshire militia. Our tenant of Bryn-y-oye³ has now left that farm vacant and quite out of order, and has actually been above £300 out of our way. This is a severe trial at this juncture, when we owe money to others and dryness of the weather prevents our other tenants from paying us, as their cattle are not in marketable condition.

The change of air to this place has done my dear Mr. [Marmaduke] Gwynne, I thank God, great service. This happy change sweetens many other disappointments, for which I hope I am duly thankful. Poor Rod's preservation also is a great comfort to me. A relation of the visible dangers he escaped will, I hope, make a lasting impression on him and on me. Nothing less than the infinite hand of Providence could have supported him. We shall be glad to see yourself and family in Wales before winter, and shall endeavour when Rod returns from his employment in Radnorshire to keep him with us till you come. I am glad to hear that Mr. [Charles] Wesley is better, but hope he will not take you to London.

I expect the family of Hendre⁴ and your sister [Mary] Baldwyn's sons to dinner this day,⁵ and therefore hope you will excuse this hasty scrawl; which, with your father's and my best dues to you and yours, concludes this from

My dearest Sally's truly affectionate mother,

Sa. Gwynne

My grandson (I heard this day) joined the Radnorshire militia.⁶ His father, mother, and uncle are yet in London, and all our family of Breconshire remain there excepting your father and myself, who are here on business.

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 7/14.

¹Hugh Bold (1731–1809) was a lawyer in Brecon, Brecknockshire, and steward of the Wesleyan society in Brecon. SGW's letter to her mother is not known to survive.

²Her son Roderick Gwynne.

³Bryn-y-oye was the original estate of Howell Gwynne (1668–1708), the father of Marmaduke Gwynne.

⁴Hugh and Joan (Gwynne) Price, and children.

⁵Richard Baldwyn (b. 1748) and Edward Baldwyn (b. 1752).

⁶Almost certainly Marmaduke Gwynne (c. 1741–84), son of Howell Gwynne and Lady Mary Rudd.

From John Johnson

Dublin
June 2, 1763

Reverend Sir,

I am obliged to you for your good wishes to me and my helpmate.¹ Her conduct shows she was from the Lord.

I have often found some concern for your so long silence,² and often thought the reason [was] your sickness. At other times I thought I had offended you.

I am much concerned for the flock in London. I expected nothing less. When at the Conference I feared [George] Bell and his company would be ranters. I can see no difference between destroying the law through love or faith. I am of this opinion: If my heart is full of love, I shall love the commandments, and my life will show it by a conformity to every precept.

I am also concerned for the flock at Norwich. I hear they are divided. What will the end of these things be? I often thought that desire in the hearts of some of the preachers to give the sacrament would be the means of destroying the work. But I fear we shall be in confusion before that can come to pass.

I often think they are happy that are taken away. But the loss of brother Gilbert,³ and Mr. [William] Grimshaw is great. I was very near it for some months this winter, and thought it would be a favour from heaven to me; for I dread the day when your brother and you shall be taken from us. The devil has long envied our happiness and success, therefore is striving to destroy the work.

Sometimes I think the Lord will stand by us and help us. At other times I think we shall be suffered to divide, and be destroyed. We have peace and love in this place. I hear they have a new scheme in the Cheshire round: anger is consistent with the second blessing, but the third will destroy it.⁴

I hope you will favour me with a line or two, so often as you can. If I live and should come to England again, I think I will see you, if alive—[even] if I [have to] ride a hundred miles. If not, the will of the Lord be done. My wife joins me in duty to you, and love to Mrs. Wesley. Pray for me, who am

Your unworthy son in the gospel,

Jno. Johnson

Address: "To / The Revd. Mr. Chas. Wesley / at / the Foundery , U[pper] M[oor]fields / London."⁵

Endorsement: by CW, "June 2 1763 / J. Johnson."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/501/92.⁶

¹This letter is not known to survive. Johnson had married Ann Hoar (d. 1771) in Dublin on Oct. 9, 1760; cf. Crookshank, *Ireland*, 127.

²CW's previous known letter to Johnson was Mar. 7, 1760

³Nicholas Gilbert was buried in Bristol on Apr. 19, 1763.

⁴See the note in William Briggs to CW, May 1, 1761, about the "blessing" controversy.

⁵The letter was initially addressed to Bristol, but that addresses is crossed out and the London address added.

⁶For a digital copy and "as-is" transcription, see:
<https://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/services/digitisation-services/projects/rapture-and-reason/>

From Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley

Bristol
Wednesday, June 15 [1763]

My dearest partner has, I suppose, ere this seen Mr. [William] Hooper and received my letter by him.¹ I had then some hopes of being able to acquaint you in a few days of my getting better. But whatever my disorder is, I am rather worse since. May it be sanctified for the good of my soul. Mrs. [Ann] Barlow and Colonel [Bartholomew] Gallatin thought it necessary for me to bleed, as the former apprehended I had somewhat of an inflammation on my lungs. But the surgeon thinks it more a nervous case, and took but three ounces of blood from me yesterday. He is more confirmed by seeing my blood today, which is not inflamed, though my breath is relieved. But I cough a good deal, and that makes an oppression on my breast, as I spew freely. I have a low fever, and am frequently taken with a cold chill and fainty. I intend to ride out, if please God I am able, tomorrow. On Monday I went in a chaise to the Wells, and I thought the water occasioned my having shiverings. I drank two glasses, which was too much for one time.

I hope this faithful account of my health won't make you uneasy. But may your prayers be offered up for me, that whatever is the Lord's appointment may be for his glory is my eternal advantage. I shall be glad to hear you are quite recovered of the complaint in your bowels. I find mine very weak at this time.

The children send their duty. Miss Nancy Stafford, etc, unite with me in kind love. Mrs. [Elizabeth] Vigor and Miss [Dorothy] Furly are so obliging as to call often to see me.

Excuse this hasty scroll from, my dearest partner,
Ever yours,

S. W.

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

Endorsement: by CW, "June 15. 1763 / Sally ill."

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 7/13.

¹This prior letter is not known to survive.

From Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley

[Bristol]
Saturday, June 18 [1763]

My dearest partner's kind letter I received on Thursday.¹ As I had wrote the day before, I deferred acknowledging it till now. I am glad to find you had such a providential deliverance.² Blessed be God, who thus preserves from and in dangers.

My poor, weak body is brought low, and my spirits are very faint. But if flesh and heart fail, I pray the Lord to be the strength of my heart and my portion forever. This I freely ask, and may I find the blessed Jesus near to save and help me in the time of need. I have rode out these three days, and I seem somewhat relieved by the air, which is a mercy. But my disorder has seized me so violent that I must expect time to remove it (if I do get rid of it).

I called this morning on the Colonel [Bartholomew] and Mrs. [Lucia] Gallatin, and was sorry to find him not so well as I wished. He has a bad cold and is detained another week. I am told Lady Gertrude [Hotham] has a nervous disorder and is confined these two days. Mr. Charles Perronet has been exceeding ill, but is now better. He is very obliging in calling on me, to advise me how to nurse myself in this complaint, Mrs. Batchelor having been successful in her management of him.³ He desires his kind respects to you, and he prays with me and for you. I am thankful to find no wrong temper in the remembrance of what is past.

Mrs. [Margaret] James of Earl's Mead desires her love. Miss Peggy has had a violent cold,⁴ and it has affected her spirits so much that she sent to tell me the child had hysteric fits and was convulsed, and that Sally was not well. It is a sickly season here, probably owing to the great drought.

Betty set out Wednesday evening to go for Wales, and I was obliged to ask Mrs. [Elizabeth] Farley to let me have Betsy⁵ (who is returned) till I can get a servant—which I must enquire for as soon as I can. If you were here, I know you would not think me fit to go to London. God only knows shall I ever see it more. Our dear little ones join in duty and love to you. I should be thankful to see you, but I am certain your ministry is so useful where you are that it will be a loss to your people to remove you. May the Lord direct you, and bless us and our little ones exceedingly abundant above all that we can ask or think, for his mercy's sake, amen.

Farewell my dearest and best friend!

Ever yours,

S. W.

Mrs. [Elizabeth] Vigor, etc. send love. Mine to my sisters⁶ and friends.

I cough still, but not so bad. It is a failure of strength and loss of appetite, tremblings, etc., which has made me so weak I can scarce crawl about. I think it is a nervous fever, or it may be a consumption. I am gone much thinner than you left me.

¹CW to SGW, June 12–14, 1763.

²CW mentioned breaking through a walkway and nearly falling into a bog on June 13.

³Sarah Batchelor (a widow, d. 1788) had left London for Bristol recently, due to a legal situation; see CW to LH, Jan. 3, 1769. In 1766 Sarah would marry (briefly!) Richard Moss—see CW to Richard Moss, c. 1768.

⁴Margaret James (b. 1751), the second daughter of that name for Capt. John and Margaret (Jenkins) James—the first was Margaret (1748–50).

⁵Elizabeth Farley (1739–93), daughter of Felix and Elizabeth Farley.

⁶Elizabeth (Gwynne) Waller, Rebecca Gwynne, and Lady Rudd.

Mr. [John] Southcote has paid me the 10£. He thanks you for accepting the bill. I paid Betty her quarter's wages.

I think I must put Charley in breeches here, as it is so uncertain if I shall see London, and the summer is near its height. At present he has a slight cold.

Address: "To / The Revnd. Mr. Chas. Wesley / at Mrs Butterfields / in Great Chapel Street / Bloomsbury / London."

Postmark: "20/IV" and "Bristol."

Endorsement: by CW, "June 18. 1763 / Sally ill."

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 7/16.

Sarah (Evans) Gwynne to Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley

Garth
June 19, 1763

My dearest Sally's letter found me here.¹ I am sorry to find by it that you have such strong disorders on you, and shall be truly glad to be assured that they have entirely left you. It is also a concern to me to find that we shall not have the much wished for pleasure of seeing you and yours at Breconshire. All my children have left and forsaken me, and very seldom it is that I can so much as see any of them. Your father and myself are very aged and therefore cannot live long. Yet so it is that none will (in all probability) be near us when our change comes. It is twelve years since I saw your sister [Mary] Baldwyn, and very near six since you was at Breconshire. Rod has been three years in Germany, and since he returned I have not had more than three days of his company. I suppose you will see him before this reaches you, for from Brecon, where he went for one night only, he was summoned away for London.

Poor Dukey is striving to get him a wife.² I pray God he may succeed in luring a good one. His poor boy³ has been ill at Brecon since I came here, but I thank the Lord he is (as I am informed) upon recovery, and hope he will soon be able to return to school.

Your sister [Joan] Price and her husband [Hugh] are well, but all their children have the chin-cough. I saw Capt. [Edward] Baldwyn's sons; the eldest is a very fine boy, they both behave very well.⁴ They dined three times with me here before the family came home yesterday sennight. My son [Howell] and Lady [Rudd] arrived and they go for Pembrokeshire about Wednesday next. Business confines me here—viz., your father and myself. The rest of our family are at Brecon. I fear I must fit up Brynyoye four our summer's residence, which will be attended with trouble and expense.

I hope Mr. [Charles] Wesley was well when you heard from him, and beg our dues may be acceptable when you write [him]. The like attends yourself and the little ones, who am

My dearest Sally's truly affectionate mother,

Sa. Gwynne

Endorsement: "Rec[eive]d July 11th 1763."

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 7/15.

¹SGW's letter is not known to survive.

²Marmaduke Gwynne Jr. (1722–82) had married Jane Howells about 1742, but she died in 1755. He would marry Elizabeth Price Oct. 22, 1763 in Eardisley, Herefordshire.

³Marmaduke Gwynne (1749–86).

⁴Richard Baldwyn (b. 1748) and Edward Baldwyn (b. 1752).

From the Rev. John Fletcher

Madeley
June 21, 1763

My Dear Sir,

For two months I have waited with impatience for your news, but in vain. Are you alive – paralysed – gouty – idle – or so preoccupied that you do not have the time to write a line to your friends in Madeley? If you do not have the time to write them a line, write them one word: *valeo* – or else – *ægroto*.¹ God willing it will be the first!

All is calm enough here. Many of our scandals are subsiding. Our demoniac is delivered.² And we have had the witness of Mr. Mould,³ who preached three weeks since; and of Mr. Riland,⁴ who has spent four days here and preached last Sunday. He is an excellent young man. He himself is only lacking a little Methodist zeal to moderate Mr. [Samuel] Walker's reserve.

When will you be coming to Madeley? How does your wife do, and the little family in Bristol? What are you doing in London? Have you repaired the breach, and healed the sore?

May God give you all the wisdom, patience, zeal, gentleness, [and] health of which you have need. Ask them for

Your poor brother,

J. F[letche]r

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

Endorsement: by CW, " June 21. 1763 / Fletcher."

Source: holograph (in French); MARC, MA 1977/495/28.⁵

¹"Healthy, or else, infirm."

²See Fletcher to CW, Jan. 5, 1763.

³Rev. Jacob Mould (1715–1805), ordained in 1751, served as curate in Lapley, Staffordshire before being named in 1759 vicar of Pebworth and Ebrington, Worcestershire. In 1768 he tried to open his pulpit to JW, but the squire of the parish objected; see JW, *Journal*, Mar. 18, 1768, *Works*, 22:121.

⁴Rev. John Riland (1736–1822), ordained deacon in 1759 and priest in 1761, was currently curate of Sutton Coldfield, Warwickshire.

⁵A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher's original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 175. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith's English translation (pp. 175–76). See also the earlier translations in Fletcher, *Posthumous* (1791), 133 (misdated as July 26); and *City Road Magazine* 3 (1873): 331.

From Josiah Dornford¹

[Deptford]
June 23, 1763

Reverend and Dear Sir,

My late dear friend Mr. Watts,² when I first knew him about twelve years ago, was as the generality of the men of the world are. He was naturally of a facetious turn of mind and fond of company, and I think I have heard him say he was guilty of almost every sin except murder. He married a first cousin of mine of whom he was extremely fond, who died in the flower of her age after they had been married a very little time. He had one only brother who likewise lived with him whom God took away just within a few days of his wife. Him he dearly loved, for they lived together as I would wish all brothers did. God having now shipwrecked all his happiness here, he now began to be in deep concern about his soul and to search for happiness above, and he did not long seek in vain. The Lord gave him many tokens of his love, but he was naturally what we call a fearing, doubting Christian. He was extremely diligent in the means and though he was very weakly, he would rise in the morning in the midst of winter and walk from Temple Bar to the Foundry. Mr. [William] Romaine's preaching, I have heard him say, was very useful to him, and he attained by degrees (not all at once) to the assurance of faith. He was very much tempted and had many spiritual combats with the enemy of souls. During his last illness, which was long and grievous, being many months and his body being afflicted and wasted away with scorbutic sores and ulcers, no one I believe ever heard him complain. He was a pattern of invincible patience and modesty. He always thought he deserved infinitely more than what he suffered, and when I saw him a few days before his death he lay as I would wish in my last hours, quite resigned to the will of God. In patience he possessed his soul. He repeated that whole verse in Job, "I know that my redeemer liveth and . . .,"³ with holy confidence and joy. And he said he longed to be dissolved and to be with Christ, and feared to have offended because he longed to be gone. A few days before he died all his pains were amazingly taken away, and he retained his senses to the last. A few minutes before he died one brother that was with him asked him if he had power to look up and he replied "Yes" louder than ordinary, and his lips kept going till he expired. I would mention one thing more of him which is he was the fondest of the Bible I think I ever saw a man, he seldom going out without it in his pocket. He always strove to speak in a truly scriptural manner and was of a most truly forbearing disposition.

I am, dear sir, with all dutiful respect,

Yours affectionately,

Jos[iah] Dornford

Pray excuse haste.

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

Endorsement: by CW, "Watts' death / June 23, 1763."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/501/135.⁴

¹Josiah Dornford (1734–1810) was a wine merchant and JP for the county of Kent. He was born at Deptford, and after his conversion joined the local Methodist society. When he married Eleanor Leyton in 1759, William Romaine performed the ceremony and JW gave the bride away. Eleanor died in 1790 and was buried by JW in Bunhill Fields. When Josiah died he was buried in the same grave.

²Likely Thomas Manser Watts, who was buried at St. George, Bloomsbury on June 14, 1763.

³Job 19:27.

⁴For a digital copy see:

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

From Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley

[Bristol]
Thursday, June 23 [1763]

My dearest partner's affectionate letter I thankfully acknowledge,¹ and I bless God that the means I am using is of great service to me. Your and dear sister Beck's care I have no reason to question, but I should find it impossible to get so easily with you what I take daily here. In the morning, early, I have warm milk from the cow brought to my bed and a spoonful of rum in it. And sometime in the day my good Mrs. [Elizabeth] Vigor brings me a new-laid egg from under the hen. I have rode out today, but am a little anxious that I cost you so much—for I hire the horse, there being no person that I can borrow of unless Mr. Oddie² or Mr. [Charles] Perronet, and I don't choose to be under obligations to them. My limbs continue very weak, but it is such a relief to have my breath free that I can't be thankful enough for this mercy.

My kind of complaint a little fatigue would soon bring back. But when I am quite recovered, I hope my way will be directed to you, for it seems a long time absence, and more so as I have been so poorly. It is five weeks tomorrow since my cold seized me. I should have used the Hot Well water, but it was after drinking two glasses of it last Monday sevendnight that my shiverings began, and Mr. Ludlow (the surgeon who attended Charley's finger) said he thought those waters of no service in my case.³ Dr. Woodward showed no great readiness to accept your invitation, as Mrs. [Lucia] Gallatin observed, and I have no great opinion of being under your physician's care now my old friend Dr. [John] Middleton is gone. Though I am thankful you ever met Dr. Turner.

I rejoice to hear of the many blessings you enjoy in London. I hope you will not labour so much as to impair your health. May the Lord's presence crown your assemblies and make you still a comforter of the mourners, for whom there has been but little sympathy shown. I wish you a happy sight of your brother [JW].

Mrs. [Elizabeth] Vigor, etc., and the children join me in most affectionate dues to you, and my sisters,⁴ and Mrs. [Anne] Davis, etc.

Farewell my ever dearest partner.

Yours,

S. W.

My service to Isaac [Duckworth].

Address: "To / The Revd. Mr. Charles Wesley / at the Foundery / near Upper Moor Fields / London."

Postmark: "25/IV" and "Bristol."

Endorsement: by CW, "June 23. 1763 / Sally mending!"

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 7/17.

¹CW to SGW, June 21, 1763.

²James Oddie (c. 1730–90), who served as a travelling preacher between 1752 and 1771, was apparently stationed in Bristol. See Atmore, *Memorial*, 298–300; and Vickers, *Dictionary*, 259.

³Abraham Ludlow (1737–1807) a young Quaker surgeon, would open in 1767 one of the earliest clinics in Bristol for administering the small pox vaccine (at a price!). Ludlow's flamboyant personality and growing wealth alienated many of his peers at the Bristol Infirmary over the years. But in 1775 he was put in charge of treatment at the original Bristol Dispensary on Stokes Croft, where he increased midwifery service for poor women, and began providing vaccinations for the children of poor families.

⁴Elizabeth (Gwynne) Waller and Rebecca Gwynne.

From Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley

[Bristol]
Saturday evening, July 2 [1763]

My ever dearest friend and partner need use no argument to bring me up to him,¹ for I have had selfish motives sufficient, especially since my late indisposition, which would have brought me to you before now were it possible. Though I was cautious of expressing this desire I had of seeing you, lest you should have come down from far more important business, and of much greater consequence to the public. Though I little thought I should ever take another journey (unless that which ends all). But since it has pleased the Lord thus far to remove my disorder, I would willingly set out next week, if I and others did not think it a very improper time for me to travel. Mrs. [Elizabeth] Vigor and Miss [Dorothy] Furlly would not attempt to hinder me a day, as I am better, for they would rather wish me with you. I shall be thankful to be of the least service to you, and very glad to be excused from company, as a small matter overcomes my spirits. If I can hear of a returned coach and a driver well recommended, who will carry us up more reasonable than the chaise, I can take the opportunity. But a chaise, for the benefit of the kids, will be far preferable. Lately 5 guineas was the price for one, as Miss Johnson told me,² and a family took it; whereas at the most 4 [guineas] is for a chaise hired here, which will take me, the children, Patty,³ and our clothes very easy and comfortable. I would not wish anyone to come down and fetch us, for it is a needless expense.

Has Mrs. [Millbery] Butterfield two beds in one room for the children? You nor I don't choose they should lie together. And yet they must be in the same chamber with the maid. I can find none of your cases and leaves.⁴ I looked for one for myself. You have locked the box and taken the key. Shall I get it opened? I have thought Isaac [Duckworth] on horseback might have been of some use to us, but I would not wish so necessary a person from you. I don't fear the journey, with God's blessing. I rather expect the air on the road to be of service to me.

Excuse haste. I trust soon to have a good sight of my dearest companion.

Farewell! The Lord bless you!

Mrs. [Elizabeth] Vigor and Mr. Brown supped with me last night.⁵ He asked kindly for you and we spent our time, in some degree, as he seemed very lively and in earnest. A seal of his ministry he lately has had in the country—a young woman dying in the smallpox.

Address: "To / The Revd. Mr. Charles Wesley / at the Foundery / near Upper Moor Fields / London."

Endorsement: by CW, "July 2. 1763 / Sally just coming."⁶

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 1/49.

¹SGW is replying to CW's letter of c. June 27, 1763.

²Elizabeth Johnson (1720–98) was the daughter of a West India merchant resident in Chippenham, Wilshire, who had been disinherited when she joined the Methodists. She remained single and her home in Bristol became a center of Methodism there.

³The nursemaid for the children.

⁴For the "Scripture cards" CW was now preparing (see note on his reply of July 2–3, 1766).

⁵Possibly Isaac Brown, who appears first as an itinerant in the *Minutes* in 1765 (*Works*, 10:304).

⁶CW lists names on the address page: "Mrs. [Hannah] Heritage, Rev. Mr. [John] Richardson, Miss [Hannah] Heritage, M[rs]. Henry, M[rs]. Smithson, [and] Mrs. [Millbery] Butterfield." Katherine Henry appears as a married woman and Ann Smithson as single in the Foundery Band Lists (1742–46).

From the Rev. Vincent Perronet

Shoreham
July 6, 1763

My Reverend and Dear Brother,

Whither should a mourner in Zion fly for consolation? Especially one whose very heart seems to be broken for Zion's sake? Should he not fly to him who has promised beauty for cities, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness? There let us send him, and there let the pious mourner be comforted.

Satan has certainly kindled a fire. But nothing except the chaff shall be consumed by it. Thy endeavour to quash it shall, at least, bring down a blessing upon thy own head, though they should proceed no further. Thy warnings not meeting with credit are only a part of thy cross. Take it up, my brother, and follow thy great Master!

A sincere friend of thine has for more than six times seven years been talking to the dead!¹ Would you change crosses with him? He would, if it was lawful. But God commands you both to bear your own. Thy will be done!

It is undoubtedly a trying time for the poor Methodist church! But the Keeper of the vineyard will watch over it, notwithstanding all the craft and all the violence of the enemy. Christ will only purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner. And when he has fanned away the chaff, let us hope to see much pure grain, though smothered over at present.

Talk not of thy former uselessness, or of being reduced again to it!² The Lord is only trying thee, to make thee still a more glorious instrument in his hands!

I hope divine providence will so order matters that we shall have the pleasure of seeing you at Shoreham. In the meanwhile, may the waters³ and every other prescription be attended with a signal blessing! And, if it seem meet to the divine wisdom, may we soon hear that your dear companion has recovered her health. All hear join in hearty respects and good wishes to you both, and in the same to our dear brother [JW]. The Lord Jesus Christ be with us all, amen.

Thine most affectionately,

Vin. Perronet

Address: "To / The Reverend / Mr Charles Wesley / at the Foundery / Upper Moor Fields."

Postmarks: "7/IY" and "Sevenoaks."

Endorsement: by CW, "Mr Perronet, encouraging / July 6. 1763."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/467, item 16.

¹Perronet had taken his first pastoral charge in 1719.

²CW had apparently expressed his distress over the situation in London by a letter (which is not known to survive).

³CW was drinking waters from a medicinal stream in Islington; cf. CW to SGW, May 26, 1763 & May 27, 1764.

From the Rev. John Fletcher

Madeley
July 26, 1763

My Dear Sir,

For several days I have had trials in plenty. But blessed be God, who gives me his peace. It is not however without a struggle that I keep it. One of these trials might result in my leaving Madeley, and I bless God that I am ready to do this *oculo irretorto*,¹ even today.

