

John Wesley's In-Correspondence (1751–55)

Table of Contents

(Update: February 2, 2024)

1751 c. Jan.	Jane Landey	1
1751 c. Jan. 14	unidentified correspondent	2
1751 Feb. 09	JW and Mary (Goldhawk) Vazeille Marriage Agreement	3
1751 Feb. 16	Emilia (Wesley) Harper	4
1751 Feb. 20	John Curtis	5
1751 Apr. 12	Ebenezer Blackwell	6
1751 May 24	Vazeille children's chancery suit	7–11
1751 June 25	John Cennick	12
1751 June 25	Samuel Lloyd	13
1751 c. June 30	Rev. John Milner	14
1751 July 22	Rev. Charles Wesley	15
1751 Nov 22	Reply to Vazeille children's chancery suit	16–19
1751 Dec. 02	Sarah Perrin	20–22
1752 c. Apr.	Bishop George Lavington	23–27
1752 May 13	Executor Response to Chancery Suit by Vazeille Children	28–29
1752 May 22	Mary (Goldhawk / Vazeille) Wesley to Rev. Charles Wesley	30–33
1752 July 29	Thomas Gaugain Landey	34
1753 Jan. 01	Howell Harris	35–36
1753 Mar. 27	Rev. Henry Piers	37
1753 c. Apr. 25	Rev. John Gillies	38
1753 May	Rev. Henry Tucker	39–40
1753 May 29	John Bennet	41–42
1753 June	Rev. John Parkhurst	43–49
1753 Sept. 05	Rev. John Gillies	50–51
1753 Oct. 01	Edward Perronet	52
1753 Nov. 20	William Atkinson	53–54
1753 Dec. 03	Rev. George Whitefield	55
1754 Mar. 21	Rev. Henry Venn	56
1754 June 29	Rev. James Hervey	57
1754 Aug. 17	Thomas Walsh	58
1754 c. Aug. 27	Mrs. Lefevre	59–60
1754 Sept. 17	Mrs. Lefevre	61
1754 c. Dec. 15	unidentified reader to <i>Gazetteer and London Daily Advertiser</i>	62
1754 Dec. 25	Mrs. Lefevre	63
1754 Dec. 30	Rev. John Gillies	64
1754 Dec. 31	James Hutton	65–68
c. 1755	Joseph Jones	69–70
1755 Feb. 14	Howell Harris	71
1755 Feb. 28	Mrs. Lefevre	72
1755 Apr. 02	Mrs. Lefevre	73
1755 c. May 15	unidentified correspondent	74
1755 c. June	Rev. Samuel Davies	75
1755 June 07	Rev. John Baddeley	76–77
1755 June 17	Rev. Charles Wesley	78
1755 July 10	Richard Tompson	79–82
1755 July 12	Updated Answer of Executor to Chancery Suit by Vazeille Children	83–84

John Wesley's In-Correspondence (1751–55)

Table of Contents

(Update: February 2, 2024)

1755 July 18	Mrs. Lefevre	85–86
1755 Aug. 09	Rev. George Whitefield	87
1755 Aug. 15	Richard Tompson	88–92
1755 Sept. 05	Rev. Samuel Walker	93–96
1755 Sept. 18	Rev. Samuel Walker to Rev. Thomas Adam	97
1755 Sept. 23	Thomas Walsh	98
1755 Oct. 02	Rev. Samuel Walker to Rev. Thomas Adam	99
1755 Oct. 08	Thomas Walsh	100
1755 Oct. 10	Rev. Thomas Adam	101
1755 c. Oct. 17	Henry Rimius	102
1755 Oct. 20	Rev. Samuel Walker	103–04
1755 Nov. 04	Rev. Samuel Walker to Rev. Thomas Adam	105–06
1755 Nov. 29	John William Fletcher	107–16
1755 Dec.	'Graticola' to the Editor of <i>Gentleman's Magazine</i>	117
1755 c. Dec. 01	John Walsh	118–19
1755 c. Dec. 12	a fellow Christian	120
1755 Dec. 21	John Walsh	121

From Jane Landey¹

[Closeland, Ireland]
[c. January 1751²]

Dear Sir,

I would have wrote to you long since to let you know how the Lord was carrying on his work in my soul. But as Mr. Landey and [Mr.] Riguet(?) wrote so often, I did not care to trouble you.

But now I am under a necessity to speak for myself, as I am told there has been many things wrote to you concerning something which I mentioned to one or two of our brethren, Mrs. Mercier in particular, who I believe has been the occasion of your getting some letters out of Mountmellick and elsewhere. She came here just after our return from Dublin, as we thought out of friendship, to see us. But I find since it was quite the reverse—it was only to know if you were married to our daughter; as she said there were many who did not expect to see her till she came with you next spring, and seemed to be very well pleased at it. I, thinking she was and that all true brethren might be of one mind, made her a confident of what passed between us in Dublin.³ I hear since they have wrote you many things in a wrong light, which has given me greater trouble than I can well express, for fear it should disturb your peace. Dear sir, if you designed to have it kept as a secret, you should have told me so, as I believe you very well knew my simple innocent temper.

I hear they have wrote you word that I gloried in it. Far be that from me. I trust I shall never glory in anything save in the cross of Christ. Indeed what I said, I thought could not give offence on either side. But I find there is no going through this vale of misery without manifold trials and temptations. But I see in the end it shall all work together for good. Glory be to God, there has none of us let go our integrity. Therefore I have a good hope we shall hold out unto the end.

I hope, if it be the will of the Lord we should live to meet again, it may be in love and peace. I am, dear brother,

Your sincere sister in Christ,

Jane Landey

P. S. I would be glad to have a line or two from you.

no address page or endorsement.

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/501/101.

¹Jane Landey was the wife of Thomas Gaugain Landey, of Closeland, Co. Laois, Ireland; a rural area about 4 miles southeast of Portarlinton. JW first preached there on June 25, 1749, at 'Mr. L.'s house' (perhaps Landey); see *Works*, 20:282. While this letter appears in a collection of letters mainly to CW, it does not specify a recipient and it seems much more likely it was to JW. The situation described explains the background to a letter from Thomas Gaugain Landey to JW, July 29, 1752 (below), and why CW's endorsement appears on this second letter.

²The date is not given, but it would fit best before JW's marriage to Mary (Goldhawk) Vazeille in Feb. 1751.

³JW may have mentioned his openness to marry during his visit to Dublin in Apr. 1750, after his disappointment over potential marriage to Grace Murray in late 1749.

From an Unidentified Correspondent

c. January 14, 1751

Very Dear Sir,

When I have deeply mused on ages past and on the revival of primitive Christianity in the present age, I have often queried whether ever before our time there arose, in any one place and in the same instant, a visible Christian society and a visible antichristian one. No doubt God had wise ends in permitting the *Unitas Fratrum*¹ to appear just as the people of God began to unite together. But we cannot fathom his designs. Yet we know all shall work together for his people's good.

Perhaps it required more grace to withstand this contagion than would have enabled us to die for Christ, and very probable we should have been now a very different people from what we are, had we only had our own countrymen to cope with. We should then have only set the plain gospel of Christ against what was palpably another gospel, and the mind and life of Christ in opposition to that of those who are vulgarly termed 'Christians'. And I verily believe we should have been far higher in Christianity than most of us are at this day.

But this subtle poison has more or less infected almost all, from the highest to the lowest, among us. We would put gospel heads on bodies ready to indulge every unholy temper. Although (glory be to God!) as a society we stand at least as clear of joining with the beast as any other, yet we have not purged out all his leaven; the antinomian spirit is not yet cast out.

All our preaching at first was pointed at the heart, and almost all our private conversation. Do you feel the love of God in your heart? Does his Spirit reign there? Do you walk in the Spirit? Is that mind in you which was in Christ? were frequent questions among us. But while these preachers to the heart were going on gloriously in the work of Christ the 'false apostles'² stepped in, laughed at all heart-work, and laughed many of us out of our spiritual senses. For according to them we were neither to see, hear, feel, nor taste the powers of the world to come but to rest contented with what was done for us seventeen hundred years ago. 'The dear Lamb', said they, 'has done all for us; we have nothing to do but to believe.' Here was a stroke at the whole work of God in the heart! And ever since this German spirit hath wrought among us and caused many to rest in a barren, notional faith, void of that inward 'power of God unto salvation'.³

Source: published transcription; JW, *Journal*, Jan. 16, 1751 (*Works*, 20:375–76).

¹A shortened form for the official name of the Moravians.

²2 Cor. 11:13.

³Rom. 1:16.

John Wesley and Mary (Goldhawk) Vazeille
Marriage Agreement¹

[London]
[February 9, 1750/51]

Articles of Agreement Tripartite

made, concluded, and agreed upon this ninth day of February in the year of our Lord one thousand, seven hundred and fifty [old style], between John Wesley of Lincoln College, Oxford, clerk, of the first part; Mary Vazeille of Threadneedle Street in the parish of St. Martin's Oatwich, London, widow, of the second part; and Samuel Lloyd Esq. of London, merchant, and William Briggs of Queen Street in the parish of St. Leonard, Shoreditch, in the county of Middlesex, gentleman, of the third part; as follows:

Whereas a marriage is intended (by God's permission) shortly to be had and solemnized by and between the said John Wesley and Mary Vazeille; and whereas the said Mary Vazeille is possessed of or entitled unto a considerable fortune or portion which the said John Wesley upon and after the solemnization of the said intended marriage will have a right, according to the laws of this land; but the said John Wesley being willing and desirous not to intermeddle therewith, but that the same shall remain and be the sole property of his said intended wife as fully and effectually to all intents and purposes as if she was sole and the said intended marriage should not take effect:

He the said John Wesley, in consideration therefore of the said intended marriage and to the intent and purpose that his said intended wife shall have the sole power over her said fortune, and that the same shall not be any wise subject or liable to the debts, contracts, or engagements of him the said John Wesley, hath covenanted and agreed and by these presents doth covenant and agree to and with the said Samuel Lloyd and William Briggs, and to and with the survivor of them and the executors and administrators of such survivors, that it shall and may be lawful to and for the said Mary Vazeille, his intended wife, from time to time and at all times after the solemnization of the said intended marriage to apply and dispose of her said fortune to her own separate and private use of uses for such other uses of purposes as she shall think proper either in her lifetime or by her last will and testament in writing, or by any other deed or instrument executed in the presence of two or more credible witnesses (notwithstanding such intended marriage) to direct, limit, or appoint. And that he the said John Wesley, his executors or administrators, shall not or will [not] at any time or times during the lifetime of the said John Wesley or after his death intermeddle therewith; nor shall the same be any wise subject to the debts, contracts, or engagements of him the said John Wesley. But that the said Mary Vazeille shall have the full and free liberty to dispose of all and every and any part of her said fortune which she is possessed of or will be entitled unto at the time of the solemnization of the said intended marriage, as fully and effectually to all intents and purposes as if she was actually sole and unmarried—any law, usage, or custom to the contrary thereof in any wise notwithstanding.

In witness whereof the parties above named have to these presents interchangeably set their hands and seals the day and year first above written.

John Wesley [seal] / Mary Vazeille [seal] / Saml. Lloyd [seal] / William Briggs [seal]

Endorsement: on overleaf; 'Signed, sealed, and delivered (being first duly stamped) in the presence of us: Thomas Maxfield / C[harles] Perronet.

Source: secondary transcription by Frank Baker, in Duke, Rubenstein, Frank Baker Papers, Box 132, folder on JW and his wife.²

¹This document is included because it functioned as a 'public letter' and is referenced in the response to the lawsuit filed by the Vazeille children found below.

²Baker viewed and copied the original signed/sealed agreement c. 1960 in the John Wesley Vol., fo. 56, Methodist Book Room, London. The present location of the original is unknown; but it is repeated in Mary's final will, proved in London on Oct. 11, 1781 (National Archives, PROB 11/1083/92).

From Emilia (Wesley) Harper

[London]
February 16, 1750/1

Dear Brother,

Your friendly letter I had this day,³ and was rejoiced much at the air of freedom and friendship which shines through the whole. Is it right that there should be coldness and distance between us? Oh no, by no means. We of the same flesh and blood; *we*, how few left by death, and those scattered in several parts of the nation; and lastly *we* who in former days were so very remarkable for the greatest love and tenderness to each other of any family in Lincolnshire. Surely it is strange, it is wondrous strange, but let the time past suffice. Is your heart inclined to an union? Mine is more so. I embrace your friendship most cordially. Let no cloud henceforth come between us, but may our ancient love revive and still increase till it be perfected in heaven.

I am, thank God, in good health, and I have been at [West Street] chapel every week.⁴ Though you did not see me, particularly that Sunday you was last there, when you was so lame, which grieved me much, though I knew not then how you came by your hurt. Blessed be our God for all things. Wise are all his ways. Though we poor mortals cannot understand the reasons why he afflicts us now, yet we are sure we shall know hereafter. Oh that I could constantly, cheerfully, refer all my odd fortunes (as the world calls them) to that time when all things will be made plain to our understanding! Then I shall no longer say, 'Oh that I were as in yore, when the candle of God shone upon me, when my friends were about me.'⁵ But that time is past, never (I think, but am not certain) to return.

I want most sadly to see you and talk some hours freely with you as in time past. Some things are too hard for me. Those I want you to solve. One doctrine of yours, and of many more—viz., no happiness can be found in any or all things in this world—that, as I have sixteen years of my own experience which lies flatly against it, I want to talk with you about it. Another thing is that wonderful thing called by us 'Jeffery'.⁶ You won't laugh at me for being superstitious if I tell you how certainly that something calls on me against any extraordinary new affliction. But so little is known of the invisible world that I at least am not able to judge whether it be a friendly or an evil spirit. I shall be glad to know from you where you live, where you may be found. If at the Foundery, assuredly on foot or by coach I shall visit my dear brother, and enjoy the very great blessing of some hours' converse. I am

Your really obliged friend and affectionate sister,

Emilia Harper

Are you not a little mistaken concerning one in the house with you? Alas, I am too weak, too low in the world for to bring a new wife to see. This is not Lincoln or a Gainsborough. At either of those places matters would have been different.

Address: 'To / The Revd. Mr. John Wesley / At the Foundry'.

Endorsement: by JW, 'S[iste]r Harper / Feb. 16, 1750 / a[nswere]d. 18'.

Source: holograph; MARC, WCB, D6/1/178.⁷

³JW had written around Feb. 14, telling Emilia of his accident on London Bridge on Feb. 10, whence he limped to West Street chapel. He also informed her that his convalescence at Mary (Goldhawk) Vazeille's had resulted in their decision to marry (on Feb. 18). This letter does not survive.

⁴Emilia had been living since 1744 at the preacher's house attached to West Street chapel.

⁵See Job 29:2–4.

⁶The supposed ghost responsible for various sounds at the Epworth rectory in early 1717.

⁷Slightly abridged transcription published in *Works*, 26:449.

From John Curtis¹

February 20, 1750/1

[[O permit me here one sigh on the ungrateful reflection that thou hast not left to thyself the half of the profits arising from thine labours on the books. But it is in vain to look back. Thy too great endenture[?] now straightens thee. Can no way be thought on to make this easy? Suppose thy brother was to accept of a living and to return his obligation to thee? Or I am persuaded in a little time the greatest part of the society love thee so well they would cheerfully consider this and assist, if it were mentioned to them by some proper person.]]

Source: extract in shorthand by CW; MARC, DDCW 8/5, p. 15.²

¹CW titles [[Extract of a letter of Friend Curtis to my brother]]. See Curtis's public letter to JW dated Mar. 23, 1748 above, and their interchange in 1749.

²Shorthand expanded with help from Timothy Underhill.

From Ebenezer Blackwell

[London]
[April 12, 1751]

Dear Sir,

I have received your obliging favour of the 7th instant.¹ I will endeavour to see Mr. [Samuel] Lloyd and act in concert with him agreeably to your desire.

I am sorry that you meet with such continual opposition, but I trust that as your day is your strength will be,² and that ere long we shall be enabled to trample all our enemies under our feet, and be made more than conquerors through Jesus Christ our Lord.

My poor dear wife³ has been a good deal afflicted with illness since you left London, but thanks to our good and gracious God is now much better. She tells me that her best services, she trusts, will always attend both you and yours, and I hope they will be continually joined with those of, dear sir,

Your truly affectionate, humble servant,

E. B.

Mrs. [Hannah] Dewell desires her best respects.
And carried to Mrs. [Mary] Wesley for her to forward.

Source: holograph (endorsement by Blackwell for his records, on p. [3] of JW's letter of Apr. 7 to him); MARC, MAM, JW 1/58.⁴

¹See *Works*, 26:459.

²Cf. Deut. 33:25.

³Elizabeth (Molland) Blackwell.

⁴Transcription published in *Works*, 26:460.

Vazeille Children's Lawsuit¹

24th May 1751

**To the Right Honourable Philip Lord Hardwicke,² Baron of Harwicke
in the county of Gloucester, Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain.**

Humbly complaining, show unto your Lordship your orators and oratrix—John Anthony Vazeille, James Vazeille, and Jane Vazeille—all infants under the age of twenty-one years,³ by Cyprian Rondeau⁴ of Warnford Court, Throgmorton Street, London, merchant, their next friend,⁵ that Anthony Vazeille late of London, merchant deceased, being in his lifetime and at the time of his death possessed of a considerable personal estate consisting in ready money, stocks in the public funds, cash in the bank and elsewhere, household goods, debts due to him at home and in foreign parts, and other effects amounting in the whole, after payment of his debts, legacies, and funeral expenses to the sum of twenty thousand pounds and upwards, did on or about the twenty-second day of March in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and forty-five duly make and publish his last will and testament in writing, bearing date on or about the twenty-second day of March, one thousand seven hundred and forty-five.

And therein and thereby, after giving several pecuniary legacies, the said testator gave and bequeathed unto his friend Noah Blisson⁶ of London, broker, and Joseph Lieutand⁷ his partner, and to the survivor of them and to the executors and administrators of such survivor, the sum of one thousand five hundred pounds, to be placed out and invested in the public funds upon trust. To permit and suffer his wife Mary Vazeille to receive and take to her own use and benefit the dividends, interest, and profits thereof for and during the term of her natural life. And from and after her decease, the said testator gave and bequeathed the same unto his two sons, your orators, John Anthony and James Vazeille and unto his daughter, your oratrix, Jane Vazeille—to be equally divided between them, share and share alike, to be paid unto them when they should attain their respective age of twenty-one years. And in case any of them should happen to die before they should attain their respective age of twenty-one years, then he gave the part or share of him or them so dying unto the survivor or survivors of them.

And all the rest and residue of the said testator's estate, in whatsoever the sum may it consist, the said testator gave and bequeathed the same unto his said sons, your two orators, John Anthony and James and unto his daughter, your oratrix, Jane Vazeille—to be paid them equally, share and share alike, when they should attain their respective ages of twenty-one years. That is to say, with regard to your orators; for with regard to your oratrix his daughter, her share or portion, though equal to theirs, the said testator willed that the sums might be disposed in the manner following—to wit, one thousand five hundred pounds to be paid to her when she attained the age of twenty-one years or on the day of marriage, which

¹While not a letter, this lawsuit filed by Mary (Goldhawk) Vazeille's three oldest children after her marriage to JW is relevant to later JW letters; particularly his letter of Dec. 9, 1774 (*Works*, vol. 29). See the response from JW and Mary below, on Nov. 22, 1751.

²Philip Yorke, 1st Earl of Hardwicke (1690–1764).

³As of the date this complaint was filed, Jane Vazeille was 14 years old, John Anthony Vazeille was about 12 years old, and James Vazeille was about 11 years old. Their brother Charles, born in January 1745, died within weeks of his birth.

⁴Cyprian Rondeau (1706–77).

⁵In British common law a 'next friend' stood in as legal representative for person who could not maintain a suit on their own behalf.

⁶Noah Blisson (d. 1775) a banker/broker.

⁷Joseph Lieutand (d. 1771), of German descent, a merchant/banker.

shall first happen, and the surplus to be placed out and invested in the public funds in trust, in order that it might be settled upon her when she married.

And in case either of his sons or his daughter should happen to die before they attained their respective age of twenty-one years, or his daughter the day of marriage, then he gave the part or share of such of them so dying unto the survivors or survivor of his sons. And in case his children above mentioned should all die before they attain the age of twenty-one years, the said testator gave and bequeathed one thousand pounds to the said Noah Blisson, and five hundred pounds to the said Joseph Lieutand, both which jointly with his said wife Mary Vazeille he constituted, made, and appointed executors of his said will, and committed the care and guardianship of his said children to his said executors, who he nominated and appointed to be guardians and trustees for his said children until they should attain the respective age of twenty-one years, or his daughter the day of marriage. And the said testator gave the residue of his estate and effects in case his children should all die before the age of twenty-one years to his nearest relations, excepting his uncle John Jullian and his son Peter Bartholomew Jullian and his aunt Lewis Jullian, as in and by the said testator's will relation being thereunto had may more fully and at large appose.

And your orators and oratrix further show unto your Lordship that the said Anthony Vazeille departed this life on or about the 6th day of June, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and forty-seven, without having revoked or altered his said will or made any other will. And soon afterward the said Noah Blisson and Mary Vazeille, the testator's widow, duly proved the same in the prerogative court of the Archbishop of Canterbury. And by virtue thereof they, the said Noah Blisson and Mary Vazeille, possessed themselves of all or the greatest part of the said testator's estate and effects.

And your orators and oratrix further show unto your Lordship that the said Joseph Lieutand is at present and for several years last past hath been and resided at Petersburg in Russia, where he proposes to stay and reside for some time to come, and hath not as yet proved the said will, or renounced the execution thereof, or acted in any of the trusts reposed in him by the said will.

And your orators and oratrix further show unto your Lordship that your said orators and oratrix were all the children of the said Anthony Vazeille that were living at the time of his death.

And your orators and oratrix further show unto your Lordship that at the time of the death of the said Anthony Vazeille the said Mary Vazeille his wife was ensient.⁸ And within the space of [two months] after his said death (viz., on or about the [sixth of June⁹], one thousand seven hundred and forty-seven) the said Mary Vazeille was delivered of a son, who is now living and was baptized by the name of Noah.¹⁰

And your orators and oratrix further show that the said Mary did since (on or about the months of March or April last) intermarry with the Reverend John Wesley¹¹ of the Foundery in Moorfields, clerk.

And your orators and oratrix are advised and humbly insist that, by virtue of the said testator's will, they are become well entitled after the death of the said Mary Wesley to the said one thousand, five hundred pounds directed by the said testator's will as aforesaid to be invested and placed in the public funds in the names of the said Noah Blisson and Joseph Lieutand for the uses and purposes in the said will particularly mentioned. And that by virtue also of the said will, and notwithstanding there has been a child of the said testator's born since the said testator's death, your orators and oratrix, as they are advised and insist, are also become well entitled to all the rest and residue of the said testator's personal estate after payment of his debts, funeral charges, and legacies.

⁸Pregnant or with child.

⁹In the case of this and the prior editorial insert in this line, blank spaces were left in the manuscript, which the writer failed to fill with the missing text.

¹⁰Noah Vazeille was born on Aug. 6, 1747 and baptized on Aug. 22 at St. Helen, Bishopsgate.

¹¹Orig. throughout this document, 'Westley'.

And your orators and oratrix have often applied to the said Mary Wesley and Noah Blisson to come to an account with them for the said testator's personal estate, and to place out and invest the said one thousand and five hundred pounds pursuant to the said will, and also to place out and invest the residue of the said testator's personal estate in some of the public funds, for the use and benefit of your orators and oratrix, and that the dividends and interest thereof might be applied for and towards the maintenance and education of your orators—which request your orators well hope the said Mary Wesley and Noah Blisson would have complied with. *But non so it is.*

May it please your Lordship that the said John Wesley and Mary his wife and Noah Blisson, combining and confederating to and with the said posthumous child Noah Vazeille, and to and with the said Joseph Lieutand (which said Joseph Lieutand living remote in parts beyond the seas and is not amenable by the process of this honourable court), and to and with diverse other persons at present unknown to your orators and oratrix, whose names when discovered your orators and oratrix pray may be inserted in this their bill of complaint and they made partners hereto (with apt and proper words to charge them) sometimes pretend that the said testator never made such will as above set forth, and that the said Anthony Vazeille died intestate. And that by reason thereof the said confederate John Wesley, in his right of the said Mary his wife, is entitled to one clear third part of the said testator's estate and effects; and that the two other third parts thereof ought to be divided equally between your orators and oratrix with said confederate Noah Vazeille. Wherefore your orators and oratrix expressly charge as the truth that the testator did make said will at such date, purpose, and effect as before set forth, and thereof appointed the said Mary Wesley, Noah Blisson, and Joseph Lieutand executors, and that the said Mary Wesley and Noah Blisson have duly proved the same in the Prerogative Court of the Archbishop of Canterbury and taken unto themselves the execution thereof. And that by virtue thereof they, the said confederates, have possessed themselves of all the greatest part of the said testator's estate and effects, to a very considerable amount or value.

And at other times the said confederates admit the same, but then they pretend that the said Anthony Vazeille, at the time of his decease, was considerable indebted to several persons in several sums of money and that he hath not left assets sufficient to answer the debts and demands due on his estate. And that there are several demands made upon them for the same, and that several of the creditors of the said testator have already brought or threatened they will bring action against them for the same. And that his estate will not be sufficient to answer and make good such debts and demands. Whereas your orators and oratrix expressly charge as the truth that at the death of the said testator the debts he owed were far short of the value of his estate, and that after the payment thereof there will remain a considerable sum. And that since his death [all outstanding¹²] parts of such debts have been paid and satisfied, or ought have been paid and satisfied long since. And that these have been for a long time now past, and paid as above desirable sums of money in the hands of the said confederates John Wesley and his wife and Noah Blisson, to the amount of twenty thousand pounds and upwards. Which monies the said John Wesley and his wife, Noah Blisson, and confederates have used and employed in trade or otherwise for their respective benefits, and have invested the same or great part thereof in some beneficial funds. And your orators and oratrix charge that the said monies and the interest or produce thereof ought to be applied pursuant to the said testator's will, and that the said John Wesley and Mary his wife and Noah Blisson ought to be chargeable with interest for so much thereof as they have employed in trade or for their respective use and benefit.

But they pretend and give out that they cannot pay or apply any monies of the said testator's estate in their hands by reason that the said confederate Noah Vazeille is entitled to a great part of the said testator's estate, and ought to have a share thereof equal to your orators and oratrix respectively. Whereas your orators and oratrix expressly charge that they, by virtue of the said testator's will, are the only persons entitled to the said one thousand five hundred pounds after the death of the said confederate Mary Wesley, and also to the rest and residue of the said testator's estate.

¹²Two to three words are very faded. The transcription given in [square brackets] seems likely.

And the said confederates at other times give out that they well know the same, and that the said confederate Noah Vazeille hath no right to any part of the said testator's estate. But then they pretend that they cannot invest or lay out the said one thousand five hundred pounds in the funds pursuant to the directions of the said testator's will, or place out the residues of the said testator's estate for the use and benefit of your orators and oratrix, by reason that Joseph Lieutand, one of the executors and trustees named in the said will, hath not renounced the trust reposed in him by the said will and refuses to declare whether he will renounce or take upon himself the burden of the same. And your orators and oratrix are advised—in regard the said testator's estate is of so considerable value; and in regard the said Joseph Lieutand cannot, by reason of his great distance, act in the executions of the trusts of the said will—that it will be very proper to have one or more trustee or trustees to be appointed by this honourable court to act therein jointly with the said Noah Blisson and Mary Wesley.

And at other times the said Noah Vazeille sets up some claim or demand to some part of the said testator's [bequest] and effects. By means of all which said several pretenses, claims, and demands of the said confederates, and of the minority of your orators and oratrix and also of the said confederate Noah Vazeille, the said John Wesley and Mary his wife and Noah Blisson pretend they cannot act with safety in the said executorship, nor pay or apply any part of the said testator's estate without the direction of this honourable Court. And therefore [they] refuse to come to any account with your orators and oratrix for the said testator's personal estate, or to place out or invest the said one thousand five hundred pounds pursuant to the direction in the said testator's will. And [they] also refuse to place out and invest the residue of the said testator's estate in any of the public funds or parliamentary securities for the use and benefit of your orator and oratrix. All which actings, doings, and pretending of the said confederates are contrary to right, equity, and good conscience; and tend to the manifest wrong, injury, and oppression of your orators and oratrix.

In tender consideration whereof, and for as much as your orators and oratrix are remediless in the premises at and by the strict rule of the common law, but are only relievable in a court of equity before your Lordship, where matters of trust and of this nature are more properly cognizable and relievable. *To the end* therefore that the said John Wesley and Mary his wife, Noah Blisson, Noah Vazeille, and Joseph Lieutand, and the rest of the confederates when discovered, may upon their several and respective corporal oaths true, distinct, and perfect answer make to all and singular the premises as fully and particularly as if the same were here again repeated, and they particularly interrogated thereto.

And more especially that they may set forth and discover to the best of their respective knowledge, information, and belief whether the said Anthony Vazeille did not make and publish his last will and testament of such date, purport, and effect as is herein before set forth, or any other? And what will or any other? And what date, purport, and effect? And whether he did not appoint the said Mary Wesley, Noah Blisson, and Joseph Lieutand, or any other (and what person or persons) executor or executors thereof? And whether the said Mary Wesley, his widow, did not on or about the time in the bill mentioned intermarry with the said John Wesley; or at any other, and what time? And whether the said Mary Wesley and Noah Blisson, or any other (and what person and persons, and who) have not or hath proved the said will in the Prerogative Court of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and possessed all or the greatest part of the said testator's estate and effects? And whether the said Joseph Lieutand ever proved the said will or possessed any, and what part, of the said testator's estate and effects, and to what amount; or in any ways acted or intermeddled in any of the trusts reposed in him by the said testator's will? And whether the said testator did not die at or about the time set forth, or at any other, and what time? And that the said confederates may set forth whether the said Noah Vazeille was not born after the death of the said Anthony Vazeille—to wit, on or about the time set forth, or an any time and what time? And that the said confederates John Wesley and Mary his wife and Noah Blisson may set forth what and how much the said testator stood indebted at the time of his death, and upon what security or securities such debt or debts are due and owing? And whether the same, or how much and what part thereof, have not since the said testator's death been paid and satisfied? And why they have not been paid and satisfied, the whole of the said testator's debts? And that the said confederate Noah Vazeille may set forth and discover whether he claims any and what part or share of the said testator's estate; and in what right, and how entitled, and

how and in what manner he makes out such his claim? And that the said John Wesley and Mary his wife may set forth and discover what right title and interest they, or either of them, claim or demand in or to the estate of the said testator; and how and in what manner they make out such their claims and demands? And that the said John Wesley and Mary his wife and Noah Blisson may set forth a true and particular account of all and singular the said testator's personal estate and effects which have come to their hands, possession, knowledge, or power, or to the hands, possession, knowledge, or power of either of them, or any other person or persons with their or either of their knowledge, privity, or consent? And in what the same did particularly consist, and what were the several values thereof, and what the estate amounted to in the whole at the time of the death of the said testator? And where the same now is, and what part or parts thereof have come to their hand respectively? And at what particular times, and how and in what manner they, or either of them, or any other person or persons, by either their or either of their order or order, or their or either of their privity or consent, have paid, applied, or disposed of the same, or any and what part thereof? And particularly whether the said John Wesley and Mary his wife and Noah Blisson, or either or any (and which) of them, did not use or employ any and what sum or sums of money part of or arising from the personal estate of the said testator in their respective trades or in any other, and what manner, and for how long? Or invest the sum in any and what beneficial funds? Or otherwise how use or apply the same, or any and what part thereof, for their or either (and which) of their benefit? And whether they ought not to be charged with interest for the same, or why and for what reason they ought not to be so charged? And whether the said testator left any, and what, debts owing at the time of his death; and which of them have been paid and which of them remain unpaid, and to whom, and how such debts were secured?

And that the said John Wesley and Mary his wife and Noah Blisson may be required to come to an account for the personal estate and effects of the said testator which has come to their hands or use. And if it shall appear that they or either of them have used or employed the same or any part thereof in trade or otherwise for their benefit, that they may be charged with interest for the same. And that they may be directed to lay out and invest the said one thousand five hundred pounds in the funds, in trust for the several trusts and purposes mentioned and declared in the said testator's will of and concerning the same. And that the rest and residue of the said testator's estate (which as your orators and oratrix are advised and humbly insist of right belongs to them) may be ordered and decreed to be placed out and invested in such of the public funds or parliamentary securities for the use and benefit of your orators and oratrix, pursuant to the said testator's will, in such manner as this honourable court shall think fit to order and direct. And that one or more trustee or trustees may be appointed by this honourable court to act in the execution of the trusts of the said will. And that your orators and oratrix may be further or otherwise relieved in the premises according to equity and good conscience, and as the nature of the case may require.

May it please your Lordship to grant unto your orators and oratrix his Majesty's most gracious writ or writs of subpoena, issuing out of and under the seal of this honourable court, to be directed to the said Noah Vazeille, John Wesley, and Mary his wife, and Noah Blisson, and the rest of the confederates when discovered, thereby commanding them, and each and every of them, at a certain day and under a certain pain therein to be limited personally to be and appear before your Lordship in this honourable court, then and there to answer, all and singular, the premises. And further, to stand to and abide such order and decree therein as to your Lordship shall seem meet. And your orators and oratrix shall ever pray, etc.

Sam. Pechell¹³

Source: British National Archives, C 11/2139/27.

¹³Samuel Pechell, Esq. (d. 1782).

From John Cennick

Dublin
June 25, 1751

My Dear Brother,

Yesterday I received yours,¹ two days after my arrival here, and assure you I am sincere in my desires and proposals of speaking and writing freely to each other, and wish heartily that a Christian conferring and treating together had hindered the making that wide space between us and you. Perhaps he that maketh men to be of one mind in a house² may nevertheless in our days begin the gathering together in one the people of God which are scattered abroad. I think if I could see the dawn of that gracious day I would wish no more, but be content to labour myself to death, and finish my pilgrimage with a cheerfulness inexpressible. Till then, as long as people in many things think differently, all must be allowed their Christian liberty. And though souls may remove from you to us, or from us to you, without becoming bitter, or with simple and upright views to please our Saviour alone and to do his will, I can see no harm in it. Only it must not be with other aims, or to indulge sin, or because they can hope for liberty on either side which is not the liberty into which Jesus Christ redeems his people.

I really love the servants and witnesses of Jesus, our dear Saviour, in all the world and am sorry if I even feel such a thought as if I had rather souls should be blessed under our ministry than through others. I love the Brethren unfeignedly. But I know the family of God are yet scattered through other peoples, and that reward which our Saviour will have shall be infinitely more numerous. Therefore I wish all to prosper who by any means seek to get in his inheritance, and whose lives are not dear to them upon that account, and wish every land and country and church was filled with faithful servants of this mind, of which number I sincerely wish yourself and I may be found in that day when we shall know as we are known. I salute Mrs. [Mary] Wesley, and assure you I am

Your affectionate loving brother,

John Cennick

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 2 (1779): 260–61.³

¹This letter is not known to have survived.

²See Ps. 68:6.

³Transcription republished in *Works*, 26:466.

From Samuel Lloyd¹

London
June 25, 1751

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I trust the Lord will cause me to remember it among his manifold mercies, his inclining your heart often to think of me, and make me sincerely thankful by a stricter obedience to his holy laws, which by his grace I will study more closely to understand. And in obedience to your kind and opportune recommendation I seriously perused the sermon in the second volume on 'Laying up treasures on earth', as also the subsequent one, 'The impossibility of serving God and Mammon';² which I hope will be of service to humbling me. Though the old leaven prompts me to justify myself with the young man in reply to our Saviour's examination, as willing to think I come within the rule, yet I am striving to get the better of it—while knowing the deceitfulness and partiality of my own heart, that I must distrust myself. O pray the Lord for me, that he will please to show me all my heart and renew a right spirit within me.

God forbid that the resolution which I have taken to remove my niece³ from Kingswood School should be any step towards occasioning the loss of her soul. And I rest it on this one point, that him to whom the secrets of all hearts are known knoweth my simplicity and integrity herein, and will not therefore make me answerable for the consequences. To whose direction humbly recommending myself, and entreating your remembrance of me in the public prayers, I am, with love to Mrs. [Mary] Wesley (to whom I have nothing to impart on business, but whom, etc.[.]).

Source: holograph (copied by Lloyd for his records, on p. [3] of JW's letter of June 19 to him); Duke, Rubenstein, Wesley Family Papers, Box 1.⁴

¹Samuel Lloyd (c. 1705–75) was a London silk merchant. He had been drawn into Methodist circles by CW in 1748 and was now advising both Wesley brothers. Lloyd was replying to JW's letter of June 19; *Works*, 26:463–64.

²JW had published his second volume of *Sermons on Several Occasions* in 1748. Lloyd is referring to sermons 28–29, 'Sermon on the Mount, VIII–IX' (*Works*, 1:612–49).

³Named 'Molly' (or Mary) Lloyd in JW's letter of June 19. Lloyd had heard from Mary (Forrest) Jones of her dissatisfaction with Robert Jr.'s experience at Kingswood. So he decided his niece should live with Mrs. Jones, and attend the same school as the Jones daughters. See JW's letters to Samuel Lloyd of June 19 and July 3 1751, *Works*, 26:463–64, 467–68.

⁴Transcription published in *Works*, 26:465–66.

From the Rev. John Milner¹

[Chipping, Lancashire]
[c. June 30, 1751]

The bishop² says he, I was told, was exceeding angry at my late excursion into the north in your company. But [I] found his lordship in much better temper than I was bid to expect by my brother Graves,³ who was so prudent that he would not go with one so obnoxious to the bishop's displeasure, and all the storm of anger fell upon him. When he told me how he had been treated for speaking in your defence, I was fully persuaded all the bitterness was past, and accordingly found it. . . . I told his lordship that God was with you of a truth, and he seemed pleased with the relation of the conversion of the barber at Bolton and with your design of answering Taylor's book on original sin.⁴ . . . I have made no secret of your manner of proceeding to any with whom I have conversed since I had the happiness of being in your company. And to the bishop I was very particular in telling him what an assembly of worshippers there is at Newcastle—how plainly the badge of Christianity, love, is there to be seen. When his lordship talked about order, I begged leave to observe that I had nowhere seen such a want of it as in his own cathedral, the preacher so miserably at a loss that the children took notice of it, and the choristers so rude as to be talking and thrusting one another with their elbows. At last I told him there was need of some extraordinary messengers from God to call us back to the doctrines of the Reformation, for I did not know one of my brethren in Lancashire that would give the Church's definition of faith and stand to it. . . . And alas, I had sad experience of the same falling away in Cheshire, for one of his son's curates would not let me preach for him because of that definition of faith.

Source: published transcription; Whitehead, *Life*, 2:271–72.⁵

¹Milner, vicar of Chipping, had written to JW on Jan. 11, 1750 (see above), but they probably first met in Apr. 1751. See JW, *Journal*, Apr. 11–21, 1751.

²Samuel Peploe (1668–1752), Bishop of Chester 1725–52.

³John Graves, an evangelical vicar of Clapham, Yorkshire, who resigned in 1755 to be appointed a missionary priest to Providence, Rhode Island, where he served until forced from office in the context of the Revolutionary war.

⁴On Apr. 10, 1751 JW preached in Shakerly on original sin, and promised to answer John Taylor's book on the subject. On Apr. 11 the barber at Bolton who shaved him described his conversion during JW's previous visit. See JW, *Journal (Works)*, 20:383.

⁵Whitehead's transcription omits some of the original (shown by ellipses). Lacking the original, his abridged version is reprinted here and in *Works*, 26:467.

From the Rev. Charles Wesley¹

[[Leeds]]
[[July]] 22, 1751

[[Dear Brother,

I see every day the wisdom of not limiting myself. Here is such an open door as compels me to stay; and my chief design for coming seems likely to succeed.]] Michael Fenwick² [[is here. I keep him with me, that I may fully prove him. I shall do nothing rashly; and believe nothing without full proof. Three more women I have found out whom the shepherd³ has wellnigh devoured—rather I should call him a wolf in sheep's clothing. One woman is naturally turned back to the world, the flesh, and the devil. He will never have the impudence to show his face again in these parts. I fear I shall find his behaviour the same in all. Never, never must he hope to be received again amongst us! I pity those poor souls to whom he is now gone; but it is not in my power to hinder it.

Send me franks, or my journals will ruin you. The two Sarahs⁴ join in love to your friend⁵ and you. Let us make a fourfold chord, and we shall not be easily broken. Our love to Friend]] [Elizabeth] Vigor [[also. She must trust me a little longer for my answer; so must honest Thomas Westell. Pray for us publicly, and privately.

Send me direction where you are. Who looks to poor Ireland?

Farewell]]⁶

Address: 'To / The Revd. Mr Wesley / Bristol / by London / Single Sheet'.

Postmarks: 'LEEDS' and '24/IY'.

Endorsement: by JW, 'Journal 1751 to July 20'.

Source: holograph; MARC, DDCW 6/25.

¹This shorthand letter comes at the end of a journal letter.

²Michael Fenwick (d. 1797) sought to become one of JW's helpers in 1751, but both JW and CW were doubtful of his gifts and discipline (see JW to CW, Aug. 3, 1751). In 1755 JW took Fenwick as his groom for a period, commenting that he was 'upon occasion a tolerable preacher' (JW to E. Blackwell, Sept. 12, 1755). But by 1758 Fenwick had been encouraged by Conference to return to his career in business (*Works*, 10:283). He returned to itinerancy in 1767, serving until he was again asked to step aside in 1774.

³James Wheatley became a travelling Methodist preacher about 1742. While JW initially thought highly of him, doubts began to surface in 1749. In 1751 the Wesley brothers expelled Wheatley from the connexion in light of evidence of sexual improprieties with young women in his circuit. Wheatley immediately set up as an independent preacher in Norwich, where he gathered a significant following, but soon fell into his former ways and by 1756 had been found guilty of immorality in public court.

⁴Sarah Wesley, CW's wife, and Sarah Perrin, who were both travelling with CW, Sarah Perrin being in charge of meeting with and examining the women of each society.

⁵Mary (Goldhawk / Vazeille) Wesley.

⁶The shorthand in this letter was expanded by Frank Baker and published in *Works*, 26:271–72; a few corrections are made here.

Response to Vazeille Children's Lawsuit

Sworn at the Public Office, 22nd Nov. 1751
P. Holford¹ [Esq.]
Reynardson²

**The Joint and Several Answer of John Wesley, Clerk, and Mary his wife,
Two of the Defendants to the Bill of Complaint of John Anthony Vazeille, James Vazeille,
and Jane Vazeille, infants under the age of Twenty-One years, by their next friend Complainant**

These defendants—saving and reserving to themselves now and at all times hereafter all and all manner of benefit and advantage which may be taken by exception or otherwise to the complainants' said bill of complaint for answer thereunto, or unto so much thereof as materially concerns these defendants (as they are advised) to answer unto—these defendants, each speaking for himself and herself and not one for the other, answer and say they believe and admit:

That Anthony Vazeille, deceased in the complainants' bill named, did in his lifetime duly make and publish his last will and testament in writing. And did therein and thereby, after directing the payment of his just debts and funeral charges, in the first place give and bequeath unto this defendant Mary, by the name of his loving wife Mary Vazeille, the sum of one thousand five hundred pounds and all his plates, jewels, and household furniture. And did also therein and thereby give and bequeath unto Noah Blisson and Joseph Lieutand, two other defendants in the complainants' bill named, the further sum of one thousand five hundred pounds upon trust, to permit this defendant to receive and take the interest and produce thereof for her own use during her life, and afterwards for such other trusts and purposes as in the said complainants' bill is mentioned.

And the said will of the said testator Anthony Vazeille was of such other purport and effect, and of such date, as in the said bill³ is mentioned. And of which said will he, the said testator, did appoint this defendant Mary and them the said other defendants Noah Blisson and Joseph Lieutand executors and trustees, and also guardians for his said children until his said sons should attain the age of twenty-one years and his daughter her age of twenty-one years or day of marriage. But for greater certainty as to the contents and purport of the said will these defendants crave leave to refer to the same when produced.

And these defendants further say they believe and admit that the said Anthony Vazeille departed this life at or about the time in the complainants' bill mentioned, without revoking or altering his said will or making any new will.

And this defendant Mary saith that she and the said Noah Blisson proved the said testator's will in the Prerogative Court of the Archbishop of Canterbury. And by virtue thereof she, the said Mary, possessed herself of the testator's plate, jewels, and household furniture devised to her as aforesaid, and also of the several other effects herein after mentioned, being other part of the said testator's estate, and of no other part thereof to the best of her knowledge and belief. But what estate or effects belonging to the said testator the said Noah Blisson possessed himself, this defendant cannot set forth, but refers the complainant to the answer of the said Noah Blisson for the particulars thereof.

And these defendants John Wesley and Mary his wife further say they believe and admit that the said Joseph Lieutand is at present and for several years last past hath been and resided at Petersburg in Russia, and that he proposes to stay and reside there for some time to come. And that he hath not as yet proved the said will, nor renounced the execution thereof, or acted in any of the trusts reposed in him by the said will.

¹Peter Holford, Esq (1719–1804), was currently a Master in the Court of Chancery.

²Samuel Reynardson, Esq. was a clerk of the Court of Chancery.

³Orig., 'will'; likely a mistake.

And they these defendants further say they believe and admit that the complainants were all the children of the said Anthony Vazeille that were living at the time of his death. And this defendant Mary further saith that at the time of the death of the said Anthony Vazeille she, this defendant Mary, was ensient,⁴ and within the space of two months next after his death (viz., on or about the sixth day of August, one thousand seven hundred and forty-seven) this defendant Mary was delivered of a son, who is now living and was baptized by the name of Noah, and is one of the defendants in this cause.

And these defendants admit that they intermarried in the month of February last past.

And they, these defendants John Wesley and Mary his wife, deny that they pretend that the said testator never made such will as in the said bill is mentioned. Or that the said Anthony Vazeille died intestate, and that by reason thereof this defendant John Wesley in the right of this dependant Mary is entitled to one clear third part of the said testator's estate and effects, and that the two other third parts thereof ought to be divided equally between the complainants and the said other defendant Noah Vazeille.

And these defendants deny that they pretend that the testator⁵ hath not left assets sufficient to answer the debts and demands due on his estate. For on the contrary these defendants believe and admit that at the death of the testator the debts he owed were far short of the value of his estate, and that after payment thereof there will remain a considerable sum or overplus. And this defendant Mary saith, and this defendant John believes the same to be true, that all or the greater part of the said testator's debts which have come to the knowledge of this defendant Mary have been paid or satisfied.

But these defendants John Wesley and Mary respectively deny that they have in their hands a sum of money to the amount of twenty thousand pounds, or any other sum of money part of or arising from the produce of the estate and effects of the said testator, save as hereafter is mentioned.

And these defendants respectively also deny that they have used or employed in trade any monies which were part of or arose from the produce of the personal estate of the said testator, these not having as yet come to their hand, or into the hands of either of them, over and above payment of the said testator's debts, sufficient to raise and pay this defendant Mary her said two several fifteen hundred pound specific legacies, and to maintain and educate the complainants and the said posthumous child Noah Vazeille—all of whom have been maintained and educated by this defendant Mary ever since the said testator's decease, and for which they these defendants have an allowance out of the said testator's effects.

And these defendants deny that they invested any monies part of or arising from the accountable part of the produce of the said testator's estate and effects in any beneficial funds.

And these defendants say they submit to the judgment of this honourable court whether the said posthumous child Noah Vazeille is not entitled to some part of the said testator's estate, and whether he ought to have a share thereof equal with the complainants or any other share thereof.

And these defendants say that for the reasons in the said bill mentioned it may be necessary for the safety of the said trustees and parties interested in the trusts of the said will, for what these defendants know to the contrary, to have the directions of this honourable court thereabout. But not on account of anything done or omitted by them, these defendants John Wesley and Mary, to their knowledge or belief respectively.

For they, these defendants, deny that they refuse to account with the complainants for the said testator's personal estate. Or to place out or invest the said fifteen hundred pounds (the interest and produce whereof is given to this defendant Mary for her life as aforesaid) pursuant to the direction of the said testator's will. Or to place out and invest the residue of the said testator's estate in any of the public funds or parliamentary securities for the use and benefit of the complainants, so soon as the same shall come in and be received. And on the contrary these defendants say they are ready and desirous to account with the complainants for the said testator's personal estate, and to place out and invest the said fifteen hundred pounds, and the residue of the said testator's estate in such manner as this honourable court shall

⁴Pregnant or with child.

⁵Orig., 'complainant'; clearly a mistake.

direct—when and as the same shall come to hand, or be gotten by being indemnified and paid their cost.

And these defendants deny that they know or believe that the said Joseph Lieutand hath proved the said will, or possessed any part of the said testator's estate or effects, or acted or intermeddled in any of the trusts reposed in him by the said testator's will.

And these defendants, John Wesley and Mary his wife, say they have—in the first schedule to this their answer annexed,⁶ and which they pray may be taken as part thereof—set forth to the best of their respective knowledge, information, and belief a full and true account of all the testator's stock in trade, credits, personal estate, and effects of which he died possessed or entitled unto (save and except his the said testator's plate, jewels, and furniture, which he by his will devised specifically to this defendant Mary as aforesaid).

And these defendants say that she, this defendant Mary, doth claim not only the said specific legacy of fifteen hundred pound devised to her, the said Mary, by the said will, together with all the testator's plate, jewels and household furniture; but also all the dividends, interest, and profits of the said other sum of fifteen hundred pounds by the said testator's will directed to be placed out and invested in the public funds as aforesaid, for and during the natural life of her, the said Mary, by virtue of and under the said testator's will.

But this defendant John Wesley, for himself, saith that he claimeth to and for himself no part whatsoever of the said testator's estate and effects, either under his the said testator's will or otherwise, save and except for the maintenance and education of the complainants and the said defendant Noah Vazeille. He, this defendant John Wesley, having previous to his said marriage settled all her the said Mary's right and property under the said will or otherwise to or in trust for the sole and separate use and benefit of her, the said Mary, and to be at her entire disposal—not only during her life but by her last will, notwithstanding her coverture.⁷ Neither hath this defendant received any of the testator's effects, or any way intermeddled with the same, or with the affairs of the said testator.