There is another difficulty that you can resolve, being on the spot. As I wanted to act with all goodwill possible in respect of Sarah Wood until the end,² I wrote to Mr. Buhet (telling him the facts of the matter) not to let her be in need if she came to lack money, adding that I would reimburse him with pleasure as far as I am able what he might have advanced in this instance. Sarah, who said to me to the last she had rather starve than to be beholden to me, is returned to London however and has asked money of Mr. Buhet on my account, and is asking more. He has prudently written to me concerning the matter in question. Read my response³ and put yourself to the trouble of finding out if she is really in need. In that case order for her what you judge appropriate in her circumstances, as long as the sum does not exceed four guineas. Although I have nothing saved at present, I will be able by God's grace to raise the money for her in several months, and I will do that with all my heart to imitate my heavenly Father and heap coals of fire on the head of my enemy.⁴

Give us your dear news, and remember us in your prayers as we remember you. May the peace and the power of our Lord uphold us from one moment to another!

Farewell

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

Endorsement: by CW, "July 26. 1763 / Fletcher [[To me and Buhet]]."

Source: holograph (in French); MARC, MA 1977/495/22.⁵

¹Horace, *Odes*, II.ii.23; "without a backward look." See also Luke 9:62.

²Fletcher had persuaded Sarah Wood to come from London to Madeley, to serve as his maid, but it had proven to be an unwise arrangement.

³This was surely a double letter; the half to Buhet has been torn off and is not known to survive.

⁴See Prov. 25:22 and Rom. 12:20.

⁵A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher's original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 176–77. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith's English translation (p. 177).

From the Rev. John Fletcher

Madeley
September 9, 1763

My Dear Sir,

I am greatly obliged to you for having delivered me so well from the embarrassment into which Mr. Buhet and my imprudence were about to throw me. Read the reply I am making to him and you will see that Sarah has not reckoned up correctly, and that I do not refuse to draw up a reckoning in accordance with my offer in your letter.¹ Mr. Buhet can wait for my payment better than you. In the meantime I am sending him my note, and to you my tender thanks.

What do you hear “out of the way” by Sarah Wood, since our acquaintance? Explain yourself in your first letter.

Have you not seen Lady Huntingdon on your sea trip? Blessed be the Almighty for the news of the Colonel [Gallatin]! I have been visited here by two of the perfect brothers: Bowen and Green.² They would have seemed to me sincere and young men in Christ, if they had not considered themselves to be *fathers*. In comparing the mite of experience that I have of the spiritual life, and what they say of themselves and their brethren, they call “perfection” what I call the “life of faith.” And on that footing I approve well enough [Thomas] Maxfield’s and your brother’s doctrine “If you are justified you have the privilege of perfect life, as being perfectly justified; and in giving yourself to Christ minute by minute you are using your privilege now.” In this case the perfectionists and ourselves are not so far apart. Clear definitions on both sides, and we shall draw much closer to each other.

The greatest obstacle seems to me to be “*Crede quod habes, et habes.*”³ An overheated imagination can gallop a long way on that horse. “*Crede quod habes, si sentis,*”⁴ or else “*nunc crede quod habebis et habebis,*”⁵ seems to me to be the right mean between the unbelief of some and the imagined faith of others.

I see that we must learn to throw our burdens continually upon the Lord. He alone can carry them without weariness and without misery. If [Thomas] Maxfield returns, the Lord will be able to correct his blunders, or enable him to concentrate upon the fruits of a living faith as the means to prevent antinomianism. I believe him to be fundamentally sincere. And although obstinate and suspicious, I am persuaded that he has a true desire to know the will and to live the life of God. I reply to you with those same words you quoted in one of your letters, “Have no fear of shipwreck, Jesus is in the boat.”⁶ The Lord, after the most violent storm, will perhaps suddenly steer the little skiff into the desired port.

I could not know to have passed sentence upon Mrs. [Hannah] Heritage, and therefore accept without reluctance the opinion which you have of her. And to make the point to you, I am obeying you in writing to her sooner than I would have done if I had not believed that it was my duty to be on the *qui vive*⁷ with women.

In respect of women, you ask me a singular question. I shall however return to it with a smile, as I think you asked it. I imagine that you had noticed that when I was on the point of coming to Madeley, for four days I saw the state of marriage in a quite different light—and the person who presented herself then

¹This letter is not known to survive.

²The latter may be the Richard Green, of Chelsea, who wrote CW Sept. 26, 1767.

³“Believe you possess, and you do.”

⁴“Believe you possess, if you feel it.”

⁵“Believe now that you will possess and you will possess.”

⁶No letter of CW to Fletcher with this quote is known to survive.

⁷“Lookout.”

to my imagination was Miss [Mary] Bosanquet. Her image pursued me for some hours the last day, and that so warmly that I would perhaps have lost my repose if the sentiment of Juvenal's proverb "*veniunt a dote sagittae*"⁸ had not made me blush, fight, and flee to Jesus—who delivered me at the same time from her image and from that of marriage. Since that time I have been even more on my guard than ever, and the head of my two Medusas has frozen the most warming features of marriage. I sustain this singular shield sometimes by meditating on the love of Jesus, who must make all my happiness, and sometimes by the following reflection.

It is true that the Scripture says that a pious wife is a gift from God. It is also true that they are just one in a thousand. But who wishes to enter a lottery where there are 999 blanks for one lot? And supposing that I could discover this Phoenix, this thousandth, what would I have gained? A disturbing refusal. Who would want such a man as I am? If my self-esteem sets up no barrier, I am obliged to despise myself warmly. Could I lack generosity to the point of expecting another would do for me that which I am unable to do for myself? That another would take it upon herself to value me? To love me? To honour me?

The matter which makes many hope that I will be obliged to leave Madeley is the celebration of a marriage after noon under particular circumstances. You see that marriages are not auspicious for me. However, if I am not being too optimistic, this cloud will clear without a shower. I believe that I will be free of it by accounting for my conduct before Ludlow court.

I am going to set down on paper some of the reflections which the two last paragraphs of my letter have brought to birth within my spirit. Weigh them with me in the balance of the sanctuary.⁹

Reasons for marriage

1. An intimate friendship is, after the love of Christ, the greatest pleasure in life and a happy marriage is nothing but such a friendship between two persons of different sexes.
2. A wife can deliver me from the encumbrance of a household.
3. Several objections and several scandals can be dispelled by marriage
4. A pious and zealous wife could be as useful as I am myself; in particular there is the added fact that she could be more useful among the women of my parish, who seem to have great need of an inspectress.

Reasons against marriage

1. Death comes to make an end to particular friendships. Furthermore, the happier a marriage, the sadder the widowhood. One can test a friend, and leave him after the test; a wife is known only when you cannot part from her.
2. A marriage brings in its wake a hundred cares and a hundred expenses. Children, family, worries, etc.
3. If the marriage is not happy, that is a fruitful source of even greater scandals, etc.
4. It is to be believed (a thousand to one) that a wife instead of being a helpmeet becomes indolent, and in consequence useless or sour, suspicious and fiercely jealous, etc.; and in consequence a particular curse.

To go back to Maxfield, I believe that the Lord makes use of him as of Jereboam in the past. This blade will pierce the heart of your brother and will cut out in time the tumours which Satan may have formed there. I am persuaded that this evil comes from the Lord, and that he will turn it at the last to

⁸Juvenal, *Satires*, vi.139; "They come with the dowery of an arrow."

⁹Cf. Job. 6.

good. I am writing to Thomas Maxfield what I think he can bear.

In respect of my soul, it thirsts for God, but it is not yet refreshed by the living waters. O Lord how long? I do not see when we will be able to mingle our tears together at the foot of the throne of grace; at least unless you come for a change of air to Madeley.

Can you send me from London the books marked on the enclosed list? My pupil [William Ley] is slow to study and special temptations increase his slowness. Prick him on or come to animate him yourself. Greet tenderly on my behalf your dear wife, Charles, and Sally.

The enclosed shilling is to give at the General Post Office with the enclosed foreign letter for my mother.

Endorsement: by CW, “Fletcher / Sept. 9. 1763.”

Source: holograph (in French); MARC, DDWes 2/36.¹⁰

¹⁰There also exists a later English translation in MARC, MA 1977/495/69. A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher’s original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 178–81. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith’s English translation (pp. 181–84). See also the earlier (and looser) translation in Fletcher, *Posthumous* (1791), 142–44.

From Christopher Hopper

Dunbar
September 11, 1763

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I am sure there is a kind unerring providence that rules over all, and he must be blind that cannot see this hand in all things. We left you in London to come to Leeds, where I stayed seven days. Then [I] set out for Scotland, to come by Thirsk, Hutton Rudby, Yarm, Stockton, Hartlepool, Sunderland, Newcastle, Alnwick, Berwick, and found the good will of him who dwelt in the bush¹ in every place. He gave us friends, and all things richly to enjoy. He appeared, good was done, therefore to him be the glory. When the Lord shall build up Sion, he shall appear in his glory. He will regard the cry of the destitute and not despise their prayer.

I begun my work for another year at Berwick, where the work of the Lord has been under a cloud for many years. But would you believe it, I had the tollbooth near full of Berwick and are left 19 in society, clear of all debt, and waiting for another preacher. We have one happy family here; a poor little flock, but I hope rich in grace. I have had considerable congregations since I came, and some good appearances.

If the North Britains are converted, it must be [by] the almighty power of God, and he shall have the glory. In England sinners are awakened, which is a miracle. But in Scotland saints are awakened, and that is a double miracle. You know what I mean. On Monday we intend to set out for Edinburgh. May our eternal Jesus be with his servants and they shall prosper.

I remember when I was at Leeds Mrs. [Mercy] Thornton told me that you had desired her to give you a true account of Mr. [Henry] Thornton's death; but she applied to me and humbly begged if I would perform the task, which I could not deny. I apprehend I need not say anything to you concerning Mr. Thornton's life, as you perfectly knew the man and all the steps he took from the time he first commenced Methodist till his last sickness. Therefore I have only to inform you that Mr. Thornton had lost his bitter spirit some time before he took his last illness and was very free and loving. He heard me preach on the Wednesday. Thursday he took his last sickness. On Sunday morning I visited him and found him exceeding ill, in a very bad fever, but very patient and his heart lifted up to God in prayer. His soul was in bitterness and in great darkness, yet not without some rays of divine light darting through the clouds. He saw his stronghold at a distance, but found no refuge by reason of unbelief. I prayed with him and left him striving for the victory.

On Sunday night I was sent for to see him die. I found him very weak, but still dark, yet not without hope. Poor soul, he was now very low. Therefore I endeavoured by work and prayer, and all the little strength I had, to help him up to his Everlasting Rock. He waited with groans, and sighed for deliverance. I left him in the hands of a merciful Saviour. On Monday I paid him my last visit. He was now enabled to venture his all upon the precious blood and righteousness of God's eternal Son as the poor ruined thief upon the cross. Whatever good he had done he renounced, and whatever evil he had done he laid that on the head of him who died for a lost world. I then bid him farewell and shall see him no more till the morning of the resurrection. May we be ready.

Death beds can only tell us the value of precious time. The moment is now. God help us to improve it for his own glory and our eternal advantage.

My wife [Ann] joins with me in sincere love to you and Mrs. [Sarah] Wesley and the young organist [CW Jr.], little Miss [Sarah], and all enquiring friends. And be assured I remain

Your unworthy son, but I hope sincere friend.

[[Christoph. H.]]

¹See Exod. 3:1–17.

P.S. Perhaps you may favour me with a line at Edinburgh, direct to Robert Miller, Merchant, opposite to the Main Guard.

Address: “To / The Revd Mr Charles Wesley / at the Foundery / London.²”

Endorsement: by CW, “Sept. 11. 1763 / Hopper - Thornton’s / death.”

Source: holograph; MARC, DDP_r 2/24.

²An initial address to Bristol is struck out and replaced with this.

From the Rev. John Fletcher

[Madeley]
September 16, 1763

My Dear Sir,

A parcel of letters for you, etc., arrives today in London. I hope that you will have received them when you read these lines. Seeing and conversing with our friend from London gave me joy. I would however have preferred to receive your note from your own hand,¹ but the will of God be done!

With regard to our friends the perfects, I told you what I thought about them in my last (at least of those whom I have seen). Thomas Maxfield proposes to come to visit me for some days. I have not rejected his proposition, I would be most glad to talk with him a little. And in his short stay he will not be able to sow division among my little flock, which is not at all prepared for perfection, and has great need of being encouraged to believe.

He listens to me perhaps as much or more than many others, and I hope that if I cannot do him good I will not be doing him any harm. I have however put back his obliging offer to next spring, if we live. Perhaps I may have had the happiness of seeing you before that time. I believe I will have told you that I love and esteem Maxfield, and although his inflexibility in following his own path surprises me, and seems to me a paradox when I compare it with his zeal, I nevertheless think him sincere, and hope that the Lord will separate the tares from the wheat in his heart. I have written to him in strong terms on the "*crede quod habes*, etc."² and on the encouragement he has given to division and to enthusiasm. If my letter shocks him, God's will be done; I would prefer to lose a friend by honest plain dealing than by unkindness.

Mr. Croft is calm enough, but he has brought three women from London! Three women nothing less than perfect. My pupil [William Ley] salutes you. He is *in orco*³ as regards his soul, *in luto*⁴ as regards his Latin. *Plura praesens*.⁵

Write to us before you leave London, and ask brother [Samuel] Frank to add a *Preservative [Against Unsettled Notions in Religion]* to the books of which I have sent you a list.

Tender greetings to your wife, the little family, John Jones, John Downes, Mrs. [Susanna] Boulton. Congratulate the last [man] on my behalf for his usefulness in the Lord's vineyard. We pray for you and count on your not forgetting us. Farewell. The peace, love, and power of Jesus will be with your soul and your body.

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

Endorsement: by CW, "Sept. 16. 1763 / Fletcher."

Source: holograph (in French); MARC, MA 1977/495/23.⁶

¹This note is not known to survive.

²See Fletcher's discussion in his letter of Sept. 9.

³"In hell, or the underworld."

⁴"In mire."

⁵"More [news] to follow."

⁶A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher's original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 184–85. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith's English translation (pp. 185–86). See also the translation in *City Road Magazine* 2 (1872): 553–54.

From John Nelson

Birstall
November 11, 1763

Dear Sir,

This is with my duty to you and my earnest prayer for you and yours and all the church of God. Glory be to God. His arm is bared in these parts. Multitudes flock to hear the word, and above a hundred joined since we came, and great part of them profess faith.

And I think those that are dead did die as great witnesses for God as ever I saw. An ancient woman that lived at Leefair—she had known the Lord about six years. I was with her a few hours before she died. She said she had many trials in that time, but she did not know that there had been one day that she had not felt the loving presence of the Lord. And she said, “I am going to praise Him for ever.” She was near eighty years old and died praising the Lord.

I suppose you have heard of the death of brother Watson of Leeds, the preacher.¹ I wish all may follow him as he followed the Lord. He had known the Lord about one and twenty years, and had preached seventeen. And he was never known to be a weathercock one day in all their trials they had through false brethren. He stood as a beaten anvil to the stroke, and died in full triumph of faith. Just before he died, he said, “I have fought the good fight. I have kept the faith, etc.”² He was buried on the tenth of this month.

And on that day he was buried sister Betty Bates of Halifax died.³ She died of a consumption. I was with her some time before she died. She had known the Lord about seventeen years, and she said she had gone through all the temptations that a woman could be tempted with. But the Lord had stood by her, and had showed her a way to escape; and she cried to him and he had helped her to escape them all, and she wanted a thousand tongues to praise him. A little before she died she had violent pain for an hour together, so that the sweat dropped off her finger ends like drops of rain. When she could speak she said, “I never felt such pain in all my life before. But glory be to God, I find his love superior to it all, and this night I shall be with him and see him as he is. O tell the preacher to tell the people on Sunday that I have fought the good fight and come off conqueror through Christ that hath strengthened me.” She desired all about her to abide in the old Methodist doctrine, then sweetly fell asleep in the arms of God. She was a single woman about 40 years old. She had been a great witness for the Lord, both in life and in death.

On Friday, the 11th, sister Mary Hall of Bradford finished her course. So that in four days we had three dear friends translated into the realms of bliss. Sister Hall was young in years, and young in grace, about 22 years old, and had found pardon on Christmas Day last, and was taken badly soon after she found the Lord, and died of pining sickness. She hath had light in all her trials, and when any did visit her in her illness they generally returned with their hearts warmed with the love of God, and praised him in her behalf. Indeed she hath left a good savour behind her, and desired that her funeral sermon might be preached from the last verse of the 3rd Psalm “Salvation belongeth to the Lord, and thy blessing is upon thy people.” There are more dead in the round, but I was not with them. But I heard good accounts of them.

O sir, pray for us, as we do for you. God hath made us of one heart and he blesses our labour together. I can bless God that I have two such partners to labour with as brothers [Peter] Jaco and Parson

¹Matthew Watson was a local preacher from Leeds; see JW, *Works*, 10:206, 260. He had just died, being buried Nov. 10, 1763 at St. Peter’s church in Leeds.

²2 Tim. 4:7–8.

³Elizabeth Bates was buried Nov. 13, 1763 at St. John the Baptist church in Halifax.

Greenwood is.⁴ My wife [Martha] joins in love to you and yours and to all friends at Bristol as well as London. I hope you will remember me in particular to Mrs. [Elizabeth] Vigor and all that family, and Mr. Green,⁵ and Mrs. [Elizabeth] Farley. And I beg of you to talk to Charles⁶ as if he were your own son when you see him. My wife hath had a sore fit of sickness again, so that her life was despaired of for many days. But she is better through mercy. I beg of you to write to me, for I am as one that is dead, for none writes to me. This is with my best prayers from

Your unworthy brother and son to serve in the gospel,

John Nelson

If you have opportunity I pray you let your brother see this with my duty to him.

Address: "To the Rev / Mr Charles Wesley / at the foundrey / London."

Endorsement: by CW, "1763 Nov. 11. Nelson's / more deaths."

Source: holograph; MARC, PLP 78/53/6.⁷

⁴Parson Greenwood (1727–1810), a native of Huddersfield, entered the itinerant ministry in 1762 and served faithfully for 31 years; see *WMM* 34 (1811): 710.

⁵William Green, a "twine-spinner" (i.e., rope maker), was one of the initial trustees of the New Room in Bristol, still serving in 1783; see Best, *Cradle of Methodism*, 187, 486.

⁶Charles Nelson (b. 1747), son of John and Martha (Webster) Nelson, was currently an apprentice in Bristol, likely with Elizabeth (Grace) Farley, widow of Felix Farley. In 1766 Charles would marry their daughter Elizabeth.

⁷A transcription was published previously in Laycock, *Haworth*, 256–57.

From the Rev. Vincent Perronet

Shoreham
November 25 [1763]

My Reverend and Dear Brother,

I take the present opportunity of acknowledging the favour of yours, which is just come to hand.¹ I sympathize with you in all your afflictions, and have still hopes that light, even great light, will soon shine out of this darkness.

The church of Christ, you know, has often been brought to the lowest ebb. And then her Lord, who knows the best time, has arose to her deliverance. Fear not, my dear brother, but even against hope, believe in hope,² and we shall both see the salvation of God!

I believe this world—I mean the moral part of it—appears to us exactly alike. It seems, like the ancient chaos, to be without form and void, and darkness surrounds it.³ But a glorious time is approaching, when the Sun of righteousness shall rise upon it with healing in his wings,⁴ and make it a more glorious paradise than ever!

We shall see it, my dear brother. We shall certainly see it. Though not with these bodily eyes. And we shall rejoice over it with the whole choir of saints. In the meanwhile let us rejoice in submitting quietly to the divine will. Let us patiently do and suffer what our Lord has appointed for us. And he that shall come, will come; and will tarry no longer than is best for us.

We should have been glad to have seen both you and our dear sister [SGW]. But perhaps the Lord has decreed we shall not meet till we meet forever. Thy will be done! Our love and respects are with you both. The Lord Jesus be with all of us!

Thine most affectionately,

Vin. Perronet

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

Endorsement: “Nov. 25, 1763 / Mr Perronet, hoping / foretelling glorious times.”

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/472/7.

¹CW’s letter is not known to survive.

²See Rom. 4:18.

³See Gen. 1:2.

⁴See Mal. 4:2.

From the Rev. John Fletcher

Madeley
December 26, 1763

My Dear Sir,

You are at last out of London, and I am ready to be out of debt. The farmers have paid me today, and I can pay you the money that you have so obligingly advanced to me. Send your note, and write me where you want me to send your money. I am so rich that I have ordered a pair of breeches. Everything is going gently—our friend [William Ley] in his Latin and his Greek grammar and me in the poor labours of my ministry. He will perhaps tell you that he has been exhorting for several weeks in a neighbouring parish. We are in danger of losing our tabernacle at Madeley wood, but the Lord will find us another. It was about a month ago that I saw at Madeley what I had never dared hope to see there: Three persons dead in six days within the faith of Christ and the consolation of his Spirit, yet not one of them belonged to the society.

The Baptists have made a new attack, and in the circumstances that we find ourselves I had thought that it was necessary to take up the cross with another response. It is finished at last in 102 pages.¹ One of their arguments—the only one which has embarrassed me a little—is the following. “If Christ made a full atonement for the sins of the whole world, if God laid upon him our iniquities, how could any bear the load in hell at the same time he dies on the cross. If you say it was for their stubbornness, impenitency, non-improvement or resisting of grace—all this is their sin, which Christ died for and atoned. How can then God be just and lay again upon the sinner the punishment of those sins which he laid on his Son? etc.” I beg you to tell me how you respond to that objection. I will be very glad to learn whether my view on the subject is not yours also.

Mrs. [Hannah] Heritage has written to me of a clergyman in London who has been obliged to leave his appointment as curate for the love of Christ [and] would be able to come to serve my church at Madeley.² You know him, what do you think of this project? You have left London, what would I go there to do?

If you go to London in the spring you must come by Ludlow. A little journey will do you good, gout demands exercise. I have oats provided for your horse, we have hay; and for you, you will have the legs of a great pig which has just suffered its sad fate.

I have tasted some of the pleasures of affection with my new friend.³ They are dangerous with a woman. I have had need of all my experience for me to stay within the bounds of simple affection. Up till now this is cemented by the blood of Jesus, and not by the liaisons of the flesh; and by the grace of God I hope that it will continue so untrammelled. If I had not found such a friend I would have been tempted to violate my promise to my first widow.⁴ And I could perhaps have been tempted to do so for this friend, if my scruples, my promise that I made to you, and several reasons based on her circumstances as regards her health and her children had not held me back.

¹See the prior example in Fletcher to CW, Jan. 5, 1763. Fletcher’s response was again manuscript, and is not known to survive.

²John Richardson (1734–92), who had taken the BA at St. John’s College, Cambridge in 1756, been ordained priest in 1757, and served curacies in Leek, Battle Abbey, and Ewhurst near Rye. At the latter he came into contact with a Methodist society and deepened his religious experience. Removed from his curacy, he offered his service to JW in 1762. See Atmore, *Memorial*, 356–65.

³This was likely the widow Ann (Cattel) Power, who appears in Fletcher’s letters over the next few years.

⁴When Fletcher declined to marry Hannah (Davenport) Englefield, he apparently vowed to her that he would never marry; see Fletcher to CW, Mar, 22, 1759 and Apr. 12, 1765.

You know that if I was to take a wife I could not do it without your approbation. Far from breaking my promise, I would not want even to take or to keep a friend without your consenting. My friend is proposing to come to Madeley in the spring, I would be very glad to have you here then to judge her with your own eyes, since to tell you the truth I do not have great confidence in mine, and even less in my heart than in my eyes.

The Lord humbles me from time to time, and gives me several tender feelings and some compassion for the suffering. These little visitations make me see at what immense distance I am from the state where I should be. I see that humility and love are the two pillars of Christian perfection. O when will they be fixed in their spiritual $\langle \dots \rangle$ of my God in such a way that they will never be cast down?

I have received your present. May God bless it to those who have the enjoyment of it, and return it to you a hundredfold. You have not sent me the commination of my papist. Whom should I pay for the books, you or Mr. Verden? Would you counsel me to set myself at liberty from time to time to make visits to serious-minded people in the neighbouring parishes? Mr. [Thomas] Maxfield is heavily occupied by his Tabernacle, or a little scandalised by the open manner in which I communicated to him my sentiments touching upon his conduct and his doctrine; he no longer writes to me.

Give me your news and that of the state of that part of Zion which you know. Present my tender greetings to your dear wife and your dear children, and pray for

The most feeble of your brothers,

J. F.

Mr. Buhet has sent me a quittance.

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

Endorsement: by CW, "Fletcher / Dec. 26. 1763."⁶

Source: holograph (in French); MARC, MAW Fl, 36.1.⁷

⁵One word is torn away by the wax seal.

⁶CW also wrote on address page, in shorthand, an initial draft of stansa 1–2, and the first line of st. 3, of "Thanksgiving for Fair Weather," MS Miscellaneous Hymns, 89–90.

⁷A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher's original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 187–88. We give here, with revisions in style and one missing line, Forsaith's English translation (pp. 189–91).