And these defendants further say they have—in a second schedule to this their answer annexed,⁸ and which they pray may be taken as part thereof—set forth to the best of their knowledge, information, and belief a full, true, and particular account of so much of the said testator's personal estate and effects contained in the said first schedule as have come to the hands, possession, or power of the said defendant Mary, or to the hands, possession, or power of either of them these defendants, or any other person or persons with their or either of their knowledge, privity, or consent, and in what the same did particularly consist—save and except such parts thereof as came to the hands, custody, and power of the said Noah Blisson, the particulars whereof these defendants John Wesley and Mary his wife have leave to refer the complainant to the answer of the said Noah Blisson.

And they, these defendants John Wesley and Mary his wife, say they have—in a third schedule to this their answer annexed,⁹ and which they pray may be taken as part thereof—set forth to the best of their knowledge, remembrance, and belief how and in what manner the said defendant Mary, or either of them these defendants, or any other person or persons by her, their, or either of their order or orders, or with her, their, or either of their privity or consent, have paid, applied, or disposed of the estate and effects of the said testator which has so come to her, their, or either of their hands, custody, or power.

And they, these defendants John Wesley and Mary his wife, submit to the judgment of this honourable court whether they ought to be charged with interest for any monies which came to their hands as part of, or arising from the estate and effects of the said testator; there not having as yet come

⁶The first schedule lists assets totaling just over £33,743.

⁷See the Marriage Agreement, above, dated Feb. 9, 1751.

⁸The second schedule lists assets received totaling just over £23,348.

⁹The third schedule lists payments amounting to the received total of just over £23,348; meaning there were no *net* monies remaining.

into the hands of these defendants, or either of them, net¹⁰ money of the said testator's effects or assets beyond the payment of his debts sufficient to raise, pay off, and discharge the two specific fifteen hundred pound legacies or sums bequeathed in and by his said will as aforesaid to or for the benefit of this defendant Mary.

And they, these defendants, deny all and all manner of unlawful combination and confederacy in the complainants' bill charged. Without this, that any other manner of thing in the complainants' said bill of complaint contained material or effectual in the law for these defendants, or either of them, to make answer unto, and not herein or hereby well and sufficiently answered unto, confessed, or avoided, traversed, or denied is true to the knowledge and belief of these defendants. All which matters and things these defendants are ready to aver, maintain, and prove as this honourable court shall award, and humbly pray to be hence dismissed with their reasonable costs and charges in this behalf most wrongly sustained.

John Wesley – Mary Wesley
H. Collet¹¹

Source: British National Archives, C 11/2139/28.

¹⁰Orig., 'neat'.

¹¹Henry Collet, Esq. (1727–74).

From Sarah Perrin¹

[[Bristol]]
[[December]] 2, 1751

[[Dear and Honoured Friend,

[[I was glad to find the people desirous of being visited and longing for faithful ministers. Their hunger for the sincere milk of the word is not all lost, but they can distinguish those who instead of bread give them a stone.

[[I am almost afraid to write all my mind, nevertheless I believe it is my duty.

[[I have long been afraid of the consequence of our suffering some preachers to go forth who have not gifts for the work; others who have not grace to adorn the gospel they preach, and whose passions are strong enough to lay waste God's heritage, wherever they come.

[[Who are answerable for the evils accounted² among us? Are not they whom the Lord has made overseers of the flock, if they do not, after they have been told of iniquity or have had examples of any kind proved upon those whom they send among the people, take every[?] means to prevent it for the time to come.

[[Has that been always done? How many servile accounts did I hear while I was in the north? How many sincere souls have been burdened above measure on the account of [Robert] G[illespie] and [James] Wheatley and Michael Fenwick? Some of them who labour in the word and doctrine were ashamed on their account, and their spirits ready to fail, because they, and some others such as they, were suffered so long to continue in the work.

[[Your brother was an ear witness to one discourse of Michael Fenwick, which I believe all present who could distinguish right from wrong thought more like a burlesque upon reason than preaching the gospel. Brothers [John] Nelson, [William] Shent, and others told me they had heard him after the same manner often to their sorrow. Should such a one be suffered again to trouble the church ill[?] shall we say? Indeed, since I heard he is in London and endeavouring to get your consent, I fear it.

[[The next person I was desired to mention to you is brother]] Wells.³ [[Sister Silby⁴ came to my person[?] as I came away, and told me Richard Pearce⁵ and she both begged you would put a stop to his being in that round, for they fear the consequence will be very bad. Their reasons are too many for me to write, but I hear you are not a stranger to his conduct though he has been suffered so long. Indeed a certain person some time ago on his way to London, being in company where they were speaking of James Wheatley, turned and smiled on brother Wells and said, This is not a time for Mr. Wesley to fall out with his preachers. A leader present replied, Is this a time for Mr. Wesley to allow of sin in his preachers?

[[O that God may give you wisdom liberally to try them which say they are app[ointed] and are not, and strength to put those from among you which are evil. And may the Lord also increase in you that

¹Sarah Perrin accompanied CW on portions of his trip through northern England the summer of 1751 to review Methodist lay preachers. Here she adds her sense of concern to that CW had already sent JW. This letter survives only in CW's shorthand transcription in a notebook he titled 'The Preachers / 1751'.

²Archaic form of 'accounted'.

³This cannot be Samuel Wells (born c. 1745), who was first admitted on trial in 1769 (see *Works*, 10: 366). One possibility is a slight misspelling for Thomas Willis, of Bristol, who attended the 1746 Conference and appears to have preached in the surrounding area for a while (see *Works*, 10:184, n. 483).

⁴A leader at Bradford-on-Avon; cf. JW, *Journal*, July 8, 1751, *Works*, 20:394.

⁵Pearce was landlord of the Cross Keys and a pillar of the society at Bradford-on-Avon; cf. *WHS* 6 (1908): 116.

tender fatherly care due to all those who are willing to spend and be spent for the gospel's sake. God will require this at your hands. He hath sent forth labourers and some there are, who deal under his anointings, who love you and seek his glory. Such you cannot encourage too much. But are there not also workers of iniquity, servants of sin corrupt in weakening your hands and sacrificing the flock. And is it not full as much required in seeking to withstand all such as it is to cherish those who are teachers sent of God?

[[Forgive if I do wrong, for I must now deliver my own soul. I verily believe unless you do with all your might strive to prevent false brothers, sons of Belial, going forth or continuing to labour with you, you will bring such a burden on your own shoulders as will crush you down. I am well assured nothing weakens your authority more than this. Oh may God give you to see it in the same light as many of us who long for our perfection see it in!

[[Your brother greatly desires this regulation. Oh that your hearts might be closely united together in this work! I long to hear you are agreed on everything and are both resolved with all your strength to purge out the aggressors.

[[I cannot help thinking to this very hour, if you had never joined hands in the work in Ireland with Thomas Williams you would have been much more blessed and much evil been prevented. God surely has had a controversy for that th[ing],⁶ and I believe a curse has been upon the camp in Ireland for that very cause. I mention this because I think it not improbable the same sinner may be cast in your way again. All that labour with you and do not love the gospel, do much more hurt to the cause of God than any of the clergy can do, by turning the grace of God into wantonness they cause the enemies of Christ to blaspheme.

[[Perhaps my friend will say, 'It is not your business to concern yourself so much about this thing. It is only about me.' But my reasons for speaking verily are because I have been long afraid these heresies should spring up among us which caused so much sorrow to the churches in the beginning. And have we not lately heard doctrines[?] as ob[noxious] to the law of God as the Incas⁷ or [belams⁸]. And as God changes not, I believe he will have a controversy with us for this, and whosoever has not c[alled] to our p[eople], of what rank so ever, whether priest or publican in the church, for their testimony against the antinomian principles and all the evil practices that come to their con[troversy] w[ith] God.⁹ The Lord will fight against them and they shall partake of the penalty of sin. I foresee tribulation for the abominations lately made amongst us.

[[But I praise God that you yourself have set us a pattern of self-denial and the daily cross. I am persuaded you thoroughly despise all the follies of life and cannot conform to the vain fashions and customs of this world either in food, furnishings, or dress. I believe you prefer relieving the poor before pleasing the eye or ear or any thing. And surely this is as much refined[?] a commandment as it is to do justice and walk humbly with God.

[[I long to find such ministers as are in all things en[couraging] to the flock, but where shall we find them and in the r[ight] w[ay]? Oh that the Lord may enable his sheep[?]¹⁰ to repent and cleave to

⁶Sarah Perrin had been deeply disturbed by Williams's role in encouraging Elizabeth Story's false accusations against CW.

⁷An account had recently been published in England attributing the formation of the Inca empire to a couple (the woman was both the man's sister and wife) who presented themselves as being of a rank superior to humans, etc. See 'An Account of the Incas, or Emperors of Peru', *Gentleman's Magazine* 21 (1751): 533–35.

⁸The shorthand letters are clear; the expansion or meaning is not.

⁹The last shorthand character might alternatively be expanded 'the Church'.

¹⁰The shorthand looks like 'op', which could be expanded as 'opponents'. The expansion given above, which seems to fit the context better, assumes that CW's pen made a slight skip in trying to form the loop for the shorthand symbol 'sh'.

him with full p[urity] of heart, that he may bear us, though we have provoked him.]]

Source: CW shorthand transcription; MARC, DDCW 8/5, pp. 13–14.

From Bishop George Lavington¹

[p. 1]

[Exeter]
c. April 1752

Sir,

You have hereby my thanks for the present you lately sent me of *A Second Letter to the Author of 'The Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compared'*.² To this you have prefixed an epistle (I know not whether to call it 'preface' or 'dedication') To the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Exeter.³ And, as it relates to a matter of fact concerning some part of your behaviour published *on my authority*, which you have endeavoured to [p. 2] *falsify* by an *irreconcilably different account* published by yourself, I shall give a plain and satisfactory answer.

To this end it will be necessary to transcribe *your own words* from your first paragraph:

My Lord, I was grieved when I read the following words in the Third Part of *The Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compared*: 'A sensible, honest woman told the Bishop of Exeter, in presence of several *witnesses*, that Mr. John Wesley came to her house and questioned her whether she had an "assurance of her salvation"? Her answer was that she *hoped* she should be saved, but had no absolute *assurance* of it. "Why then", replied he, "you are in hell; you are damned already." This so terrified the poor woman, who was then with child, that she was grievously afraid of miscarrying, and could not in a long time recover her right mind. For this, and the Methodists asking her to live upon free cost, she determined to admit no more of them into her house. So much is *her own account* to his Lordship, on whose authority it is here published.' [p. 3]

This, I confess, was published *on my authority*; tis very true, and you will presently see it fully attested. Your second paragraph stands thus:

This renewed the concern I felt some time since, when I was informed (in letters which I have still by me) of your Lordship's publishing this account both at Plymouth in Devonshire and at Truro in Cornwall, before the clergy assembled from all parts of those counties at the solemn season of your Lordship's visiting your diocese. But I was not informed that your Lordship showed a deep concern for the honour of God, which you supposed to be so dreadfully violated, or a tender compassion for a presbyter whom you believed to be rushing into everlasting destruction.

Had you thought fit, sir, to publish those letters (which you say you have by you), with the respective dates and names of the writers, it might have been considered what credit the contents deserved. At present, allowing what you was informed of to be *true*—that I gave this account to my 'clergy at the solemn season of my visitation'—I desire to know what season could be more proper for [p. 4] advising the clergy 'to take heed to their flock', and put them upon their guard against *delusion*?

But it seems I am to answer too what you was 'not informed' of, 'that I showed a deep concern for the honour of God, etc.' I hope I showed *some* concern in cautioning against a strange and pernicious dispensation. But are *you* sure that you know the *secrets of my heart*, of which you was 'not informed', that I 'supposed' the honour of God to be 'so dreadfully violated', and I 'believed' you to be rushing into 'everlasting destruction'?

¹For background to this letter, see Colin Haydon, 'Bishop George Lavington of Exeter (1684–1762), and *The Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists Compared*', *Southern History* 37 (2015): 60–85.

²See JW, *Works*, 11:377–429.

³*Ibid.*, 379–85.

By the way sir, let me advise you not *always* to pin your faith upon your western correspondents. You may remember how grievously *some* of them imposed upon the leaders of Methodism by transmitting to London a *notoriously false account* of my charge to the clergy at my visitation. And immediately a pamphlet comes out with a fine *encomium upon Methodism* as contained in that charge.⁴ This falsehood I was obliged to contradict by a public advertisement.⁵ The Methodists, by as *public an advertisement*, confessed themselves to have been deceived and that the *Bishop of Exeter was no friend* [p. 5] *to the Methodists*.⁶ And yet, some time afterwards, the Methodists at Cork in Ireland, your *own brother* at the head of them, reprinted the same *lying pamphlet* as my performance; and thereby (for no matter by *what artifices Methodism prevails*) some degree of credit was gained to your *sect*, as having its cause espoused by an English bishop. Your brother—being asked how he could do such a thing as to reprint such an account as part of the Bishop of Exeter's charge, after he had publicly disavowed it and the Methodists themselves confessed they had been deceived—he either could not, or would not, offer a single word in answer. This account I had from the mouth of the very person who asked your brother the question.

But to return. In your third and fourth paragraphs we have your *confutation of my account* of my discourse with Mrs. Morgan, in the following words:

In order to be more fully informed, on Saturday, August 25, 1750, Mr. [John] Trembath of St. Gennys, Mr. [John] Haime⁷ of Shaftsbury, and I called at Mr. Morgan's at Mitchell. The servant telling me her master was not at home, I desired to speak [p. 6] with her mistress, the 'honest, sensible woman'. I immediately asked, 'Did I ever tell you or your husband that you would be damned if you took any money of me? (So the story ran in the first part of the Comparison;⁸ it has now undergone a very considerable alteration.) Or you or he ever affirm

⁴The pamphlet was a single broadsheet. The text begins: 'My brethren, I beg you will rise up with me against moral preaching. We have been long attempting the reformation of the nation by discourses of this kind. With what success? Why none at all.' A copy survives in the Lambeth Palace Library (ESTC number T230361).

⁵A letter dated Sept. 5, 1748 appeared in at least the *General Advertiser* (Sept. 9, 1748, p. 1) and the *London Evening Post* (Sept. 13–15, 1748, p. 4). It read as follows:

A written paper called 'An Extract from Dr. Lavington the Bishop of Exeter's Charge to his Clergy, 1748' having been dispersed about London, etc., and afterwards printed (though without a title), I think myself obliged to declare that it was no part of *my charge*, but the product of mere *fiction*.

Upon this *pretended extract* has been grounded a printed pamphlet called *A Letter to the Lord Bishop of Exeter, occasioned by his late Charge to the Clergy of his Diocese, etc.*; which, being only fighting with a shadow, needs no other answer than his own words (p. 15), 'Oh, sir, how have you been imposed on!'

But because I would not have the Methodists be imposed upon themselves, or any more impose upon the public as if in any way I were a favourer of their sect, I freely declare my sentiments 'That there are several well-meaning ignorant people among them; that the sect in general is actuated by a *spirit of enthusiasm and delusion*; and that as to *some* of them, especially of their *leaders* and *teachers*, I have reason to believe *something worse*.'

G. Exon

⁶A Clergyman of the Church of England, *A Letter to the Right Reverend Father in God George, Lord Bishop of Exeter, occasioned by his Lordship's late Charge to the Clergy of his Diocese: in defence of those principles of the Methodists, objected to in his Lordship's Charge* (London: E. Withers, 1748).

⁷Orig. in Lavington, 'Haines'.

⁸I.e., Lavington's *The Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists Compared* (Part I, 1749).

(another circumstance related at Truro) that I was rude with your maid?' She replied vehemently, 'Sir, I never said you was, or that you said any such thing. And I don't suppose my husband did. But we have been belied as well as our neighbours.' She added, 'When the bishop came down last he sent us word that he would dine at our house. But he did not, being invited to a neighbouring gentleman's. He sent for me thither and said, 'Good woman, do you know these people that go up and down? Do you know Mr. Wesley? Did not he tell you you would be damned if you took any money of him? And did he not offer rudeness to your maid?' I told him, 'No, my Lord. He never said any such thing to me, nor to my husband that I know of. He never offered any rudeness to any maid of mine. I never saw or knew any harm by him. But a man told me once (who [p. 7] I was told was a Methodist preacher) that I should be damned if I did not know my sins were forgiven.'

This is *her own account* given to me. And an account it is, irreconcilably different (notwithstanding some small resemblance in the last circumstance) from that she is affirmed to have given your Lordship. Whether she did give that account to your Lordship or no, your Lordship knows best. That the Comparer affirms it is no proof at all, since he will affirm any thing that suits his purpose.

Whatever regard may be due to *this account* in general, let me observe a *mistake* or two. I neither sent word that I would dine at their house nor did I send for Mrs. Morgan to the *neighbouring gentleman's* where I did dine. Every word that passed between us was at her *own house at Mitchell*. Nor did I ever see the woman before or since. Mrs. Morgan must needs know this. And there is certainly a want of exactness *somewhere*. But *where* the mistake lies, either in this or any other part of her *account*, which you say was *given to you*, I neither know nor care. The following *attestations* will sufficiently clear *me* from [p. 8] any imputation, or even suspicion, of having published a falsehood.

In the month of June, or July, 1748, we whose names are underwritten attended the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Exeter in his primary visitation of the county of Cornwall. In our return from Pentryn his Lordship and we (after having dined with the Reverend Dr. Stackhouse in the parish of Probus near Truro) baited at a public-house at Mitchell, kept by one Morgan, who happened at that time not to be at home. His Lordship, having before received a well-attested account that Mr. Wesley the Methodist preacher had been there guilty of some unjustifiable behaviour, took this opportunity to enquire of Mr. Morgan's wife what truth there was in the information of this kind which his Lordship had received. Her answer was that Mr. Wesley, being at her house some time before, had taken occasion to ask her whether or not she was sure of her salvation. She answered she could not say she was absolutely sure of it, but she hoped she should be saved, as well as other Christians. Mr. Wesley replied, 'If you are not sure of it, you are damned already.' This, she said, [p. 9] so terrified her, being then with child, that she was afraid she should have miscarried; and that it affected her to a great degree for some time after.

Mr. Wesley, she said, and some of his followers had talked there about the apostles travelling to preach the gospel without being at any expense, and signified their expectation of being entertained themselves in the same manner, as they went about with the same design, which made her unwilling to receive any such guests into her house.

Mrs. Morgan, being then asked some questions about some indecent conversation which Mr. Wesley was said to have had with a maid of hers, replied that 'Mr. Wesley had indeed said things to one of her maids which were very improper to be spoken to a young girl, and especially by a clergyman'; but she seemed reserved as to enlarging upon particulars.

This was the substance of what passed between his Lordship and Mrs. Morgan concerning Mr. Wesley, as far as we can recollect, after the most serious consideration, at such a distance of time. [p. 10]

That his Lordship, or either of us, sent for Mrs. Morgan to the gentleman's house where we dined, and there asked these questions, we aver to be absolutely false.

The truth of all this is now jointly attested by us,

John Fursman,⁹ Chancellor of the Church of Exeter
Will[iam] Hole,¹⁰ Archdeacon of Barum

N.B. That the said Wesley whom Mrs. Morgan spoke of to his Lordship was Mr. John Wesley, the noted Methodist preacher, I then apprehended and still do.

John Fursman, Chancellor of the Church of Exeter

To this *ample testimony* I beg leave to add a letter to a friend of mine, from a clergyman in the neighbourhood of Mitchell, whereby it appears that she still adheres to the [p. 11] account which she gave to *me*. How far she adheres to the account given, as you say, to *you* will soon appear.

St. Enoder
January 28, 1752

Honoured Sir,

I received your favour last Saturday evening, and I went to Mitchell and talked with Mrs. and Mr. Morgan about the affair mentioned in your letter. Mrs. Morgan says that Mr. J. Wesley formerly came to her house and asked her, 'Whether she had an assurance of her salvation?' She answered him, 'That she hoped she should be saved, had not an absolute assurance thereof.' 'Why then', replied he, 'you are in hell; you are damned already.' Mrs. Morgan, being then with child, was so much terrified at this that she was very much afraid of miscarrying and was not well for many days after. Mr. Morgan, being then absent, upon his coming home and finding his wife very much disordered, and upon his asking her the occasion thereof, was told by her as above and does assure me that his wife was not well for a long time after, and that he also was afraid she would miscarry. Mrs. Morgan says farther that Mr. J. Wesley some time ago said to a maid of hers such things as were not fit to be spoken [p. 12] by any man, but more especially by a clergyman.

As to the Methodists asking to live upon free cost, this was spoken to Mr. Morgan by Mr. J. Wesley and others of them, whom Mr. Morgan answered thus, 'If I was to do so, I should not be able to pay my rent, and for my malt, etc.' They replied to him that our Saviour and his apostles used to be entertained by their hosts gratis, and that he need not doubt but that God would pay him. Upon this he determined to admit no more of them into his house. Mr. Morgan says farther that Mr. J. Wesley did or said such indecent things to the above-named maid in his chamber, and in the night, and she immediately ran down stairs and protested that she would not go near him, nor any of the Methodists more, even though he should that moment discharge her and turn her out of his house.

Honoured sir,

Your most obedient and obliged humble servant,

Tho. Bennet¹¹ [p. 13]

After this, Mr. Bennet was desired to go directly to Mrs. Morgan, and ask her the question whether or no she did really give that account to Mr. Wesley which he has published? He accordingly went, and sends her answer in the following letter.

St. Enoder
March 4, 1752

Honoured Sir,

⁹John Fursman (1678–1757) was Chancellor of the Cathedral at Exeter from 1731 to his death.

¹⁰William Hole (1709–91) was Archdeacon of Barum (Barnstaple) from 1745 to his death.

¹¹Thomas Bennet was appointed vicar of St. Enoder, Yorkshire, in 1734.

Yesterday I went into Mitchell, in order to talk with Mr. and Mrs. Morgan: The former not being at home, I began thus with the latter: 'Mrs. Morgan, do you remember that about August last was twelvemonth Mr. John Wesley, Mr. Trembath of St. Gennys, and Mr Haime of Shaftsbury called at your house?' She answered me, 'Sir, I do remember that Mr. John Wesley and others (the names of whom I can't tell) did call at my house about that time, by some very particular circumstances. For, my husband attending on some other business, I was obliged to be in the field looking after my work-people, who were reaping corn. And I was sent for in all haste to come home, and then was told by my servant that I was wanted above stairs, where when I came, [p. 14] the chamber door being open, I found them round the table on their knees. They soon rising out of the posture, Mr. John Wesley asked me, 'Did you or your husband ever tell the bishop, or any other person, that I attempted to *debauch* a maid of yours?' I told him that I never said such a word to any one, and that I believed my husband never did. As to the other parts of Mr. Wesley's letter to the bishop, she declares tis all false, and will be ready so to do to Mr. Wesley himself, or to any other person whatever, at any time.

I am, honoured sir,
Your most obliged, etc.,

Thomas Bennet

This, sir, is *ex abundanti*, and more than was needful. The only point I was to prove is this, that Mrs. Morgan did really give that account to me which was published on *my authority*. This hath been done effectually. And more certificates I could easily produce to the same purpose.

Should Mr. Trembath and Mr. Haime bear testimony to every word of your [p. 15] account—however our two several accounts may *vary* in all, or any of the particulars; or even be 'irreconcilably different'—tis no concern of *mine*. I leave the matter to those who have a better knack at *reconciling contradictions*.

The remainder of your epistle, mere *rant* and *declamation*, shall give me no trouble. Having cleared up a *matter of fact*, which might be thought necessary for my *own justification*, I find myself under no obligation, or disposition, to enter into *matters of dispute*, wherein our opinions would widely differ. I am too sensible of your way of answering, your temper, and *what manner of spirit you are of*, to think of any farther correspondence. And if you expect that I should *let myself down to a level with you*, you will find yourself mistaken.

I pray God to give you a *good will*, and a *right judgment in all things*; and am, sir,
Your obedient humble servant,

G. Exon.

Source: published transcription; George Lavington, *The Bishop of Exeter's Answer to Mr. J. Wesley's late Letter to his Lordship* (London: Knapton, 1752).