From the Rev. George Whitefield

New York
December 26, 1763

My Dear Old Friend,

Once more I write to you from this dying world. Through infinite unmerited mercy I am helped to preach twice or thrice a week, and never saw people of all ranks more eager in Philadelphia and this place than now. Lasting impressions I trust are made. At New Jersey College we had sweet seasons among the sons of the prophets, and I have had the pleasure of conversing with many “new creature” ministers of various denominations. Ere long we shall join the elders about the throne. Then shall we all greatly marvel and try who can shout loudest, “He hath done all things well.”¹ Neither you or your brother [JW] or the highest archangel in heaven shall, if possible, outdo even me, though less than the least of all. Continue to pray for me as such.

Remember me in the kindest manner to your dear yokefellow and all enquiring friends, and assure yourselves of not being forgotten in the poor addresses of, my dear friend,

Yours etc., etc. in Jesus

[G. W.]

P.S. I hope your brother lives and prospers. How is our friend [James] Ireland and family? God bless him and his.

P(oo)r Mr. Wright hath had a long seasoning with the ague and fever, but is now recovering.²

Address: “To / The Revrd. Mr. Charles / Wesley in / Bristol.”

Postmark: “8/FE.”

Endorsement: by GW, “Zealous G. Whitefield Dec. 26 / 1764.”³

Source: holograph; Drew, Methodist Archives, Rev. George Whitefield Collection.⁴

¹Mark 7:37.

²Possibly Rev. John Wright, Presbyterian minister in Cumberland County, Virginia who was supportive of the revival.

³CW misdated the year, since he did not receive the letter until Feb. 1764.

⁴A transcription was published previously in Jackson, *Life of CW*, 2:220–21.

1764

From B[artholomew?] Richards¹

[London]
February 28, 1764

Reverend Sir,

Though I have not had the pleasure of receiving a letter from you since you left London, I have had the satisfaction of hearing of you by several of the brethren whom you favoured with letters, through whom you was pleased to convey your love to your friends who met you on Sunday evenings, among whom I would take the pleasure of ranking myself.

As the time draws nigh that your brother will leave us,² for a great part (as we suppose) of the summer, permit me to observe to you what great satisfaction it will be to your friends and well-wishers, and I am persuaded to the society in general, to see you here upon his leaving us. Indeed it was the sense of your friends that you and he should have had a personal conference before he left London, with which some of them (I suppose) may have acquainted you, in order the better to concert y(oursel³)ves for the good of the society and prevent ill-designing per(sons fro)m insinuating themselves into the favour of the one, at the expense of the other. But as I understand he told the leaders yesterday that he should see you at Bristol,⁴ I hope it will answer the same end. It was very pleasing to hear from your brother that he expected you would be here in March. “So” (says he) “we agreed before he went out of town,” which gives us the agreeable satisfaction that there is a good harmony subsisting between you and him. And we hope your next interview will be a means of strengthening and increasing it.

I would observe with great satisfaction that since you left us your brother has preached in the general in the good old way, and rarely to insist upon instantaneous sanctification. One Sunday he leaned pretty much that way, which occasioned me to write to him. In answer whereto he wrote me “That it is his settled judgment, and has been for many years, that every believer may expect to be sanctified in a moment, in an inexpressibly higher degree than he was when he was justified.”⁵ I think this is reducing the matter to a narrow compass, for here is no full or entire sanctification insisted on, but only a higher degree. And therefore I wrote to him that⁶

If this great work of the Spirit be not understood to be confined to one particular operation, as if it was only at one particular time throughout his whole life that a believer is to expect to be so highly favoured, I can readily receive it. And I know of none but what are like-minded. For I believe that experience shows that every believer who continually watches unto prayer is favoured with many fresh manifestations of the love of God in a higher, and sometimes undoubtedly in an inexpressibly higher, degree than when he was justified. And that a further or

¹B. Richards and his wife were lay members of the society in London; attending particularly the West Street chapel. Surviving materials record only the first initial of his Christian name. It is possible that this was Bartholomew Richards (c. 1700–72), a poultry merchant with a store on St. James Street, near the West Street chapel. Bartholomew married Mary Man (d. 1782) in 1734.

²JW left London for northern England and Ireland on March 12, 1764.

³A small portion of the letter is torn away, affecting two lines, but the text can be reconstructed with reasonable confidence.

⁴JW was in Bristol Mar. 13–18.

⁵Neither of these letters are known to survive.

⁶The following is the only record we have of this letter.

higher degree of holiness is brought into the soul, proportionable to the degree of love shed abroad in the believer's heart. So that I am persuaded of the truth of what you said a 12-month ago in public, that where the love of God fills the heart, and so long as it fills the heart, there is no room for sin. And therefore if sin be only subdued, it answers the same end upon your plan as if it was expelled. Seeing your judgment is that it may be brought in again.

So far my letter. How far your brother approves of it, or how far you may approve of it, I know not. But I thought it proper to mention this to you now, on account of the expectation of you two conferring together, before you come to town [i.e., London].

And now sir, what should hinder your speedy rousing to supply your brother's lack of service? All things are ready. A lodging is ready to receive you and your family. Your friends are ready to wait upon you. The congregation is ready to receive the glad tidings of salvation at your mouth. The holy angels are ready to guard you. The Holy Spirit is ready to assist you and bless your labour of love among us. The blessed Jesus is ready to own and bless his word dispensed by you. And the eternal Father is ready to own your endeavours with success.

My wife <joins⁷> in Christian love to you and your spouse and lovely offspring, with
Yours affectionately,

B. Richards

Address: "The Revd Mr. Charles Wesley."

Endorsement: by CW, "[[Richards of brother]]" and "Richards sense of sancti / fication Feb. 1764."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/501/121.⁸

⁷A small portion is torn away by the wax seal, but the missing text is obvious.

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 Wesley

London
March 1, 1764

[[Dear Brother,]]

If the parties require it, I will re-hear the cause of William Warren and Abraham Ore.¹ But I do not apprehend there is anything to be said, more than what you have heard already.

I read Rollin's *Belles-Lettres* several years ago. Some things I liked, some I did not. Mark in him what you admire, and I will give it a second reading and a farther consideration.²

You "have no thoughts of venturing to London before May"! Then I must indeed "do the best I can."³ So I will comply with the advice of the stewards, as well as my own judgement, and insist upon John Jones's assisting me on Sunday.⁴ I have delayed all this time purely out of tenderness to *you*.

[[Adieu.]]

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

Postmark: "BATH."

Endorsement: by CW, "B[rother] Mar. 1. 1764 / ordaining J. J. in pure tender / ness to me!"

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 3/23.⁵

¹Nothing is known of this matter beyond this reference, apparently a matter of discipline in the Bristol society.

²Charles Rollin, *De la Manière d'Enseigner et d'Étudier les Belles Lettres* (4 vols.; Paris, 1726–28); published in English as *The Method of Teaching and Studying the Belles Lettres* (4 vols.; London, 1734).

³JW is quoting a letter from CW which is not known to survive.

⁴To enable John Jones to assist him fully, JW arranged for him to be ordained a priest by a man who claimed to be the (Greek) Orthodox Bishop Erasmus (Gerasimos Avlonites) of Arcadia in Crete; cf. A. B. Sackett, "John Wesley and the Greek Orthodox Bishop," *WHS* 38 (1971–72): 81–88, 97–102. This explains CW's comment in his endorsement about "ordaining J. J." Jones continued to serve as JW's assistant until 1769, when he left the post for health reasons. Jones was subsequently (re-)ordained by Richard Terrick, Bishop of London in 1770 and took a parish. He remained friendly with the Wesley brothers, but was no longer active in Methodist circles.

⁵Transcription published in JW, *Works*, 27:351–52.

From B[artholomew?] Richards¹

[London]
March 13, 1764

Dear Sir,

As your brother has now left us we hope to hear of your speedy coming to us, and the rather as there is an affair now in agitation which in my apprehension will be a means of giving our enemies a great advantage against us—namely, Dr. [John] Jones's officiating as a clergyman among us. I have offered him [Jones] reasons in writing to induce him to forbear acting in that character—exactly the same in substance, and for the most part in expression, with those contained in the other half sheet [see below]; a copy of which has been also given to your brother, which I was writing to acquaint you with as I understand there is to be a conference between you two upon the point.

I remember you were much against Mr. [Lawrence] Coughlan's ordination by the same. And I grant the circumstances between his and Dr. Jones's ordination differ, yet I conceive that the substance is the same and that they must both stand or fall together.

To colour the matter (as I conceive), it has been plausibly said that when a popish priest recants his error, he is not reordained. I grant it, but believe he cannot legally exercise the office of a priest in the established Church without the allowance of the bishop or archbishop. But however that be, the circumstances between that and the present case widely differ. For in the one case the man professes popery and subjection to the church of Rome, and is ordained by a bishop of that church, and I believe it is generally abroad. In the other case a Greek bishop² (or one supposed to be so) comes into England and exercises the office of ordination, not among his own countrymen or those of his own church, but among English people and them of the established Church, who have no connexion with or dependence upon the Greek church, but on the contrary believe that church to abound in errors, about as bad as the popish. And therefore I as much wonder that any member of our national Church should submit to receive orders from a Greek bishop (let the suggestion be as uncontroverted as possible) as I should if he was to go to a popish bishop for orders, which I suppose would not be submitted to. And I as much wonder that a Greek bishop of probity and conscientiousness should ordain anyone that he must be persuaded (if he believes the doctrines of his own church) held many and great errors.

If this ordination be allowed of, we may expect (if anybody else should appear here in the character of a Greek bishop) that it will be allowed by many others. And can it be supposed that our bishops will sit still and suffer such a principal part of their office to be usurped by foreigners, when even themselves cannot canonically exercise their office out of their own dioceses? It is therefore to be feared

¹The events behind this letter are sketched by JW in a letter published in *St. James's Chronicle*, Feb. 12–14, 1765, p. 4 (*Works*, 27:417–18). In the summer of 1763 JW encountered Erasmus, who described himself as Bishop of Arcadia, in a destitute state. JW offered financial support to Erasmus, and requested that Erasmus ordain John Jones. Jones held the educational requirements for ordination, but efforts by JW and LH to persuade a Church of England bishop to ordain him had failed. This refusal exacerbated JW's concern to provide sacraments to the growing community of Methodists in London, because so few in his connection were ordained. Thus the request was for Erasmus to ordain an assistant that JW felt was fully qualified. This ordination took place perhaps as early as July–Aug. 1763, though the exact date is not recorded. The letter of JW to CW dated Mar. 1, 1764, makes clear that the ordination had taken place some time before, but JW had not yet allowed Jones to officiate in Methodist settings. Shortly after the ordination of John Jones, while JW was out of London (as he was much of Aug. to Oct.), another of his assistants, Lawrence Coughlan, sought and obtained ordination from Erasmus, without JW's knowledge or support. Richards' letter reflects the concern among some London Methodists about these two ordinations.

²For more on Erasmus of Arcadia, see his letter to CW, May 30, 1764, below.

that if this affair be suffered to go on, it will be found that it was the wrongest step that the Methodists ever took, and will expose them most to the cause of their enemies. All which is humbly submitted to your serious consideration by, dear sir,

Yours very affectionately,

B. Richards

Reasons humbly offered against Dr. Jones's officiating as a Clergyman

First, because there were great suspicions last summer touching the character of the person who ordained him. It was questioned whether he was a real bishop, and if he was, whether he had not left his own country upon account of some issues or misbehaviours. Till these things are fully cleared up to the satisfaction of the society (many of whom have entertained the above suspicions and were determined not to receive Mr. [Lawrence] Coughlan as an ordained minister), the validity of his orders may justly be suspected.

Secondly, but supposing him to be a real bishop of a Greek Church, and that he stands clear of suspicions of any kind, it is clearly apprehended that he has not according to our laws and the constitution of our national Church (of which we profess ourselves members) any right or power to exercise his episcopal character here. And that no person ordained by him can be acknowledged a minister of the Church of England or (lawfully) use the office of the church. And that if any one would do so, he would be liable to a prosecution in the ecclesiastical court, where his (supposed) ordination by a foreign bishop would not be regarded. Besides, this would be a means—and the most effectual means—of raising up the bishops and clergy against the Methodists, for such a proceeding must needs force them in a tender point and they would undoubtedly use all their power to put a stop thereto. It behoves every one therefore to take care how they become instrumental in doing anything that may be a means of stirring up our enemies against us, lest they become answerable both to God and man for the consequences.

Thirdly, it is humbly apprehended that the concurrence of Mr. Charles Wesley should be had in an affair of so great consequence. Is he consenting thereto? We look upon the two brothers to be our joint ministers, and humbly conceive that nothing of importance (especially of so great importance) should be undertaken without their joint consent. If it be, may it not be productive of divisions among ourselves? It is therefore humbly hoped and desired that brother John Jones may forbear to exercise of an ordained minister till the two brothers have had a personal conference upon it; and until also full satisfaction be given, both on the validity of the ordination itself and also as to the legality of it according to our laws and constitution,

Especially as, fourthly, by the Act of Uniformity, 14th [Car.] ch. 2,³ it is directed that no person whatever shall presume to consecrate and administer the holy sacrament of the Lord's Supper before he be ordained priest according to the form and manner prescribed by the Book of Common Prayer, upon pain to forfeit for every offence the sum of £100. It is granted that by the Act of Toleration dissenters are exempted from this penalty. But as our above named brother is intended to act as a minister of the Church of England, it will remain in full force against him.

It is hoped that these things will be seriously weighed and considered, that we may act consistently with our profession of members of the Church of England—which, it is apprehended, the introduction of foreign ordinations among us is no sign or badge of. These are the sentiments of others, besides that of an unworthy brother,

B. Richards

Address: "To the Rev. Mr. Charles Wesley."

Endorsement: by CW, "March 13, 1764 / Richards – of Greek Ordination."

Source: manuscript copy by Richards; MARC, MA 1977/502.

³I.e. the Act of Uniformity 1662.

From Selina (Shirley) Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon

Clifton
May 17, 1764

My Dear Friend,

I am most extremely obliged by your letter,¹ and hope when you have time you will give me a few moments to know how you do and how your soul prospers and the work in your hands. I have the great pleasure of assuring you dear Mrs. Wesley has quite satisfied my heart, and I do believe we love one another better than if it had not happened.²

I do beg you will remember me in the most affect[ionate] manner to dear Mrs. Berkin and kind remembrances to him,³ and that my prayers and tenderest wishes will ever attend them. And poor Mrs. Wordsworth assure of my sympathy, love, and compassion for her.⁴ But I think her brother's zeal and faithfulness must make her great amends for all she can lose in this world.⁵ Assure him I love him and praise the Lord for him, though I don't know him. In heaven, I trust, we shall be well acquainted. That general assembly and church of the First Born has something in the sound that gladdens my heart, and raises every idea of greatness and blessedness of glory and happiness that can be added to the mind or heart of a creature to love him that sorrowed through life for us, to bring us to himself there, makes every step [of] weeping become sacred.

Miss Nelly is not better and yet not so much worse as to expect any change soon.⁶ I know you will pray for that in her heart, let the matter happen when it will. I am, in faithful Christian affection,
Ever your most unworthy friend.

I fancy I have pleased your brother by my last letter.⁷

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

Postmarks: "19/MA" and "Bristol."

Endorsement: by CW, "L. H. May 17. 1764."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/504/1/74.⁸

¹This letter is not known to survive.

²Nothing more is known of how SGW may have offended LH.

³Mary March (1736–1812), sister of Jane Catherine March, married William Berkin (1731–96) in London in 1756. They became close to both CW's family and LH. LH spells the name "Burkin."

⁴Judith Townsend (1738–86) married John Wordsworth in Jan. 1758. Her husband had died recently, leaving her a widow. In 1771 she remarried Rev. Thomas Haweis. LH spells "Wadsworth."

⁵Her brother was Rev. Joseph Townsend (1739–1813), who became rector of Pewsey in 1763, and was a close associate with LH. He opened his pulpit to JW on Oct. 2, 1764 (see *Works*, 21:491), but in later years aligned more with Calvinist Methodists, drawing JW's rebuke in a letter of Aug. 1–3, 1767.

⁶The reference seems to be to Alice Durbin (1757–1834), the third daughter of Henry and Hester (Thrilby) Durbin (d. 1759) of Bristol. Henry Durbin was close to both CW and LH, and his daughter Alice ("Nelly") suffered significant mental illness throughout her life. LH may have been helping care for Alice since her father was widowed.

⁷This letter is not known to survive.

⁸Cf. the previous transcription in Tyson, *Correspondence*, 105–06.

From the Rev. John Wesley

Haddington
May 25, 1764

[[Dear Brother,]]

Is there any reason why you and I should have no farther intercourse with each other? I know none; although possibly there are persons in the world who would not be sorry for it.

I hope you find peace and unity in the south, as we do in the north. Only the seceders and Mr. Sandeman's friends are ready to eat us up.¹ And no wonder, for these, as well as deists and Socinians, I oppose *ex professo*.² But how do Thomas Maxfield and his friends go on? Quietly, or *gladiatorio animo*?³ And how are John Jones, [John] Downes, and [John] Richardson? And my best friend, and yours?⁴

The frightful stories wrote from London had made all our preachers in the north afraid even to mutter about perfection, and of course the people on all sides were grown good Calvinists in that point. It is what I foresaw from the beginning, that the devil would strive by Thomas Maxfield and company to drive perfection out of the kingdom.

O let you and I hold fast whereunto we have attained;⁵ and let our yea be yea, and our nay, nay!⁶ I feel the want of some about me that are all faith and love. No man was more profitable to me than George Bell, while he was simple of heart. O for heat and light united!

My love to Sally.

Adieu!

Endorsement: by CW, "B[rother] / Maxf[iel]d driving out P[erfectio]n."

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 3/24.⁷

¹Two notable secessions from the Church of Scotland led to separate presbyteries, in 1733 and in 1761. A smaller secession by the followers of John Glas and Robert Sandeman occurred around 1730.

²"Expressly."

³Terence, *Phormio*, Act 5, Scene 8 (l. 964), "like gladiators" (Loeb).

⁴Mary (Goldhawk / Vazeille) Wesley and SGW.

⁵See Phil. 3:16.

⁶See Matt. 5:37 and Jas. 5:12.

⁷Transcription published in JW, *Works*, 27:369–70.

Anne Davis to Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley

[London]
May 29, 1764

Ever Dear Madam,

I cannot let this opportunity slip without conveying a few lines by dear Mrs. [Sarah] James to tell you how much I am disappointed [to lose] the pleasure of your company this summer.¹ Whenever I go to our friends in Great Russell Street,² how do I miss you there! But I can truly say my heart is with you continually and, as God has pleased to confine you at home, [I] must submit—as his will is always best.

I am very sorry to hear your spirits is so often low. I beseech my dearest friend to do all you can not to indulge it, for [it] is a disease that will creep more and more upon you. But I too well know that there is times when all our art or medicine will be of no use. It is God alone that can help and support. He has helped and supported you and I to this day; and fear not my dearest friend, he will strengthen and support you in every time of trouble, even to the end. May the Lord enable you to give up yourself, your babes, your all to his care and wise disposal. You will find it is the happiest moments that can be enjoyed upon earth.

Miss [Rebecca] Gwynne told me she would be with you at your time of distress, which I rejoice at because it will be a comfort to you.³ May the Lord Jesus bring you safe through and save you in child-bearing over this time also.⁴ Your dear partner [CW] seems to express that his stay with us will be very short. He thinks the time long already that he has been absent from you. He is but half here, he says, and cannot be easy without you (it is no wonder, sure). As much as I love him, I cannot wish his stay to be from you, though he is much blessed with us. Poor dear Mrs. [Elizabeth] Waller has had another plunge and I hear will be going for Bath soon. The Lord help us to wade through with patience all these storms and travails of life, looking unto Jesus every moment, until we are made fit to approach the eternal throne and claim the crown through Christ our own.⁵

As to my health, it is bad past expression. My pain is constant and at times insupportable. I think it a miracle I live from day to day. My weakness is so great and my spirit worn out seemingly to the lowest ebb. O may you never feel your nerves and spirits in all its dreadful forms as I do! But I still creep about and look cheerful, though in continual misery, which makes no one have any idea of what I feel except you, your dearest partner, and your sisters.⁶ You four are the only compassionate tender-hearted ones I meet with on earth. The Lord bless and reward you *all* for your love and tenderness to me, who am unworthy all your favours. I long for the day to meet you all where sorrow and sighing is at an end, and parting is no more forever. O let us hasten to that day, my ever dearest friend, for through mercy I can feeling say my treasure and my heart is there. I do not find a wish to stay on earth one hour, but to be made fit to appear before him in love.

I long for a letter from you. My old doubting heart would sometimes persuade me you love me less than you have done. But I will not give way to the thought. It would be ungrateful after so many years' experience of your tender regard. But if I never see you more, and now give up the thoughts of it, dear you are to me and very dear you ever will [be] till I meet you in that happy place of rest. My hearty

¹John and Sarah (Search) Jones had accompanied CW to London; see CW to SGW, May 13, 1764.

²The home of Harrison and Millbery (Gilby / Butterfield) Footitt, who were hosting CW during his time in London.

³SGW was pregnant with the couple's sixth child, and would give birth in September.

⁴See 1 Tim. 2:15.

⁵See CW, "Free Grace," st. 6, *HSP* (1739), 119.

⁶Rebecca Gwynne and Elizabeth (Gwynne) Waller.

love to your dear children, Mrs. [Elizabeth] Vigor and [her] sisters. I beg you will never mind the want of franks. Let not that deprive me of the pleasure of hearing from you.

The Lord Jesus be ever with you, and remember me in your prayers.

Your most unworthy but ever affections friend and servant,

Ann Davis

Address: "To / Mrs Wesley" (hand delivered).

Endorsement: by SGW, "May 29 / Ans[were]d June 23rd 1764."

Source: holograph; Bridwell Library (SMU), Manuscript collection.

From Erasmus of Arcadia¹

To the Most Esteemed and Most Wise
Honourable² Charles

Amsterdam
May 30, 1764

Greetings!

Believers do not quarrel with anyone but rather they make peace with those who are quarreling, following the Lord. For he did this: he made us, when we were sinners, to be reconciled to the consubstantial Father. And again, a believer does not grow angry, but has patience and follows the word from the Lord, never to be angry. Thus I ask for the same love: do not bear a grudge, nor return evil for evil, but love those who hate you. For the prophet Moses spoke in this way to the people, “You have sinned a great sin; and now I will go up to God, that I may make atonement before God for your sin.”³ And David said, “I was for peace among them that hated peace.”⁴

You see, most reverend [sir], what love they have who in truth believe. I know that I have offended you, but it is not my fault. The Lord knows the thoughts of humans. I do not at all believe this sacred festal gathering to have been anything shameful, but rather a love feast. I am going away from here. May the Father, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, keep you safe from the deceits of humans. May the Lord guard your paths, and your teachings, rejoicing in knowledge, learning with joy; may our God himself keep in his protection in peace your brother and your relations, and may he put all of your enemies and all your conflicts below your feet. Be strong!

Unto the praises of the Immortal,

Gerasimos Protopresbyter of Arkadi

P.S. The time is coming for me to depart for Greece, God willing and God being pleased. Since God has granted you power, spiritual food, the glory from above, be my benefactor. I am deficient in means for my journey; be not offended, desist from your anger. Let not my poverty be an impediment, for great is the power of virtue. I beg you to show appropriate mercy to the man who brings this to you. Adorn your hand most reverend with alms-giving, with brotherly affection, and with love, since these are the expressions of virtue. By these you will gain angels, not humans, as your friends. For this mercy you will be commended by God. I have attempted seven times and now I find a time when I can depart. Have mercy upon my distress as you please and wish, not according to your will but according to your power. You have the virtues of moderation, manliness, understanding, mindfulness, and philanthropy, and for this reason I hope you will be just. Remember Abraham the friend of strangers, Job the righteous, and Tobit, the food they gave to the poor, and clothing to the naked. Luke says, sell your possessions and give [them] to the poor.⁵

¹Erasmus of Arcadia (Gerasimos Avlonites; fl. 1752–73) was a Greek Orthodox leader who consistently identified himself as a bishop. A native of Corfu, then dominated by Venice, he worked in Crete during the period of Ottoman domination there. He travelled in Holland (from 1752), England (ca. 1762–64), Sweden (1768–69) and Switzerland (1772–73), leaving a trail of letters and other writings in each place. In late 1763 or early 1764 he ordained both John Jones (at JW’s request) and Lawrence Coughlan (without JW’s knowledge). CW disapproved of these ordinations and had apparently communicated this in some fashion (no letters of CW to Erasmus are known to survive).

²The Greek expression here (Κυριω Κυριω, lit. “Lord, Lord”) denotes deference to a high official.

³Exod. 32:30.

⁴Cf. Ps. 120:6–7.

⁵See Luke 12:33.