Executor Response to Chancery Suit by Vazeille Children

The public office the 13th day of May 1752,
before A. Allen

Zinke

**The Answer of Noah Blisson, one of the Defendants, to the Bill of Complaint of
John Anthony Vazeille, James Vazeille, and Jane Vazeille, infants
by their Next Friend Complainant**

This defendant, saving and reserving to himself all and every manner of benefit and advantage of exception to the complainants' said bill of complaint, or to so much thereof as this defendant is advised is material for him to answer unto, he answers and saith he believes it to be true that Anthony Vazeille in the complainants' bill named was in his life possessed of a considerable personal estate, consisting chiefly in debts due to him in foreign parts, and that he did on or about the time in the bill mentioned duly make and publish his last will and testament in writing, of such date and to such effect and purpose as is therein mentioned, and thereof appointed Mary Wesley, in the will named Mary Vazeille his wife, this defendant, and Joseph Lieutand in the said bill also named executors. And this defendant saith that the said Anthony Vazeille departed this life on or about the sixth day of June one thousand seven hundred and forty-seven, without altering or revoking his said will, and at the time of his death the said Joseph Lieutand, who was therein named executor jointly together with this defendant and the said Mary Vazeille now Mary Wesley, was absent and resided in Petersburg in Russia and therefore this defendant and the said Mary Vazeille duly proved the said will in the Prerogative Court of the Archbishop of Canterbury and possessed themselves of all such part of the estate and effects of the said Anthony Vazeille as they could get in. And this defendant believes the said Joseph Lieutand now is a Petersburg in Russia aforesaid and hath not as yet proved the said will or renounced the execution thereof. And this defendant believes that the complainants are of the children of the said Anthony Vazeille that were living at the time of his death; but that at the said time the said Mary Vazeille, now Mary Wesley, was ensient and was shortly after delivered of a son who is now living and is baptized by the name Noah. And this defendant believes the said Mary in the bill named did on or about the time in the bill mentioned intermarry with the Reverend John Wesley, clerk, in the complainants' bill also named. And this defendant saith that all the said testator's books and accounts being in the possession of the defendant Mary Wesley, this defendant for a just and true account of all such estate and effects as the said Anthony Vazeille was possessed of, interested in, or entitled unto at the time of his death with the leas and real values of the same and every part and parcel thereof, and also for a just and true account of all such sums or sumes of money as the said Anthony Vazeille owed at the time of his decease, and how such debts were serviced craves leave to refer himself to such answers as the said Mary Wesley shall put in with respect thereto. And this defendant further desiring saith that he hath in the first schedule to this his answer annexed or underwritten, and which he prays may be taken as part thereof sets forth to the best of his this defendant's knowledge, remembrance, and belief a full, true, and just account of all such sums or sumes of money as he this defendant hath received, gotten in, and possessed for and upon account of the estate and effects of the said Anthony Vazeille deceased. And this defendant further saith that he hath in the second schedule to this answer annexed or underwritten, and which he also prays may be taken as part thereof, set forth to the best of his knowledge, remembrance, and belief a full, just, and true account of all sums or sumses of money as he hath paid, laid out, and expended for and upon account of the estate and effects of the said Anthony Vazeille deceased. And this defendant humbly submits it to this Hounourable Court whether the complainants are entitled after the death of the said Mary Wesley to the whole of the said one thousand five hundred pounds directed by the testator's will to be invested in the public funds in the name of this defendant and the said Joseph Lieutand, for the purposes therein mentioned, and whether by virtue of the said will and notwithstanding the birth of the said Noah since the death the testator, the complainants are entitled to all and every part of the rest and residue of the said testator's personal estate. And this defendant admits that it is true that the complainants being infants and the said Noah Vazeille being also

an infant, he hath been advised he could not act safely without the direction of this Honourable Court. And this defendant saith he is desirous of being discharged of the trust reposed in him by the said testator's will and is ready and willing to apply all such part of the testator's estate and effects as he hath, or which shall come to his hands, in such manner as this Honourable Court shall direct, being indemnified for what he shall so do by a decree of this Honourable Court and being paid all costs and charges which he may be put to on account thereof, together with the costs of this suit.

Noah Blisson
Chris[tophe]r Lofft¹²

[Schedule 1 lists monies received of over £18,700.]

[Schedule 2 lists expenses of nearly £19,000]

Source: British National Archives, C 11/2139/28.

¹²Christopher Lofft Esq. (d. 1772), barrister; father of Capel Lofft (see 1776–80 in-letters).

Mary (Goldhawk / Vazeille) Wesley to Rev. Charles Wesley¹

Kingswood
May 22, 1752

Sir,

You desired me to write to you.² And I entreat you to deal honestly between God and your own soul. Wheresoever your own heart condemns you, be humble and be ashamed before him who is greater than your heart and knoweth all things, and who will bring every secret thing into judgment. I am rather constrained to speak the more plainly at this time because I see hardly anyone that loves you or the work of God so much as to do it. They rather uphold your pride and excessive laziness by vile flattery and base compliance, making you thereby fit fuel for hellfire—not, as you say, *a minister of Jesus Christ*. Hence then, if the devil give you leave, look inward, reflect seriously on your past conduct, and consider how well it has answered your high calling: *a minister of Jesus Christ*. O learn to be little and vile in your own eyes.

Now to begin with what I was myself a witness to when at London.³ You serve the creature more than the Creator. For her sake who is your *idol*,⁴ how did you then sacrifice the work of God. You said at first you would only stay there a day or two. But how was your weakness imposed upon by those proud wretches and your idol, [detracting] both from your purpose (the work of God) and particular care of your own soul. This you may remember was so glaring that I could not help but speak to you of [it], as well as pray for you. But all was to no purpose. For you would nether rise up, or sit down, nor dress, but to please those worldly-minded wretches.⁵

And is not the case the same to this day? Is not every journey, nay every time and place of preaching, laid out only for her convenience? Was it not on her account you left London? Is it not for her sake that you did not come to Kingswood—or rather lose a good dinner and her sweet pipe? Was it not for her that travelling in the societies you went only to the rich, not the poor; because it was not worth your lady's while to visit those for naught? So it is you neglect the poor societies, because (as some said) '*Their cages were not fine enough for your singing bird*.'⁶ Pray tell me what fine things or ornament does a Methodist preacher's wife want? Why, meekness and lowliness of mind. But I was told 'Sally Gwynne wanted a husband in great haste. So she put on the show of religion till she gained her point'—though

¹While not addressed to JW, we include this letter because it casts light on the relationship of JW's wife and his brother at the time. On Mar. 15, 1752, Mary and her daughter Jeanne set out with JW on his preaching tour to northern England (see JW, *Journal, Works*, 20:411). They reached Newcastle on Apr. 30. While there Mary received word that her sons (staying at Kingswood) were ill. About May 15 she went to Kingswood to check on them (see JW to Ebenezer Blackwell, May 23, 1752, *Works*, 26:494–95). Events during this visit provoked this letter.

²Note that both CW and Mary were in the Bristol area, so CW had apparently requested that Mary put complaints she was making into writing.

³CW and his wife Sarah were in London when (to their shared dismay) JW married Mary (Goldhawk) Vazeille in Feb. 1751; see their initial reactions in CW, *MS Journal*, Feb. 2 – Mar. 19, 1751. CW and Sarah left London for Bristol in early May 1751, but were there again much of Oct. and Nov. CW was again in London, at least on short trips, during Jan. through March 1752.

⁴I.e., Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley.

⁵CW and Sarah spent their time in early 1751 at the London home of James and Elizabeth (Gwynne) Waller, Sarah's sister; or with Martha (Meighen) Colvill and her niece Mary Degge at either their London home or country house near Chertsey.

⁶Sarah was known for her beautiful singing voice.

you was not the aim.⁷ So I do not wonder she makes a tool of you. You sacrifice all to her.

O my brother, is this doing the work of God deceitfully or is it not? But what says our Lord? ‘Cursed be every such an one.’⁸ In your conscience you know you are not clear as to these matters (whatever be the cause). Is this a *minister of Jesus Christ*? Are you not a bad slave of Satan? Pray what would you say if it were the case of anyone but yourself? O be wise in time. God calls aloud, ‘Come out from among unclean things.’⁹ Shake off sloth. God is not mocked.’ If this is not sowing to the flesh, I know not what is. Your mean and base and inordinate practices you should consider. Are not these things below the character of a man? Much more a *minister of Christ*? You have raised such contempt and aversion to yourself from most of those with whom you have been by trifling conversation, not in religious and serious talk. O my dear brother, be not faithless but believing. Show your faith by your works. Let red-hot passion be seen in your face no more, but go and preach the gospel. Wait no more to be desired. If you are a *minister of Jesus Christ*, it is time to show it.

It is a matter of grief to me to see how many souls you have weakened by the littleness of your faith. And shall not God visit for this? How can you dare tell people they have no faith or grace if they will not hear in the morning?¹⁰ Pray, why do you not always rise as your brother does when in health? And why did not she rise before she was with child—though I cannot see why she might not now.¹¹ You talk mightily of the power of faith. I wish you would show it. What measure of this faith, I pray, have you? Time was, I read, when Christians could trust God with body and soul. I appeal to your own conscience in the sight of God, where is your faith in the affair of the smallpox?¹² It is absolutely none at all. But where shall the fearful and unbelieving appear?

I pass by many things too tedious to relate. But I must remind you of your little vile artifices by which you daily endeavour to enrich yourself and lade yourself with thick clay—which may effectually sink you into eternal perdition. Though I forget, would not even this sacrifice be too little to gain your charmer’s love? Heaven in her love; damnation in her hate. I fear you think very little at this time of any other heaven or hell. Otherwise you would not dare to *rob your brother* and the poor. To sacrifice to her pride and your own sensuality, you must take a house and furnish [it] as for a fine gentleman; not as a Methodist Christian or minister of the lowly Jesus Christ.¹³ And with some things you had no manner of right to. Your brother could not but wonder at your assurance herein. And I must tell you not to be surprised when I send to take away his picture out of your house, which [he] himself gave to me. Indeed, everyone can take notice of you laying your hands on what you like at any place—and very decently too, by offering to buy it, as you did my carpet. The Londoners easily saw through your design when you made a fresh publication of the watch-night hymns, etc.¹⁴ Many at that time were much offended. And

⁷Likely referring to Rev. Edward Phillips (1716–76), rector at Maesmynys, Wales, who had also courted Sarah Gwynne Jr. See CW, *MS Journal*, Dec. 8–12, 1748.

⁸Cf. Gal. 3:10; etc.

⁹Cf. 2 Cor. 6:17.

¹⁰I.e., attend the morning preaching service.

¹¹Sarah was currently pregnant; their son John would be baptized Aug. 17.

¹²It is possible that it was smallpox afflicting Mary’s sons that brought her to Kingswood; or that CW was avoiding Kingswood due to smallpox there. The smallpox infection that would scar CW’s wife Sarah and take the life of their toddler son John was in Dec. 1753.

¹³After his marriage to Sarah Gwynne on Apr. 8, 1749, CW had rented a house in Bristol, at the corner of Barton and Charles St. (possibly what now is No. 19 Charles Street). They moved into this house on Sept. 1, 1749; see CW, *MS Journal*.

¹⁴The watch-night was an early Methodist practice that emerged among the coal miners at Kingswood. These were nights when Methodists gathered to devote themselves to prayer, somber

still you are not satisfied. Witness, as you told me your proposal to your brother about the hymn for the girls.¹⁵ Why, if any man is a pickpocket, what are you? As arrant a one as ever lived. And all this for what, pray you? Why to make up the sum of £3,000, beside your base £100 a year, and £50 more when you can catch it, as a fine lady's fortune. Good grounds for suffering! Which is the best now? Settle it in your own heart to suffer, or 'Soul take thine ease; eat, drink, and *sing* too.'¹⁶ Till a sudden destruction come upon you unawares. O think and be wise, before it be too late.

I hope you have not thought of keeping a man [servant], since your proposal to me. You may remember my objections against it. The Lord teach and convince you! I must tell you, you are not to blame your brother; he is clear in all this matter. But if you blind and bind him up, you shall not me! Nor is [it] your sharp words, nor your threats, shall frighten me from telling you what I seen and think. Remember your obligations to your brother, and blush for shame. You know you eat of his bread, and might probably be exposed to intolerable want and reproach but for him. For I can tell you, most of the civilities and kindnesses you have received have been merely for his sake, not for your diligence in the work, nor *her* good breeding. But I hope she has learned a little by being with her betters.

What I now speak is from myself and my own knowledge. What barbarity was it to suffer your brother to go out at a time when his throat was so bad, and [he had] a great fever?¹⁷ He could neither speak or swallow. You would not then preach when we sent to desire you. You had made a pre-engagement, a visit with your wife, so did not come (so it is you sacrifice your brother, time, God, and all to your own ease and indulgence, your harpsichord, and your siren's destructive voice¹⁸), and soon after sent for him to come and speak with you from Snowfields, when his life was in danger. Sure[ly] this is not as you would be *done* by. When I asked you to go to Ireland,¹⁹ was that becoming in a *minister of Jesus Christ* to fly in such a passion? Be ashamed and consider your many obligations and obey the convictions. But you do not strive to obey God, nor ease your brother in anything. You say you love your wife. I should have you, and every man [do so]. But take care you do not longer make her your idol and your curse.

But I forget, I am not to teach a *minister of Jesus Christ*. But bear with me. Your behaviour to me has been as indecent as malicious. Was it kind to send back of copy of my last letter? And before that, to tell your brother of my coldness towards your wife? If it had been so, you should have spoken to me of it. Was it decent when you saw your brother's wife [come] from a long journey, and you saw me going

reflection, and mutual encouragement to the holy life. The earliest mention we find of the practice in CW's *MS Journal* is when he attended a meeting at Kingswood on Apr. 24, 1741. CW wrote two hymns following his initial experience of watch-night, that were published under the title of 'Midnight Hymn' in *HSP* (1742), 131–34. These were soon sung regularly at watch-night services, encouraging CW to write additional hymns. He collected nineteen of these in *HSP* (1749), vol. 2. Then, in Dec. 1750, Charles had William Strahan print a pamphlet collection of *Hymns for the Watch-night* that contained eleven hymns selected from these earlier publications. Mary is suggesting that CW did so simply to earn more money, not to provide a handy resource for the services.

¹⁵The school at Kingswood, set up primarily for boys, had a separate program for girls. CW apparently wrote and proposed publishing about this time a 'Hymn for Girls' for use in this program. There is no evidence of its separate publication, but CW included it in *Hymns for Children* (1763), 60–63.

¹⁶Cf. Luke 12:19.

¹⁷This incident likely took place in Jan.–Mar. 1752, when both brothers were in London. But there is a gap in JW's published *Journal* for this period, making it impossible to be specific.

¹⁸CW's wife Sarah played the harpsichord, accompanying her singing.

¹⁹This was surely after Mary arrived in the Bristol area, worried about her children, and hoping that CW would take JW's place in the planned preaching tour of Ireland. As it turned out, her sons recovered and Mary accompanied JW on his Irish preaching tour July–Oct. 1752.

alone and you mounted on a horse to go to dinner? For once I will venture to teach you a little good manners. I will tell you: out of duty and affection to your brother (if you have any), though you should have no concern for me, you should show a letter respect to *his* wife—who is your pillar and staff, under God your only support; so that if his head be once laid (which God yet forbid), you will find what I say too true. I was often told by word and letters, and from some even of your good friends, when I was newly married to your brother, that all the family besides himself were no better than blood-suckers, who would (if they could help it) leave neither of us the skin of our teeth. I did not then think it. But I find it to be too true—and you to be one of the greatest. But I hope to be aware of you and them. O lay these things to heart. Consider how becoming they are in you, a Methodist minister. Your own conscience can furnish you with much more of the like nature; as I myself could too.

You have been long as one that dreameth; it is now high time to awake. A *minister of Jesus Christ* has no time for concerts or trifling visits Nay, he has learned to count all thing loss for Christ. Is this your case? No! You do preach for a morsel of bread, which probably alone prevents you from being the greatest persecutor your brother has. These things have been much on my mind, as well as others, and have caused much grief, which was not a little increased by your cruel and scornful behaviour at Bristol, and when you forbid my coming near your wife. I have no more to say now. If you are a true *minister of Jesus Christ*, you will show it to

Your much injured and offended friend and sister,

Mary Wesley

P.S. Pray be careful how you desire others to worship your idol, or cause them to stumble. For my part, I cannot but pray for you and her that the Lord would open your eyes—that you may not be a ‘blind leader of the blind’.²⁰

Endorsement: by CW; ‘1752. M[ary]. W[esley]. and Perronet²¹ / *convicta spirita insolescunt*’.²²

Secondary Endorsement: ‘Mrs. John Wesley’s scurrility – with Mr. Perronet’s remarks of pity.’²³ *Copie vera*.²⁴ E.T.T.’²⁵

Tertiary Endorsement: ‘Copied at Sale [Cheshire], March 25, 1859 by Mr. Clegg’s daughter’.

Source: secondary transcription; Duke, Rubenstein, Frank Baker Papers, Box 132, folder on ‘John Wesley and his Wife’.²⁶

²⁰Cf. Matt. 15:14.

²¹Orig. in secondary transcription, ‘Rouquet’; almost certainly a misreading.

²²I.e., ‘*convicti spiriti insolescunt*’; ‘convicted by the Spirit, they become insolent’.

²³A later hand adds: ‘These were never discovered’.

²⁴‘A true [or accurate] copy’.

²⁵Elizabeth Tabitha Tooth (1791–1865), was the recipient of many letters and other documents of the CW family, as executrix for Sarah Wesley Jr. Tooth frequently made and gave away transcriptions of these documents—sometimes before either gifting or selling the holograph. [Note: she is often referred to as Eliza Telitha Tooth, but the name given above is what appears in both her baptismal record and the official listing of her death.]

²⁶The survival or location of the holograph is unknown. The transcription that survives in the Baker papers is four stages removed from the holograph. The initial transcription by Eliza Tooth came into the possession of a Mr. Gandy, who loaned it to his neighbour William Clegg (1806–97) of Sale, Cheshire in Mar. 1859. Clegg had his daughter Mary Elizabeth Clegg (1845–1919) make a copy. Mary in turn (after her marriage to Lewis Hartley) shared her copy with R. Thursfield Smith (c. 1828–1907) in Nov. 1902, and he copied it ‘with care’. Smith’s copy came into the possession of Frank Baker.

From Thomas Gaugain Landey¹

Closeland [Co. Laois]
July 29, 1752

Reverend Sir,

My dear friend, brother, and the man I love in my heart (O Lord, thou canst read it there), lest you should be under any doubt or apprehension that my love and reconciliation to you is not thoroughly or altogether sincere, I trouble you with this—to assure you it is. And by the assistance and grace of God, neither man or devil shall ever be able to shake or alter it. The greatest trouble I now have is when I recollect the bitterness that I have often harboured in my heart against you—though it never arose to the pitch you were informed. Neither did it ever continue three hours at one time.

Love and resentment (alternately) used to take possession, such that I have often thought (with the heathen prince) that I had two souls. Thanks be to God his blessed Spirit has drove out the evil one. A great deal of the misunderstanding that happened between us has been owing to the misapprehensions of pretended friends, who were in the bottom real enemies (it is good to know them). O Lord, deal not with them according to their wickedness, but do thou graciously open their eyes and fill their hearts with love. And then shall they see the evil of their ways.

As perhaps a good many people both in England and Ireland (who love to sow contentions and add fuel to fire) will be ready to give you uneasiness in regard to what has passed, I thought proper to subjoin to this a memorandum or certificate—to stop such busybodies' mouths.

In case you return to Dublin by this house, I hope we shall have the pleasure of seeing Mrs. Wesley and her daughter.² You may depend nothing shall pass that will give you or her the least uneasiness. My love to brother [Samuel] Larwood, who I assure you is your unshaken friend. With the love and respects of this family to you and him, I am obliged in haste to conclude myself, dear brother and friend,

Your sincerely affection[ate] servant in Christ,

Tho. Landey

Memorandum:

Whereas there lately arose a difference between the Rev. Mr. John Wesley and me, which was mostly owing to the false misrepresentations of pretended friends and evil hearts of enemies, I do hereby certify and declare that Mr. Wesley has truly and clearly convinced me of the innocency of his proceedings and intentions in regard to me and my family. And I do heartily (as in the presence of God), solemnly declare my thorough reconciliation and love to him. Indued thereto by no other ends or reward whatsoever (in which I am sure he will do me justice) but a full conviction of his innocency and my sincere belief of his being a faithful and sincere servant of his master, my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Signed July the 29th, 1752

Tho. Landey

Endorsement: by CW, 'A true copy, Oct. 23, 1752 / witness: C Wesley / Sarah Wesley³'.

Endorsement: by CW (on external cover), 'July 29, 1752 / Copy of Landey's Acquiescence'.

Source: CW copy of holograph; MARC, DDCW 7/52.

¹Thomas Gaugain Landey and his wife Jane owned a home in Closeland, Co. Laois. See her letter above, c. Jan. 1751. It suggests tension between the Landeys and JW concerned his perceived slighting of a possibility of marrying their daughter.

²Mary (Goldhawk/Vazeille) Wesley and Jeanne Vazeille.

³Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley's name in her own hand.

From Howell Harris

[Trevecca, Breconshire]

January 1, 1753

Dear Brother John Wesley,

Shall I speak freely to you, as I am going before you to that dear man who has indeed honoured you, whom I believe you would honour every way for you live on his bloody sweat? O let your ministry be sprinkled with his blood indeed. Let his mangled body be daily held before the people, till they really lose all confidence in the flesh by the knowledge of his cross. I wish your ministry and the United Brethren's were united. It would be for the public good. The godhead and glory of our Saviour's person, and his death is among them. Do not stumble at any stumbling stone. Would that light that passed through your hands when you published the word to sinners and saints prevail, the mystery of God[?] in our flesh would soon ravish your soul and the whole nation would bow before you to [ac]knowledge of his almighty groans and sufferings. And the idol of self-righteousness, which a dozen years ago you began to attack, would tremble and fall before the true and spiritual preaching of his agony and bloody sweat. I have sounded the alarm, who will follow the blow?

I shall enter into no particulars as I have left a few things to be printed, which I should be glad you would cast an eye upon.¹ I have really fought a good fight, and have, through millions of infirmities, kept the faith, and am more than conqueror, in the face of all my enemies, through him that loved me and washed me in his own blood.

You and your brother Charles have ever been dear to me. I have wished the foundation to have been laid deeper in God's blood and sufferings—and then souls stirred up to go on to perfection by abiding on his ineffable torments, by the Holy Ghost. I have often feared your wisdom and popularity would prove your fall and turn you from the true simplicity of the gospel and the mystery of the cross, which flesh and blood cannot know, for it is foolishness to it—by which alone we are crucified to the world and the world to us (1 Cor. 1:18). Except the soul finds out this fountain all convictions, desires, strivings, and awakenings will die. And if a form of religion abides, it will but feed a pharisaical spirit that makes the end of persons worse than their beginning, and the reformation intended by a dear Saviour for a real blessing to this and future generations would end in a whole stubborn sectarian, self-righteous spirit, which I know your soul would abhor. And nothing but a true and real acquaintance with God's power and humiliation in the heart [can prevent such].

I have been expecting to be at the marriage supper of the Lamb before this. O my dear brother, honour his blood and death, and he will honour you. I send this as my dying and loving request to you, for the Lord's sake, for your own sake, and for the sake of thousands that attend your ministry. Turn their eye to the Saviour; indeed, suffer them not to idolize you. O let nothing fall from your lip or pen but what really turns the soul from self to the Saviour. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom, though ever so much reformed, it is but a whited sepulchre under all religious changes. All is not the fruit of the Spirit that seems like it. The way is narrow, it is few that find it. To deny ourselves is a deep lesson, and I fear but few learn [it].

Farewell, be faithful to death

I have written some things in the time of my confinement, as I mentioned before, which in confidence of your love to that Saviour to whom I am indeed going, I have ordered the bearer to let you peruse and correct, if you have time and shall think it service to him. In hopes of seeing you coming after me, soon having overcome and made your robes white indeed in the blood of the Lamb. With hearty salutations to your brother Charles, and all who love Christ our God and Saviour in sincerity, and have no other teacher, or strength, or righteousness, or hope, or life but him, and die to the world and the world to

¹Harris is likely referring to his 'dying testimony'; see some excerpts of this material in Morgan, *Howell Harris*, 257–62.

them by his cross. These all, whoever and wherever they are, I here declare before men and angels, I love and carry in my heart—going off indeed with a heart bleeding over a miserable world, and self-righteous, self-sufficient, whole heart[ed] professors, that will not indeed come to the manger and the cross to adore their God, and be saved by his humiliation.

I have been confined from public service for some months, but through grace enabled all in my own house to testify of him to all that come to me. What humility and self-denial are produced by the view I daily have of his glory and my happiness in him? I am really weary of nothing here but the body of sin in my flesh, and the indifference of others that Christ is slighted and rejected. Poor sinners will not come unto him! I rejoice in you and the large field before you. Know that he that has been faithful in all, yea to all that trust him, will keep you from all the snares that surround you.

Though I know not how to give over, I must conclude.

H. H.

Source: Harris's manuscript copy for his records; National Library of Wales, Trevecka Letters, #2042.²

²A polished and embellished transcription was published in Morgan, *Howell Harris*, 203–05.

From the Rev. Henry Piers

Bexley
March 27, 1753

Dear Sir,

I have had many instances, and now especially a glaring one under my own roof, of those who mistake the doctrine of *justification by faith alone*. Though it be the truth of truths, the 'truth as it is in Jesus',¹ I am persuaded it is unskilfully preached or mistakenly received by some under your inspection.

I have taken some pains to convince William Greenwood,² who says he was commissioned by you to preach the gospel, that he lives in gross outward sin, even in the sin of adultery; but notwithstanding all I can say he replies that the Lord has not showed him it, and if it were so that he would, for that he shows him everything. Nay, he says positively that he 'never had once the least conviction on that account'. He says in his own justification that the former woman never was his lawful wife. And when I have asked him whether he and she were not joined together by our ordinance and by his minister appointed thereto; whether they did not take one another for better [or] for worse, and to keep only to each other so long as they both should live; whether there was *any other* lawful cause of separation but fornication or adultery only, which I find he cannot prove—he replied 'that Mr. John and Mr. Charles Wesley never reprov'd him for this', 'that you had sent him forth to preach the gospel', 'that his soul was full of peace', 'that he had great power with God', 'that God was ever with him, especially in prayer and preaching', and 'that he could not more doubt of his justification than of his being alive'.

I should never have known this, though they have lived in my house these five months, but for a quarrel (as there are many, nor can they ever be happy) between him and her he now calls his wife, in which she told me this astonishing tale.

I know not whether you will approve what I have done, but I have ever since excluded them from the sacrament. And on my first telling him I would do so, without any concern he replied he would go to some other church and have it elsewhere.

I should be glad of your judgment in this affair. I desire that you will be more cautious yourself, and be more explicit in your directions to your preachers as to the doctrine of justification.³ For from more instances (as I have already said) than this I am persuaded that undue justification does but *harden souls more in sin*; and that antinomianism (too general a spirit among the Methodists) prevails lamentably, through that fatal mistake. As I knew not where to direct for you, I have sent this enclosed to a friend, who will take care, on reading it, to send it to you.

I am, reverend sir,

Your friend and affectionate, humble servant,

Hen. Piers

Endorsement: by JW: 'Mr Piers—depart[ing] / March 17, 1753 / a[nswere]d May 4'.

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/610/110.⁴

¹Cf. Eph. 4:21.

²William Greenwood attended the Leeds Conference in May 1753 (and was active in the Todmorden society 1750–52); see *Works*, 10: 260. This letter helps explain his absence subsequently.

³JW discussed antinomianism and justification with his preachers at the 1753 Conference (see *Works*, 10:262).

⁴Abridged transcription published in *Works*, 26:503–04.

From the Rev. John Gillies¹

[Glasgow, Scotland]
c. April 25, 1753²

The singing of hymns here meets with greater opposition than I expected. Serious people are much divided. Those of better understanding and education are silent. But many others are so prejudiced, especially at the singing publicly, that they speak openly against it and look upon me as left to do a very wrong or sinful thing. I beg your advice, whether to answer them only by continuing in the practice of the thing with such as have freedom to join, looking to the Lord for a blessing upon his own ordinance; or, if I should publish a sheet of arguments from reason, and Scripture, and the example of the godly. . . . Your experience of the most effectual way of dealing with people's prejudices makes your advice on this head of the greater importance.

I bless the Lord for the benefit and comfort of your acquaintance; for your important assistance in my *Historical Collections*, and for your edifying conversation and sermons in this place. May our gracious God prosper you wherever you are. O my dear sir, pray for your brother, that I may be employed in doing something for the advancement of his glory who has done so much for me, and who is my only hope.

Source: printed extract; Whitehead, *Life*, 2:272–73.³

¹John Gillies, D.D. (1712–96), a minister in the Church of Scotland, was pastor of Blackfriars church, Glasgow from 1742 until his death. His concern to cultivate international awareness of the current revivals led to work on *Historical Collections relating to the Success of the Gospel*, which appeared in two volumes in 1754, with an Appendix in 1761. Gillies contacted JW in finalizing these volumes, leading JW to visit Scotland in Apr. 1753. The two engaged in frequent correspondence for the next several years. See *DEB*, 443; and *ODNB*.

²Whitehead introduced with the words: 'Soon after he left Glasgow Mr. Gillies wrote to him as follows.'

³Whitehead's transcription omits some of the original (shown by the ellipsis). Lacking the original, his abridged version is reprinted here and in *Works*, 26:504–05.

From the Rev. Henry Tucker¹

Bawdrip near Bridgwater
May 1753

Reverend Brother,

I have been for near ten years past a preacher of the gospel, but perhaps with no great profit either to myself or others. A state of melancholy which I fell into after a severe fit of illness about three years ago begun to make upon me strong and lasting impressions of a serious kind. I soon found myself glowing with a constant and ardent desire of doing good; and yet at the same time all my endeavours, and indeed my whole life, [was] as constantly interrupted and overcast with spiritual desertions and an inclination to despair. In short, I found there was something wanting.

It was my lot to be (very providentially I hope I may say, because very unexpectedly) removed from a curacy in Cornwall to the care of the parish I write from. I was before well acquainted with the corruptions of my heart and well satisfied of the necessary duty of correcting, or rather of striving to correct them; in doing which I had made, as I thought, great progress. But I soon perceived there was room for much greater. I accordingly went on, 'conquering to conquer',² powerfully assisted in every respect. I had never attended nor administered the more solemn ordinance of the Church without seriously recollecting, and some degree of sorrow for, my past life. But all this, though so often repeated, I was convinced had been ineffectual by the experience and most sensible feeling of a sound repentance, which I was wonderfully blessed with some time in the last summer, the day before my receiving and assisting in the administration of the sacrament. In the same week (God be merciful to me!), in the night, after my first sleep, I was either called upon to resign my soul instantly or to receive a more than ordinary measure of divine grace, to which I have been oftentimes infinitely fearful I was too unconsenting. My fears, however, have been somewhat allayed by considering that I ought not to have presumed upon a translation, and my improvements in grace since that time—which were indeed so great as to leave no part of my life almost, not even the most indifferent action of it, insensible of that unspeakable union which is the consummation of a Christian's lot. No part of my life, I mean, excepting eating and drinking, was unattended with a religious joy, and that not always void of it, neither. It was here, I think, I was not sufficiently [watchful], or had not fortified myself enough, and thereby gave the tempter some advantage to draw me into a divided state betwixt denying myself the necessary refreshments of life (so yielding to death) and going on cheerfully with my duty. I have been hindered from doing the first, it may be some hundreds of times, by means of an impression sensibly affecting my whole body, which I felt first in return to my earnest and importunate prayers that God would be pleased to make his will known to me and in some way or other, as he should see fit, to satisfy my perplexities.

What follows is a sad and disconsolate story. I am fallen from a state of light and love, of all humility and meekness, into one of darkness and horror, and great impatience of spirit, void in the greatest measure of that sweet communion and sweeter suffering I was before possessed of. And what is worse than all the rest, a state that hath brought me in danger of growing proud and fretful. God forbid! Jesu help! Lord help me! It needs not to mention what a discerning and faithful Christian can do for me,

Your affectionate but distressful brother,

Henry Tucker

I am told the letters you receive of this kind are publicly read to your society. Perhaps you will see reasons for not making this public. Some I have too respecting the spiritual good of my little flock; many, but I think not the greatest part of which, like most of the world besides, are strangely prejudiced

¹Henry Tucker (c. 1710–55) took his BS from Queens' College, Cambridge in 1744 and served a series of curacies. He had been appointed rector of Bawdrip in Feb. 1753 and died in office two years later. There is no other surviving correspondence between Tucker and JW.

²Rev. 6:2.

against the name of Methodists.

Address: 'To / The Revd. Mr. John Wesley'.

Endorsement: by JW, 'Rev. Mr. Tucker, near Bridgewater / May 1753 / a[nswere]d June 20'.

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/610/119.³

³Transcription published in *Works*, 26:509–11.

From John Bennet

Bolton
May 29, 1753

Your letter left at Bolton dated April 6¹ (after having been publicly read from house to house, as I'm informed, both to professors and profane persons) came safe to hand by a servant girl in the town. In answer to which, I am not conscious that I preach controversy, or anything but Jesus Christ, simply, practically, and him crucified.

However, if you or any of the brethren now in connection with you are apprehensive I do, let the righteous smite, etc. (Ps. 141:5).

I thank you for the kind offer of the house. At present we have a dwelling-house and a large room in the town to preach in, both of them very well situated, though not very beautiful either without or within. I suppose that was I to preach at your room at Bolton or elsewhere amongst your people and simply make use of those words of that dear man of God Mr. John Janeway in one of his letters to a particular friend, 'The bush may be singed, though if God be in it, it cannot be burned up'²—alas, I had done enough!

Besides, if your brethren in point of conscience were in time past constrained to forbid me the desk (as at Manchester, etc.) because I preached error, heresy, or (as one of them lately said) the devil's doctrine, I am surprised how they can think now to profit by me, since I confess that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I still the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets.

Therefore (begging an interest in your prayers whenever you find access by faith unto the throne of grace), let us stand still and see the salvation of God.³

By the by we shall see our completeness in Christ and the need and necessity of him being made of God (yea unto believers) wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.⁴

I wholly agree with that eminent saint Bishop Hall that nothing will give us true solid comfort in a dying hour but righteousness⁵—not ours in the inherent grace wrought in us or holy works wrought by us; no, but Christ's perfect righteousness wrought out for and applied unto us by his Spirit. The consolation flowing from this application is (I verily believe) everlasting. This hope [is] a good hope. This grace—this union betwixt Christ and the believer—is entirely the work of the Spirit, made by working faith in us and thereby uniting us to Christ. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace to the end, the promise might be sure to all the seed. God is faithful, by whom saith St. Paul to the

¹In late 1751 Bennet made a break with the Wesley brothers (see JW, *Journal*, Mar. 31, 1752, *Works*, 20:414). In early Apr. 1752 he disputed JW's right to the preaching-house at Bolton, leading JW to explain to the society on June 14 'that there had been a mistake concerning the house, which John Bennet imagined I had contrived to make my own property; but Mr. Grimshaw had now cleared it up, having assured Mr. Bennet: 1) that I knew nothing of the deed relating to the house till after it was made; 2) that I had no property in it still; only a clause was inserted whereby Mr. Grimshaw, my brother, and I were empowered to appoint the preachers therein' (JW, *Journal*, *Works*, 20:428). On Apr. 6, 1753, JW had left a letter (which does not survive) for Bennet at Bolton which sought a reconciliation by a kindly gesture, offering to open the pulpit to Bennet provided that he did not preach on controversial subjects.

²James Janeway, *Invisibilities, Realities, demonstrated the Holy Life and Triumphant Death of Mr John Janeway* (London: Parkhurst, 1702), 52.

³See Exod. 14:13.

⁴See 1 Cor. 1:30.

⁵See Joseph Hall, *Christ Mystical* (London: E. Withers, 1755), 2.

Corinthians, 'you were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ'.⁶

Dear sir, pray let me desire you once more seriously to consider into what near and close union those persons are brought who have union with Christ. How hath the Holy Ghost chosen out of all the nearest natural relations to express and shadow out the closeness of this spiritual relation that is between Christ and his? The union of branch and root, body and members, husband and wife. I apprehend the union betwixt Christ and the believing soul is infinitely nearer than any of these. Tis according to our Lord's own words: 'You in me and I in you'.⁷ Whereas though the members be in the body, yet the body is not in the members. And though the branch be in the root, yet the root cannot be in the branch. Therefore a believer's union with Christ is infinitely nearer than the union of any of these similes by which it is represented. *It is Christ in us, and we in him*, being a spiritual union which is the nearest union that can be, even so near that the apostle saith, 'He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.'⁸

I hope you'll excuse my freedom in mentioning my thoughts on this head, since herein it is chiefly I have been accused of wresting the Scriptures. Wherein you see I'm wrong I hope you'll use the same freedom I now take, and show me my error.

Source: Bennet's copy for his records; MARC, Bennet, Letter-book, 101–02.⁹

⁶1 Cor. 1:9.

⁷John 14:20.

⁸1 Cor. 6:17.

⁹Abridged transcription published in *Works*, 26:509.

From the Rev. John Parkhurst¹

[p. 5]

[Lower Catesby, Northamptonshire?]
June 1753²

Reverend Sir,

I do in the sincerest manner join with you in lamenting the great decay of *true vital* Christianity among us, and heartily wish success to all such attempts for the revival of it as are consistent with the Word of God and the real interests of mankind. And I trust you will not be offended with me if I think myself obliged to try every doctrine I hear or read by the [p. 6] *written Word*, and openly to declare my dissent from every important point of faith which is pressed upon Christians by any *man* whatever without sufficient authority from the *oracles of God*. I trust you will not be offended with any Christian who thinks himself obliged thus to act. Nay, I know you cannot be offended if you adhere to those sentiments you have publicly professed to the world. I need not therefore make any apology for declaring in this public manner that there is a doctrine of utmost moment which is continually inculcated by you in your printed discourses and journals, and which (if I may judge by my own ears) frequently makes a part in the discourses of those who preach in *your name*. That there is a doctrine of this sort, which though some texts of Scripture may seem to incline towards it, will, I am persuaded, if fairly *weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, and tried by the Word of God, be found wanting*.

The doctrine I mean, as collected from your own writings and the discourses of [p. 7] your assistants, is this: 'That every *true* child of God, everyone who *indeed* believes in Jesus, obtains an internal knowledge, sense, and *feeling* from the *immediate* operation of the Spirit of God upon his soul that *his* sins are forgiven and *himself* reconciled to God. And that as a consequence of this everyone who has not obtained this internal *feeling* of forgiveness is not in a state of salvation but of damnation.'

I shall not, sir, endeavour to refute this doctrine by producing what this or that great man of our own or any church has said or written concerning it. But I shall directly enquire whether those passages of Scripture which are usually brought in support of it are sufficient for that purpose. And if upon fair examination they shall appear not to be so, I hope you will give me leave to conclude that this is *no Scripture doctrine*, but at best a mere invention of man.

The texts of Scripture usually cited to prove the doctrine just mentioned are Rom. 8:16, 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that [p. 8] we are the children of God.' Rom. 5:1, 'Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.' 1 John 5:10, 'He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.'

I place Rom. 8:16 first because I apprehend it to be the *great bulwark* of this doctrine, and because *as such* I shall have occasion to dwell longer upon it than on the other two passages.

And here to prevent any deception which may arise from the *mere sound* of a single text without considering the context, or from the artful joining it with other passages which though somewhat like it in sound have little or no connection to it in sense, I shall cite the whole context from the beginning of the chapter, naked and without comment, as it stands in our translation [i.e., the KJV].

Romans 8:1–17

1. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who [p. 9] walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

¹John Parkhurst (1728–97), of Catesby House, Northamptonshire, matriculated Clare College, Cambridge, in 1745, receiving his BA in 1749, and MA in 1751. He was a fellow of Clare College 1751–52, during which time he was also ordained deacon and priest. The death of his older brother in 1752 led to Parkhurst inheriting the family estate instead of pursuing a church living. He became known as a biblical lexicographer and follower of the anti-Newtonian, John Hutchinson.

²The publication was announced in the *Public Advertiser* on June 6, 1753.

2. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.
3. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.
4. That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.
- [5. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.]³
6. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.
7. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.
8. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. [p. 10]
9. But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.
10. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.
11. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.
12. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.
13. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.
14. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. [p. 11]
15. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.
16. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.
17. And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

From this passage, *thus* produced, the following propositions are, I hope to every intelligent and attentive person, indisputable.

First, that the apostle is in ver. 16 speaking not of the Holy Spirit considered as dictating the *outward word*, but as *received by* (v. 15; see Gal. 4:6), *dwelling in* (vv. 9, 11), and *leading* true believers (v. 14). Compare 2 Cor. 1:22, 5:1; Eph. 1:13, 4:30, and others.

And therefore, [p. 12] secondly, that the meaning of verse 16 is not that the Spirit *in the word* 'bears witness with' (or to) 'our spirit that we are children of God'.

But, thirdly, that the plain meaning is that the spirit of adoption, the spirit of love to God considered as our reconciled Father in Christ (see Gal. 4:4–5), whereby also even in the midst of *sufferings* (see v. 18) we are like our blessed Lord himself enabled to cry 'Abba, Father' (Mark 14:36); that this *spirit of adoption*, this *love of God* is the *proof* of our being 'the sons of God'. As St. John also asserts in the plainest terms (1 John 4:7), 'Everyone that *loveth* is *born of God*.' See [1 John] ch. 4:12–13, and ch. 3:23–24.

So that the 'witness of the Spirit' *here mentioned* is the very same as what the apostle calls (Rom. 5:5) 'The love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.' A love arising, I with joy confess, from this principle, [p. 13] that 'we love him, because he first loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins' (1 John 4:10, 19). A love derived from 'the author of every good and perfect gift',⁴ and which poor fallen man cannot have but through the operation of his Spirit.

³Verse 5 is mistakenly omitted.

⁴Cf. James 1:17.

And if *this love* be really the witness of the Spirit *here* mentioned by the apostle, then sir, it is not (nor *anything like*) what you assert it to be in your sermon (Vol. 1, p. 193⁵), ‘An *inward impression* on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God *directly* “witnesses to my spirit that I am a child of God”;⁶ that Jesus Christ hath loved me and given himself for me; that all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God.’

You say indeed in the same sermon (p. 195⁷), ‘The *manner* how the divine testimony is manifested to the heart I do not take upon me to explain. “Such knowledge is too wonderful and excellent for me; [p. 14] I cannot attain unto it.” This no doubt you know was spoken by the royal prophet [David] (Ps. 139:6) on a quite different occasion from that on which you have here quoted it, and therefore I suppose you cite it not by way of proof but of accommodation. But the following words, being *almost* the same with those given by Christ as an *outward emblem* of the Holy Spirit and his operations, must not be passed over. ‘The wind bloweth, and I hear the sound thereof, but I cannot tell *how* it cometh or whither it goeth.’ The words as delivered by our Saviour to Nicodemus (John 3:8) stand in our translation thus: ‘The wind⁸ bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell *whence* (πόθεν, not *how*) it cometh, and whither it goeth. *So is everyone* that is born of the Spirit.’ If so, then by the way shall we or shall we not call it *presumption* [p. 15] or *delusion* for a man to say ‘I was converted by such or such a text of Scripture, by such or such a sermon, the Spirit came into my heart from *thence*, from that hour I was born again’?

And though what you say⁹ in the next sentence, ‘As “no one knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man that is in him,” so the *manner* of the things of God knoweth no one save the Spirit of God.’¹⁰ Though this be certainly true, yet sir, if you would diligently attend to those descriptions given in the sacred Scriptures by the Holy Spirit of himself and his operations, and which are frequently drawn (as in the passage just quoted from St. John) from those of the *material* spirit or air, I am persuaded you would not only understand them much better yourself, but be enabled to explain them to others in a more just and satisfactory manner, *according to the* [p. 16] *said descriptions*—and not a step further have you or any uninspired *man* upon earth authority to go.

What follows (in page 196) ‘But the fact we know, namely that the Spirit of God does give a believer such a testimony of his adoption that, while it is present in the soul, he can no more doubt the reality of his sonship than he can doubt the shining of the sun while he stands in the full blaze of his beams.’ This passage, I say, is an appeal to the *internal sensations* of men and therefore is quite beside the present question. If not, I ask where does the *Scripture* say that the Spirit of God does give a believer such a testimony of his sonship, etc.?

And here, sir, permit me freely to ask one question upon that paragraph of your sermon I have been now examining: Whether any doctrine can be so absurd or inconsistent with the whole tenor of Scripture but a man may prove it *from Scripture* by jumbling texts together which have little [p. 17] or no connection with the point in hand, or with one another—especially if he take the liberty of *altering* any words of those texts as he sees occasion? How far you are concerned in this question let every *unprejudiced* person judge from the specimen above given.

I proceed to the consideration of another text usually produced for the *internal feeling of forgiveness*, namely Rom. 5:1, ‘Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our

⁵I.e., Sermon 10, ‘The Witness of the Spirit, I’, I.7, *Works*, 1:274.

⁶Rom. 8:16.

⁷Sermon 10, ‘The Witness of the Spirit, I’, I.12, *Works*, 1:276.

⁸Parkhurst adds a note here: “Το πνευμα ... πνευ; *Spiritus spirat*” (Vulgate and Mont.); and perhaps would in English be more properly translated “The air acteth or breatheth”.’

⁹Parkhurst adds: ‘*You say*, because the apostle (1 Cor. 2:11) is speaking of a very different point.’

¹⁰Sermon 10, ‘The Witness of the Spirit, I’, I.12, *Works*, 1:276.

Lord Jesus Christ.' The context runs thus,

[Romans] ch. 4:23ff.

23. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him;

24. But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; [p. 18]

25. Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

5:1. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

The point of the apostle here upon is that all, both Jews and Gentiles, do (as Abraham did) obtain *imputed righteousness* through faith. And 'being justified by faith', says he, 'we' (Gentiles as well as Jews) 'have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ'.

Is there the least hint here of any *internal feeling of forgiveness*? Nothing like it. For how is it that we have access into this grace (this peace) wherein we stand? The apostle plainly tells us (ch. 5:2) not by any *inward sensation whatever*, but by *faith*. [p. 19]

And moreover so clearly explains his own meaning [in] Ephesians 2:11 ff. that producing that passage will be the best comment on this before us.

Ephesians 2:11–19

11. Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;

12. That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

13. But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

14. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; [p. 20]

15. Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;

16. And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.

17. And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

18. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

19. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

Whence does the apostle prove that Christ came and preached *peace* to those which were afar off and to them which were nigh? Because 'through him we both' (Gentiles and Jews) 'have an access by one Spirit unto the [p. 21] Father.'¹¹ And therefore the word 'peace' relates not to any *internal sensation of our own minds*, but to the *external* reconciliation purchased for us by the blood of Christ ('for he is our

¹¹Parkhurst adds a note: 'On this verse are two most judicious references to Heb. 4:16 and 10:19–20. And indeed the references in our [KJV] Bibles are the best comment[ary] I am acquainted with, admirably adapted to the use of those who in matters of *eternal moment* do not approve of resting in *any man's word*, but endeavour to obey the *apostolic* injunction of "comparing spiritual things with spiritual" [1 Cor. 2:13], and our Saviour's command of searching the Scriptures' [John 5:39].

peace’) and to the liberty of addressing the Father through him and by his Spirit.

Do I then deny that ‘peace’ which Christ, almost with his dying breath, bequeathed to his disciples (John 14:27), that ‘peace of God which passeth all understanding’,¹² that ‘peace in the Holy Ghost’¹³ which is part of the ‘daily bread’¹⁴ of every true Christian? Far from it. It is my earnest prayer that ‘The God of hope may fill you’, and all true followers of Christ, ‘with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in *hope*, through the power of the Holy Ghost.’¹⁵ [p. 22]

The *single* point I now insist upon is that the ‘peace’ mentioned [in] Rom. 5:1 has no relation to any *internal feeling of forgiveness*. And whether it hath or not I shall now leave to your conscience and to the consciences of all those who shall read this, in the sight of God. And let those that dare, trifle with or adulterate (καπηλευειν) the *certain dictates* of his Spirit.

The third and last text I shall at present consider is 1 John 5:10. ‘He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.’

Romans 8:16 [and] Galatians 4:6 are the only other passages I can find where *this internal witness* is mentioned, and therefore if the apostle’s rule of ‘comparing spiritual things with spiritual’¹⁶ be admitted, I apprehend we cannot be greatly mistaken in explaining the ‘witness’ here mentioned by St. John of that *filial loving Spirit* breathed into us by the Holy Ghost; especially as our translators [in the KJV], men of no small attainments both in knowledge and piety, refer to Rom. 8:16 and Gal. 4:6 as *parallel passages*. [p. 23]

We know St. John was the great apostle of *love*. His gospel is full of *love*. His epistles breathe the same *loving spirit* almost in every line. It was this beloved disciple of whom it is reported that when he was so old that his speech and memory almost failed him, yet he would get into the pulpit and, if he could utter nothing else, would repeat that endearing sentence, ‘Beloved, let us love one another.’¹⁷

If then another apostle makes that blessed spirit of *love* the *witness of our being the sons of God*, can we expect that St. John will set up a *different witness*? No, surely.

But I shall not rest the matter here, but endeavour from St. John *himself* to show what he means by the ‘inward witness’ here mentioned.

He himself then tells us ([1 John] 4:7) ‘Everyone that loveth is born of God.’ And again (vv. 12–13), ‘If we love one another God dwelleth in us ...’¹⁸ Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and *he in us*, because he hath given us of his Spirit.’ And yet again (v. 16), ‘God is [p. 24] love, and he that dwelleth *in love* dwelleth in God, and God *in him*.’ What then must be that ‘witness’ which ‘he that believeth on the Son of God hath *in himself*’ but that *filial loving spirit*? Of which St. John proceeds to assert [in] v. 11: ‘This is the record’ (μαρτυρια, the *subject* of this *witness*) ‘that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son’; which is exactly parallel with what we have before seen St. Paul affirms, ‘The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.’¹⁹

And is not this *loving spirit* a mark of the children of God in every respect preferable to that pretended *internal feeling of forgiveness*? If we love the Lord our God (as our *reconciled Father* in Christ) with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength, we can make no *doubt* of it. We do indeed *feel* this in

¹²Phil. 4:7.

¹³Cf. Rom. 14:17.

¹⁴Matt. 6:11.

¹⁵Rom. 15:13.

¹⁶1 Cor. 2:13.

¹⁷1 John 4:7.

¹⁸Parkhurst omits ‘and his love is perfected in us’.

¹⁹Rom. 8:16.

a *manner* intelligible to all mankind who have any affections at all. If we love our neighbour as ourselves, we cannot but *feel* that too. But I dare appeal to [p. 25] the hearts of those who have been taught that the *internal feeling of forgiveness* is an *indispensable* mark of the children of God whether, though perhaps they might sometimes imagine they had it, they have not at other times (without any apparent reason) fallen into the greatest anxiety and²⁰ doubtfulness of mind concerning their adoption and regeneration because their conscience told them they *then* had not that *feeling*. I believe some have suffered such terrors on this account as no words can describe, and such as have almost, if not quite, driven them to *distraction*. And if after all this doctrine be really false, will it be any breach of charity to apply that of the prophet Ezekiel (23:22), ‘With lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad’, *to those who teach it?* Pardon my plainness of speech. If this *internal feeling of forgiveness* were a plain doctrine of Scripture, however improbably it might appear to my reason, I should most certainly conclude myself in an *unregenerate* state because *I had it not*; and that it was therefore *unintelligible* to me, [p. 26] because I was not *born again*. But as I think sufficient evidence has not yet been produced to prove it a Scripture doctrine, I may humbly *hope* and *believe* (or in the words of our Church have a ‘sure trust and confidence in God’²¹) that by the merits of Christ *my* sins be forgiven, and *myself* reconciled to the favour of God, though I have not this *feeling*, nor ever had it.