Address: “To / The Revend Carolo Wesley / at the Foundery near / Moorfields / London.”

Endorsement: by CW, “Cretian bishop 1762.”

[CW then adds:]

“ ... w[oul]d Peter’s zeal have sold
His heavenly powers for perishable gold.
At Mam[m]on’s beck dispensed etherial fire,
And made apostles for a wizard’s hire.”⁶

Source: holograph (in Greek); MARC, DDCW 6/84.⁷

⁶An excerpt from Samuel Wesley Jr. “To the Memory of the Right Rev. Francis Gastrell,” ll.139–42, *Poems on Several Occasions*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge: J. Bentham, 1743), p. 103. In the original the complete first line reads: “Almost as soon might Peter’s zeal have sold.”

A second annotation is in a later hand: “What may be the WIZARD’S HIRE, I know not; but this I know, there is neither ‘SENSE, CORRECTION, OR GRAMMER either in the letter or Postscript.’ However they carry self-evident marks that they were both wrote by the same MASTERLY hand.”

⁷In addition to the holograph, there are three distinct manuscript translations of the letter in a notebook in MARC (MA 1977/502, items 15–16). The translation given here is informed by them, as well as a translation by Ted Campbell.

From the Rev. John Fletcher

Madeley
June 3, 1764

My Dear Sir,

I do not want to let Mr. Marriott depart without several lines for you.¹ I begin with your accusation of thoughtlessness.² I admit that I am guilty. You will allow me however to say to you that my proposition to the German baron is not so instantaneous as you imagine it.³ Nine years ago I drew up my little plan for this work.⁴ I have followed the rule of Horace, “*nonum prematur in annum*,”⁵ and I had long set aside the thought of publishing it. The letter from our man came to awaken it at just the right moment and put it into the hands of providence. Not that I feel an itch to have my name in print, but I think from time to time that I am indebted to the French and I would count myself happy to be of use to one of their souls.

I have paid visits to the ministers of the parishes where I had been exhorting. Two received me civilly and the third was not at his lodging. I have learned a remarkable fact. The parish of Wombridge, where I am most often, is what one calls a lawless place, independent of our English bishops and under the jurisdiction of an Irish bishop. “I can,” said one of the neighbouring ministers, “kill you for preaching there, and no one will bring me to judgment for so doing.”

I have written to Mrs. Power on the receipt of your letter.⁶ She has left Madeley to return to West Bromwich, Mr. Edward Stillingfleet’s parish.

What do you think of imputed righteousness in the sense of Mr. [George] Whitefield and [James] Hervey? Is there such great harm in believing that the merit of the works of Christ belongs to me just as much as that of his sufferings? When I am hard of heart (which is not rare), I often find satisfaction in feeding upon the tears of my saviour and in presenting them to his Father in place of those which I strive to shed but am not able. I do not wish to renounce lightly anything which belongs to my saviour. I would wish to embrace evangelical antinomianism, without feeding diabolical antinomianism. Open your heart to me on this article.

Some time since I returned to my ideas about marriage, and following my custom *naturam expulsi furcâ* (*nie usque recurret* I hope).⁷ My fork was the love of Jesus: “I am married to my saviour; can I not be happy, perfectly happy, in loving him only and without reserve.” I envisaged him as my

¹Thomas Marriott (1725–75), a baker on Norton Folgate, London, and his wife Webster (Langdon) Marriott (1722–72) were among the earliest members of the Foundery society—see Foundery Band Lists (1742–46); Stevenson, *City Road*, 572–74; and Vickers, *Dictionary*, 223. With William Ley now enrolled at Oxford, Fletcher was tutoring their son Will (1753–1815).

²CW’s letter with this admonition is not known to survive.

³The German baron’s name was apparently De Prane (see Fletcher to CW, Apr. 28, 1765). The project is described in Fletcher to CW, May 10, 1765.

⁴This was likely the proposed dialogue between a minister and one of his parishioners that Fletcher described to JW in a letter of Feb. 17, 1766 (Forsaith, *Labours*, 225–27).

⁵Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 388; “Let it be kept back into the ninth year” (i.e., do not rush it).

⁶This is almost certainly Ann (Cattel) Power (1727–78). Ann Cattel married Francis Power (1721–54), an attorney in Kenilworth, Warwickshire in 1750. They had a son baptized “Anthony” in 1751, and a daughter Elizabeth baptized in Aug. 1754, just a month before Francis died. Their son appears to have taken the name “Francis” after his father’s death (perhaps it was a middle name).

⁷“I have driven out nature with a two-pronged fork (and it will never return I hope).” Cf. Horace, *Epistles*, I.x.24; “You may drive out nature with a two-pronged fork, but it will always return.”

spouse in a new manner. I came to him with greater liberty. And I understood in some way, or thought I understood, the sense of the words of Solomon, Canticles 1:13.⁸ This amorous manner of going to the saviour and attaching myself to his person is useful to me to fix my fickle imagination. But I fear lest there be something carnal in it; so much the more as from that time on I sense a strong desire to embrace all the world in purity. I am nearly into Moravian territory by these ideas. Tell me what are the dangers and the precipices to be recognised there.

Mr. Marriot speaks of an exchange with Mr. [Benjamin] Colley or [John] Richardson and myself. What do you say of it? Mr. [John] Berridge has refused the one I proposed to him. I would be very glad to see you, but I fear the dissipation of London and I would prefer to hide myself in a village than to be seen in the crowd of the little world where you are. That is perhaps my pride, as what attracts me is perhaps that I would rather be first in the village because I am alone there, than be last in the town. Should I go to London, I would rather go there *incognito* than on the footing of an exchange. Present my Christian respects to your wife, little family, Mrs. [Susanna] Boulton, [Hannah] Heritage, John Downes, to the ladies of St. James Place⁹ and to Mr. [Bartholomew] Gallatin, etc.

Farewell. Pray for me.

I am about to set out for Worcester for our little conference.

I lent through complaisance the last frank I had for you. And instead of one for you the Earl of Hereford sent this for your brother.

Address: "For / The Revd. Mr. Charles Wesley / London."

Endorsement: by CW, "Fletcher June 3 / 1764."

Source: holograph (in French); MARC, MA 1977/495/102.¹⁰

⁸"A bundle of myrrh is my well beloved unto me. He shall lie all night between my breasts."

⁹Bridget Carteret and Anne (Carteret) Cavendish

¹⁰A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher's original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 191–92. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith's English translation (pp. 193–95). See also the translation published in *City Road Magazine* 3 (1873): 332–33.

From Selina (Shirley) Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon

Bath
June 9, 1764

My Dear Friend,

The expense my poor, stupid letters put you to justly makes me keep silence, often longer than my heart would let me. But I am quite desirous that you should be at rest about the perfect happiness and real love of my dear Mrs. [Sarah] Wesley's heart and mine to each other, as for one moment I never wanted it so.¹ The more she is convinced of this, her's will abound. I will willing[ly] fear for myself and suppose my zeal for both your happiness might make my judgment too hasty in its conclusions.

I am more and more in heart united to Miss [Dorothy] Furly. She is a precious and faithful soul, and will come clear and free from all selfish entanglements. *Faith alone* is a great thing indeed, but here and here only is our life, which is to be proved by those works this brings; till then we have none but what self and pride makes for us. The sufficiency for all is only found in the Lord *himself*. And by *faith alone* we can only love, and therefore only purely obey in this constant and practical state of heartfelt trust, singly and separately from all things. May my soul abide in him for all and in all. Aand though it is a hard lesson, it teaches us what he designs we should learn, that he will have mercy. And this in all things alike we want from him. I see in every thought of my heart wants it for its covering.

If you see Mr. [Walter] Shirley, assure him of my love and tell him as I am now at Bath that I long to see him there. There is a universal desire stirred up in all to hear him, and he has been much blessed. Prevail with him to come, unless he has any check on his own heart to prevent him.

I am applied to for two curates. I have recommended Mr. Kesson[?]² of Kingswood to be a curate to Mr. Berkeley, the bishop's son.³ Should you know of any with you that wishes for orders, let me know and I will recommend them to the curacy vacant in Shropshire and that wants one immediately. Lose no time to let me know. I wish we had a nursery for those out of your lay preachers.⁴

My love to dear Mrs. [Mary] Berkin. I long to be informed about all things going on among the spiritual people in London. My chapel is above ground,⁵ and I find I am heartily wished to die before it is

¹See the mention of a possible affront SGW had made to LH, but which LH assured CW was resolved, in LH to CW, May 17, 1764.

²LH has scrawled the name at the end of a line; other possibilities include Henson, etc. None of the most likely possibilities match masters or students known to be at Kingswood in 1764. Michael Evans was the curate actually appointed under Berkeley at Acton in 1764.

³Rev. George Berkeley (1733–95), son of Bishop George Berkeley (1685–1753), took his BA from Christ Church, Oxford in 1757; his MA in 1759; and would go on to receive a doctorate. He was ordained priest in 1757 and was currently serving as vicar of Bray, rector of Acton, and Chancellor of Christ College, Brecon (hence the need for a curate). LH spells "Barkley."

⁴The focus of JW's school at Kingswood at the time was not training preachers; it was educating children, including the children of travelling preachers (a track for training preachers would be added after the expulsion of some Methodist students from Oxford in 1768–69). JW expected his lay preachers to improve their knowledge and abilities while in the itinerancy. LH, by contrast, had been concerned for some time to nurture more "evangelical" candidates orders in the Church of England. This comment to CW is one of the early signs of creating her own school for this purpose, which would be established at Trevecca in 1768; see Alan Harding, *The Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 173–232.

⁵LH had built the first chapel specific from preachers in her connexion in Brighton in 1761, and a second shortly after in Ote Hall (Oathall), 8 miles north of Brighton. She was currently erecting her most elaborate chapel yet, in Bath. See *ibid.*, 48–51.

finished. I am sure of your prayers for its success, but I think it is remarkable [that] I have not had a line from one creature to rejoice its being built. But by that and all things else it is a matter quite between my heart and our only best friend; and that being sufficient, I can want no more.

I have a letter from your brother who wishes me stay for the Conference,⁶ and I do hope you will be at it and prevail with any or all of the clergy you meet with to be at it.⁷ I believe it will be an important season. If you think it will be no loss to Mr. [John] Downes, I will forbear thinking of my watch.⁸ Expenses of importance calls for all from myself. But if it can be any loss to defer it, I will at all adventures have it and then say nothing after you have found out that.

Ever, ever your affectionate friend.

Miss Nelly grows worse,⁹ but my health obliges me to be here for the present.

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

Postmarks: "11/IV" and "Bath."

Endorsement: by CW, "June 9. 1764 / L. H."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/504/1/75; Tyson, 106

⁶JW's annual Conference was scheduled for early Aug. in Bristol.

⁷LH continues to be concerned about sacraments being restricted to ordained clergy.

⁸Downes helped support himself by making watches.

⁹Alice Durbin.

From the Rev. Vincent Perronet

Shoreham
July 17 [1764]

My Very Dear Brother,

I hope your manuscript will come safe to hand.¹ It gave me much pleasure in the perusal. I wish the animadversions may afford you any.²

Honest brother Mitchell³ is my assistant once a fortnight at the Water House,⁴ where he preaches on Friday evenings to a very quiet audience. I make no doubt but Methodism, notwithstanding all the wiles of Satan, is designed by divine providence to introduce the approaching millennium.

May God awaken every poor formal professor of Christianity out of that miserable Sardian and Laodicean state into which so many are fallen!⁵ What a melancholy sight is it to see those who are called to the high privilege of holding communion with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost grovelling in the mire of their corruptions with much seeming content! May the Lord Jesus dwell in all our hearts by faith, and may we all be rooted and grounded in divine love!

We are sorry we must despair of seeing you. Our best respects attend my dear sister, yourself, and brother [JW].

Thine most affectionately,

Vin. Perronet

Endorsement: by CW, “Mr. Perronet / of the work July 17. / 1764 / Meth[odis]m to introduce / the millennium!”

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/472/8.

¹Within a year of issuing *Scripture Hymns* (1762), CW decided to do a more extensive collection of this type of hymns on the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. He began with a volume on the Gospel of John in Dec. 1763, which he completed on Apr. 30, 1764. (see MS John on CSWT website). This was the manuscript he had shared with Perronet (as evidenced by CW’s endorsement on Perroent’s next letter).

²If Perronet’s comments were written in the manuscript, then the copy of MS John that survives was a revised version (as no such comments appear).

³This may be the Wesleyan itinerant Thomas Mitchell (1726–85), but he was typically assigned in Yorkshire.

⁴A manor house on the bank of the River Darent in Shoreham.

⁵See Rev. 3.

From the Rev. Vincent Perronet

Shoreham
August 16 [1764]

My Very Dear Brother,

Through some unavoidable accident the favour of yours only came to hand yesterday.¹ I hope, long before this, your dear partner's sorrow is turned into joy.² This glorious change shall one day be the lot of all the children of God! And therefore may his Holy Spirit enable every sorrowful child to keep a steady eye upon that glorious season! All glory to free grace! I know one who is so wonderfully, though most undeservedly, supported by it!

Say not, my dear brother, that thou "sometimes hopest." Hope on, even in full assurance of hope, and thus hope even unto the end! For sure I am, thou shalt not be disappointed of thy hope.

I ever read your hymns with pleasure. But never read any with more pleasure than the last. Therefore I pray that you would publish them.³ I will subscribe for six, but without the bookseller's fee.

Mistakes and misapprehensions are, in some things, inseparable from our present state. However, it is certainly a Christian office to endeavour to set our brother right when we apprehend him to be wrong, especially in matters of great importance. Gospel perfection is undoubtedly of great importance. But to "preach it" as if it were like justification, i.e., in its own nature an instantaneous work; or "to allow that a person is perfect because he affirms it himself," this is certainly a great mistake.

No serious sensible Christian can doubt but God can, in an instant, make the foulest leper perfectly clean; can instantly turn the impurest sinner into a perfect saint. But this is not his usual, established method, nor could I merely take anyone's word for it. The good Lord reveal, in his time, every truth to his children which is needful for them!

We are greatly concerned to hear of the misfortune of our worthy brother [John] Jones and his companion. I shall take care of the letter to honest brother Mitchell.

Our love and respects are with thee and thy dear companion. The Lord Jesus Christ be with all of us!

Thine most affectionately,

V. P.

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

Postmark: "20/AV."

Endorsement: by CW, "Perronet Aug. 10. / 1764 / [[promising to subscribe for]] 6 [[of my next Scripture Hymns]]."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/472/9.

¹This letter of CW is not known to survive.

²I.e., that SGW's pains and fears about the pending childbirth will be replaced with the joy of the birth of their seventh child.

³Perronet is surely referring to MS John, the first in a series of scriptural hymns on the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles which CW was currently preparing. They were not published during his life.

From the Rev. John Fletcher

Madeley
August 22, 1764

My Dear Sir,

I have at last received your dear letter after having waited for (I think) two months.⁴ I have often wished myself at Bristol among you, but in vain. I think that if Lady Huntingdon can expedite a plan of union,⁵ and make the clergy receptive to it, she will achieve a great coup. I have written to her with my views and those of my neighbour Hatton,⁶ in the hope that a letter would make up for the lack of our presence. But it probably came too late.

About the new invitation contained in your last I have the same difficulty. I can easily discontinue the personal functions of my ministry. But the public ones—burials, christenings—compel me to remain in place here on weekdays as well as Sunday. Thus I am obliged to wait resolutely for you.

I have not yet broken up my household. My cross is still on my shoulders. And what is worse than that, I am living on borrowed money. My servant has been ill since my return from Smisby,⁷ and I have been obliged to have two or three women with her, as well as the apothecary. And I do not care to see her again until she is fully recovered. Every day I await a farmer from Wales, known to Mr. Howell Harris, who is talking of taking my house and of giving me board into the bargain. Pray that the Lord guides me lest *incidam in Scyllam cupiens vitare Charybdim*.⁸ When you come you will have a bed for yourself and a stable for your horse, so that can be no excuse.

Mr. [Thomas] Maxfield has written to me by one of Mr. Croft's acquaintances that he will be very glad to come to me for a short visit. And I have written to him that I will be glad to receive him, and for two reasons: firstly, because he preaches (according to what Mr. [William] Ley has written) the gospel as before, without [George] Bell's additions; secondly, because I love peace as a catholic, and I hope to maintain it with all, in order to have the opportunity to mend it where Satan has broken it. Added to which, notwithstanding his faults, he is an old friend who has good qualities, and from whom one can draw good when there is no rivalry. And his faults will be corrected more easily through friendship than by aloofness. Besides, if he comes I will have a care to be on my guard, for fear of being biassed against your brother or against him. *Media tutissimus ibo*.⁹

As attached as I am to Shropshire, last Sunday I went away for the first time on a Sunday since my settling here (my journey to Smisby excepted). Mr. Davenport, curate of Tipton in Staffordshire made an exchange with me.¹⁰ I preached in his church in the morning, and in the afternoon I preached at West

⁴This letter is not known to survive.

⁵Spurred by conversations with LH, JW formulated a call for greater union among the evangelical clergy in the Church of England in early 1764 and shared it with LH (JW to LH, Apr. 20, 1764, *Works*, 27:358–62). Her positive response led JW to suggest a gathering of evangelical clergy in Bristol the week he was to meet with his lay preachers (JW to LH, May 16, 1764, *Works*, 27:367–68). She gathered about a dozen clergy and the two groups met together on Aug. 8, 1764. Little more came of the plan.

⁶Rev. Thomas Hatton (c. 1735–1807), a graduate of Cambridge, had been appointed rector of Waters Upton, Shropshire in 1764, and remained there to his death. He was the sole Church of England clergyman near Fletcher who was sympathetic to the Methodists.

⁷The parish of Rev. Walter Sellon.

⁸“I fall into Scylla while seeking to avoid Charybdis.”

⁹Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, ii.137; “I will go safest [in] the middle.”

¹⁰Rev. Thomas Shaw had been curate of Tipton in 1762, but the records on CCEd then jump to 1812. A likely curate in 1764 is Rev. Edward Davenport (b. 1713).

Bromwich for Mr. [Edward] Stillingfleet, before Lord [William] Dartmouth, etc. And I returned the same night to Madeley, after having done 55 miles; and I found myself as fresh as when I left in the morning.

My principal target in going to West Bromwich was to enlist Mr. Stillingfleet to join the union, the plan of which your brother has drawn up. But, says he “there is nothing in it.” I found him greatly soured by your brother’s move, who has bought from [James] Wheatley the tabernacle which he built in Mr. Stillingfleet’s parish.¹¹ I do not believe that many among the clergy [will] agree to a union, unless your brother keeps his word and promises them not to send his preachers into their parish, or among their labours.

Mr. [Alexander] Mather told me last Sunday that he had been invited to go to the Coal-pit Bank,¹² where I have written to you that I had gone to prevent this happening. He added that he did not want to make such a move without my approval. I refused him on the pretext that Mr. Hatton and myself are both better placed to take care of that place, given that it is between our two parishes and that we have very recently met there. Your brother said nothing to me on the matter of introducing preachers into the neighbourhood, and I took good care not to stir the embers. All was peace, and folks were calmer and more reconciled to his appearance at Madeley than I would have believed possible. There is only one of our churchwardens who makes overt threats.

Present my respects to Lady Huntingdon and tell her that if she really wants to honour me with several orders, comments, or directions—immediately by letter, or by you as her messenger or secretary—she can count on their prompt execution, if the matter concerned is within my power. If we are still alive I will try to pay her my respects at her first visit to Mr. [Howell] Harris’s household in Wales, or at Bath. I hope the Lord will give me voice.

I have not forgotten your dear half and her hour which is near.¹³ May the Lord support her in advance by a lively hope, and by her ability and her patience in the day of her distress. Greet her from me and recommend for her meditation the 11th and 12th chapters of Hebrews. Don’t forget Charles and Sally. The peace of God be with you and with us all. Pray for us.

N.B. Mr. Stillingfleet should be glad of seeing you.

[In English at end] Give my Christian love to Mrs. Spragg,¹⁴ and tell her that Mrs. [Ann] Power hath received her letter and thanks her for it. She would have answered it before if she had heard from her daughter¹⁵ since she sent her word to set out for Bristol. The last time she heard from the person where she boards she was not well, and her mother begins to be uneasy at her not hearing how she is and when she is to set out for Bristol.

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

Endorsement: by CW, “Aug. 22. 1764 / Fletcher.”

Source: holograph (in French); MARC, MA 1977/495/86.¹⁶

¹¹This tabernacle stood of Paradise Street and had been purchased by members of the local Methodist society for use by preachers in connexion with JW.

¹²Now known as Ketley Bank.

¹³SGW was nearing delivery date in her pregnancy.

¹⁴John Spragg (1699–1778), a currier in Bristol, married Rebecca Bennett (1714–85) in 1755. They appear as a couple in a 1770 list of the bands in Bristol. Fletcher spells “Sprag.”

¹⁵Elizabeth Power (1754–1839).

¹⁶A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher’s original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 195–97. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith’s English translation (pp. 197–200).

From B[artholomew?] Richards

[London]
August 30, 1764

Reverend Sir,

Upon my coming into [West Street] chapel last Sunday morning, to my very great surprise I found Dr. [John] Jones in the desk, reading prayers. It seems he had officiated the Sunday before at Spitalfields, which I had heard nothing of. After sermon I had some talk with him about it. He was very shy and desired I would speak to your brother [JW]. However, upon my acquainting him (which I think I had your authority for) that he had promised you both by word and letter not to officiate without your concurrence, he put it off by saying it was not just so, or something to that effect.

I afterwards spoke to your brother and desired to know how Dr. Jones could officiate as a clergyman among us, consistent with the principles and practice of the Church of England, of which we professed ourselves members. Whereto he urged the validity of the Greek ordination. But upon my telling him that was not to the point, he said or signified that field preaching and extemporaneous prayer were as much against the principles of the Church of England, or to that effect. And after a few altercations, he said he would defend it (concerning the Dr.'s officiating as a clergyman) against all objections. Whereupon I told him I had delivered him my reasons against it in writing near half a year ago,¹ which he had not yet answered. I enquired of him if you concurred in this proceeding. He said you half-concurred. I was too short in not asking him what he meant by that, but acquainted him with Dr. Jones's promise to you, [and] that the beginning of the Dr.'s ministrations among us would be the end of yours. Whereto he replied he could not help it if some people would act absurdly, but that he must act according to his conscience, or to that effect. Whereupon I told him (as I also did Dr. Jones) that I could not acknowledge the Dr. as a minister of the Church of England and I accordingly avoided going to the part of the table where he administered the cup.

My desire at present is to have your sentiments in what manner to act in this critical affair. Perhaps there are but few that view it in the light that I do, or that care to speak their minds freely about it. Was it conversed at the Conference and consented upon there? If it was, I think your brother would have mentioned it to us, which I do not find he has. Let me entreat you to write to me in a post or two whether you think it expedient for me to submit to Dr. Jones's new character or not, especially considering how strenuously I have opposed it both to your brother and him.²

I hope this will find you the father of another living and well favoured child, or at least that you will soon be so. My wife joins in Christ love to you and your dear partner and children with, dear sir,

Yours in all Christian affection,

B. Richards

Address: "To / The Revd. Mr. Chas. Wesley / at / Bristol / postage paid 4d."

Endorsement: by CW, "Aug. 30. 1764 / Upright B. Richards / of J[ohn] J[ones]."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/501/122.³

¹See Richards to CW, Mar. 13, 1764.

²If CW replied, it is not known to survive.

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

From the Husband of Elizabeth Gill

[London?]
[November 1764¹]

Worthy Sir,

If you think proper to speak a word or two of my wife's death, it might be a blessing to some.

Elizabeth Gill, when I married her, I believe she loved God with all her heart. Soon after she was careful about many things, lost her peace with God, though still continuing in the way to heaven.

The day before she was taken sick a person came to see her. She was giving the child suck. She said to the person, "I do not know what I should do if the Lord was to take this child from me. I find my heart set upon it so and what do you think I was thinking upon just now? Something said to me, 'What art thou doing? Eternity is at hand and thou art in this unhappy state?'"

The next day she was taken sick, and she cried out, "I am lost to all eternity if I die in the state I am in." She continued crying, "Lord have mercy upon me; come Lord Jesus, come quickly now; come, come now," till three days before she died. She seemed to pray but little that morning. In the afternoon the nurse said to her, "Can't you pray now?" "No," said she, "I can't pray at all. I wish some person would pray with me." They did. The next morning she said, "Now my burden is gone. I can pray." And [she] said, "It is easier to lose faith than to get it." Then she said, "What a wretch I am to doubt, the enemy says tomorrow." But her cry was, "Come Lord Jesus."

About 11:00 two or three friends came to see her and went to prayers with her, and there was a shaking among the dry bones and the Lord sealed her pardon upon he[r] soul. When they had done praying, she could hardly speak. A person said to her, "Now do you love Jesus Christ?" She could not speak. A person said, "If you do, heave up your hand." She did, and put it to her heart. Her friends left her, and then she sang that verse:

And wilt thou yet be found?
And may I still draw near?
Then listen to the plaintive sound
Of a poor sinner's prayer.²

After that she sang "Praise God from whom all blessings flow" almost as clear as ever I heard in my life. Then two or three more friends came and asked if she loved Jesus Christ. "Yes I do. Yes I do." And then she sang:

O the infinite height
Of our solemn delight
While we look on the Saviour and walk in his sight!
The blessing who knows,
The joy he bestows
While we follow the Lamb, wheresoever he goes?
[...]
Not a spirit above
To perfection can prove
Or count his unsearchable riches of love:
But we all shall obtain

¹The only indication for dating this manuscript is CW's endorsement; an Elizabeth Gill was buried in Southwark on Oct. 10, 1764.

²CW, "The Resignation," st. 1, *HSP* (1740), 76.

What none can explain,
And in Jesus's bosom eternally reign.³

And then she said to them that stood by her, "Why don't you help me to sing?"

The next morning her husband went to her and asked if she loved Jesus Christ. "Yes I do. Yes I do." And [she] said, "Ask of the Lord and he will give you living faith." I asked where she found it. She said, "In my inner parts, in my inner parts." She said to the nurse, "I wish you was going with me." Two or three stood round the bed, but she could not speak. But [she was] quite sensible to the last. When they turned from her, she gave so pleasant a smile as could be and her countenance spake what was in her heart; till she quietly slept in the Lord.

Endorsement: by CW, "Elis. Gill's happy End / Nov. 1764."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/501/64.⁴

³CW, Hymn 26, sts. 2 & 4, *Graces* (1746), 12.

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 Wesley

London
December 7, 1764

[[Dear Brother,]]

Be so kind as to show this to Thomas Lewis¹ and Mark Davis,² so I may answer theirs and yours together.

What need of a formal petition? Would it not be just as effectual for me to write a letter to the Corporation, in the name of all the Bristol Methodists—urging first, Mr. Witherspoon’s argument against the English theatre;³ secondly, the matter of fact, the actual mischief done thereby; and then gently and respectfully making the application?⁴ What think you? *Ecquid novisti rectius?*⁵ Send me word without delay.

Sister Suky was in huge agonies for five days, and then died in the full assurance of faith. Some of her last words (after she had been speechless for some time) were, “Jesus is come! Heaven is here!”⁶

I am like Simonides. The more I think, the less able I am to answer the king’s question: to prove the necessity, expediency, or propriety of an atonement to an unconvinced sinner.⁷

Indeed, you ought to have said something to Thomas Maxfield’s letter, had it been only what you say now.⁸ He is Thomas Maxfield still. *Cerebrum non habet.*⁹ Mr. [John] Richardson is better and better.

James Wheatley (the jewel!) has given me warning to quit the Tabernacle in spring,¹⁰ so I am preparing to build at Norwich, for no place already built can be procured for love or money.

I think verily there is no need that you and I should be such strangers to each other. Surely we are old enough to be wiser.

¹Thomas Lewis (1714–82) was General Steward of the Bristol society at this time (see JW, *Works*, 10:873), and a friend of CW. See CW’s hymn on his death in MS Funeral Hymns (1756–87), 99–102; and published in *AM* 6 (1783): 49–51.

²Mark Davis (1734–1803) was accepted as an itinerant at the Dublin Conference in 1756, shortly after joining the Dublin society (Crookshank, *Ireland*, 1:131). He was currently serving in Wiltshire as an Assistant. Davis left the itinerant ranks in 1768 to set up a school in London (see *Works*, 10:353).

³John Witherspoon, *A Serious Inquiry into the Nature and Effects of the Stage* (1757).

⁴JW wrote this letter, sent via CW; see below, Dec. 20, 1764.

⁵“Do you know anything better?”

⁶Susanna (Wesley) Ellison, the elder sister of John and Charles, died the very day of this letter.

⁷Simonides of Ceos (c. 566–468 BCE) was asked Hiero of Syracuse to explain the being and nature of the Deity. Simonides asked for a day to reflect, then another day, and so on. Hiero grew weary of waiting, and asked the reason for his strange behaviour. Simonides replied, “The longer I deliberate, the greater obscurity I find.”

⁸CW’s letter, with his comment on Maxfield, is not known to survive; neither is the letter by Thomas Maxfield under consideration.

⁹“He has no brain.”

¹⁰After Wheatley was expelled by JW and CW from their connexion as a travelling preacher, for sexual improprieties, he became an independent and built a chapel in Norwich called the Tabernacle. When further indiscretions drove Wheatley from Norwich, in Nov. 1758 he offered to lease the Tabernacle to JW (see *Journal*, Nov. 3, 1758, *Works*, 21:170).

Come, I will give you a little work. Translate for me into good English the Latin verses that occur in the *Earnest Appeal*; and why not those three Greek ones?¹¹

Ἦ, καὶ κυανέησιν ἐπ' ὀφρύσι νεύσε Κρονίων,....¹²

I have answered poor Mr. Hervey's last tract so far as it is personal.¹³ My love to Sally.
*Vivamus!*¹⁴

Adieu!

I will see to the £6.

You *should* send Charles Perronet's book immediately.¹⁵

The Tax of the Apostolic Chamber.¹⁶

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

Postmark: "8/DE."

Endorsement: by CW, "Dec. 7. 1764 / B[rother]. / poor S[ister] Suky saved / at last! Why shd — / despair?"

Source: holograph; Pitts Library (Emory), John Wesley Papers (MSS 153), 2/22.¹⁷

¹¹While he refers specifically to the *Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*, JW is lumping with this the three-part sequel, *Farther Appeal* There are only two Latin quotations in *Earnest Appeal*, and no Greek. JW was at work on a new edition of the *Appeals*, but ended up publishing only the *Earnest Appeal* (6th edn.) the following year. He published the full set next in his collected *Works* (vol. 14, 1772). Vol. 32 of that first edition of JW's collected *Works* (1774) included an appendix giving English translations for various Latin and Greek items, including those in the *Appeals*. It is unclear who did the translations. The relevant Latin and Greek passages (with suggested English translation in footnotes) can be found on *Works*, 11:51, 217, 274, and 303.

¹²Homer, *Iliad*, i.528ff. The translation that JW supplied in *Works* (1774) was "Jove spake, and nodded with his sable brow, / And huge Olympus to his centre shook."

¹³James Hervey's manuscript letters addressed to JW, which he left unpublished at his death in 1758, in the care of his brother, had been surreptitiously published by one of their associates in mid-1764 as *Aspasio Vindicated, and the Scripture-Doctrine of Imputed Righteousness Defended against the Objections and Animadversions of the Rev. John Wesley, in Eleven Letters* ([Leeds: Griffith Wright,] 1764). JW became aware of this volume and crafted an answer in late Nov. He published this "answer" as the Preface to his abridgement of John Goodwin's *Treatise on Justification*; see JW, *Works*, 13:377–90.

¹⁴"Let us live!"

¹⁵Possibly a reference to C[harles] P[erronet], *A Letter to Mr. P[ayn]e : Occasioned by the late frequent disturbances made during the time of prayer and exhortation, in an independent meeting in Beach-Lane* (London, 1762).

¹⁶Possibly equating CW's role with that of the Apostolic Camera in the Church of Rome.

¹⁷Transcription published in JW, *Works*, 27:401–02.

From Lady Gertrude (Stanhope) Hotham

Kensington G[r]ove (?)
December 19 [1764]

My Very Dear and Reverend Friend in the Lord,

This is indeed but the second letter I have wrote since the departure of my dear daughter in the Lord.¹ The evidences of which I here enclose you from her own mouth,² not above a quarter of an hour before she was redeemed from a miserable world of pain and grief, labour and sorrow, unto the regions of eternal bliss. Oh my dear friend, I stand confounded that such a wretched creature as myself should be spared to be a witness of such mercies. What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits? May he more and more enable me to declare the wonders he hath done for the children of me, with praise and thanksgiving, in which I am sure you will join with

Your very unworthy but very faithful friend in the Lord,

G. H.

My dear son [Charles] desires to be remembered to you in the kindest manner, as has my dear deceased daughter in her will, by a small token of £10, and must beg the favour of you to accept of a scarf which you'll be so good as to provide yourself with.

Mrs. [Bridget] Carteret and [Anne] Cavendish, Gatty,³ and Miss Gee⁴ all desire to be remembered.

Address: "To / The Rev. Mr. Charles Wesley / in Charles Street / Bristol."

Postmark: "19/DE."

Endorsement: by CW, "Dec. 19. 1764 / Lady Gertrude / of Melly Translated."⁵

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/428/2/81.

¹Melusina Hotham died Dec. 17, 1764, in Clifton, Gloucestershire.

²The enclosure does not appear to have survived.

³Lady Hotham's other daughter, Gertrude Hotham (1731–80)

⁴Gertrude Gee (b. 1740), a cousin of Lady Hotham, who would marry James Whyte in 1772.

⁵CW also records in shorthand: [[To Mrs. Hall at Mr. Roth's(?) / No. 20 Gloucester Street / near Queens Square]]. He may have meant that he sent this address for his sister Martha to Lady Hotham.

From the Rev. John Wesley
To the Mayor and Corporation of Bristol

London
December 20, 1764

Gentlemen,

Both my brother and I, and all who have any connexion with us, are extremely sensible of our obligations to you for the civility which you have shown us on all occasions, and we cannot but feel ourselves deeply interested in whatever we apprehend in any degree to concern your honour or the general good and prosperity of the city of Bristol. This occasions my giving you the present trouble, which (whether it has any farther effect or no) you will please to receive as a testimony of the high regard we shall ever retain for you.

The endeavours lately used to procure subscriptions for building a new playhouse in Bristol have given us not a little concern, and that on various accounts: not barely as most of the present stage entertainments sap the foundation of all religion, as they naturally tend to efface all traces of piety and seriousness out of the minds of men; but as they are peculiarly hurtful to a trading city, giving a wrong turn to youth especially gay, trifling, and directly opposite to the spirit of industry and close application to business; and, as drinking and debauchery of every kind are constant attendants on these entertainments, with indolence, effeminacy, and idleness, which affect trade in an high degree.¹

It was on these very considerations that the Corporation at Nottingham lately withstood all solicitations, and absolutely forbade the building a new theatre there, being determined to encourage nothing of the kind. And I doubt not but thousands will reap the benefit of their wise and generous resolution.

It does not become me, gentlemen, to press anything upon you, but I could not avoid saying this much, both in behalf of myself and all my friends.

Wishing you the continuance and increase of every blessing, I remain, gentlemen,
Your obliged and obedient servant,

John Wesley

[[Dear brother,]]

I suppose it is of little consequence in whose hand this is transmitted. Let it be accompanied by prayer and good must follow, one way or the other. Let us work while the day is.²

Adieu.³

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

Postmark: "19/DE."

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 3/25.⁴

¹Despite these concerns, the Theatre Royal was built on King Street, opening in 1766.

²Cf. John 9:4.

³The note to CW appears on the back of the address half and is thus detachable, so that the letter to the Mayor and Corporation of Bristol could be delivered without the affixed note. It is not clear that CW did deliver it.

⁴Transcription published in JW, *Works*, 27:405.

From Samuel Franks¹

[London]
December 28, 1764

Dear Sir,

This day, about 3:00 in the morning, our dear friend completed his warfare.² About 2:00 your brother was with him. After a time he went to prayer, and having finished all relating to him, while he continued for the Lord I [was] strengthening and supporting his wife.³ He gave up his spirit with patience and thankfulness, into the hands of his merciful and faithful Creator and Redeemer, without a sigh or groan. His senses were acute to the last moment. I think such an instance of patience, resignation, and self-diffidence I scarce ever met with. Some of his last words uttered yesterday were, “Pray for me, that I may not deceive myself.” His meaning was that he might not overrate the supporting and comforting grace God had blessed him with—allowing for the body’s passing down his mind. For some weeks past his soul has been a sacrifice of prayer, praise, and thanksgiving.

The Lord prepare me to follow him. I thank him I grow more weary of all transitory things than ever. May I experience and daily increase in all the holy humble heavenly mind which was in Jesus! Mrs. Matthews is very disconsolate; but as well as can be expected. My wife⁴ joins in love and duty with

Your affectionate servant,

Saml. Franks

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

Postmark: “28/DE.”

Endorsement: by CW, “Dec. 28. 1764 / Franks of J. Mathews / released.”

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/501/109.⁵

¹Samuel Franks (d. 1773) was JW’s general steward in London, covering both books and the Foundry from 1759 until his death in Sept. 1773. See Stevenson, *City Road*, 48.

²This friend was John Matthews, a London supporter of Methodism who married Jeanne Vazeille, the stepdaughter of JW, on July 24, 1757. As this letter records, JW was at Matthews’ side when he died; see also JW, *Journal (Works)*, 21:497).

³Jeanne (Vazeille) Matthews.

⁴Samuel Franks married Sarah Walker in Nov. 1762 in London. Sarah appears as a single female in the Foundry Band Lists (1742–46).

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

From the Rev. John Wesley

London
December 31, 1764

[[Dear Brother,]]

Pray tell Thomas Lewis I believe one I spoke to yesterday will make us a good housekeeper. She is selling off her things, and can come in two or three weeks.¹

John Matthews sent for me between 2:00 and 3:00 on Friday morning.² One had a little before asked him how he found himself, and he answered, “The Lord protects, for ever near.” When I came, he was perfectly sensible. I began to pray at 3:00, and before I had spoken many words his soul was set at liberty, without a groan. Here is a subject for y(our pen.³) He has had “the witness,” in *my* sense, for several months—that is, he *knew* he was in the favour of God, and had *no doubt* of going to heaven.⁴

I hope Goodwin is above three-quarters printed.⁵

You know doctors differ. I could trust Dr. Turner as well as any.

I shall say a word to the preachers in Ireland. I really thought Mark Davis had had more wit and more modesty.

I do not yet find anything on the atonement fit for a deist. Pray inquire of your learned friends.

My love to Sally.

[[Adieu.]]

I have sent you by Miss Billo the Preface to Goodwin and the *Appeals*. You will English the Latin verses, and produce the nearest and correctest edition of them which has ever appeared.⁶

Endorsement: by CW, “B. Dec. 31, 1764 / J. Mathews death.”

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 3/26.⁷

¹CW’s letter, to which JW responds on several points, is not known to survive.

²Matthews, husband of JW’s step-daughter Jeanne (Vazeille), had been dying of consumption since at least August; see JW, *Journal*, Aug. 27, 1764, *Works*, 21:487.

³There is a hole in the paper and the words in brackets are supplied.

⁴CW wrote a manuscript poem “On the Death of Mr. John Matthews, Dec. 28, 1764,” surviving in MARC, MA 1977/583/20.

⁵I.e., JW’s extract of John Goodwin’s *Treatise on Justification*.

⁶Cf. JW to CW, Dec. 7, 1764. There is no evidence that CW prepared the English translations requested at this time. Only the *Earnest Appeal* was issued in a new edition in 1765, and there was no English translation provided for the Latin verse.

⁷Transcription published in JW, *Works*, 27:405–06.

1765¹

From James Thwaite²

London
January 5, 1765³

Reverend and Dear Sir,

As you will be apprised by this post of something which will displease you, I take the freedom to acquaint you myself. It hath fell out without my seeking or even desire. But a person came to me, enjoined me to keep a secret for a time, and then it was propounded to and I was without any desire persuaded into ordination by the Greek bishop with several other travelling preachers, which hath made some stir among us. Whereas Mr. [John] Jones hath set the example, and admitted by your brother's approbation,⁴ why should we be turned out of the Methodist society for the same fault overlooked in others? And blessed be God, no one could say anything to our charge since we was admitted into your society. And you cannot say so of all that is ordained and uses their ordination. If Mr. Jones will give up his, we are willing to give up ours.

Dear sir, excuse my writing to you and pardon me in this thing. I remain
Your son in the gospel,

Jas. Thwaite

Endorsement: by CW, "Thwait c[o]nfess[ion] / Jan. 6, 1765."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/502.⁵

¹The opening letter for this year, and several that follow, deal with repercussions of JW having John Jones ordained in the winter of 1763–64 by Erasmus of Arcadia. It is noted above that Lawrence Coughlan received ordination from Erasmus shortly after Jones—without JW's knowledge; see B. Richards, to CW, Mar. 13, 1764. In 1764 Thomas Maxfield (now independent of JW) had Erasmus ordain four of his associates. Then in Dec. 1764, six of JW's local and itinerant preachers—all active in the third "blessing" movement, paid Erasmus for ordination (again, without JW's knowledge); an event reported in *Lloyd's Evening Post*, Jan. 7, 1765 (p. 28). JW's response was to call an immediate meeting of preachers and stewards in London, where it was decided that the six who had just purchased ordination would not only be refused recognition as clergy, but expelled from the Methodist connexion of preachers.

²James Thwaite (or Thwayte, 1733–1803), a native of Yorkshire, moved to London and was converted to Methodism at the age of 21. He began to preach locally in 1758. He and his wife frequently hosted gatherings at their London home and were active in the "blessing" movement of the 1760s. When Thwaite was censured in early January for this ordination, he withdraw from the connexion and build a chapel in which to preach, which flourished for a while then failed. See *WHS* 22 (1740): 141–43.

³Thwaite misdated as "1764"; CW gives the correct year in his annotation.

⁴See JW to CW, Mar. 1, 1764.

⁵For a previously published transcription, retaining Thwaite's unpolished spelling and punctuation, see *WHS* 38 (1971): 85.

From the Rev. John Wesley

London
January 11, 1765

[[Dear Brother,]]

I believe Thomas Goodwin wrote that book.¹ Pray hasten John's tract, and give Pine the Preface.² Mr. To. is not a Calvinist yet,³ nor Mr. [George] Downing half an one. I have a letter from him today, and hope to be with him at Ovington tomorrow.

I have no objection to Mr. Trail's preaching in Weavers' Hall, but I am not rightly satisfied as to his preaching at all.⁴

On Monday morning [Jan. 7], I desired the preachers and the stewards to meet me.⁵ It was then inquired,

1. Can James Thwaite, Benjamin Russen,⁶ Richard Berry,⁷ Jonas Latles,⁸ John Oliver,⁹ and Thomas Bryant,¹⁰ who have *bought* an ordination in an unknown tongue, be received by us as

¹CW's letter to JW does not survive, so it is not clear what book was in question.

²I.e., JW's *Extract* of John Goodwin's *Treatise on Justification*, with the Preface answering James Hervey, which William Pine (1739–1803) of Bristol was printing.

³Likely Rev. Joseph Townsend, rector of Pewsey, better known to CW; but also possible is Augustus Montague Toplady.

⁴Likely the same Mr. Trail in JW to Christopher Hopper, Nov. 2, 1763, JW, *Works*, 27:345.

⁵The six preachers named next were those ordained (without JW's knowledge) by Erasmus of Arcadia in Dec. 1764.

⁶Benjamin Russen (1736–77) was a broker by trade before obtaining ordination from Erasmus. There is no record he secured regular ordination, but within a few years he was publishing sermons and seeking a position in Church of England parishes: see *Gospel Liberty the Believer's Privilege* (n.p.: n.p., 1769); *The Lord our Righteousness* (London: n.p., 1774), a candidate sermon for lecturer at St. Bartholomew the Less; and *The Christian Mariner under the Convoy of the True Pilot ... preached at the Lock Chapel* (London: W. Oliver, 1776). Sometime in this process he was appointed master of the charity school associated with St. Matthew's in Bethnal Green. Here he gained notoriety when he was accused of sexual impropriety with several of the girls. He was found guilty and sentenced to death on Oct. 17, 1777.

⁷Little is known with certainty about Berry beyond this incident.

⁸Jonas Latles (c. 1726–90) joined Laurence Coughlan for a time serving a dissenting meeting house in Bermondsey, Surrey. It is unclear whether he served in a priestly capacity after that venture ended in 1766. But in later years he was returned to JW's good graces, being buried in the burial ground at City Road chapel on Feb. 12, 1790, with JW officiating. In both his will and the inscription on Wesley's tomb he is referred to as Rev. Jonas Latles; see Stevenson, *City Road*, 391 (misspelling the name Lalles). Latles's wife, Catherine (Boxhammer) Latles (1714–98) is buried in the same location.

⁹Oliver repented his act of seeking ordination and was restored at the 1765 Conference. He continued to itinerate through at least 1782.

¹⁰Bryant's response to this censure was to Bryant lead 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.

clergymen?¹¹ No.

2. Can we receive them any longer as preachers? No.
3. Can we receive them as members of our society? No.

And this I ordered to be signified to each of them immediately.¹²

[[Adieu.]]

Address: “To / The Revd Mr C. Wesley / in / Bristol.”

Postmark: “15/IA.”

Endorsement: by CW, “Jan. 11. 1765 / B[rother] expelling his Witnesses because ordained by J. Jones’s ordainer.”

Source: holograph; Pitts Library (Emory), John Wesley Papers (MSS 153), 2/23.¹³

¹¹JW distinguishes the ordination of these six from that of John Jones on two grounds: 1) they paid a fee to Erasmus; and 2) they could not understand the words of the ordination service (unlike Jones, who knew Greek).

¹²This action was also publicly announced in a letter by JW, dated Feb. 5, 1765, to the *St. James’s Chronicle*; see *Works*, 27:415–16.

¹³Transcription published in JW, *Works*, 27:411–12.

From Sir Charles Hotham

January 12, 1765

My Very Dear Sir,

Accept of my sincerest thanks for your kind remembrance.¹ How justly do you observe that I belong more to those gone before than to any earthly friends yet left behind! Oh, I feel I do. Nothing have I here to court my stay. May I then be continually aspiring after a better world, where the weary are at rest and where sin and sorrow shall torment no more. May I through grace be enabled to persevere unto the end, and never, never rest till Emmanuel be mine. Nothing short of this can satisfy my aching heart. And as I have before my eyes so recent an instance of the power of importunate prayer in that dear departed saint, may I never cease crying day and night till blessed as she was.

I entreat your prayer, my dear sir, to this blessed purpose, and beg you would do me the justice to be assured of the sincerest regard and affection of

Yours most faithfully,

C. Hotham

Address: "To / The Revd. Mr. Charles Westley / in Charles Street / Bristol."

Postmark: "14/IA."

Endorsement: by CW, "Jan. 12. 1765 / S[i]r Cha. Hotham / after Melly's death."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/428/2/84.

¹This was surely a letter of sympathy about the death of his sister Melusina, not known to survive.

From the Rev. John Richardson

[London]
January 20, 1765

Reverend and Dear Sir,

*It fama per urbes!*¹ Bristol I perceive has heard of the madness of our prophets.² I wanted to give you a short narrative, but thought some other would do it that knew more of the secret. Mr. [John] Wesley has been not a little bowed down. They sing on all sides that he offered a premium to fetch two foreign bishops to *help* Erasmus to consecrate him [i.e., JW] bishop.³ This sprung from his asking Erasmus (by John Jones) whether he could consecrate him. When it could not be done without more Erasmites, it was dropped. All the rest I suppose is *purum putrem*.⁴

On Monday, after the last ordination got air, the priests were all cut off at a meeting of stewards and preachers.⁵ A formal paper was sent to all them dealing with our names at length. It was unlucky for John Jones that his was there, for James Thwaite fell upon him that night at Wapping after he done preaching with, “What a *villain* are you (*bona verba ex puro corde!*)⁶ to sit in judgment on me, and are in the same fault!” The doctor took it all patiently.⁷ Brother Thwaite was at first near to distraction. He has been several times here to worry Mr. Wesley, but he has not seen him yet. The grief Mrs. Thwaite had on this account threw her into fits at the [West Street] chapel.⁸ She is still much burdened and behaves quite well under it. Thwaite pretends to have letters from several travelling preachers [asking], “Is the bishop in London? If not tell us where he is in Holland and we will go over.” He half threatens to let him loose upon us. “Would it not be right considering how ill I am used?” He talked loudly of going to Mr. [Thomas] Maxfield,⁹ but for his wife’s sake stands still at present. John Oliver¹⁰ had passed his word to preach for Thomas Maxfield yesterday. Notice was given for him. He has since that seen Mr. Wesley and got leave to go hide himself awhile at Colchester. He broke his word with Thomas Maxfield for *conscience*’ sake. He was afraid of losing the life of God, although they offered him £40 per annum! We expect every day to hear of Thomas Bryant’s tearing the flock at Sheffield, and setting up for himself.¹¹

¹Virgil, *Aeneid*, iv.173; “Thus the report goes through the cities.”