Thus sir have I done what I proposed, by examining those texts which are commonly produced for this doctrine in your writings and the discourses of your ‘assistants’ (for yourself I never heard). And I shall presently leave you and the world to judge whether they are sufficient evidence of the point to any who are not already enlisted in a party, or have not their imaginations greatly heated and their judgments biased by the continued and *vehement* repetition of this doctrine. [p. 27]

We know to what a horrid length the Quakers run under pretence of their *internal light*.²² But at present I purposely avoid enlarging on the *consequences* which have, or probably may, attend your doctrine of *inward feeling* so zealously propagated—the consequences, I mean, either to the souls of those who believe it or to the outward peace of the community in general. For to you, who profess yourself a member and are a priest in the Church of England, and whom as such I honour and reverence, I need not I trust, in order to confute or persuade you to abandon a doctrine of this sort, make use of any other argument than that it is not ‘*read* in Scripture, nor may be *proved* thereby’.²³ And of this sort I take the *internal feeling of forgiveness* to be, and shall continue so to think till clearer and stronger evidence than I have yet seen or heard is produced from Scripture for it. *From Scripture*, I say, for the heart of man is very *deceitful* and his strength of *imagination* so [p. 28] great that if thousands were to join in affirming, yea calling God to witness, that they had it, it would by no means prove to me, nor I believe to any considerate man, that *all* God’s children had it, and that a man who had it *not* was in a state of *damnation*.

How often (I might say how constantly) this doctrine is inculcated by your assistants you well know. I believe they rarely preach without mentioning, yea insisting upon it. And I think it so extremely flattering to the heart of fallen man that I am not at all surprised that many earnestly wish, and then believe, it to be true. And if they are not of a sanguine temper, and so cannot work themselves up to a *fancy* that they have this *feeling*, tis no wonder that they fall into the most shocking terror and perplexity of soul. On the other hand, you are so well acquainted with the nature of the human mind as to be sensible that an *internal feeling*, or something not distinguishable therefrom, may *frequently* be produced in it by perpetual attention to and eager desire of the said *feeling*. Oh let us not [p. 29] set up such an *uncertain*—I think I may now say *unscriptural*—witness of our adoption, instead of (or in conjunction with) the *spirit of love*, the true *Scripture* witness. I hope you will not see reason to conclude that I am actuated by any

²⁰Orig., ‘of’.

²¹Parkhurst notes as from the ‘Third Part of the Sermon of Salvation’; i.e., in the *Book of Homilies*, the Homily ‘On the Salvation of Mankind’; included in JW’s extract, cf. *Works*, 12:37.

²²Parkhurst adds: ‘*Vide* [Charles] Leslie’s *Snake in the Grass* and the several *defences* of it.’

²³Cf. Church of England, Article of Religion VI, ‘Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures’.

other spirit in what I have here written. And in the same *spirit of love* I beg leave to propose to you the following queries, which, with all due deference, I would recommend to your serious consideration:

Whether you did *originally* derive the doctrine of the *internal feeling of forgiveness* from the Scriptures or from the Moravian Brethren?

Whether this doctrine be not absolutely inconsistent with that of *justification by faith*, since it asserts that a man is in a state of damnation who does not *know* and *feel* his sins forgiven—so making not *faith* but *internal knowledge* and *feeling* the condition of justification?
[p. 30]

Whether *internal* and *intuitive* knowledge be not the great bait wherewith Satan has seduced the more *spiritual* part of mankind from the temptation of Eve (Gen. 3:5) to the present time; and which, to such, he has constantly set up, in *some shape or other*, in opposition to *faith*?

And lastly, whether *deists* and *enthusiasts* (by whom I mean such persons as pretend to the *Spirit*, or any *degree* thereof, without producing *sufficient* evidence)—whether *deists* and *enthusiasts* are not more nearly related than is commonly apprehended?

As I am not conscious to myself of having *in any respect misrepresented* either your doctrines or those of the sacred Scriptures, so have I no excuse to make on *that account* for what I have written. If I am *mistaken* in any particular, you will find me upon admonition and conviction very ready to retract.
[p. 31]

I have nothing more to add at present but that I am, reverend sir,
Your sincere friend and well-wisher in Christ,

John Parkhurst

Source: published transcription; John Parkhurst, *A Serious and Friendly Address to the Reverend Mr. John Wesley, in Relation to a Principal Doctrine advanced and maintained by him and his Assistants* (London: E. Withers, 1753).²⁴

²⁴On p. 4 of the booklet is this Advertisement: 'If this address should fall into the hands of any of the followers of Mr. Wesley, all the favour I beg of them is to read it *with attention*, and *without prejudice*, and to regard me not as an enemy but as their affectionate brother in Christ, till I give them *reason*, either by misrepresenting Scripture or by some other means, to think otherwise.'

From the Rev. John Gillies

Cawaldstone, 60 miles NE from Glasgow
September 5, 1753

Reverend and Very Dear Sir,

I have received both your kind letters, one dated St. Ives, 27th July, and the other Plymouth Dock, 14th August.¹ I have been from home these three weeks to visit my mother in her widowhood, and have preached in three different places on the Lord's days, but alas! not with that freedom and earnestness I would be at. Pray, dear sir, what are the methods of studying and preaching that you have found in your experience most blessed? I would be obliged to you for some hints on this head.

The books you sent me by William Hodgson were not come to hand when I left Glasgow, but were expected daily; so that they are undoubtedly come before now. I hope to return to Glasgow in a fortnight, and must then apply closely to the finishing my *Historical Collections*. I have not been quite idle since I came away, having concluded my extracts from your *Journals*, and marked out some passages in the *Kilsyth Narrative*² to be extracted. You did well to put me in mind of that blemish of expressing one's self as if we would confine God either to work in *one manner* only, or only among those of our *own opinion*. I am resolved, when I meet with expressions of this sort, to leave them out; and I intend also, according to my present light, to leave out any unnecessary touches upon controverted points that are not fundamental. When I designedly deviate from this rule it will be matter of conscience with me. And I know in that case you will have me excused. But I hope there shall be nothing inserted in my book to give uneasiness to any who think as you do upon the necessity of mutual forbearance. For I have learned that the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.³

I have a letter from good Mr. [William] Grimshaw at Haworth, 26th of July, wherein he says, 'Good Mr. Wesley acquainted me with your undertaking. I promised to send you an account of the birth and progress of the work in these parts, which I will do. But I wait the assistance of two or three fellow-labourers in it, whom the Redeemer was pleased to send forth as the first instruments of it here. Then you shall have it.' But he would have me suspend the printing of it till next year (I suppose he means for a year to come), that more subscriptions may be procured, and that I may obtain a more perfect relation of the work of God in England, which I may perhaps lament the want of when it is too late if I precipitate the press.

I exceedingly love the honest Christian spirit that runs through his letter, but am not sure how far he judged right in advising a delay of printing. I know you was of a different mind. If you have not seen reason to alter your opinion, I beg you will write soon, that I may write to Mr. Grimshaw the necessity of being expeditious; and I wish you would also take the trouble to write to him, that I may get the accounts he speaks of against February or March next, for I hope by that time to be advanced in printing to that part of the book.

Let me beseech you, dear sir, to take such care of your life and health, as they may probably be most instrumental for the glory of our Redeemer, in gaining souls to him. O when shall I get that divine ἔλεγχος⁴ you mention, in my own soul! The other day I fasted and prayed (if I may call it prayer) all day in the fields; but a body of death still cleaves to me. I fear I have not yet got the gift of the Holy Ghost. I know not what to do. I sometimes think I should be happy to be in some wilderness in America; to begin the world anew; to forget and be forgotten; to have none but God to converse with; digging for my daily

¹Neither of these letters is known to survive.

²James Robe, *A Faithful Narrative of the Extraordinary Work of the Spirit of God at Kilsyth* (London: Mason, 1742–43).

³See Rom. 14:17.

⁴'Evidence or conviction' (of faith). See *Farther Appeal*, Pt. I, I.4 (*Works*, 11:106–07), to which passage Gillies may have been referring.

bread. But is not this desire of solitude, or of absence from all former acquaintances, a vain thought (as you observe in your *Journal*), unless I could fly from my wretched, vile self? I am vexed with perplexing thoughts; for what if Satan may have some hand in them, to keep me from appearing publicly for my Redeemer? The Lord help me, that I may not deceive myself. I deserve to be utterly lost. But O that he should show me what it is that separates my soul from him, that it might be destroyed, and that I might know he is my God in Christ. This, this is all I want. Dear Mr. Wesley, continue to pray for

Your most unworthy, but affectionate brother and servant,

John Gillies

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 20 (1797), 511–12.⁵

⁵Transcription republished in *Works*, 26:513–14. The letter is also published (by T. E. B.) in *WHS* 14 (1923): 38–40; but it is unclear whether he is drawing on a manuscript source.

From Edward Perronet

Wakefield
Monday, October 1, 1753

Dear Sir,

Did I not begin to cease from man, etc., at almost everything I meet with, I should wonder at not hearing anything (scarcely *of* and not) at all *from* you for e'en nigh these four months together. I have wrote to you twice since I received yours—once directly by way of answer to that, and then in another of Mr. Hanson's,¹ but I can hear nothing either of *you* or *them*. I hope you will favour me with a line soon to Grimsby, where I suppose, if I live, I should land tomorrow sevensnight, once mo[re] to visit *that* round, and then (Why not for once?) to turn my back upon Lincolnshire.

I have just seen your new *Dictionary*,² and find heavy faults with it. First, the levity of the Preface. Secondly, your having put down a hundred such words that I believe are new, Xenodochium³ for one—and leaving out others of the very same *originals*, and which are more frequently used, and that by *yourself*, etc., as *plerophory*,⁴ for [instance]. I am, in haste and much respect,

Affectionately yours,

E. P.

[[Your brother is set off with John Hutchinson and his sister for Bristol.⁵ O why are not you all at one another's elbow? What but an enemy can ever keep you thus asunder for so long together?

Why would you not send the letter you promised to Leeds? What can you think those to whom you promised it will think and say about it? For my part I hardly know how to show my face amongst them there. Do, I pray you, transmit it the first opportunity. Remember your word and honour is at stake.

My respects to Mrs. [Mary] Wesley. Why do I hear nothing from her? Pray what have I done afresh? I hear she writes to others. Why not to me?]]

Address: 'To / The Revd. Mr. John Wesley / in / London'.

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/502/1/52.⁶

¹This may be Perronet's misspelling of John Hampson, currently an itinerant.

²Wesley's *Dictionary* was published by Strahan in July 1753.

³Defined by Wesley, 'an inn, an hospital'.

⁴Wesley inserted 'plerophory' in his annotated copy, but forgot to define it in the enlarged 2nd edn. (1764).

⁵Isabella ("Bell") Hutchinson was born in 1725 to Timothy and Mary Hutchinson.

⁶Written by Perronet on mostly blank verso of copy of letter to Whitefield, May [28], 1753. The writing is very difficult to transcribe with certainty, and the order of the three sections in Byrom's shorthand obscured because they are written in odd places. This transcription published in *Works*, 26:524.

From William Atkinson¹

[Plymouth] Dock
November 20, 1753

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Last Sabbath day, by conversing with brother Lucas² concerning the state of the church, I saw more necessity than ever of such persons to assist in this great work as were possessed with a real desire for the good of souls, and who would be faithful to God and you. And I must acknowledge I felt my heart sensibly concerned for you, and the great charge that you are engaged in.

Now I am clearly convinced, 'This work is of God.' Therefore I judge it is my duty to assist in an affair of so great importance according to the utmost of the ability which God has or may give me.

Well, then, do you think I could be in any degree useful in a public way? I am very sensible of my inability for so great work as the ministry; yet I find a sort of constraint to offer myself to do what I can, supposing it were only 'the keeping the people together' or 'the doing anything towards regulating what is amiss in any of the societies whither I went'.

My flesh indeed is ready to fail while I am writing to you, and 'tis with no small difficulty that I have broke silence; yet I cannot help questioning myself thus: What is my one business in this world? Why, 'to recover the favour and image of God'. Now in what state of life can I have the best opportunity in doing this? I think in the work and manner above proposed. For God has entrusted me with one talent, and I know not how I shall give up my account with joy if I lay it not out to the best advantage.

Now, notwithstanding what I have wrote, there is still an obstacle which I must mention to you; and that is a prudent care of my wife. Wherefore I think if the wisdom of God sees fit to call me to this great work, he will point out some place where she may live most to the glory of God. I have thought, if she could have the opportunity of being in some Christian friend's house where she might have her meat for what she could do by her needle or otherwise, it might answer well. As to clothes, a little occasionally with what she has would serve a great while.

My sister I propose putting to a mantua-maker, where after two years she will be capable of providing for herself. I would now, if you please, desire your answer speedily on this important affair, beseeching you to give me your best advice, and not to be unmindful of me in your prayers.

I cannot conclude without returning you our thanks for your letter; and also a word or two of the goodness of God towards us. Since brother [John] Trembath has been with us many appear to be deeply convinced of sin, and numbers of the truth of the doctrine. We have also been favoured with several opportunities of preaching in our new room. And God has witnessed to his truth; for one has received the remission of her sins, and many have been abundantly blessed, myself being no small sharer herein. We seem now to be much in earnest, and a good harmony among us. The predestinarians are more than ever fond of themselves, for we can hardly be favoured with the sight of one of them. Brother Jane³ is a new man! And I believe Mr. Calvin is quite out of favour with him now. He is quite in earnest in our cause, and his sister is deeply convinced of sin. Brother Daw has acted Mr. Reily⁴ over again! Let him not meet with Alexander the coppersmith's reward!

¹William Atkinson (fl. 1750–65) was a native of Plymouth Dock, Devon, who worked as one of JW's assistants in the Foundery book room in London in the 1750s. He returned to Devon in the early 1760s and gave leadership in Methodist building activity there.

²This is likely Richard Lucas (d. 1774), who was just entering itinerant ministry. His first appearance in Conference records was in 1754 (see *Works*, 10:269 n945); he served through about 1765, appearing in the Minutes thereafter as a recipient from the retired minister's fund (see *ibid.*, 402).

³Possibly Nehemiah Jane, later a leader of the society at Plymouth Dock (see JW, *Journal*, Aug. 20, 1780, *Works*, 20:183–84).

⁴Possibly James Relly, a proponent of Calvinism in a form that leaned to antinomianism.

I conclude your sincere and affectionate friend,

William Atkinson

P. S. My spouse⁵ with all our friends join in much affection to you and Mrs. [Mary] Wesley. I wrote to Mr. [William] Briggs for some of the [*Christian*]*Library* with other tracts, but have never had any account. We are in great need of some of the sm⟨all⟩ tracts to disperse about, for many are catching at ⟨any⟩thing. Where is brother [Edward] Perronet?

Address: 'To / The Revd. Mr J. Wesley / at the Foundery near / upper moor Fields / London'.

Postmarks: 'PLY / MOUTH' and '23/NO'. *Charge:* '4'.

Endorsement: by JW, 'Will. Atkinson / Nov. 20, 1753 / a[nswere]d 24'.

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/610/1.⁶

⁵Ann Hide married William Atkinson in Plymouth, Devon in 1748.

⁶Transcription published in *Works*, 26:531–32.

From the Rev. George Whitefield¹

Bristol
December 3, 1753

Reverend and Very Dear Sir,

If seeing you so weak when leaving London distressed me, the news and prospect of your approaching dissolution hath quite weighed me down. I pity myself and the church, but not you—a radiant throne awaits you, and ere long you will enter into your Master's joy. Yonder he stands with a massy crown, ready to put it on your head amidst an admiring throng of saints and angels. But I, poor I, that have been waiting for my dissolution these nineteen years, must be left behind to grovel here below! Well, this is my comfort: it cannot be long ere the chariots will be sent even for worthless me. If prayers can detain them, even you, reverend and very dear sir, shall not leave us yet. But if the decree is gone forth that you must now fall asleep in Jesus, may he kiss your soul away, and give you to die in the embraces of triumphant love! If in the land of the living, I hope to pay my last respects to you next week. If not, reverend and very dear sir, F-a-r-e-w-e-l-l. *I prae, sequar, etsi non passibus aequis.*² My heart is too big, tears trickle down too fast, and you, I fear, [are] too weak for me to enlarge. Underneath you may there be Christ's everlasting arms. I commend you to his never-failing mercy, and am, reverend and very dear sir,

Your most affectionate, sympathizing, and afflicted younger brother in the gospel of our common Lord,

G. W.

Sources: published transcriptions; *AM* 2 (1779): 318, collated with Whitefield, *Works*, 3:44–45.³

¹JW's apparent recovery from a serious illness in Oct. 1753 was followed within a few weeks by an illness so desperate that on Nov. 26 he composed his own epitaph (as having 'died of a consumption'). He intermittently gained a little strength, but not for four months was he able to preach again, on Mar. 26, 1754—a convalescence which he used to good effect by working on his *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament*.

²'Go before; I will follow after, though not with matching steps.' A combination of two quotations, from Terence (*The Lady of Andros*, 172, and *The Eunuch*, 908), and Virgil (*Aeneid*, ii.724).

³Titled in *AM*: 'On the apparent approach of his dissolution'. Transcription published in *Works*, 26:532–33.

From the Rev. Henry Venn¹

Breadstreet, opposite the Three Cups, Cheapside [London]
March 21 [1754]

Dear Sir,

Very shortly, if nothing unforeseen prevent, I am to be placed in a cure near this city, where all the power of the Spirit of God is especially needful to keep me from falling; and the most pressing exhortations of every believer wanted to stir me up to diligence and labour.

And as I have often experienced your words to be as thunder to my drowsy soul, I presume, though a stranger, to become a petitioner, begging you would send me a *personal* charge to take heed, to feed the flock committed unto me. Which will be more agreeable if you will found it on that declaration of the great apostle [Paul] concerning his inward frame whilst he was engaged in the work of the gospel at Corinth. As our commentators are most wretchedly blind in explaining this Scripture, I would fain see the ground of his *weakness* and *fear*, and *much* trembling, set forth in your strong manner. This will prove, I hope, a very substantial service to me, and be esteemed an inestimable favour.

And if you consider, most excellent sir, the various snares a *curate* is exposed to; either to palliate the doctrines of the gospel, or to make treacherous allowances to the rich and great; or at least to sit down well satisfied with doing the least more than the best amongst the idle shepherds. If you consider these things, you will not, I hope, condemn this letter a(s) impertinently interrupting you in your no(ble) employment, or think one hour lost in complying with its request. It is the request of one who though he differs from you, and possibly ever may in some points, yet must ever acknowledge the benefit and light he has received from your works and preaching—and therefore is bound to thank the Lord of the harvest for sending a labourer amongst us so much endued with the spirit and power of Elias, and to pray for your continuance long amongst us to encourage me and my brethren by your example, whilst you edify us by your writings. I am, sir,

Your feeble brother in Christ,

H. Venn

Address: 'To the Reverend Mr John Wesley / at Bristol'.

Postmark: '26/MR'. *Frank:* 'H. free Sydenham'.

Endorsement: by JW, 'Mr Venn / March 21, 1754'.

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/610/120.²

¹Henry Venn (1725–97) received his BA from Jesus College, Cambridge in 1746, and MA from Queen's College in 1749. Mirroring these degrees, Venn was ordained deacon in 1747 and priest in 1749. After brief curacies in Cambridgeshire and Surrey, Venn accepted the curacy of Clapham in 1754. During his time there he was drawn into the evangelical wing of the Church of England and became close with JW, George Whitefield, and Lady Huntingdon.

²Transcription published in *Works*, 26:535.

From the Rev. James Hervey¹

Weston
June 29, 1754

Dear Sir,

I have read your *Notes*; have returned them by the Northampton carrier; and transmitted such observations as occurred to my mind. I think, in general, you are too sparing of your remarks and improvements. Many expositions are too corpulent; yours are rather too lean. May the good hand of the Lord be with them, and with their author!

Bengelius likewise is returned, with thanks for the use of that valuable book.² Please to present my affectionate respects to Mr. Charles, and desire him, if he has done with Vitranga,³ to send it by the same conveyance as brings your parcel. Let me beg to be remembered in your prayers and in his, that I may not dishonour the relation of, dear sir,

Your friend and brother in Christ,

Jams. Hervey

I have very little acquaintance; no interest at all; on which account you will expect from me no other subscription than my own.

Address: 'To / The Revd. Mr. Wesley / at the Foundery / London'.

Postmark: '1/IY'. *Charge:* '3'.

Endorsement: by JW, 'Mr Hervey / June 29, 1754 / a[nswere]d July 3'.

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/610/75.⁴

¹Wesley's convalescence after his severe illness of Oct.–Dec. 1753, was utilized for preparing the first draft of his *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament*, which he began to transcribe on Mar. 19, 1754. He then sent copies around to several friends, seeking helpful comments, corrections, and additions. This is the response from his former Oxford colleague, James Hervey.

²JW had loaned Hervey one of the books of Johann Albrecht Bengel, (1687–1752), most likely *D. Io. Alberti Bengelii Gnomon Novi Testamenti: in quo ex nativa verborum vi simplicitas, profunditas, concinnitas, salubritas sensuum coelestium indicatur* (Tübingen: H. Philip Schram, 1742).

³It is unclear which of several books by Campegius Vitringa (1659–1722) Hervey had loaned to CW, but he had a major commentary on Isaiah that would surely have been of interest.

⁴Transcription published in *Works*, 26:538–39.

From Thomas Walsh¹

Foundery [London]
August 17, 1754

Reverend and Dear Sir,

The reason why I am not 'as serious as sister Aspernell'² is, not because I do not bear so high a character, but because I am not so high in the grace of God. There is no moment wherein I am not serious and circumspect, but I am condemned by my conscience, or reproved by the Spirit of God. There are three or four persons that alarm and entice my natural propensity to levity. You, sir, are one, by your 'witty proverbs'. However, I praise God at this present time that I have power over my own spirit. And I heartily thank you, sir, for your kind and seasonable reproof; and the more so because I find no one besides you that uses great plainness of speech in telling me what is unbecoming in my conversation. I desire sincerely to do all the perfect and acceptable will of the Lord. And as much as in me lies I desire to be subject to your direction, and conformable to your example. My natural will is stubborn. I have taken up arms against it. Whether I shall overcome and receive the crown, God only knows.

I have been employed in visiting the classes this week. Mr. Matthews³ says they meet as well as usual. Some are alive to God. Many are strangers to the power of godliness. There is much need still to preach 'repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ'.⁴ I have hitherto spoke plainly and largely to those I met. My soul has not been ruffled at all, nor do I apprehend that many have taken offence at my manner of speaking. When I have finished I can give a more perfect account. We stand in great need of help. We must give up more places, or else disappoint the people. We pray for the health of your body and the comfort of your soul. Pray for us, and advise us.

I am, reverend and honoured sir,

Your dutiful son,

Thomas Walsh

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 20 (1798): 360–61.⁵

¹Thomas Walsh (1730–59) was the son of an Irish carpenter, and raised Roman Catholic. He was gifted in language study and for a while operated a school. Initially contemplating the priesthood, Walsh came to doubt some teachings of the Church of Rome. In this time of questioning he found spiritual assurance among the Methodists. In 1750 he met JW, who convinced him to become a travelling preacher. Over the next nine years he would serve mainly in Ireland, but with stints in England and Wales as well.

²Bilhah Aspernell (d. 1774) was a leader of a band for single women at the Foundery in London from Apr. 1742, and member of the Select Society from Dec. 1743. She is frequently mentioned in JW's diary, and he performed her burial service on Jan. 28, 1774 (JW, *Journal, Works*, 22:397).

³John Matthews (d. 1764) was a London supporter of JW, who 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).

⁴Acts 20:21.

⁵Transcription republished in *Works*, 26:539.

From Mrs. Lefevre¹

[London]

c. August 27, 1754

Dear Sir,

Your answer to my question on what is the proper foundation of our rejoicing in temporal blessings is perfectly satisfactory, and I thank you for it. What you say of Mr. P—'s tract² is just what I wanted; possibly some fit season may be given me to make a good use of it. One would imagine that if singleness of eye and sincerity of heart were really found in all those of our ministers who in a measure preach the gospel, there would scarce be room left even for the shadow of a dispute. But this is only imagination, for I cannot help observing some, for whose sincerity I would answer with my life, that are far from being consistent long together.

I have lately been attacked with a might pretty distinction (and from my ignorance a new one to me) in respect of the doctrine of assurance of forgiveness of sin. Mr. — says it is of the *essence of faith*; but most of the old Puritans, together with a heap of great names (of which I remember not one) say it is of the fruits of faith. A poor weak woman, who has not learned logic, may be easily puzzled with the nicety of a logical distinction, but still I could plainly see, that let it be essence or fruits, there was a manifest necessity for enforcing the doctrine; because a tree which brings not forth its proper fruits is a barren tree. A faith which bring not forth its proper fruits is a dead faith, and consequently unprofitable.