²I.e., the six preachers who had purchased ordination by Erasmus of Arcadia, all of whom appear to have been part of the “blessing” cohort in London,

³*Lloyd’s Evening Post*, Dec. 7–10, 1764 (p. 553), after mentioning the laymen ordained, adds: “And two celebrated Methodist preachers made also an application to the Greek bishop to consecrate one or both of them bishops; but the Greek bishop told them it was contrary to the rules of his church for one bishop to make another.” This account was repeated in *St. James’s Chronicle* (Dec. 6–8, 1764), p. 3.

⁴“Pure rot.”

⁵The meeting on Jan. 7, referred to in JW to CW, Jan. 11, 1765.

⁶“Good words from a pure heart.”

⁷Remember John Jones held a medical degree.

⁸Thwaite married Alice (“Ann”) Lund, an active Methodist, in London in July 1753, which led to his own conversion. His wife remained uncomfortable with Thwaite’s later moves, and JW happily performed her funeral when she died in 1778; see JW, *Journal*, Nov. 26, 1778, *Works*, 23:113.

⁹Maxfield had set up an independent chapel following his split from JW over the “blessing” controversy in London; and Maxfield had Erasmus ordain four of his own associates in Nov. 1764.

¹⁰Another of the men ordained in Dec. 1764 by Erasmus.

¹¹Bryant indeed split the society in Sheffield in May 1765.

Latles,¹² a local preacher, is joined his brother Laurence Coughlan.¹³ Berry and the broker carry no collars yet!¹⁴

The thoughts of many hearts were revealed at the covenant [service] on sight of Thomas Maxfield. One of his people asked Mr. Wesley, “Have you any objection to Mr. Maxfield helping you tonight?” “No.” So he came! This is your brother’s account to the society last night. He added that he should never come back without confessing his fault at least to all the preachers and stewards in London. This gave much brightness to many faces.

I went to Thomas Butts as you desired, he will be glad to hear from you when it suits.

When Mr. [John] Wesley had done in the desk on the covenant night, he sent for me to give out an hymn in the desk. When I had done, John Jones and Thomas Maxfield were with him at the altar. He sent for me. I was going till I saw Thomas Maxfield between Mr. Wesley and John Jones. I then stopped and said I *would* not go. I heard no more about it. I wonder they should send particularly for me. Mr. Wesley knew I shunned officiating with John Jones one Tuesday at the chapel.

As to Mr. C[oughlin] and ⟨Latley, the⟩¹⁵ had both laboured with John Jones, and I believe ⟨held?⟩ no objections had they been called to minister with Thomas Maxfield and him that night.

Mr. [Ebenezer] Blackwell has it from some great man that the Lords Spiritual¹⁶ are currently taking some measures to put an end to travelling preachers. We are to have a day of humiliation on this account.

Of the backsliders no more. I think there is enough to bid you come and help. After all, I remark in general, the people are much alive, many speak of giving themselves altogether to God. As to myself, I see no other way to get rest. I have ofttimes a multitude of peace, I see the promises as a wall of fire around me ever since you preached on that scripture at the chapel. But oh what wrath I sometimes groan under!

I have no hopes of getting to Bristol now, for I have no money to signify, However, if you would fix your time of coming here, I would stretch a point and come a fortnight before to bring you up. My health is a little better. My kind love to Mrs. Wesley and my playfellows, Sarah Pearce and her sister.¹⁷

Concludes me, dear sir,

Your ever obliged servant in Christ,

J. R.

I beg your prayers. I gain much more by the prayers of others than I do by my own.

Address: “To / The Revd Mr Chas: Wesley / in / Bristol.”

Postmark: “21/IA.”

Endorsement: by CW, “Jan. 20, 1765 / B[rother] Richardson / History of the / Priests and T. M.”

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/502/3/8.

¹²Jonas Latles; Richardson spells “Lackless.”

¹³When Coughlan confronted opposition to fulfilling the priestly role in JW’s chapels based on his ordination by Erasmus of Arcadia, he stepped out of the Wesleyan connexion and established a dissenting meeting house in Bermondsey, Surrey. Latles apparently joined Coughlan there. In early 1766 Coughlan was recruited to obtain formal ordination in the Church of England, in order to serve as a SPCK missionary priest in Conception Bay, Newfoundland; at which time it seems the meeting house closed.

¹⁴I.e., Richard Berry and Benjamin Russen.

¹⁵A small portion is torn away, affecting two lines. The text supplied seems likely, but not certain.

¹⁶The Church of England bishops serving in the House of Lords.

¹⁷Sarah Pearce (d. 1773) was a Bristol Methodist converted by CW; see MS Journal, Sept. 26, 1739. Her sister (name uncertain) also died in 1773; see Ann Chapman to CW, c. Oct. 25, 1773.

From the Rev. John Fletcher

Madeley
January 31, 1765

I have at last received your letter,¹ and I bless God, my dear sir, that he still grants you the use of your hand. He has a greater plan for you which you do not yet imagine.

I will await you in the spring with Mr. Stokes,² whom I pray you to embrace cordially on my behalf. Remember the middle of April. I think of it often, and I would not regret to be two months older suddenly.

Mr. Howell Harris came to see me about six weeks since. He is an extraordinary man. I would not know to whom to compare him more aptly than to Lady Huntingdon. He is an exceptional character as she is, and the path they tread seems to be laid down on the same grounds. I suppose that his design was to engage me to go to Trevecca to take up some post, master or undermaster, in the new college. I said to him that as I was sure that providence had placed me here, I would not dare to quit my gate without a particular and well-marked order from my divine Master. He did not argue otherwise, and entered into my ideas. He left a blessing for me. He gave us an exhortation which the Lord will apply to our souls. I see myself as excessively small next to the great man, and blessed be God, my littleness does not sadden me.

I am out of debt once more. May the Lord give me his grace not to enter into it again. I have quit my tabernacle of 5 guineas a year, to return to the Rock Church, the old house where I exhort in Madeley wood.

Mr. [Joseph] Guilford the preacher,³ witness of his perfection not of ours, has spent two days here and has left me this morning. His perfection does not even understand recollection. He avows overtly that he is not able to think of God and of his business at the same time. He is in no way a false witness of the perfection which he professes.

The κακον Ιηριον⁴ has left behind it a brood of six whom you have perhaps heard being talked about at present.⁵ Your brother tries to destroy them. Will they not be among those Methodists what the fox-cubs of Samson were among the corn of the Philistines?⁶ Mr. [William] Ley writes to me from London that Thomas Maxfield speaks of reunion. He has assisted your brother at Spitalfields, and has no more than 50 members in his society. Whom should one believe?

I have no need to make new vows of celibacy, the old ones are fully in force. I take care not to speak of the opposite state with disrespect. I know that will be the means to cause God to let me fall headlong. I recommend it in the fear of God. I have gone further, I have myself single-handed made a marriage between two people of our society. And nonetheless, with regard to myself, it seems to me from day to day that I am called to live as St. Paul. My body is so dead that a woman would embarrass me extremely. And moreover, I would not want to marry a person whom I did not love. And if I loved her, I would not want to load her with a burden which is a load to myself—I mean to say myself.

I see my vocation, although I do not pursue it as I should. O when will I be faithful to my convictions? When will I myself follow the advice I give to others? I am ashamed of practising it so little,

¹This letter is not known to survive.

²Joseph Stokes (1706–73), who married Mary Fall (c. 1707–87) in 1745 in Bristol; they were the parents of Mary Stokes (1750–1823), a correspondent with JW.

³Joseph Guilford (d. 1777), who had been a soldier, was converted under the influence of Thomas Olivers and became an itinerant in 1761; see Atmore, *Memorial*, 169–71.

⁴Fletcher likely intended something like “false episcopacy” (see Greek “ιερων”).

⁵The six laymen ordained by Erasmus of Arcadia.

⁶See Judg. 15:4–5.

of speaking so much of Christ and of having so little union with him. I would wish to embrace him without ceasing in spirit as the bride of my soul. This is the marriage to which I aspire. But my heart is so flighty that it will not fix upon him over five minutes without some wandering thought, or lukewarmness of affection. O miserable creature that I am, whom will deliver me of this heart? May this cry go forth without ceasing until grace changes my desert into Eden.

Pray for me. Farewell. Greet on my behalf Mrs. [Sarah] Wesley, Charles, Sally, and her little sister.⁷ May the Lord fill us with his most abundant grace.

Farewell.

My love to Mr. [James] Ireland <...⁸> to Isaac [Duckworth] too, bring him by <...>.

Endorsement: by CW, “Fletcher Jan. 31. 1765.”

Source: holograph (in French); MARC, MA 1977/495/24.⁹

⁷Selina Wesley was born in early Sept. 1764; apparently Fletcher had not heard of her death in October of the same year.

⁸The end of this and the next line are illegible, due to staining.

⁹A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher’s original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 200–01. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith’s English translation (pp. 201–03). See also the translation in *City Road Magazine* 2 (1872): 554–55.

From William Briggs

London
March 10, 1765

Reverend and Very Dear Sir,

I thank you very sincerely for your kind letter of January 26,¹ and am very glad my poor remarks gave you no uneasiness.² Is it not possible for you to submit too much [to JW]? For in a thousand things you may acknowledge a superior capacity and acute judgment. Yet if in fifty truth should be made clearest to you, I query whether you can be well satisfied with a silent acquiescence? It would have been, and still would be, a vast increase of honour to both if you wrote, preached, and acted in concert—so that what appeared in print, or was delivered in the pulpit, or performed for the general good might have the approbation of each and have the hearty concurrence of both. And truly this would give joy to us all.

Had he submitted his thoughts to your judgment, I think they would not have been so confused, nor some of them so absurd and contradictory. But so it is. We must submit to what we cannot help, and great reason have we all to be thankful to God for sending an instrument with so many excellencies. I hardly ever see or hear him but I stand astonished at the goodness of God in sparing his so long. Yet at the same time I feel a secret shudder at: “What must we do when he is gone?” The Lord is gracious and ruleth over all. In him will I hope!

As to our loss of some “perfect priests,”³ it has given much sorrow to many and particularly to your dear brother. Though he has certainly acted nobly on this occasion in suffering the pain of parting, rather than the hurt of them continuing. There never was a more absurd step than the last ordination, and had your brother allowed of it (or should he ever employ any of them as *ministers*) dreadful would have been the consequence, as many of us were determined. However, all is well and we can testify to all the world that our ministers mean to act with consistence.

There is one thing I (secretly) want to search to the bottom, but I am afraid to stir a step in it. And I will mention it to you, though I protest I want no solution from you if you should think it as well for me to be in the dark. It has been strongly rumoured here that “your brother (by Mr. [John] Jones) solicited the itinerant bishop that he would ordain him (your brother) a bishop.”⁴ This your brother has, in some sort, contradicted in the public papers.⁵ Yet a very worthy man, and one of a truly upright mind, assured me that he, in conversation with Mr. Jones, asked whether Mr. Wesley approved of his (Mr. Jones’s) ordination by the Greek bishop; to which Mr. Jones replied, rubbing his hands, “O to be sure; for he would gladly have been ordained a bishop by him, could it have been done.” Now though it might not be altogether true as reported, yet here certainly appears to be a solid foundation to surmise that the bishop was interrogated whether he would or could ordain your brother. Now I should be extremely glad to know if your brother directly or indirectly never gave the least occasion for such an application. If anyone officiously did it of himself, or innocently enquired of the bishop how far his powers extended (without the smallest degree of authority from your brother), your dear brother has answered the charge with propriety. But if he by word, or deed, or writing gave rise to such application—this I shall be glad to be ignorant of, as the inference must be grievous to me who love[s] and honour[s] him so highly.

“Now, Now!” as it was uttered when in fashion, always appeared to me to be unscriptural and a

¹This letter is not known to survive (nor one for Feb. 26, if that is what Briggs intended).

²It appears that Briggs wrote CW in early Jan. 1765, but this letter is not known to survive.

³The six laymen ordained in Dec. by Erasmus had all been active in the “blessing” cohort within London Methodism.

⁴See John Richardson to CW, Jan. 20, 1765, and the article in the *Lloyd’s Evening Post*, Dec. 7–10, 1764 (p. 553), cited there.

⁵JW to *St. James’s Chronicle*, Feb. 10, 1765, *Works*, 27:417–18.

violence upon our understandings.⁶ “*Now, now* God is ready to give what such an one prescribes as necessary to be had,” was I think more the flight of fancy than of a sound judgment. And though I search very diligently the blessed Scriptures and the *Christian Library*,⁷ I could neither find the state of perfection described by these men, nor the necessity of now receiving it. Yet in every page I found truths that pressed me to pursue perfection as a precious seed, making its progress to an eternal harvest. But this language is now at an end (I hope) with us; and that [with] the fall, our rise and progress according to divine truth will our trumpets sound, without the wild rantings of an ungovernable imagination.

Having a few minutes to spare, I will send a few of the serious thoughts I have lately indulged upon the blessing we enjoy under the ministry of your brother and you, etc. It has been my custom once in a few years to visit the Fetter Lane congregation; and now and then I visit Mr. [Martin] Madan and the like faithful servants of Christ.⁸ But nowhere is the gospel in all its parts so clearly preached (so I think) as amongst us. This may be thought the effect of partiality. But if it was not the language of truth and Scripture, I should have very little comfort in it.

At Fetter Lane last Sunday morning I found about 150 plain people sitting and singing, in a soft and melodious harmony, to a pleasing organ. All seemed to be in a stupid kind of serious indifference. And the words they sung only suited to the *Unitas Fratrum*!⁹ After signing, a plain man in black (who sat in the pulpit) stood up and gave out in a soft, namby-pamby manner those excellent words [in] Hebrews 4:7–9. Upon which he spoke more consistently than ever I heard a German, and more within the reach of commonsense. But throughout his discourse, all he said amounted to this (except a few hints of the great danger of an heart-work and holiness): “We must at all times, and upon all occasions, only consider the sufferings of our dear Saviour. We must be absorbed in his blood and righteousness. And all that he did and suffered for us is the whole of the gospel-plan, in which all may rest assuredly in soul and body, without anxiety, especially in those blessed moments when we can fly into his wounds.” Thus Mr. Brodersen (a native German) went on,¹⁰ in a kind of pleasant promises to flesh and blood. After sermon two verses were sung; the grace, etc. said; and all retired—without the least appearance of any better Spirit influencing than at a common concert of innocent music.

The zealous predestinarians are excellent when compared to these antinomians. Christ is the grand theme of all their discourses; but then they insist that whoever receives Christ will and must bring forth fruits of virtue and holiness. Good certainly follows. Many honour the name of Christ in word and deed, who once only dishonoured him. Yet, when you expect to see or hear anything that indicates a deep experimental heart-work, there is little to our satisfaction. Yet, I say again and again that they are the servants of Christ, are blessed with crowded congregations, and a great blessing is given to many souls through their ministry.

The antinomians rather shudder at the thoughts of holiness. But the predestinarians are pleased to see it as the fruit of faith; yet are so careful of insisting upon it as an essential that they fear to burden their hearers with too much of it in all its universality.

From our pulpits Christ is preached as the only way to peace and holiness. Here, I think, is the true gospel-method in its blessed variety. We cannot rest upon a notion or mere idea of what Christ hath done for us, till we feel the mighty working of his power within us. True Christian virtue and holiness are taught to be essentials of our professions. and though the antinomians scout us as legalists, and the predestinarians lament our bondage; yet, divine truth in the Holy Scriptures demonstrates our experience to be the real and genuine work of the Holy Ghost. Every page of Scripture proclaims that inward and

⁶Briggs shifts to the topic of those emphasizing obtaining Christian perfection by claiming it *now*.

⁷The 50-volume collection edited by JW.

⁸I.e., meetings of the Moravians and Calvinist Methodists.

⁹“United Brethren,” the formal title in Latin for the Moravians.

¹⁰Christian Brodersen was actually from Denmark. Briggs spells “Brodensen.”

outward holiness are essentials of the Christian dispensation. And it is impossible in the nature of things to be Christians, or holy and happy, without an experimental knowledge of divine truth. Therefore it is that your brother, you, and your sons [in the gospel] as so far from being afraid of mentioning holiness, or burdening your hearers with it, that you rightly insist upon it as an essential of our Christian calling.

The consequence is obvious. The poor antinomians (allowing them to be sincere) are as ignorant of true Christian liberty as the philosophic heathen. And the reformation amongst the predestinarians is only (or chiefly) from outward vice to outward virtue. Whilst amongst us, we are willing to suffer all the sorrows of a progressive regeneration, till made meet for an eternity of joy. We had rather hear the plainest and most searching truths than by any imaginary conceits fly from the life of holiness.

Oh what a blessing is it to hear and bear such truths as *really* tend to make us more holy! Whatever any may say or fancy to be the truth as it is in Jesus, it is certain that the more we partake of his image the more we enjoy of his presence, and the more clearly we see into his overruling goodness and power. In short, if it was possible, we your friends and hearers would rather be holy Christians and unhappy, than happy believers and unholy.

Dear sir, I have very little time to trouble you; and now [that] I have time to say a little, I hope your patience is untried. As far as I know, your society would say the same things and better. And this I am sure of, all of us would rejoice to see you. Your dear brother is the bearer of this, and is gone for some time perhaps.¹¹ But our gracious God forbid his final departure yet! If you still love us, come and see us. And I hope you will rejoice over all more than, reverend and very dear sir,

Your obliged and affectionate friend and servant,

W. Briggs

We salute all in your house most cordially. All the family at Shoreham are well and love you.¹² And if I can ever serve you in anything, spake.

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

Endorsement: by CW, “Briggs preferring the / M[ethodis]ts March 10. 1765.”

Source: holograph; MARC, DDPr 1/13.

¹¹JW left London for Bristol on Mar. 11, continuing on through northern England and Ireland, not to return to London until Oct. 24.

¹²I.e., the family of Rev. Vincent Perronet, Briggs’s father-in-law.

From the Rev. John Fletcher

[Madeley]
April 12, 1765

My Dear Sir,

Mrs. [Ann] Power thanks you for the trouble that you have taken to find a place for her son. She is very happy as to what you say about Mr. Edwards.¹ She thinks that the gentle approach is the appropriate one to take with the young man. She had planned to leave Madeley at the beginning of the month, but the hope of seeing you here next month has kept her. She wishes to know how many years her son will serve his apprenticeship for. Lacking a good master, [he] is not well advanced in Latin.² I think that he reads Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. He writes very well and seems of a happy nature. He has had some [religious] convictions.

I really begin to hope that you will come at last, although you will have put [it] back from the middle of April until the 6th of May. I persuade myself that this will be your last delay. Mrs. Wesley, to whom I present my respects, will be very welcome if she wishes to accompany Charles [Jr.]. And in that case I hope that Sally will come as well. From Ludlow here, the usual route is by Much Wenlock and not through Bridgenorth.

I preached the Sunday before Easter in the church at Darlaston. The Methodists of those parts are counting upon your visiting them. On Easter Day, after having served my church, I went to the Coal-pit Bank about five miles distance from Madeley³—the place where I had exhorted on Sunday evenings over several months. And there I sacrificed the last remnant of my reputation. The house was full and the number of hearers was greater outside than in. I preached *sub dio*,⁴ for the first time. Our timorous people think all is over now, and I shall surely be turned out of my living. As far as I am concerned, I am calm and I await the event without anxiety. You will be told in full detail my reasons for taking this step when you are here. I hope that you will not make any vows not to preach. I look forward to seeing you not only in my chair but upon my steps. Our little assemblies are at Wellington (a market town about 7 miles off). I went there about three weeks ago to exhort. The Lord seems to want to raise up there a battery against the fortress of iniquity.

I have received a letter from John Jones, who tells me that Mrs. [Hannah] Englefield *en audaciam*⁵ wants me to take her son Thomas,⁶ to fit him for a clerk's place, because the master to whom he was bound (a gunsmith) and the business (by report) are too hard for the young man and he wants to leave both. I have replied as a burnt child. I see by this instance that my good friend is still filled with her pretensions. If ever I marry, she *coelum terram que movebit*.⁷ What satisfaction for her if I was to give her this occasion to exclaim that I am a traitor, a perjuring liar! I hope that I am in perfect safety as far as that is concerned. My objections against marriage have been fortified latterly by the regrets of the couple

¹Francis Power was made apprentice to Thomas Edwards of Bristol, an apothecary, on Aug. 19, 1765. This is apparently Francis and Ann (Cattel) Power's eldest son, born in 1751, whose baptismal name was Anthony. He has either adopted his father's name or it was his middle name. Francis is listed as an apothecary in the *Bristol Directory* (1775), and was buried in Bristol in 1780.

²Apothecaries used Latin for the names of medicines.

³Now known as Ketley Bank.

⁴"under the heavens"; i.e., in the open air.

⁵"audaciously."

⁶Fletcher had earlier provided some support for Thomas Engleton (1747–70); see Fletcher to CW, Mar. 22, 1759.

⁷"will move heaven and earth."

whom I had married as my first attempt. The young man tells me that he has the utmost difficulty imaginable to keep himself from cursing me for having counselled him to enter into the state of marriage.

What do you say of John Goodwin's book?⁸ Isn't it very strange? I have not read it all through again. I lack the time for reading, prayer, and meditation. I await you to bewail with you before the throne of grace. A contrite heart filled with love I lack. Ask it for me. I despair of seeing my ministry blessed until I have obtained that grace.

Warmly greet on my part all friends; above all Mr. [Joseph] Stokes, whom I long to see I trust in the bowels of the Lord, and Isaac [Duckworth]. Tell me definitely when you will be leaving and which day you expect to be at Madeley. The God of peace will be with you and will strengthen you in body and in soul, for your journey and for eternity.

Bring a set of your hymns for Mrs. [Ann] Power; not the *Scriptural* ones, she hath them. Mr. Powys⁹ is in Shropshire and will be informed of your future arrival at Madeley.

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

Endorsement: by CW, "April 12. 1765 / Fletcher."

Source: holograph (in French); MARC, MA 1977/495/25.¹⁰

⁸Likely referring to John Goodwin, *Imputatio Fidei, or A Treatise on Justification* (1642); of which JW had just published an abridgement: *A Treatise on Justification* (1765).

⁹Thomas Powys (1725–75) of Berwick, Shropshire. He was related to the Hills (Thomas Hill's first wife was Anne Powys). and supportive of the Methodists.

¹⁰A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher's original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 203–05. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith's English translation (pp. 205–07).

Sarah (Evans) Gwynne to Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley

Eardisley Park¹
April 23, 1765

My Dear Sally,

I hope my silence to your partner and self will be excused when I assure both it did not proceed from want of regard, affection, or any other respective due, but from age, its companions, and various troubles, vexations, disappointments, and ill-usage that have happened to us from many quarters.

I must now acquaint you with my poor son Duke's disorder, which has brought me here. He was near three weeks ago seized with violent pains in his head, from whence (as he imagined) came a fetid matter through his mouth and nose. Others apprehended it proceeded from a bad tooth, which has been taken out and relieved him in some degree. But the wrathsomeness of the disorder continuing, [I] fear some further experiments in surgery must be performed before a cure can be completed. I hope he is not in immediate danger, but neglect in such a case may prove of bad consequence. He has ordered his case to be sent to London, and wish he may follow directions when such arrive as will be necessary towards completing a cure. He and Mrs. [Elizabeth] Gwynne join me in affectionate dues to yourself, your partner, and young family. I am much fatigued with my journey and find troubles on every side. May God enable me to pass through this transitory world into that happy state where tears and fears shall be no more. This is the daily prayer of

Dearest Sally's most affectionate mother,

Sa. Gwynne

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

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 7/18.

¹An estate in Eardisley, Herefordshire, hometown of Marmaduke Gwynne Jr.'s second wife, Elizabeth Price.

From the Rev. Vincent Perronet

[Shoreham]
April 27, 1765

My Very Dear Brother,

Since the “cause is God’s and he will certainly maintain it,”¹ all anxiety stands justly condemned and the words of Cybele are entirely applicable, as well as the reason subjoined:

... maria ante exurere Turno
Quam sacras, dabitur, pinus.²

Sooner shall Satan set the sea on fire than destroy the work of God! Wherefore then don’t thou fear, oh thou of little faith! I know indeed that thy fears are rather the effects of love and tenderness and zeal for the cause of God than of a dastardly spirit. But put them all away, since they will only discourage the weak, as well as thyself.

God will direct thee in all things how to act. His Spirit will be a “light unto thy feet and a lamp unto thy paths.”³ Make haste both to London and Shoreham. Exercise the manifold gifts and graces which are in thee. And all will be light, and all difficulties will vanish before thee. I trust there will be a perfect harmony betwixt thee and thy friends, so that all Satan’s devices shall fall upon his own head.

As matters have turned out, I could have wished that our worthy brother Mr. John Jones had contented himself with his original orders.⁴ They were greatly blest to many souls. And though he certainly deserved all the legal powers which could have been conferred, yet it seems to me, by the event of things, as if God had chose he should have continued in the state “wherein he first was called.”⁵

Our love and respects are with you both. The Lord Jesus Christ be with all of us!