The answer is, 'A tree may be alive, and yet not bring forth fruit immediately.'

Well, but this makes nothing against the necessity there is that it *should* bring forth fruit in order to make it a profitable tree.

But then we have a homily to fly to: 'The homily on salvation says nothing of assurance.'

If the homily contradicts St. Paul, the homily is nothing to me.

'O, you won't refer it to that because it makes against you.'

I do not so much as know what is in it.

'It only says a *sure trust* and *confidence*.'

I think a 'sure confidence' is nearly the same thing with assurance.

'No, they are very different.'

Now, sir, you must be so good to furnish me with two or three of your strong arguments to pull down this Babel tower which *our friends* are building. I should also be glad if you would tell me by what happy art you are always *consistent* in doctrine, as well as practice—for I can find no one else that is so.

Difference of opinion I regard not; I could enjoy fellowship of spirit with a truly sincere predestinarian, papist, or Quaker. Inconsistency is the thing alone which hurts me. When I find this in people who I know to be in so much higher a state of grace than myself, and whom I love and honour, it disquiets me I own by far too much, and my soul, like Noah's dove, flies solitary about and finds no place to rest on the face of the whole earth; till at last with one olive-leaf, and *only one*, she returns joyful to the ark.

¹Little biographical evidence is available upon Mrs. Lefevre (c. 1723–56). CW wrote two poems on her death on July 6, 1756; the second implied that she was thirty-three years old. Scattered clues indicate that she had been converted and had become a Methodist only two or three years earlier. Of her character and spirituality, however, there is ample evidence. John Fletcher testified, 'She lived a saint and died an angel'. In his poems CW described her as 'a spotless soul, a sinless saint, in perfect love renewed', and JW spoke of her as 'a dove-like woman, full of faith and humble love, and harmless as a little child'. After her death, ninety of her devout letters were published by her husband, and although all names were suppressed it seems clear that five of these were to JW. Twelve years later JW reprinted fifty-five of the ninety, together with one further letter to him.

²Possibly one of the Revd. Vincent Perronet's numerous pamphlets.

Give me leave, sir, to entreat of you (if you should have a little time to spare) that you will just point out to me, first, what are the probable causes of this inconsistency in those who have truly sincerity of heart and singleness of eye. Secondly, what is the most probable means of curing this distemper of the mind. And, thirdly, how I may avoid falling into it myself and keep my soul from being disquieted when I find it in those whom I highly esteem.

I hope God continues to preserve to us your precious health, and that your long journeys may be a means of strengthening and establishing it. I doubt not but the work of the Lord prospers in your hands, and that you will have much reason to rejoice in the fruit of your labours. How happy are you to be always thus employed in such eminent service for your Master. You live almost the life of an unembodied spirit; and I live nearly the life of a *plant*. But thank God, it is absolutely certain that this immortal spirit of mine, which is thus pressed in on every side and weighed down with matter, will some time burst its bonds and break the bars of its prison; and then, how it will soar! Nothing sure can equal the life, the joy, the glorious liberty, which a spirit must feel when first delivered from its heavy clog!

Farewell! May our dear Redeemer continually watch over you, and bless you in every thought, word, and action! I am, etc.

* *

Source: published transcription; Lefevre, *Letters*, 156–60 (JW, *Extract*, 87–89).³

³Abridged version published in *Works*, 26:540.

From Mrs. Lefevre

[London]
September 17, [1754]

Dear Sir,

How shall I find words to thank you for your sweet expressions of care and friendship for my soul? Ten thousand thousand blessings on your own for this kindness. I hope I may in *one* sense say that my soul prospers, because I desire nothing but that the will of God may be done in me and by me. But I have not at present those sensible comforts and overflowings of joy I have at some times experienced. The cries of a sickly infant, which touch all the finest springs of human nature, cast a kind of heaviness over my soul; and the perpetual and strict watch I am obliged to keep over my heart, for fear the least murmuring or complaining thought should arise in it (which I would rather die than suffer) seem rather to restrain my soul from the glorious freedom she once had of losing herself in the heights and depths of divine love.—

O blessed hours of abstraction from all creatures, and joyful communion with the fountain and centre of all happiness, when will ye return? When it is the will of my heavenly Father that you should return; and in that divine will I rest contented, willing, nay pleased, to suffer anything, everything, so I may be kept from sin. I have lately had inward temptations buzzing about my mind like insects in a summer's day; but by looking to Jesus I as easily disperse them as the waving hand disperses those little troublesome animals; and thanks to my Redeemer's boundless mercy I still enjoy in my inmost soul a peace which I would not lose for millions of worlds. But I greatly want constant recollection, and a mortified, humble spirit. You know the weight your words have with me; give me, I beg of you, some directions for obtaining this. I cannot take my leave without thanking you again and again for inquiring after my soul. Oh, how dearly do I love you for this goodness. May the tender mercies of God be with you! May the eternal Comforter meet and bless you in every word of your tongue, and in every thought of your heart!

Your ever-grateful and affectionate,

* *

Source: published transcription; Lefevre, *Letters*, 160–62 (JW, *Extract*, 89–90).¹

¹Transcription republished in *Works*, 26:541.

Unidentified Correspondent to the *Gazetteer and London Daily Advertiser*¹

c. December 15, 1754

A Copy of a Letter sent by a Gentleman in the Country, to His Friend in Town

Dear Sir,

I doubt not but you have heard of, and perhaps may have seen, a pamphlet lately published entitled *The Moravians Compared and Detected*.² I have dipped into it and, to say the truth, the author has taken care to prevent my doing more. However, several reflections have naturally occurred which I take the liberty to send you, as a person to whom I may freely herein open my mind.

First, the things laid to their charge seem almost too bad to be true. If they were so enthusiastically and abandonly wicked upon principle as they are represented to be, some traces thereof would have been perceived in their countenance, and in many parts of their conduct.

Again, why has no man hitherto asked publicly of these people, 'Do you make use of this or that expression?' 'What do *you* mean by these words?' 'Are your ideas and opinions or practices with regard to this, and this, and this point such as are laid to your charge?' I have seen in the Moravian books several offers to explain and give an account of any passages in their writings or practices which might come in question. I remember also to have seen in the newspapers some months ago an advertisement signed James Hutton dated from Lindsey House, wherein, declining paper war, offers were made to answer any questions which should be made them about their matters.

Surely in this country, where liberty of conscience is so firmly established no man need be backward to own his principles, there may indeed be many a man unwilling to answer unless modestly and decently called upon.

I have been told by one of these very Moravians that their people have been every day in expectation that some lover of truth or other, some humane decent writer, would put publicly such questions to them, drawn out and containing the principal points in the writings against them. By this method they hoped a solid end would shortly be made of the controversy. Especially if this were done during the life or leisure of Count Zinzendorf, against whom the principal attacks are leveled—who could answer whether the passages themselves, in the writings in question, were his or not; and could best and most authentically fix the true meaning of his own words, so at least as to leave no room for future misunderstanding.

I cannot help observing that it is pity that wherever in any case malice, party-spirit, or personal interest find proper to invent and spread calumny and abuse, it is not only greedily swallowed down by all persons of a similar stamp but it readily finds credit with the yawning and indolent part of mankind, who grudge to give themselves the trouble of inquiring into the bottom of what they hear, or of stirring to protect injured innocence or of rescuing the characters of even the most worthy persons.

Source: published transcription; *Gazetteer and London Daily Advertiser* (Dec. 19, 1754), p. 1.

¹While this letter is not publically addressed to JW (the possibility that he is the 'friend' in London cannot be ruled out), it clearly served as a stimulus for JW preparing for publication *Queries Humbly Proposed to the Right Reverend and Right Honourable Count Zinzendorf* (*Works*, 14:91–114). See also the letter of James Hutton dated Dec. 31, 1754 below.

²George Lavington, *The Moravians Compared and Detected* (London: Knapton, 1755).

From Mrs. Lefevre

[London]
December 25, 1754

Dear Sir,

May this blessed day in which the Sun of righteousness first arose on our dark world bring a new accession of light, and peace, and joy to *your* precious soul! May the *power* of God accompany every word you utter, and give you this day to enlarge your conquests over the prince of darkness. O give my full heart leave to expand itself in praying for you, in blessing you, and in thanking you for your surprising goodness to me. No, never shall you find *me* ungrateful; *that* God in whom alone I trust for strength will preserve me from falling into this *meanest* of all crimes.

I shall not, I fear, have the delightful satisfaction of hearing you tomorrow,¹ and therefore could not forbear writing today; besides, I am by illness prevented attending the public worship of God, so that I have need of this comfort. Everything has succeeded here beyond my hopes; your presence has greatly dispelled every cloud of prejudice, and fear of man. In short, when I consider the goodness of God, and my own absolute unworthiness, I am lost in astonishment. Dear sir, pray that I may make a proper improvement of all these blessings, and particularly of that *exceeding* great blessing, your friendship. O sir, may I *indeed* say *your* friendship? The Lord Jesus bless and reward you! Expression fails me when I would thank you as I ought, and tell how much I am

Your ever obliged and affectionate,

* *

Source: published transcription; Lefevre (JW, *Extract*, 86–87).²

¹On Thursday, Dec. 26, 1754, JW preached at the Spitalfields Chapel on Ps. 81:1.

²This is the one letter added by JW in *Extract* to those in Lefevre, *Letters* (1757). Transcription republished in *Works*, 26:546–47.

From the Rev. John Gillies

[Glasgow, Scotland?]

[December 30, 1754]

⟨...¹⟩ one of your letters, of this doubled stroke, has (I trust) proved true; that he himself has become my light and my comfort. O help me to praise him. I feel a great deal of what some will call melancholy. The world is more and more a wilderness to me, but I love to pour out my heart to Jesus, and find relief and sweet peace in so doing. The only thing for which I would desire to remain longer here is that I may yet by his almighty grace be made a real saint, and may be instrumental in his hand of bringing in others. I earnestly beg your prayers, very dear sir, that these desires may be granted.

Pray let me know how your health is. Dr. Russel[I] in Truro writes that you are spitting blood. I hope it is the effect of some more transient ailment. He writes also that you are got the length of the Galatians in your Notes on the New Testament. May the Lord long preserve you, and succeed your labours more and more. I am, reverend and very dear sir,

Yours most affectionately,

John Gillies

Address: 'To / The Reverend / Mr John Wesley / at the Foundery near / Upper Moor Fields / London'.

Endorsement: by JW, 'Mr Gillies / Dec. 30: 1754 / a[nswere]d Jan. 18'.

Source: holograph; MARC, WCB, D6/1/200 (imperfect).²

¹The opening section of the letter is missing.

²Transcription published in *Works*, 26:547.

From James Hutton¹

December 31, 1754

*To the friends and well-wishers of the Moravians,
into whose hands the writings of their adversaries may have fallen.*

Gentlemen,

[1.] I am told several of you are somewhat impatient that the Moravians have hitherto published no direct answer to any of the several pamphlets wrote against them in this country, and that you wish they would at last resolve to answer, because you are at a loss what to reply when their adversaries cry out against them in all companies that they have nothing to answer and that their silence must be taken for confession.²

[2.] It is for your sakes gentlemen, that I set pen to paper, who are not fond of finding the Moravians guilty without trial, and who take no pleasure in the abuses thrown out upon them, but who it seems begin yourselves to be almost staggered that so little answer is given to the many crying accusations against them.

[3.] I should look upon myself as very idly employed if I should take any steps for the sake of their determined enemies (who—to a man—are all of them so without cause), as the innocence of the Moravians, their usefulness to society, and the benefit they are of to every country where they settle has been proved by facts incontestable and so manifest to all about them (and to those who take any pains to enquire) as to render all apology for them with regard to their being good subjects absolutely needless; and as the sermons and maxims and other books of theirs published in our language, which every reader can turn to, are the best refutation of all the charges against their doctrine and principles.

[4.] Is it not, therefore, upon these considerations, much more advisable for such peaceable, orthodox, innocent, and praise-worthy people, who are assured that thousands of sensible and worthy persons are convinced of their innocence, to bear with patience and the comforts of a good conscience the scoff and laughter of rash and credulous people, the ill will of malevolent and party spirits, the detestation of all hypocrites, and the sure and settled hatred of all those who are no friends to a religion they live by—who have a *cause* to maintain, which as yet they dare not openly avow, thought they are making all possible preparations to remove all obstacles to it; viz., *The overthrow of every doctrine which distinguishes Christianity from other religions, and the introducing in the stead and place of Christianity something else.*

[5.] Is it not, I say, better for the Moravians to bear than to give themselves any trouble at all to clear their characters to such, with whom it should be their glory to have no fellowship or receive any sort of countenance from?

‘His favour may I enjoy who was crucified under Pontius Pilate . . .’ (Ignatius Martyred)

[6.] I suppose you may have heard of a principle practised by the Moravians, which is never to answer any book wrote against them which has the sanctions or protection of their superiors in any country where they dwell. The defeat of antagonists often carrying along with it a certain degree of reflection upon the protection they had unadvisedly met with, it may possibly happen that such superiors may look upon their honour in danger of suffering and may thus become actual parties in the cause against them, who before were only credulous listeners to their antagonists.

¹While not addressed specifically to JW, Wesley replied to this letter in a preface to his *Queries Humbly Proposed to the Right Reverend and Right Honourable Count Zinzendorf* (Works, 14:91–114).

²See the specific appeal in ‘A Copy of a Letter sent by a Gentleman in the Country, to His Friend in Town’ *Gazetteer and London Daily Advertiser* (Dec. 19, 1754), p. 1 (and above).

[7.] As it has been publicly asserted in the German and English newspapers, and never contradicted, that the German writer against the Moravians in this country has met with such a protection for which they have too much respect to be prevailed upon by any treatment, provocation, or challenges, how often soever repeated, to attack (and put to open shame, as I know would infallibly be the consequence of their beginning to take him in hand); so I think they must be left undisturbed to follow that maxim of theirs with regard to that German, and pass by his writings without any direct notice.³

[8.] As to the book that Mr. Whitefield has wrote in the hurry of a zealot against them,⁴ they may probably find that as he has already had the grace to retract upon better information some of his rash and hasty proceedings and expressions in other matters, so he will look upon it as an honour received to himself to make the proper remarks one day or another on his own book, as soon as he has hearkened to the true state of things about which he wrote upon partial and false information in so hasty a manner.

[9.] The author of *The Moravians Compared and Detected*,⁵ being more abusive, vulgar, and low-witted than any poor dull German or Dutch libeller, of them all can expect of no gentleman that he will enter the lifts with him, or that any serious good person or sincere Christian can suppose it necessary to pay any attention to what he has wrote.

[10.] As, then, one of the writers against them has such a protection that they decline meddling with him, as another will probably be his own best answer, and as the third is so indecent a writer to deserve any answer, is nothing to be done in this controversy by the Moravians, and are all mankind to be left in this uncertainty about them?

[11.] Now though I might very well imagine that the sermons and maxims, etc., in English had showed positively what the Moravians' doctrines were and were not, that so many thousand witnesses to their character and good lives had been sufficient to put to shame all such stuff as has been related of them, and that what had been published by them since the controversy against them in this country began had left them very little still to do in order to give a proper idea what sort of people they are.

[12.] I can let you know, gentlemen, that a stranger to them [i.e., Wesley] is, as I am told, at this time busied in summing up the charge against the Moravians which he finds in the pamphlets against them—by reducing of which points into the form of queries at an examination, he hopes to get plain, positive and categorical answers,⁶ which is the very method the Moravians have so repeatedly desired, in order to enable them to give a reason of the hope that is in them, to which the common method of altercation in theological controversies bears no sort of resemblance.

[13.] I am glad that at last somebody will be so much concerned for the truth as to make at least some inquiry, for are not the charges against the Moravians of such a nature as to render an indolent indifference whether they are true or fake almost unpardonable? And should any man be listened to for a moment who would have the assurance to persuade the world before he has seen the queries, and their answers, that they will not come to the point.

[14.] I hope the gentleman will obtain what he desires, although with regard to controversy these particulars in the Moravians must be remembered and observed:

³Hutton is referring to Henry Rimius, *A Candid Narrative of the Rise and Progress of the Herrnhuters, Commonly Called Moravians, or Unitas Fratrum* (London: Printed for A. Linde, 1753); and Rimius, *A Solemn Call on Count Zinzendorf, the Author, and Advocate of the Sect of Herrnhuters* (London: Printed for A. Linde, 1754).

⁴George Whitefield, *An Expostulatory Letter addressed to Nicolas Lewis, Count Zinzendorff, and Lord Advocate of the Unitas Fratrum* (London: Keith & Oswald, 1753).

⁵George Lavington, *The Moravians Compared and Detected* (London: Knapton, 1755 [though actually published in Dec. 1754]).

⁶See JW, *Queries Humbly Proposed to the Right Reverend and Right Honourable Count Zinzendorf* (*Works*, 14:91–114).

1) That faults laid to their charge they will sooner own and lay aside than themselves produce a recital of their good and great deeds—although the relating but one or two of them would show that 500 evil stories raised against them cannot possibly be true.

2) That neither can they venture to lay before the eyes of everybody indiscriminately (what they never decline doing before the persons whom it concerns to know their matters, the government under whom they live) the whole state of their situation everywhere. Nothing having supported them against their persecutors in power in all places but the mighty hand of God and their actual innocence—and the utter impossibility of proving any of the crimes laid to their community upon any strict inquiry, in any country where the facts are laid.

Some persons may take it for a want of good manners for a people to be always glorying in this, that their innocence in every place where it has been examined into has appeared to a demonstration upon the severest scrutiny.

And experience has shown the Moravians that it would be the most imprudent thing they can do for them to specificate so often the many instances thereof. For they have so many adversaries who give up their waking hours to contrive and excite all sorts of iniquitous proceedings against them (Isa. 29:20), and who can as little rest when they are in bed for the mischief they are devising there against them (Ps. 36:4). Who should no sooner get an account of their favourable situation in any place than they would earnestly seek all opportunities directly to excite them troubles there, and would not stick at any pains, though it should lead them to the most distant parts of the world, to the farthest end of Asia, Africa, or America, as well as to the remotest corners of Europe, to compass it. And who to that end not only load the press with writings against them, but begin and carry on lying and malicious correspondence against them, wherever either the general or penny-post, or any ships of any nation, can carry their packets of false intelligence and base insinuations.

If the Moravians are desirous, therefore, of being at peace in any corner of the earth, they must be extremely cautious of letting their enemies know where they are, or how they are countenanced, or of laying open these matters to anybody but the proper persons.

3) That the oriental way of speaking, which was much in use with them, is very different from the western:

That they have already long ago condescended to drop much of the oriental way of speaking since they have been aware of its being so madly construed against them, and use the western way as much as they can without letting the sense suffer. And though they never comprehended the double meaning imposed upon many words by corrupt people, yet they are very earnest that the meaning they were supposed to have when they used them is detestable and most heartily detested by them all.

That many of the phrases cited against them as church doctrine or phrases are taken from books which have never been authorized by them as such, though nothing at all that has been cited has been left in its right place, without curtailing or disfiguring.

That though they may think it foreign to the purpose in this country to insist much upon it, yet those Lutherans who blame and ridicule several of the Moravian ways of [page 3] speaking either know not what they themselves sing and pray publicly in their own churches or scoff at and scorn the matters used in their own liturgies.

4) Neither will the chiefs of the Moravians be answerable for, nor themselves disclose, the faults of any persons, members of theirs, which may have been committed during the time that they were deceived by many of the several parties within the church which set themselves up against their ordinary [i.e., Zinzendorf]—parties which, though they seemed to flourish for a time, and to be near bearing sway, are all of them these several years happily extinct. The conduct our Lord recommended concerning letting the wheat and tares grow together, etc., having been followed by the principal leaders of the Moravians with unexpected good success, to the honour and praise of the mercy of Christ.

[15.] Having premised these particulars in the Moravians' method of controversy, I will only add that if that gentleman who is busied in summing up the charge against the Moravians has any regard of the impatience said to be in the public for an answer, a close on to every point, I hope he will not only take care to form his queries in such a manner that they may deserve the utmost attention, and come close to the point, but that he would use all possible speed therein. For I know the Moravians to be as willing to oblige their friends and every man with an account of the reason of the hope that is in them as any reasonable man can wish, although no considerate man can desire of them to fight with scolds, who are so great strangers to that most illiberal art.

[16.] If the Moravians, by their persisting in refusing to carry on a paper war, introduce into this country the more gentleman-like method of reducing points of controversy into close and modest queries, every person who has been shocked at the usual injustice and indecency of party writers on all sides and in all questions will be much obliged to them; and their endeavours for the peace of the nation will be as conspicuous and successful as their endeavours for its prosperity have been.

[17.] As soon as these queries are finished, the Moravians, who expect them with earnest longing, will lose no time in answering them, I dare say, to the satisfaction of all honest and thinking men.

James Hutton

Source: published transcription; *Gazetteer and London Daily Advertiser* (Jan. 4, 1755): 2–3.

From Joseph Jones

c. 1755

I was born February the 10th, 1722. My father was a member of the Church of England, and my mother was a Quaker. But my father (for the sake of having my mother) turned Quaker also. But as the way was too strait for him, in a few years he returned to his former profession and to his old course of life. This brought numberless troubles both on himself and family, which ended in extreme poverty.

After I grew up this was a great affliction to me, for I knew not what course to take to get a living. I wished to learn my father's trade, but he would not take the trouble of learning me. However, I resolved to have a trade if possible. But I could not see how, till a distant relation, a blacksmith of the same town as I was, one day blowing his bellows said, 'Joe, if thou art willing to learn my trade, I will take thee and learn thee for nothing.' I very readily accepted his offer, and was bound to him for seven years.

I continued to serve him with great satisfaction both to him and myself till I had served two years of my time; when, contracting an acquaintance with a neighbouring apprentice, we agreed to run away together and go a privateering. Accordingly we set out for Bristol, intending to get a berth on board the King William privateer. But she had sailed a few hours before we reached Bristol. In this I since saw a remarkable instance of the mercy of God towards me, as the ship was lost and all the crew perished. For had I died at this time, I had certainly been undone forever!

My design being thus frustrated, in a few days I returned to my master again, who received me kindly and treated me well. But such was the influence of the devil over me that, before I had served half the remainder of my time, I eloped again and went to Bristol, intending to work there. But I had not been there long before I was seized with a fever which had like to have cost me my life, and which left me so weak that I thought I should never recover my strength any more.

When all my money was spent, and my clothes pawned, I sent to my friends to acquaint them of my situation. In a few days my master came after me, and took out a warrant against me. And had not the mayor stood my friend, I must, in my weak and wretched situation, have gone to prison, which I most justly deserved. Having at the request of the mayor obtained leave to return, I set off that day; and with great difficulty I reached home that night, where I lay sick for ten weeks.

In this affliction I was brought to a sight of my sins, when I cried heartily to God for the pardon of them. And often when I read the psalms of David my heart melted within me. At this time, I read the Bible, and found that our Saviour forgave the sins of the people who came to him in the days of his flesh. On this I heartily wished I had lived *in those days*; for I thought I would make one of the number of those who came to him for pardon. For I never had heard, nor so much as once thought, it was possible for any one *in our days* to know his sins forgiven in this world. However as I knew a reformation was necessary, I resolved to set about the work. So I became a diligent attendant on the means of grace, and was very regular in the performance of all the outward duties of religion.

But after a while I fell again into my old sin of drunkenness. And so grievous was the fall that I was more like a fiend than a man while I was in this detested situation, for I cursed and swore, and seemed altogether like one newly come from the bottomless pit. When I came to myself, I knew not where to hide my guilty head and was greatly tempted to put an end to my wretched existence. As I now gave up all hopes of mercy, I did not dare to ask forgiveness of God; but tremblingly looked for all the fierceness of the divine displeasure! Thus finding myself under the frowns of the Almighty, and my parents not suffering me to come near them, I was driven to almost everything that was desperate; and why I did not destroy myself no one but God can tell. I have often thought that no one was ever in a worse condition on this side [of] everlasting burnings! Whether at my labour, in company, or alone, the most horrid, terrifying, and blasphemous thoughts that can be conceived had the possession of my mind.

By some means or other (I know not how) I had conceived some thoughts of the sin against the Holy Ghost. I thought if I was to commit this I should know the worst that could befall me. Thousands of temptations I had to curse the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! (which as I then conceived was the sin against the Holy Ghost).

One day as I was shoeing a horse the temptation was strong upon me, and things not going exactly to my mind, I did, as I thought, in heart consent to the suggestion of the devil. But O the terror and distress which followed for near a year and a half! I was indeed as a vagabond upon the earth, and continually expecting when the wrath of the Almighty would visibly break forth! At length I grew so hardened and insensible as to dare the Almighty to do his worst! And as I had no hope of mercy, I gave the reins to my lusts, and determined to have all the pleasure I could in this world.