Thine most affectionately,

Vin. Perronet

P.S. I have made a few strictures on Mr. Hervey’s *Letters* to your brother, which you shall see when you come to Shoreham.⁶

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

Postmark: “6/MA.”

Endorsement: by CW, “Mr Perronet encouraging / April 27. 1765.”

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/472/10.

¹Cf. Acts 5:39.

²Virgil, *Aeneid*, IX.115–16; “Turnus shall have leave to burn up the seas, sooner than my sacred pines.”

³Cf. Ps. 119:105.

⁴I.e., his calling as one of JW’s preachers; rather than the ordination by Erasmus of Arcadia.

⁵Cf. 1 Cor. 7:20.

⁶Perronet likely had access to the corrected version: James Hervey, *Eleven Letters from the late Rev. Mr. Hervey, to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley; containing an Answer to that Gentleman’s Remarks on “Theron and Aspasio”* (London: Charles Rivington, 1765).

From William Briggs

[London]
[c. May 5, 1765]

This letter coming open to me (William Briggs), I take the opportunity of returning thanks for your last of April 5.¹ Only in one point these is a seeming to clash; but in all others, I hope, there is a blessed harmony. The truth is but one and you both aim at promoting it to the glory of God and the good of souls. These jarrings between the wisest I think will make us weak ones wholly to apply to and trust in Christ for present and future direction. I would be partial only to us as the truth is for or against us. I wish better of the Lambskin church than their principles will allow;² for it is certain the grace of God is, in many, more powerful than wrong principles. God's peace be with you and yours.

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

Postmark: "6/MA."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/472/10 (postscript added to Vincent Perronet's letter of Apr. 27).

¹This letter is not known to survive.

²The Moravians favoured the title "Lamb" for Christ, and referred to themselves as kin of the Lamb.

From the Rev. John Fletcher

Madeley
April 29, 1765

My Very Dear Brother,

I hope that this letter finds you packing your bag and ready to leave Bristol. The Lord favours you and invites you by his providence, the rain has stopped and the roads will soon be dry and passable.

Mrs. [Ann] Power thanks you cordially for the care that you take with her son [Francis]. She would have wished to send him immediately, if he was here and if his little outfit was ready. He is in a boarding school three or four miles from Birmingham, and she must go to see him to make his shirts, etc. She is still here, ill at present. She will try to send him in the month of June. She will be very happy to see you, in order to ask you some more specific questions. The young man is aged about 16 years. She thinks that she is not able to engage him beyond 21 without his consent, which she has not yet asked. She imagined that an apprenticeship of five years would suffice.

Last week I took a journey as far as Evesham, where I went to make a visit to Mr. Davies;¹ and returned by Worcester, where several evangelical ministers propose to have a little conference four times per year. We are six: [Edward] Davies, Mr. Baily of Pashur,² Mr. Cook of Welland,³ Mr. [Edward] Stillingfleet of West Bromwich, Mr. [John] Riland, Mr. [Thomas] Hatton, and myself. Mr. Biddulph⁴ and [William] Talbot were absent; one on business, the other with a bad leg. We spent our time in making the rules.⁵

I received the day before yesterday a letter from a French lady in London in which I find the following paragraph.

I had some time ago a lodger of the name De Prane, [a] German baron, who knows and loves the friend of sinners and tastes the sweetness of his love, and tries to spread his knowledge wherever he can. He writes to me from Germany that he has reprinted a great many copies of your sermon on regeneration,⁶ and that he wants to have it translated into German. He adds, "I know that you know the author. I ask you to write to him to ask him if he wants me to send him his books, and if he wants to send to me several of his printed works or manuscripts in French, etc."

¹Edward Davies (c. 1736–1812), originally of Rhyddlan, Flintshire, graduated from Jesus College, Oxford in 1759 and was ordained a priest in Jan. 1760. He was apparently serving in some capacity in Evesham or nearby Bengeworth, where he would be appointed perpetual curate in 1767.

²Fletcher's phonetic spelling for Rev. Thomas Beale (b. 1733), who was curate of Pershore at the time and would serve as perpetual curate at Bengeworth 1772–93.

³Fletcher was likely referring to Rev. Samuel Cooper (1736–1803), ordained and appointed curate of Welland in 1763; he would become vicar of Loxley 1770–1803.

⁴Rev. Thomas Biddulph (c. 1735–90), ordained in 1760, was currently ministering in or near Worcester. He would serve as curate in Bengeworth in 1768, before becoming vicar of Pastow in Cornwall in 1770. See *DEB*, 95.

⁵The rules survive at Cliff College, Arthur Skevington Wood Archive Library, A/1/24; see *WHS* 22 (1739): 52–57.

⁶John Fletcher, *Discours sur la Régénération* (London, 1759).

Would you allow me to send him your sermon *Awake Thou that Sleepest*?⁷

Mr. [Thomas] Powys knows that you will be at Madeley next month and himself proposes to make you a visit there. What courage!⁸

I will give you in advance my reasons for the step that I took at the Coal-pit Bank. During last winter the Lord has awoken several souls in this Kingswood of Shropshire. I have exhorted among them every Sunday evening and the house was more than filled, despite the bad roads and the darkness, and despite the splitting of the congregation caused by Mr. [Thomas] Hatton, who came also to exhort in another house.

When the days lengthened, Mr. Hatton ceased to come. His congregation was therefore joined to mine. And with daylight bringing many new hearers, it was almost impossible to breathe in the house. On Easter day it was full, and as there were three times more outside than in, they beseeched me to exhort in front of the house, which is what I did and what I have continued to [do] since that day. I leave the consequences to the Lord.

I must tell you that (in Passion week) I sent a messenger to the minister of the parish, with a letter in which I laid the case before him and prayed him to allow me the liberty to preach in his church, but he refused me it.

I sense the need of talents and of grace more than ever. I preached last Sunday on Hebrews 11:41 and I condemned myself by all that I said. I need to gain that faith which is the evidence of things invisible, the substance of what I hope for. Pray that I obtain it.

Mr. Croft joins me in love to Mr. [James] Ireland, and if he does not visit Shropshire before you, he (Mr. Croft) desires you may bring his bill.

Mr. [John] Berridge is not able to accept the proposed exchange. Let me know your departure as soon as it is fixed. Present my greetings to your travelling companion.⁹ Exhort him to take up his cross and come to terms with the life of a bachelor in his hermitage.

I am not surprised if Mrs. Wesley does not dare to risk herself with you. Greet her warmly, and embrace Charles and Sally. My compliments, I pray you, to all our friends who may ask after me. May the God of peace strengthen you and go with you. Come and strengthen

Your poor friend. Goodbye.

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

Endorsement: by CW, "April 29. 1765 / Fletcher."

Source: holograph (in French); MARC, MA 1977/495/26.¹⁰

⁷Fletcher surely means the French translation of *Awake Thou that Sleepest* (London: Strahan, 1761); see Fletcher to CW, Dec. 26, 1758.

⁸It was courageous because Powys was enmeshed in Calvinist circles.

⁹Likely referring to Isaac Duckworth.

¹⁰A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher's original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 207–09. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith's English translation (pp. 209–11).

From the Rev. John Fletcher

[Madeley?]
May 10, 1765

My Dear Sir,

It is fortunate that I have learned not to count on anything, otherwise I would have been thoroughly vexed in respect of the visit I was expecting from you.¹ I have nothing to criticise in the providence which has called Mr. [Joseph] Stokes to London. But if I had been in your place I would have placed Isaac [Duckworth] on the post horse (the spare horse as you call it), I would have mounted my own, and I would have come on my own. If you come in the month of August that will be so much pure profit, because I have resolved to expect you only when I see you.

It may be that I will come to see you myself in London, since much is spoken of my being expelled from Madeley for having preached in the open air. I am calm however. I continue to do so without any opposition at present, and the commotion that is made about the matter brings me from time to time several new hearers. Pray that all this turns out for the best.

I do not know if I remarked to you in my last that Mr. [Thomas] Hatton is so occupied in profiting from his building that he has left me alone at the Coal-pit Bank, having obliged me to take the step which it is supposed will lead to my ruin. If I had to do it again, I would do it tomorrow.

Last Sunday Mr. [James] Ireland was here and accompanied me to my field preaching. The French expression among our Protestant brothers in the Languedoc is “preaching in the wilderness.”

Direction is: Thomas Powys, Esqr., at Berwick near Salop.

Mrs. [Ann] Power wants to know how to direct to Mr. [Thomas] Edwards in writing about her son [Francis].

I hope that you will let me know by your next letter that you have arrived safely, and that God blesses you. How do you get on with the Greek priests?² The Lord fill you with his spirit of power, of wisdom, of patience, and of love, to lead this great people!

I shall go, God willing, to our little clergy conference at Worcester on the 4th of next month and I count on bringing back with me to Madeley our brother [Edward] Davies of Evesham, to support me a little. How have you found Mr. [Joseph] Townsend?

I am very pleased that you have read some Cerceau on French poetry.³ It is a good work, as good as Fénelon on eloquence.⁴ If my German baron accepts the proposal that I have made him to print at half cost a little work in prose and in verse under the title “The Conversion of a Modern Pharisee,” I will engage you as critic.⁵ The prose will be without faults as it will be made up only from passages which go together well. You are a judge of poetry and you must now be that of French poetry.

I am still really the poorest and the most vile of the disciples of Jesus. And for all that, I do not sense my poverty and my baseness as I should. O God make me to feel your love, and soften my heart so that it never hardens more. Pray for me. Salute Mr. Stokes and tell him that if you come in August I will await him also, *quod differtur non debet auferri*.⁶ Mr. [Thomas] Marriot will be coming here soon; write a long letter by him.

¹Fletcher is replying to a letter of CW that is not known to survive.

²I.e., the Methodist lay preachers ordained by Erasmus of Arcadia.

³Likely Jean Antoine du Cerceau, *Receuil de Poesie Diverses* (Paris: Veuve Estienne et Fils, 1749).

⁴François de Salignac de la Mothe Fénelon, *Dialogues sur l'eloquence* (Paris: Chez Jacques Estienne, 1718).

⁵There is no surviving evidence that Fletcher developed this project.

⁶“What is postponed should not be cancelled.”

The bearer is a woman of our society who is going to London to work in the gardens. She belongs to a parish next to mine. When she comes back I expect a letter by her.

Address: “To / The Revd. Mr. Charles Wesley / at the New Room/ Bristol” // “at the Foundery / Upper Moorfields / London.” [redirected]

Postmark: “18/MA.”

Endorsement: by CW, “Fletcher May 10. / 1765.”

Source: holograph (in French); MARC, MA 1977/495/27.⁷

⁷A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher’s original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 212–13. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith’s English translation (pp. 213–15).

From the Rev. John Fletcher

Madeley
August 8, 1765

My Dear Friend,

I await your news from London or Bristol in vain, as for a long time I have not been sure where you are. I have been told that you are in London at the moment, and I will write to you there to remind you of your promise to make Madeley one of your stopping points when you return to Bristol. It's the month of August and that's enough for you, if you haven't forgotten your promises. I hope that Mr. [Joseph] Stokes will be coming with you. Give him my tender affections. The same to your wife. The pleasure of seeing her sister at Ludlow⁸ will perhaps commit her to accompanying you here. Assure her on my behalf that she will be as welcome as you.

You know that Mr. [Thomas] Maxfield has been here for six weeks. But what you don't know is that his preaching is accompanied by God's blessing. He has a great number of hearers; many thousands (it is said) when he preaches among the coal mines. People do not seem to pay attention to the shortcomings in his manner of expression. I haven't heard any complaints, apart from the Baptists. All are agreed to praise him as the most simple, the most evangelical, and the most comforting preacher who has yet been seen in our church. When you come you will be able to judge better the fruits of his ministry. As to how one views his doctrine, if he did not preach regeneration, the cross of Christ, and a total renunciation to oneself with constancy and with power, I would be tempted to believe that he sometimes goes too far towards the philosophy of several antinomians. But I confess to you that all things considered I believe him innocent of that article.

With regard to instantaneous perfection, I have not yet heard him speak of it. What he presses with fervour is the life of faith from minute to minute, to which those who want to proceed in the way of salvation make no objection. His stay in Madeley has given me the opportunity to preach four Sundays away from my church. The first [time] in the church at Darlaston. The second, in two churches in Staffordshire; or rather in the churchyard of the latter, where I ventured to follow your custom, the clerk having refused me entry to the church, likewise to around 1,600 hearers. The third Sunday I was invited to preach at Tipton, near Wednesbury, but the rector sent order to his deputy not to allow me into his seat. Mr. [Edward] Stillingfleet at West Bromwich offered me his church and I preached there in the morning. I had intended to do so in the evening, but I was prevented by one of the churchwardens, who demanded my licence.

Sir Charles Hotham and Mr. Cartwright came a fortnight ago to take me to Bretby where Lady Huntingdon is.⁹ I have made two journeys there. And I spent last Sunday there. In the morning I preached in a neighbouring church; in the evening in the courtyard of the Hall. Sir Charles is going away to Yorkshire with Mr. Jesse.¹⁰ Lady Huntingdon intends to go to Bath, and to take in Madeley on her way. She has promised me to be here on Sunday [next] week, but I am expecting her in two or three days. Could you not come to see her? Mr. Townsend's sister¹¹ and perhaps he himself will accompany my Lady.

I do not know when Mr. Maxfield will leave us. As his ministry is well received and blessed, it is my duty to keep him here for the sake of his hearers, and of mine, for as long as he wants to stay. If I wished him in London I would suspect that it is out of jealousy and out of envy, because God blesses him more than me, and that all like him better. O how sweet it is, how wise it is to trample underfoot the base

⁸Mary (Gwynne) Baldwyn lived just north of Ludlow.

⁹Bretby Hall, Debyshire.

¹⁰Rev. William Jesse (c. 1739–1815), curate of Chigwell, Essex.

¹¹Judith (Townsend) Woodworth.

impulses of pride and of self-love that Satan would raise up in our hearts. My God never left me under their tyranny!

I have lost hope of seeing a public reunion between your brother and Maxfield. They are not made for each other. It is necessary for us all to learn the true meaning of those words: "Whoever would be the first among us, let him be the servant of all."¹²

If you come and we are to have some arguments, I hope that they will be as amicable as those which Mr. [Walter] Sellon and myself have had with Lady Huntingdon on perfection and on law. Goodbye. Pray for

Your feeble servant and brother,

J. F.

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

Postmark: "16/AV."

Endorsement: by CW, "Fletcher / Aug. 8. 1765."

Source: holograph (in French); MARC, MA 1977/495/29.¹³

¹²Mark 10:44.

¹³A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher's original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 215–17. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith's English translation (pp. 217–19).

From the Rev. John Wesley

Newcastle
August 9, 1765

Dear Brother,

Yours came just to hand as I was taking my leave of Dublin.¹ On Monday I expect to set out hence for Manchester. I wish you would write to Mr. Fletcher.² In this case your word may go further than mine. I had engaged a young man in Dublin for the place at Bristol, but Mr. Franks³ thinks I may save the expense—that with the help of Mr. Pine,⁴ he can supply Ireland too with books, at least as well as it has been done hitherto. I will make a trial for a time. I firmly believe George Whitefield *might* recover, but not till he lives like Lewis Cornaro.⁵ I hope to return from Cornwall to Bristol in the latter end of September. But what is become of Lady Huntingdon? When do you see her or hear from her?

What hinders you administering the sacrament every week, or every day, to some of the poor sick? Mr. [John] Richardson can show you the way to as many as you desire. We both want more of Mr. De Renty's spirit, more of his holy love to the poor.⁶ I really believe you are a better divine than a logician, I mean, *pro hac vice*.⁷ I cannot for my life see the connexion between the premises and conclusion. "I dare not countenance John Jones, *ergo* I do not administer at Spitalfields when he is at West Street."⁸ By the same rule you ought not to administer at Kingswood when he is at London. If any of our old brethren, Robert Windsor, Richard Kemp, John Reddall,⁹ or any other [who] has been with us these twenty years and over and above, is alive to God, full of love to him and his children, can show me what the latter of these propositions has to do with the former, *erit mihi magnus Apollo*.¹⁰ "But these men have received the sacrament from John Jones, *ergo* I dare not administer it to them." This argument is

¹JW sailed from Dublin back to England on Aug. 1. CW's holograph is not known to survive, but some excerpts and apparent points made are present in JW's response.

²The desired letter likely referred to Thomas Maxfield's extended visit and preaching in Madeley. No letter from CW to Fletcher on this topic is known to survive.

³The published transcription reads "Mrs. Franks," but this is surely Samuel Franks, JW's book steward in London.

⁴William Pine, JW's current printer in Bristol.

⁵Despite his ill health, Whitefield had left for America in 1763. He returned to England on July 7, 1765 in shattered health. Luigi Cornaro (1475–1566), was the Venetian author of a popular book translated into English as *Sure and Certain Methods of Attaining a Long and Healthful Life* (1702). JW's Oxford diary records him reading this work in Dec. 1732. Cornaro emphasised both proper diet and exercise.

⁶Gaston Jean Baptiste de Renty (1611–49), a Roman Catholic whose life and ministry to the poor JW admired; publishing in 1741 *An Extract of the Life of Monsieur De Renty*.

⁷"For this occasion."

⁸CW is still questioning the legitimacy of John Jones's ordination by Erasmus of Arcadia; cf. JW to CW, Mar. 1, 1764.

⁹Robert Windsor (1703–90) was a native of London and one of the first members of the Foundery society (see JW's comment at his death, *Journal*, Feb. 7, 1790, *Works*, 24:165). John Reddall (d. 1790) appears in the Foundery Band Lists (1742–46) as the leader of a band for single men; in 1755 he married Mary Lloyd. He was one of JW's assistants with medical electricity. The couple remained active at the Foundery and at the later City Road chapel.

¹⁰Virgil, *Eclogues*, iii.104; 'He will be the great Apollo to me' (Loeb).

good if their receiving from him puts them out of a state of salvation. But not else, not if they are children of God still and act according to the best light they have.

Hitherto I have touched on the conclusion only, but the premise appears to me equally strange. I cannot see that “the Oath of Supremacy affects *his* ordination” anymore than it does *my* field preaching.¹¹ Nothing is more certain than it was never *designed* for any such thing as to prevent a Greek bishop occasionally ordaining an Englishman, nor does this ordination imply that Englishman’s withdrawing his allegiance in whole or in part from his sovereign, although it is sure this would be implied in his being ordained by a Romish bishop.

Undoubtedly the least inconvenience is, if you cannot get over this odd scruple at which many are just now laughing in their sleeve and saying, “Aha, so we would have it,” to return to Bristol.¹² Otherwise I see nothing that can prevent an open breach between you and me. And what an occasion this would give the enemy to blaspheme!

You will never “appease Mr. [Martin] Madan,” unless you can change his heart. He has a deep, cordial hatred to me, although you do not suppose he will own it. He is *mali caput et fons*.¹³ The heart partly creates, partly catches hold on these occasions. I have abundantly sufficient to prove this charge under his own hand. Two of his letters, particularly his last, breathe the whole spirit of William Cudworth.¹⁴ Such exquisite bitterness I have rarely known, but it is all well. I do not know that John Jones will come to Kingswood at all. I think London is his place. I have just work and care enough. My love to Sally.

Adieu.

Source: published transcription; *The Christian Witness and Church Members Magazine* 18 (1861): 182–83.¹⁵

¹¹Anglican clergy were required to take the oath of supremacy to the reigning British monarch. CW had apparently objected that John Jones’s ordination by Erasmus of Arcadia was invalid because it did not involve the oath of supremacy.

¹²CW had come to London in early May to help fill in while JW was on his extended trip to Ireland and the north of England.

¹³“The head and fount of evil.”

¹⁴William Cudworth (1717–63), an English Presbyterian, was converted at the age of twenty and drawn into the circle of Calvinist Methodists for a time, before turning Independent. JW considered him a prime example of ‘antinomian’ Calvinism. Orig., “Pudworth”; a misprint or misreading of holograph.

¹⁵Transcription published in JW, *Works*, 27:443–44.

From James Hutton

[London]
Saturday, August 17 [1765¹]

If so old a friend will call me dear Jemmy, I will call you dear Charles, and let that be our mutual language.

When you gave me your little book you said, “Though I know you read no other hymns but your own, yet I will give you a little book; but you must read it.” And you repeated it to me more than once that I should read it. The pleasure I had in seeing you hindered me from taking notice of that dry rub. But I assure you, you were mistaken in thinking I read no other hymns but those of the Brethren. I have read all those of yours that I have heard of, Mr. [Martin] Madan’s *Collection*,² and Mr. Whitefield’s.³ And wherever I find unction, and sentiment, and experience, though expressed in poor poetry, I find a very sensible pleasure in reading them. For in hymns I look chiefly on those [factors]. And yet [I] could wish, and have wished, and have expressed my wish publicly in print that the hymns of the Brethren of our congregations were better expressed, in better language and poetry, than many of the finest hymns in themselves among us are.

In a little time after you was gone I got up and read through every one of those texts, with their verses annexed.⁴ I knew before that you was a good poet, and therefore many fine verses there were not unexpected. When I read No. 8, that Moses hid his face for he was afraid to look upon God, I thought in myself the New Testament application would be that we, with open face, etc. For we have an advantage which Moses had not, that tremendous brow has condescended to be humanised, to be crowned in thorns (the loving marks of which are certainly as visible as those of the prints in his feet and hands and side which were seen and handled after his resurrection, and with which he went in to heaven, and with which he will certainly appear at the Last Day) and the looks of his eyes and whole countenance now towards us are those of reconciliation, and those of [a] bridegroom to such who have genuine grace. And perfect love casteth out that fear at his appearing, which the want of genuine grace will occasion at that time. There is certainly a fear of ourselves very just and proper, but that is only in a believer till he himself approaches; the sound of his feet, even the dawn of the news of his coming, will certainly make a true believer lose every kind of fear. The very thought of it will do it, much more his appearance. This does not take away the shamefacedness but the joy is predominant. And tell me the sort of fear which the plain and full discovery of immense and infinitely condescended love and happy lot will cause, and that will be the sort which the true believer must then feel, being certain of his bride state and the completion being at hand with such a bridegroom.

Here dear Charles you have my thoughts, not in contradiction or thwarting or controversy, but

¹CW’s endorsement says 1766, but August 17 was a Sunday that year. It was a Saturday in 1765, which was the year SGW and the children accompanied CW to London.

²Martin Madan, *A Collection of Psalm and Hymn Tunes Never Published Before* (London: Lock Hospital, 1765).

³George Whitefield, *A Collection of Hymns for Social Worship* (London: William Strahan, 1753).

⁴The only recent published volume by CW with Scripture texts attached to each hymn was the two-volume *Scripture Hymns* (1762). These hardly qualify as a “little book,” and hymn No. 8 in this collection is on Genesis, not Moses. Hutton’s discussion echoes themes in *Trinity Hymns*, which CW would publish in 1767, and which also ties a Scripture text to every hymn. The motif of beholding Christ with an open face is prominent in these hymns, but there is no reference to Moses hiding his face. It is most likely that CW gave Hutton an early manuscript version of this collection for his input, and based on this input CW left out the hymn Hutton mentioned.

only as the thing appears to me. True faith is scandalously rare, and even among pious and awakened people it is the last thing they stumble upon. And in general I take it people would be much holier if they believed in good earnest—by believing [rather] than by striving—or in other words would be changed from glory to glory by seeing him as he is. This is a matter which has proved itself by fact, a thousand instances of which are manifest.

Whether I shall be able to come and have the pleasure of breakfasting with you on Monday, I cannot tell. If I am tolerably well, I hope for it. My love to your dear wife and children. I am, dear Charles,

Your loving James, or Jemmy.

Endorsement: by CW, “James Hutton 1766 of Faith .”

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/428/2/70.

From Mark Davis

Manchester
August 25, 1765

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Our conference began on Tuesday morning and concluded Friday afternoon.¹ Our temporal affairs were settled with prudence and patience, and some doubtful characters narrowly inquired into, I would hope without partiality.

On Tuesday your brother read to us his latest thoughts on Christian perfection, a manuscript which he intends to publish.² One proposed to have seriously and calmly considered the doctrine itself, the character of its professors, and the circumstances of receiving the glorious grace. But this your brother would not at all permit, because: 1) we have not *now* all things to learn; [and] 2) several young preachers might be unsettled and bewildered by hearing such debates.

An accidental³ sentence then introduced this question: “Is the witness of the Spirit a blessing distinct from the fruit?” This with another, “Can it be, where the fruit is not perceived?” We argued pros and cons for⁴ one and a half hours, before we fully understood each other, and then replied, “The witness of the Spirit is a blessing distinct from the fruit, yet never exists where the fruit is not; although the mind does not often advert to the fruit of the Spirit when first the witness is enjoyed.”

On Thursday I read my thoughts concerning women speaking in the church, i.e., in our public bands. Your brother replied, “We know this practice has been attended with a great blessing. But your point we must not *now* debate; for Mark Davis is prepared for the argument, and we are not”!

On Friday we were told the whole story of Dr. [John] Jones’s ordination, in which it was proved by testimonies nobody can deny that Erasmus is a true bishop of the Greek church. Patience I believe had its perfect work in many, for silence listened and answered not. The Dr. left us on Thursday night, perhaps previously conscious of the victory.

We parted, I believe, in great love to each other. I never expect to have all things said and done in the best manner in so large an assembly; much less all things said and done according to my imperfect norms of right and wrong. Yet I am persuaded our Conferences are the main sinews of all our discipline, and that they will greatly promote our unanimity while we have any of the Spirit of true Christianity among us.

I am to ramble through the North of England and Scotland, and spend some time in the north of Ireland, so as to reach Dublin about Christmas, where I shall be glad to meet a line from you.

My kind respects and love to Mrs. Wesley and family.

I commend myself, dear sir, to your prayers, and am

Your very affectionate friend and humble servant,

M. Davis

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 2/63.

¹For the formal printed *Minutes* of the 1765 Conference, see JW, *Works*, 10:302–14. These *Minutes* mention nothing about the debates described by Davis.

²This would have been the manuscript of *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, as Believed and Taught by the Rev. Mr. John Wesley, From the Year 1725 to the Year 1765*; JW, *Works*, 13:136–91.

³Orig., “accidently.”

⁴Orig., “We proed and coned.”

From the Rev. Vincent Perronet

Shoreham
August 30, 1765

My Very Dear and Reverend Brother,

I could wish that his Grecian Lordship¹ had been preaching either in Lapland or Japan, instead of putting the whole Methodist church in confusion! However, if instead of a silent protest,² you would enter even a public one against that ordination; and would, at the same time, stretch out your hand to prevent the flight of an innocent flock; would you not full as sufficiently “show your disapprobation of Greek orders and your attachment to the oath of supremacy”? I really think you would. But I find that this is too tender a point to insist on, and therefore I drop it.

We entirely agree that “it is but fair to read an author before we answer him.” But I wonder, my dear brother, what there is in those strictures which could induce the least suspicion that “I had not read Mr. Hervey’s Letters”?³ They were sent to me for that very purpose. And I can say, with unhappy Julian, “ἀνέγνω, ἔγνω, κατέγνω.”⁴ I know the answer of the famous Basil may be retorted by our Calvinistic divines, “ἀνέγνω, ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἔγνω, etc.”⁵ So widely different are the sentiments of different professors.

I am truly concerned that most, if not all, of our pious brethren are tumbled into the pit of predestination. The good God deliver them out of it.

We shall be always glad to see thee, with thy dear companion and the little babies.⁶ Our love and respects are with you all. The Lord Jesus be with each of us!

Thine most affectionately,

Vin. Perronet

Address: “To / The Reverend / Mr Charles Wesley / to be left at Mr Hunt’s / in Frith Street / Soho.”

Endorsement: by CW, “Aug. 30. 1765 / Mr Perronet – to the / purpose.”

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/472/11.

¹Erasmus of Arcadia.

²Like omitting the Lord’s Supper at Spitalfields on Sunday, if John Jones was administering at West Street chapel; cf. JW to CW, Aug. 9, 1765.

³See Perronet to CW, Apr. 25, 1765.

⁴Julian the Apostate’s famous reply to a critique by Apollonarius, “I have read it, understood it, and condemned it.”

⁵St. Basil of Caesarea’s rejoinder, “You have read it, but have not understood it; [for had you done so, you would not have condemned it].”

⁶SGW and the children were currently with CW in London.

From the Rev. John Fletcher

[Madeley]
September 23, 1765

My Very Dear Friend,

Have you really forgotten about me? I cannot bring myself to believe it. I would rather imagine only that my letters are lost, or that you are sick, or so immersed in important business that you have not yet been able to reply to me.

Be that as it may, I beg you, if you have gout in the hand, to use one of your friends to give me your news. I would have replied to you earlier if I had been sure where you were. But impatience takes hold of me, and I am risking writing to you in London, being weary of waiting for your news.

In my last I told you that Lady Huntingdon proposed to come to stay several days at Madeley. Providence prevented me from having the honour of seeing her here, with illness striking Mr. Townsend's sister,¹ whom she had promised to take to Bath.

Thomas Maxfield has left me after a two-month visit. His preaching, which is more gentle than mine, has pleased many people. Many have been comforted and encouraged. However I have not found the fruit for which I had hoped. I have written to your brother [JW] that I believe him [i.e. Maxfield] clear of antinomianism, if his preaching is not teased apart and taken bit by bit. For if such is the case, he could then be accused of making the way so wide that the ungodly think to enter therein and the swine to take the pearls; but it is clear that they cannot do so and they do not wish to keep them. I have hoped that there could be peace between you. But I do not know how it would be possible for peace to find its way into and fill the great chasm. I would despair at this if I did not know that all things are possible for the Lord.

The heavens favour me externally. My parishioners are tired of insulting me, and my enemies of coming to church. My field preaching has raised a storm in the neighbourhood, but it is rumbling thunder, without deadly lightning. The bishop has not yet called me to give an account of my conduct.

All that I am able to say to you of our state is "*Lentè festinamus*."² We have as yet no further witnesses to perfection. Mr. Maxfield left two in Salop during the two days that he was there, but nobody here.

As to my soul, "*Lentissimè festino*."³ From time to time, however, it seems to me that the Lord is making some efforts to bruise the hardness of my heart. Blessed be God, I have a grain of faith, peace, and hope; but I await a bushel of love.

Would you bring this to me, this bushel full of pure love? And if it is too heavy for you, persuade Mr. [Joseph] Stokes to lend you his chaise, and come together to bring me this treasure. September is nearly out and I was expecting you in the month of August.

*Mox-cilo rescribas, attamen ipse veni.*⁴

Greet your wife and your children from me, as well as our common friends around you, wherever you may be. And remember to pray for

Your feeble friend,

J. F.

Address: "To / The Revd. Mr. Charles Wesley / at the Foundery / Upper Moor-fields / London."

Postmark: "30/SE."

Endorsement: by CW, "Sept. 23. 1765 / Fletcher."

¹Judith (Townsend) Woodworth.

²Suetonius, *Augustus*, 25; "We are making haste slowly."

³"I am making haste very slowly."

⁴"Reply post-haste; better, come in person."

Source: holograph (in French); MARC, MA 1977/495/30.⁵

⁵A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher's original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 219–20. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith's English translation (pp. 221–22).

From an Unidentified Correspondent

[London]
[c. October 1765]

A Short Account of the Experience of Sister Me[a]cham¹

She was early endued with much of the fear of God, and her own mother remarked she was scarce ever seen to smile till twelve years old. She married young (about 20 years old) when it may be said her trouble began, for her first husband, being quite unconcerned about his salvation took her a walking on a Sabbath day. As they went, she thought the people she saw were all going the broad way to destruction. Yet she went in with him to the ale house. The next day convictions followed her so strong she thought she had committed the unpardonable sin and was tempted to destroy herself. At one time in particular when her husband was going out on a Saturday night, as was his custom, she locked her chamber door and had a knife ready. But her husband, without any cause that he knew of, returned (doubtless sent of God) and went up directly to the chamber door and, finding it fast, burst it open directly, when she flung the knife away behind the bed.

The same temptation continued some months, none knowing it but God. But meeting a friend, a Dissenter that she thought was a Christian, she opened her mind to him. But he, being ignorant of such experiences, acquainted her husband and friends, contrary to her desire—and as she sought his promise, she now thought there was no such person as a Christian to be found. Immediately her friends sent for the Reverend Messrs. Wilson and Marlow,² both curates of Shoreditch, who took a deal of pains with her (though for some time they could not but think she had committed some enormous crime). She kept constant to the prayers of the Church and hearing both Sundays and weekdays; but dared not take the Lord's Supper, fearing she should do as Judas did. Till Mr. Wilson, meeting her on the day before Good Friday, asked if she intended receiving the next day. She was startled at the question but told him “no,” for the above reason. But Mr. Wilson told her that if she would not, he would never speak to her any more. She complied rather than disoblige him; and there she received a full sense of the pardoning love of God and went home rejoicing. This is about 30 years since.

It should be noticed that in the time of her troubles her friends took her out to Whitechapel Mount when thousands of people were there to see a shame siege. She cried out aloud, “There is not among us such a wretch as I,” and fell down as dead. Also at hearing a sermon of the Reverend Mr. Wheatley³ on the sin against the Holy Ghost, she also fell down as dead. This was about the time the field preaching began here, which she was often persuaded to hear but would not, being strongly rivetted to the Church till our brother Barnes, who lived in the neighbourhood, knowing Mr. [John] Wesley was going to preach on a morning on our Lord's temptations, sent her word desiring her to come to hear him at 6:00 in the morning. She came, though against her inclination and heard. When asked how she liked [it], she told Mr. Barnes that he must have told Mr. Wesley all her life; which when he declared he had not, she thought God had directed the word to her and [she] continued hearing in the morning and evenings; her husband being then at sea (who would else have opposed it).

He died in the West Indies leaving her with one child. His relations were very kind to her in his absence, till she came to the Foundery. They then sent for her to ask if she intended to continue with the

¹This may be Mary Jackson, b. 1707 in Shoreditch, who married John Tompson in 1724. They had a son William in 1729. In any case Mary Tompson was a widow who married Thomas Meacham in 1742; both Thomas and Mary appeared in the Foundery Band Lists (1742–46). Mary Meacham was buried Sept. 10, 1765 in Bunhill Fields.

²Rev. Michael Marlow (1711–95) became curate at St. Leonard, Shoreditch in 1735.

³Rev. Henry Wheatley (1690–1756), a lecturer at St. Leonard Shoreditch (1720–56).

Methodists. She told them she hoped that the day she left them that God would require her soul from her body. From that day they all forsook her. The great enemy of her soul, who had long lain idle, began to renew her old temptations upon her now, though not quite so powerfully as before. About twenty-three years ago she married again. On consulting the Lord in prayer, the words were strongly imposed on her mind, “You shall have trouble in the flesh. Nevertheless I spare you.”⁴ A year after, and after a lying in, God was pleased to afflict her with a cancer in her breast. But the temptations of her soul were beyond all that you might say. Tears were her meat day and night. About seventeen years ago God visited her with another sharp affliction, an ulcer in the womb, both which bodily afflictions continued to her death and a fever generally once a year.

About nine or ten years ago she received a great blessing under the Reverend Mr. Charles Wesley’s preaching, when you said you had come that they might receive a second benefit, which was a great support to her. She was never so well as when she could be in the house of God, and many a time has dragged her frail body there though her pains were so great she thought she should never get back. She often received great comfort from Mr. [Thomas] Walsh, Mr. [James] Morgan, Mr. [John] Nelson, etc., in private conference. Yet the enemy pressed her so very sore with blasphemous and hard thoughts of God that within a fortnight of her death she cried out in agony she feared she should be damned at last.

She was naturally of a quick spirit and a very tender conscience, which frequently caused her much trouble, for when having said a thing, she would keep her word however difficult so to do. She may justly be said to have been a faithfully loving wife and mother, a kind friend and neighbour, a good mistress and a compassionate Christian.

Endorsement: by CW, “S. Mitcham’s death 1765.”

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/501/110.⁵

⁴1 Cor 7:28.

⁵For 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

[Madeley]
October 8, 1765

My Dear Sir,

I greet and I thank Mr. [William] Osgood for the letter which I have at last received from you.¹ I have given the message to Mr. Croft (we call him that for short) and his reply is that he has a place for one other boarder at the moment. And that he will do what is in his power if Mr. Osgood sends his son, to teach him to fear God, to read, to write, to spell correctly, and to count. But that his school is not suitable to extend a child's studies into grammar, Latin or French, seeing that he understands neither one nor the other of these languages. I am offering Mr. Osgood for his son my care as minister, but I dare not promise them to him as a schoolmaster, to make up what is lacking in Mr. Croft's teaching. Meanwhile, insofar as my commitments allow me, I will not refuse to give him at meal times some small guidance to prevent him forgetting his Latin. Charles would share them with him if you send him there. But I would advise you to come there yourself before deciding anything for your son.

I am still alone in my hermitage and I hope that I will never load myself up with cares of a household. The more I live, the more I enjoy the pleasure of being free of that burden. Though I do not have that, still I have others too numerous to tell you. The power of God is sufficient to carry them for me.

Mr. [Alexander] Mather, preacher of Chester-round, is coming very shortly to preach at Wellington, some two miles from the place where I preach on Sundays. Our people have invited him (behind my back) without me. The consequences will come down upon me. If they are bad, I will need to carry them as well as I am able. I will need to pray meanwhile that the ill does not outweigh the good, and live in great hope and without worry.

My neighbour Mr. [Thomas] Hatton speaks of opening a school soon to teach Latin and to take boarders. We have here in the parish for some weeks one of your acquaintances, Miss Boys from London.

You will need to do as the others. You will need to know how to correct by patience what you are unable to prevent by carefulness. If you want to send me a dozen of your packs of cards,² I hope to sell them. Mark the price. Mr. [Thomas] Marriot has a package ready to send to Madeley for Mr. Croft. If you take advantage of the opportunity, I will be able to have them this month. The peace of God strengthen you, your wife, and your children, whom I greet cordially in Christ. Remember at the throne of grace

Your feeble brother and servant

J. F.

I hope that [William] Ley is now a deacon. Greet our common friends on my behalf. Farewell.

Address: "To / The Revd. Mr. C: Wesley / at the Foundery / Upper Moor-Fields / London."

Postmark: "14/OC."

Endorsement: by CW, "Oct. 8. 1765 / Fletcher."

Source: holograph (in French); MARC, MA 1977/495/31.³

¹This letter is not known to survive.

²See Frank Baker, "Charles Wesley's Scripture Playing Cards," *WHS* 29 (1954): 136–38.

³A close transcription of the French original, showing Fletcher's original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 222–23. We give here, with revisions in style, Forsaith's English translation (pp. 224–25).

From William Hopkins

Bristol
December 5, 1765

Dear and Reverend Sir,

Agreeable to your request, I have at last prevailed on myself to give you a short account of my dear wife's life and happy death.¹ O that it may be mine also.

Indeed, I am at a loss for words to set it forth in its proper light and give her her just due. But this I can truly say, she was an Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile.² Her life and conversation was beyond the common rank of believers, although she always put herself down for an unbeliever. But such a loving and tender friend is very rare to be met with. For this three and twenty years as we have been together, she has been a sincere follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. And the constant desire of her soul has been to obey him whom she long[ed] to love with all her heart—which sometimes she had a taste of. The Lord did give her to drink of the brook by the way, and cause her to lift up her head.

But the difficulties and trials of life did weight down her precious soul from day to day. She would often say to me, "O my dear, I love you to a fault. O that I could love the Lord Jesus more and you less; then I should be happy indeed." I have always been ashamed of myself to see her simplicity and sincerity, and my unfaithfulness. All that I can say is vastly short of what she deserved, which all that knew her life and conversation cannot but testify, though none knew as well as myself. She has had often great manifestations of the love of God to her precious soul, but soon fell to doubting again. Indeed, I have had greater confidence for her than I had for myself.

For this last two years of her life she has been greatly afflicted with violent pain and sickness, which she has borne with uncommon patience. For this last year she has been mostly confined to her room. In which time she would often be in great fear, lest the Lord should take her away before he had finished his work in her soul. Which I did always tell her I was sure he would not, for that his promise could not fail. For everyone that truly and sincerely seeks the Lord shall surely find him. Which I very well knew she had done for this five and twenty years. All which time she has been in your society and humbly waiting at the feet of Christ for his salvation. And at last she receive[d] fully what she so long waited for.

For this two last months of her life she was mostly confined to her bed, during which time she was often greatly refreshed and the Lord, according to his promise, did give her to taste of his love. And [she] would often say, like our Lord's disciples of old, "My heart doth burn within me."³ But fear and unbelief would return again. She would express herself often in those words, "Nothing short of Christ coming and reigning king in my soul will satisfy me." Then she would cry, "O that the Lord would not take me till he has enabled me to leave a good confession behind me."

About a fortnight before her death one came to see her, and she said to them she was one that had been a long time seeking but had not the assurance of the love of God to her soul, who exhorted her to look unto Jesus, who was both able and willing to give it [to] her. Now the next day she spent wrestling in mighty prayer. After that the Lord broke in upon her soul and made her to trust in him. And then she was assured that he would not take her hence till she had seen his great salvation. And so she continued for near a week.

When death began to draw nigh, she said, "I am going." But now she believed that God for

¹William Hopkins and Deborah Wilkins were married in 1742 in Bristol. Deborah was buried on Nov. 25, 1765. CW was in Bristol at the time and had encouraged William to write this account.

²See John 1:47.

³Cf. Luke 24:32.

Christ's sake had forgiven her all her sins. After this Mrs. Gee coming to see her,⁴ being an intimate acquaintance, having met together in class many years and knew her state perhaps better than anyone besides, asked her if she had any fear. She said, "A little." She said, "Fear not, the Lord is near." After that she had a great conflict, which lasted about one hour, during which time she kept praying. But on a sudden she cried out, "He is come." Mrs. Gee, being present, asked her, "Is the Lord Jesus come?" She said, "Yes." and she felt that Spirit that raised our Lord Jesus from the dead had quicken[ed] her soul. She said, "Virtue is gone out of him and I am healed."⁵ And she broke out in these words, "Glory be to God on high." "Bless the Lord oh my soul, and all that is within me bless and praise his holy name."⁶

I myself, being present, having a constant recourse to her sick bed whose life I would gladly have bought with my own, hearing her thus rejoicing in God, it rejoiced my heart also. I then, kneeling down with a few friends which were present, gave thanks to the Lord for what he had done for her soul. I then took her by the hand and asked her if she was willing to go to her Saviour. She said, "Yes, but you won't let me go"—meaning, as I suppose, my not being willing to give her up, for she had often before desired me not to pray for her life. Oh who can tell the smart of parting with such a friend?

Mrs. Gee then said to her, "Now you long to be dissolved and to be with Christ."⁷ She said, "His will be done." She would be often looking up with a smiling countenance, very earnest, as if she had seen the very heavens open. And one ask[ed] her what she saw. She said, "The Lord Jesus and his holy angels coming to receive me." By which her tongue was filled with praise. O who can tell what she then saw? No mortal! But we too shall know, if we be found ready.

She said a day or two before her death, "I shall be in glory by Sunday." And on Sunday morning, about half after 1:00, she sweetly fell asleep in Jesus.

Dear sir, all that has been said is not one tenth part of what might truly be said of my dear friend, which is now in glory. Indeed, the task was too great for me, had you not requested it. And for whom, together with your dear brother, she and I had always the greatest veneration. For whom we always desired to live and die with. Your last visit was doubly welcome both to her and me. Your admonition I shall never forget. You told me as soon as I could entirely give he up the Lord would do what was best. And so he did. His will be done, though hard to flesh and blood. And he did from that day enable me to give her up into his hands. And he has took her to himself. Oh the wisdom and goodness of God! His ways are past finding out. I too soon shall follow her. Oh that I may be found ready.

Pray sir, excuse what you see amiss in this scrawl. Consider my loss and pray for me. My constant prayer is for you and your dear brother, until we meet in glory. Which is all at present from

Your ever loving and dutiful, though unfaithful son and servant in the gospel of our
adorable Saviour Jesus Christ,

William Hopkins

Endorsement: by CW, "The Life & Death of thy / Righteous – S[ister?] Hopkins / Dec. 5. 1765."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/501/88.⁸

⁴Mary Deacon married Thomas Gee (d. 1761) in Bristol in 1742; she found assurance under CW's preaching on Apr. 24, 1746 (see MS Journal).

⁵Cf. Luke 8:46.

⁶Ps. 103:1.

⁷Cf. Phil. 1:23.

⁸For a digital copy and "as-is" transcription, see:
<https://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/services/digitisation-services/projects/rapture-and-reason/>

From William Perronet

London
Friday, December 13 [1765]

Dear Sir,

I am but just now returned from the country to take my last leave of my poor brother Henry.¹ As Dr. Turner was not in town, Dr. Fothergill was called in,² who could however give them no kind of hopes. Nor do I believe that it was in the power of medicine, or any human means, to save or even to assist him. I never yet saw so bad a sort of the small pox. But it was no small comfort to me to find him in so peaceful and happy a state of mind.

It pleased God, in a very extraordinary moment, to make all his bed in his sickness. Inasmuch that he who had led a very sorrowful and afflicted life seemed to be entirely excused from the ordinary pains and distresses of sickness and death. He who had lived for so many years without hope, and according to his own apprehension without God in the world, did now experience a hope full of immortality. And he who had for so long a time accounted himself neglected and forsaken of God did now, in his last moments, wonder to find him so near at hand, and so ready and willing to save. "Let us," said he a few hours before his death, "press forward, through every difficulty, and receive of the abundance of grace and mercy which Jesus has to bestow."

He was patient and resigned beyond anything I ever saw. He said his bed felt so comfortable to him, and that his medicines were so very pleasant (though in truth they were far otherwise) that an epicure might wish to be sick to enjoy what he did.

My sister Mady attended him,³ as he had requested, and was I believe an instrument of much good to him. He went off this morning between 9:00 and 10:00 without a single groan or sign, leaving us all to sorrow for his loss, though not without a great mixture of hope and joy.

I left the Dr. and Mrs. Turner pretty well. All here unite with one in love and respects to yourself and Mrs. Wesley. My sister Mady begs that you will be so kind as to write to my father [Vincent]. As soon as he heard of my brother's illness he said, "Whether he is for life or death, I know that this will be a glorious illness to him."

I beg my compliments to Mr. and Mrs. James,⁴ and am, dear sir,
Your very affectionate friend and servant,

W. Perronet

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

Postmark: "13/DE."

Endorsement: by CW, "[[Bristol Thursday April]] 17. 1766";⁵ and "W. Perronet of Harry / at rest forever!
Dec. 13 / 1765."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/472/32.

¹Henry Perronet (1730–65) was buried Dec. 15, 1765 in Islington.

²John Fothergill (1712–80), a Quaker, was a prominent London physician.

³"Mady" was the familiar name for Damaris Perronet (1727–82), daughter of Vincent and Charity (Goodhew) Perronet.

⁴Captain John and Margaret (Jenkins) James.

⁵This possibly indicates that the letter was delayed in getting to CW.

From the Rev. Vincent Perronet

Shoreham
December 30 [1765]

My Very Dear Brother,

The favour of yours came to hand on Sunday the 22nd instant,¹ when I entered into my 73rd year. When God has nothing more for me to do or suffer, I trust he will, through my dear redeeming Lord, call home to his kingdom of glory one of the most unworthy of all his children! He has seen proper to give the precedency to the dear companion of my life, and six of our family—four sons and two daughters.² Just the like number of both remains still behind.³ But to whom the Lord designs the next honour is only known to himself.

My dear son Henry, like the poor woman in the gospel, was bowed down for about 18 years. Had a deliverance been sooner best for him and his mourning friends, it had come sooner. I doubt not but your Christian conversation was blessed to him, and I thank you much for what kindness you showed him. If those remarkable parts of Scripture mentioned by my son William are considered with respect to the then state and circumstances of things, and to the succeeding events, the hand of God is so visible that to ascribe this to chance or accident must discover either blindness or inattention, or a most unhappy propensity to unbelief.

In what state of health this letter may find our dear little friend I know not.⁴ But this I know, that should it find his tender parents weeping, it will find him rejoicing; and therefore let them also rejoice in the Lord!

I doubt not but your honoured father will prove a true prophet. And, blessed by God, I have the same assurance with regard to mine! Yet a little more pain and suffering and we are at our journey's end.

You must have heard before now that your dear brother [JW], in coming to Shoreham on Wednesday, the 18th instant, had a most providential escape from being almost crushed to pieces in the borough, by a fall with his horse. But he was much mended before he left us the Saturday following.

Our best respects are with thee and thy dear companion and family. Mutual prayers I hope will always continue. The Lord Jesus Christ be with all of us!

Thine, most affectionately,

Vin. Perronet

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

Postmark: "8/IA."

Endorsement: by CW, "Dec. 30. 1765 / Mr Perronet bereaved / of his children" and "[[read to Bristol, April]] 17. 1766."

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/472/12.

¹This letter, consoling Vincent on the death of his son Henry, is not known to survive.

²The Perronets lost two daughters in their infancy (one apparently named Susanna), as well as sons Daniel (1719–21), Vincent Jr. (1727–46), Henry (1730–65), and Thomas (1731–55).

³The surviving daughters were Damaris Perronet and Elizabeth (Perronet) Briggs; the sons were Charles, Edward, John, and William.

⁴Perronet is perhaps referring to CW and SGW's seventh child, who would be born in Feb. 1766 and named Samuel.