In this state of mind I came out of my time, and went to work at Bitton with a very wicked man; yet one who would frequently reprove me for my intolerable wickedness. While I worked here I was sent to sharpen some collier's tools at a place about two miles from Bitton, where I saw a poor man who used to drive the engine-horses sitting in a coal shed, and went in to chat with him. While I was with him I saw a small Bible lying on an old chest, and taking it up, he said, 'Young man do you know what is in that book?' I said, 'I can read it'; and so, replied he, can many beside you who know very little of what it contains. He then asked me if I had ever heard any of Mr. Wesley's preachers? I told him I had heard Mr. [John] Cennick, but did not understand his preaching, though I thought he made one of the best prayers I ever heard in my life. But [I] told him also it mattered not what I heard or did, for I was worse than Peter who had denied Christ with oaths and curses, or Judas who betrayed his master with a kiss. At relating this my heart melted, which the poor man perceiving, said, 'Young man, if you were to hear Mr. Wesley's preachers it would be good for you.' These words, 'it would be good for you', never left me, till six or seven weeks after, when I was constrained to set out to hear the preaching at Kingswood. When I came there, I entered the house with much fear and trembling. The text was John 20:29: 'Blessed are they who have not seen and yet believe.' The preacher took occasion to show who were true believers and who were not; and to point out the happiness of the one, and the misery of the other. As he went on, I felt myself the unbeliever he described. So that when he showed the misery of the unbeliever in this world and the next, my heart so sunk within me that I could not refrain from tears. In the midst of my sorrow he said there was mercy for the vilest and worst of men, if they truly repented—for men as vile as Saul the persecutor, Magdalen the town sinner, and Manasseh, that monster of iniquity. This gave me some hope that there might be mercy for me, though I felt myself the vilest of the vile. Being encouraged by what I now heard, I determined to seek for mercy, and immediately broke off from all my sinful companions.

When I came home I was asked by my mistress how I liked the preaching? I told her that I never heard such a preacher, nor such preaching in all my life. 'O then', said she, 'you will go again wont you?' I said, 'Yes, if it please God to spare my life.' 'Ah', said she, 'I have heard many people say, if any one hears them but once, they will be sure to be bewitched by them!' I said, 'I know what I heard is the truth, and that if I die in the state I am now in, I shall surely go to hell.'

My thus turning Methodist, and persuading others to go and hear them, so incensed my master against me that in a short time I was obliged to quit my place. I then went to live in Bristol, and afterwards in Bedminster; during which time I was a diligent attendant upon the means of grace. But though I sometimes found a little relief, yet my misery increased in some sort as my light increased.

About this time I was convinced that baptism is a means of grace and a commanded duty, and shortly after was baptized by the Rev. John Wesley at the New Room. But this, as it is only an outward sign of an inward and spiritual grace, could not satisfy my soul. I still continued to hunger and thirst after righteousness, till God set my soul at liberty under the ministry of Mr. Charles Wesley.

Now I could say I *was* dead, but am alive again! I *was* lost, but am found! For the love of God was shed abroad in my heart, and I had peace and joy in believing.

Joseph Jones

From Howell Harris

Trevecka
February 14, 1755

[A copy of this letter, perhaps the original draft, remains in Harris's records, but the writing is not legible enough to attempt a confident transcription.]

Source: Harris's manuscript copy for his records; National Library of Wales, Trevecka Letters, #2122.

From Mrs. Lefevre

[London]
February 28 [1755]

I shall not forget the great reason I had to be thankful both to God and you for our *last* conversation. It seemed to me that I had more liberty of speaking to you than usual, though a thousand things were yet left unsaid; and you led me to make many observations which I hope will be of *lasting* benefit to my soul. You have taught me to see the amazing wisdom and loving-kindness of God in several instances which I should not else have thought of, and I am fully satisfied with all his disposals. Knowing he orders all things well, I cheerfully submit, and I trust that strength will be given me to walk on in the way set before me, 'though sorrowful, yet' (in one sense) 'always rejoicing'.¹

Is it not a great blessing that the thorns are mixed with roses? This is infinitely more than I deserve. How true is it that the higher satisfaction we have in anything, beside God, the greater pain must necessarily attend it? I have often been taught this lesson, in various degrees, each rising above the other; and yet I have not learnt wisdom. I who shall teach me *this* wisdom? Why you yourself can lay down most excellent rules, but it is God alone who can give me power to practice them. I plainly see the necessity of having every thought brought into subjection to Christ; it must be thus, if I would attain settled peace and constant recollection.

In your extract from Molinos² the state of mind I am seeking is well described in these words: 'The soul that is entered into the heaven of peace acknowledges itself full of God and his supernatural gifts; because it lives grounded in a *pure love*, receiving equal pleasure in light and darkness, in night and day, in *affliction* and *consolation*. Through this holy and heavenly *indifferency* it never loses its peace in *adversity*, nor its *tranquillity* in *tribulation*, but sees itself full of unspeakable enjoyments, etc.' And again, 'Though the valley of the lower faculties of the soul is suffering *tribulations, combats, martyrdoms*, and suggestions, yet at the *same time*, on the lofty mountain of the higher part of the soul, the true sun casts its beams; it inflames and enlightens it, and so it becomes clear, peaceable, resplendent, quiet, serene, being a mere ocean of joy.'

'But alas!' you will say, 'How far are *you* from this state!'

True, I am far from it indeed. And yet I have sometimes experienced some little glimmerings of it. But they have been soon disturbed, and then I have fondly said to myself, Well, when this trial, when this temptation, or difficulty, is over, I shall return to my sweet peace, and my soul will be wholly swallowed up in the love of God. Vain imagination! I think I have *now experimentally* learned a truth which before only floated in my brain, that 'the peace of a Christian does not consist in being free from temptations and difficulties, but in steadfastly and calmly conquering them'.

Once more, the Lord preserve you! Could my prayers avail anything, what blessings would you receive, in body, soul, and spirit! Oh! farewell, farewell! And when your soul is most carried up to God, remember to pray for

Your grateful and affectionate

* *

Source: published transcription; Lefevre, *Letters*, 162–64 (JW, *Extract*, 91–92).³

¹2 Cor. 6:10.

²JW included an extract of Miguel de Molinos, *The Spiritual Guide* (London: Thomas Fabian, 1688) in his *Christian Library*, 38:249–94. For the following quotes see 291–92.

³Abridged version published in *Works*, 26:551.

From Mrs. Lefevre

[London]
April 2 [1755]

Dear Sir,

I return you many thanks for writing so soon, and particularly for filling *two* sides of your paper. My soul was as much enlivened by your letter as the earth, the birds, and flowers are by the rays of the sun after a long and heavy rain. May your blessed Master reward you for all your goodness to me!

I thank God I have in some measure learned that grand lesson, 'Not as I will, but as *thou* wilt';¹ and I continually pray that he may teach it me more and more. The present idle and half-dying life I am obliged to lead greatly needs this temper of mind; and it is all the free mercy of my Redeemer that I can *now* say, His grace is sufficient for me.

In regard to temporal blessings, I have now and then a little dispute with some of my religious friends, and I want your authority to strengthen my arguments. They say, Whatever temporal blessing God gives, you are to rejoice and take a pleasure in it, as his gift. And I say, Whatever temporal blessing God bestows, the motive for your rejoicing should be *merely* the *will* of God—for if you rejoice in the blessing considered as a happiness in itself (though referring it to God with a thankful heart) you are building on the sand, and your happiness will be shaken, if not overturned, by the first storm that beats upon it. But if the *will* of God be the motive of your rejoicing, you build your happiness on a foundation which never can be moved. The present blessing, indeed, may vanish away, but your cause of rejoicing still remains sure and steadfast in time and in eternity. Some people think the *way* I am in at present a prodigious happiness, and the greatest of worldly blessings, and will ask me, 'Are you not *pleased*?' I answer, I am pleased with everything which is the will of God; and the answer is thought an odd one. But I cannot help it, I dare not make any other.

You want me to say something upon Christian love ripened in eternity. But this is a theme for angels. My soul is too low, too dull to attempt to write upon it. I can only wish and pray to be a partaker of it. Farewell. May the sweetest streams of redeeming love ever fill your soul. I am

Unalterably yours,

* *

Source: published transcription; Lefevre, *Letters*, 165–66 (JW, *Extract*, 93–94).²

¹Matt. 26:39 and parallels.

²Abridged version published in *Works*, 26:553.

From an Unidentified Correspondent¹

c. May 15, 1755

I am grieved because there are divisions in the Church; as he who should maintain the truth of the gospel, by an exemplary life, causes it to be blasphemed, and lays a stumbling-block in the way of those whom he should build up in the faith. I am grieved for the honour of God. Is not thy brother an offence to God? Is he not a stumbling-block to many? Is not the gospel blasphemed through him? Doth he love God whom he hath not seen and hate his sister, whom he hath seen?² Surely God will visit for these things. If your brother will not be reconciled to his sister, he is no disciple of Christ. Mrs. [Mary] Wesley is desirous to have peace and willing to embrace him. But if he will not, he is no child of God but an enemy to Christ. Mrs. Wesley last Sunday night desired to speak with him, and sent me to him, but he would not come to her. How was her soul grieved! She wept. She strives all she can to be at unity but if she succeeds not, it must all fall upon your brother. If an house be divided against itself, it cannot stand.³ The grief of Mrs. Wesley and the hardheartedness of your brother afflict my soul. I know Mrs. Wesley is willing to be reconciled; I will clear her.

Source: CW manuscript transcription in letter to Lady Huntingdon dated May 30, 1755; Drew, Methodist Archives.

¹The writer is discussing the current deep tension between CW and Mary (Goldhawk / Vazeille) Wesley—placing the blame on CW and defending Mary.

²See 1 John 4:20.

³See Mark 3:25.

From the Rev. Samuel Davies¹

Virginia
c. June 1755

The poor Negro slaves here never heard of Jesus or his religion till they arrived at the land of their slavery in America, whom their masters generally neglect, as though immortality was not the privilege of their souls in common with their own. These poor Africans are the principal objects of my compassion, and I think the most proper subject of your charity.

The inhabitants of Virginia are computed to be about 300,000, and the one-half of them are supposed to be Negroes. The number of these who attend on my ministry at particular times is uncertain. But I think there are about three hundred who give a stated attendance. And never have I been so much struck with the appearance of an assembly as when I have glanced my eye on one part of the house, adorned (so it has appeared to me) with so many black countenances, eagerly attentive to every word they heard, and some of them covered with tears. A considerable number of them, about an hundred, have been baptized after they had been fully instructed in the great truths of religion and had evidenced their sense of them by a life of the strictest virtue. As they are not sufficiently polished to dissemble with a good grace, they express the sensations of their hearts so much in the language of simple nature and with such genuine indications of artless sincerity that it is impossible to suspect their professions, especially when attended with a suitable behaviour.

Mr. Todd,² minister of the next congregation, has near the same number under his care. And several of them also, he informs me, discover the same seriousness. Indeed there are multitudes of them in various parts who are eagerly desirous of instruction. They have generally very little help to read; and yet, to my agreeable surprise, sundry of them, by dint of application, in their very few leisure hours, have made such a progress that they are able to read their Bible, or a plain author, very intelligibly. But few of their masters will be at the expense of furnishing them with books. I have supplied them to the utmost of my ability. They are exceedingly delighted with Watts's songs. And I cannot but observe that the Negroes, above all of the human species I ever knew, have the nicest ear for music. They have a kind of ecstatic delight in psalmody, nor are there any books they so soon learn or take so much pleasure in as those used in that heavenly part of divine worship.

Source: published extract: JW, *Journal*, July 27, 1755 (*Works*, 21:21–22).

¹Rev. Samuel Davies (1723–61) later served as president of the College of New Jersey (i.e., Princeton) from 1759–61. At this time he was an active New Light Presbyterian evangelist, building upon a nondenominational revival in Hanover County, east Virginia.

²John Todd (1719–93) had been educated at the College of New Jersey, licensed by Gilbert Tennent's Presbytery of New Brunswick, and sent to assist Davies in Virginia.

From the Rev. John Baddeley¹

Hayfield [Derbyshire]

June 7, 1755

Dear Sir,

Being closely knit to you in love, and especially attached to your person (in that the Lord of his free favour has not only made you a kind of first-fruits of us his creatures, in this our gospel-day, but has signalized his favour to youward in making you the instrument whereby such numbers are and have been turned from darkness to light), I am constrained to open my mind to you; and I trust in the spirit of meekness.

I would speak with regard to the case debated in your last Conference at Leeds. Some of your lay itinerant preachers had a desire, as such, to administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. Now might it not (unless they had a legal call and authority thereunto) be justly said unto them, 'Seemeth it but a small thing unto you that God has separated you from among the congregation to bring you near to himself',² that ye thus *seek the priesthood also*. Alas! alas! 'Ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi.'³

What can the event be but settling in such places as seem most commodious to them, and then settling upon their lees? Hath not this been the general and great bane of true scriptural Christianity? Has it not eaten out the life of religion, and caused the power of godliness to dwindle in dissenters of every denomination among us? For who, who can bear ease and fullness of bread?

But why would they separate from the Established Church? Admit some things circumstantial in her might be amended, where is the Church to be found that is infallible, and without error? Still may not our constitution, with regard to essentials, be truly styled apostolical, primitive, and divine? Do we not, avoiding both extremes, whether that of popish superstitious tyranny, or fanatic anarchy, steer in the middle path? Be not then, dear sir, estranged in your affection, nor straitened in your bowels of love to the mother that bare you, and still continues (permit me to speak freely), notwithstanding some small irregularities in you, to dandle you on her knees. O labour, watch, and pray, with all your might, that no such breach, no such wide chasm, be made in her side! Wherefore should the pickthank heathen have cause to say, Where is now their God? For I query much if, upon dissenting from the Established Church, the divisions and subdivisions of the Methodists among themselves would not exceed those of the Anabaptists in Germany dissenting from Luther—and then what an horrible scene of confusion will here be open both to the world and believers!

I have only hinted this, as having the glory of God, the cause of Christ, and the good of souls, at heart, with humble deference to your superior judgment. And may he in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge give you a right understanding in all things.

I am, dear sir,

Your very obliged humble servant, and most affectionate brother,
in the bonds of the gospel,

John Baddeley,
Rector of Hayfield, Derbyshire

¹The debates and decision of the Leeds Conference of May 6–10 soon became known both to JW's sympathizers and enemies, and the implication of the preachers' desire for ministerial status and independence caused much concern among many otherwise friendly clergy from this time onwards. JW had visited Hayfield on Apr. 8 *en route* to the Conference, and had preached for Baddeley, 'a second Grimshaw'.

²Num. 16:9.

³Num. 16:7.

P. S. And now, my dear brother, blessed be you for your last visit! And blessed be God that sent you, and made it spirit and life to my soul, and to the souls of mine! How were we refreshed by you, brother! O may we always glorify God in you! At what time either you or Mr. Charles Wesley come into these parts, deign to make my cottage your covert.

There is one thing the world calls an accident which I cannot well omit informing you of. When at Hayfield you observed in your discourse that the Book of Ecclesiastes was written by way of dialogue. And on the clause, 'There is a time to dance',⁴ you said there was no such time you knew of, unless they would 'dance into hell, or as David did before the ark'. Whereupon certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, being highly offended, introduced a dancing-master amongst us. The master and mistress of the house where he was entertained were sometime ago somewhat awakened, but of late have betaken themselves to ale-selling. They had an only son about two years old; which child, at the time of their fiddling and dancing, cried and said, 'I'll not stay here, I will go home.' He was afterwards missing, and search being made for him, he was found wandering alone a considerable space from the town. Being asked whither he was going, he replied, 'Home'. The day following, when they were in their jollity, they put the child into a back kitchen, that he might be out of the way, as he still showed a dislike to their proceedings. But he was lost again, and after a while found dead in the river, and in a place too where there is almost a continual concourse of people. Yet no eye saw him till dead. So the Lord would not suffer his going home to be prevented, but removed him⁵ to his own tender and eternal embraces.

Dear brother, what a God is your God whom you serve continually! How jealous is he of his glory, in that he would not suffer one word delivered by his ambassador to fall to the ground but repaid the bold condemners thereof to their face! 'Whatever' then 'our hand findeth to do' for our gracious Lord, let us 'do it with' our 'might'.⁶ O let us strive together for the faith of the gospel, contend earnestly for that faith which was once delivered to the saints, and own none genuine short of that which works through love all inward as well as outward holiness!

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 2 (1779): 319–21.⁷

⁴Cf. Eccles. 3:4.

⁵Orig., 'it'; corrected in errata (at end of vol. 9).

⁶Cf. Eccles. 9:10.

⁷Titled in *AM*: 'On leaving the Church. A remarkable providence.' Abridged version published in *Works*, 26:558–60.

From the Rev. Charles Wesley¹

[June 17, 1755]

You are certainly the best, and the only judge, what you should give in charity, and your life is too precarious to promise beyond a year. I shall follow your example in this. For this year I engage to give Patt £10, half to her, and half to her son,² since you do not choose I should give her the whole £10. The boy, I hope, will be provided for before the year is past.

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 4/15.³

¹Replying to JW's letter of June (9?), 1755, *Works*, 25:560.

²I.e., his sister Martha (Wesley) Hall and her son Westley Hall Jr.

³CW copied this extract from his letter to JW in a postscript to his letter to his sister Martha. Transcription published in *Works*, 26:560–61.

From 'P. V.' [Richard Tompson]¹

[London]
July 10, 1755

Reverend Sir,

[1.] As to your request that 'if I have observed anything in any of your tracts which I think not agreeable to Scripture or reason I would communicate to you my sentiments thereon', I know not well what to say thereto. That I think differently from you in some particulars is certain, and especially in two articles: first, concerning '*assurance* being essential to *justifying faith*'; and secondly, concerning '*sinless perfection*'. But I cannot flatter myself with the hopes that anything which I can offer will prevail with you to relinquish either of these opinions, to which you appear to be so very warmly attached. I wish some person of *parts* and *learning* would, in a candid manner, enter into a discussion of these particulars. However, as you have been pleased to desire my remarks, I am unwilling to refuse a compliance with your request.

[2.] It is a consideration of *great weight* with me that I cannot learn that either of these opinions hath ever been the doctrine of the *primitive Church*. For (to use the words of the learned Bishop Bull) 'I am, and always shall be, afraid of interpreting Scripture contrary to the stream of antiquity, unless upon the most clear arguments against it—a case which I believe will never happen. The consentient judgments of primitive antiquity will surely outweigh a multitude of probabilities and plausible reasons.'² But *perhaps* you will say 'that you have very plain Scripture to prove what you assert in both these cases now before us'. To which I reply, that those Scriptures which you bring for that purpose appear to me, *when rightly understood*, to teach no such thing; nay, I think I can produce very clear Scriptures which teach quite the contrary. But the time will not now permit me to enter into a particular examination of that point. If you should think proper to make any reply to this, that, *perhaps*, may be the business of a more convenient opportunity.

[3.] I do not dispute, sir, whether an *assurance* that a person's *past* sins are forgiven be attainable in this life—that is no part of our difference. But the proposition which I argue against is this, 'that no person is a *true believer in Christ* but he who either certainly *knows*, or has known, by the *immediate revelation of the Holy Ghost*, that his sins are forgiven'. I observed before that I cannot learn that this has ever been the doctrine of the Christian Church in any age; and not only so, but I find it contrary to the experience of many persons of whose interest in Christ there cannot be any reasonable doubt.

[4.] It is certain that, *in the nature of the thing*, *assurance* is neither of the *essence* of *faith*, neither is it essentially connected with it. I must believe *antecedently* to the act of justification, and that act must pass before God can reveal to me that he has passed such an act. And it will hardly, I suppose, be affirmed that it is impossible for God to pass such an act in my favour without revealing to me that he has passed it. That would be to affirm that the passing one act must necessarily oblige him to another act, which is absurd. And therefore if God is obliged to act in the latter case at all it must be by virtue of some promise made to mankind so to do. But that he has made any such promise I declare I cannot find in all the Bible.

[5.] I have not leisure now, as I observed before, to enter into a particular disquisition of those texts of Scripture which are supposed by you to countenance this opinion, but shall only observe that after having very carefully considered them all, the most that I think can possibly be inferred from them is that the witness of God's Spirit is, in a greater or less degree, generally attainable.

[6.] There is one thing on this head that I think hath not been so carefully attended to as it ought, namely the distinction between *full assurance* (which must certainly, in the very *nature of the thing*, exclude all *doubt and fear*) and that *witness of the Spirit* which many persons have who cannot with any degree of certainty discover whether it is his witness or not. That they feel something of that kind they are

¹Answering JW's letter of June 28, *Works*, 25:556–57. Tompson reveals his identity and explained the initials used here in his letter to JW dated Feb. 25, 1756.

²George Bull, *A Defense of the Nicene Faith*, Sec. I, Chap. 1, §9.

ready enough to confess, but are apt to suspect that it is not what it really is, and what others can discern it to be by the fruit which they bring forth.

[7.] It is indeed asserted in the Preface to your second *Journal* ‘that a person may be a believer who is not freed from doubt and fear’.³ Which is the very thing that I contend for. But how to reconcile this with your other doctrine, ‘that a man cannot be justified without knowing that he is so’, I confess I am quite at a loss—it appears to me to be a plain contradiction to it. That a person may be a believer whose *assurance* is withdrawn I think you likewise allow. And why a person may not be a believer without an *assurance*, who has never had it, as well as one that has and is now without it, I cannot understand.

[8.] I think that the authority of the Church of England has been mistakenly pleaded in this article. To have ‘a sure trust or confidence in God, that my sins are forgiven’, and to be, by *immediate revelation* from him, *assured* that they are, are, I think, very different things. The words ‘sure trust’ do, I apprehend, mean no more than a *trust* founded on a *reasonable ground*, in opposition to a *vain confidence*; neither can I see how any trust at all can consist with *clear* and *full assurance*. I should look upon it as a very absurd speech to say, I *trust* that the dead will rise; and yet I do not think that we have the same *degree* of evidence that this will come to pass that a person to whom *God immediately reveals* that he has forgiven his sins has for that. ’Tis true, indeed, that the assent to both these propositions is founded *on the express testimony of God*; but though I have *sufficient*, yet I have not the same *degree* of evidence that God dictated those particular words of Scripture that I have of the other, if *God immediately* reveal it to my soul. For in the one case the *revelation* is *immediate*, in the other, *mediate* only.

[9.] I beg leave to remark farther that *our Church* in this definition of *faith* cannot, without great absurdity, be supposed to speak of that *faith* which is the *immediate proximate cause* of justification, but of that which follows after it. The proposition to which she supposes my assent to be given is *that my sins are forgiven*; therefore this forgiveness must be the *object* of my assent, and consequently antecedent to it; which, on supposition that she intended a definition of that *faith* which is the *procuring cause* of justification, is making her to assert this evident contradiction, that though it is necessary for me to believe in order to be justified, yet that I am justified before I believe at all.

[10.] It is very surprising to me to hear it so confidently asserted that if men have not a *clear assurance* that their sins are forgiven their *faith* doth not differ from that of the devils. Strange doctrine this! Is there no difference between my believing ‘that Christ has actually satisfied *divine justice* for my sins, and that God is willing to be reconciled to me on that account’—and the *faith of a devil*, which is that neither Christ *nor anyone else* has made any [atonement] for *his*, but that he must assuredly perish for ever? Hath not God expressly promised that he will justify every man who sincerely *repents* and *believes thus*? But hath he given any promise to justify *devils*, on that or any other account? It is matter of wonder to me to find persons so very thoughtless. It is likewise not a little surprising to hear that those who are supposed to be *unbelievers* are exhorted to receive the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. What would the apostles, what would the primitive Church, what would the compilers of our liturgy have thought of such directions as these? Is not the sacrament the actual communication of Christ, with all his benefits, to every worthy receiver? Are we not commanded in Scripture to see that we come thereto properly qualified, lest we eat and drink our own condemnation? And can anyone be properly qualified to receive Christ without faith? Impossible! Suppose I were to question one of these supposed unbelievers who had been at the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper as follows: Have you, together with the bread and wine, received Christ? He would, I suppose, answer, ‘No’ (because he was not sensible thereof). I ask him farther, Is there any medium between receiving worthily and unworthily, that is, between receiving Christ and eating and drinking condemnation? If he understood anything he must reply, ‘No.’ I continue: How came you to go to receive that which you must know, if you suppose yourself an unbeliever, that you were not qualified to receive? Perhaps he would answer that he went there in order to get faith. I should then immediately ask, Who gave you authority to go there without faith? Did you never read that Philip would not baptize

³See *Works*, 18:220.

the eunuch till he professed to believe with all his heart? It is very evident that my respondent must here be quite dumb. I cannot help adopting on this occasion the sentiments of that excellent person the late truly valuable and justly lamented Dr. Doddridge, namely that 'the nature of faith was never more misrepresented than it is at this present'.⁴

[11.] I shall conclude this article with observing that if that person who actually believes that Christ has died for *his* sins, and goes to the Holy Sacrament with a reasonable expectation of receiving the benefits of his death; if such a one, I say, be an *unbeliever*, I shall despair of ever understanding what a *believer* is as long as I live. But to proceed to the other article.

[12.] I think it is your opinion that it is possible to attain in this life as *great rectitude of nature* as our first parents were possessed of before the Fall. And I can truly say, in the presence of the searcher of all hearts, that I could heartily wish that this were true. I think that I could be willing to suffer anything in order to attain to such a state. To have all the clouds of ignorance dispelled from my mind! To have it in my power always, without interruption, to fix my affections on my God! What so desirable as this? What is there in this world so worthy a wise man's pursuit?

... My one desire is this,
Thy only love to know:
To seek and taste *no other bliss*,
No other good below.⁵

[13.] But I sincerely confess that I cannot find any ground, either from Scripture or the catholic church, to expect such a state as this; but much to the contrary. The Scriptures alleged by you on this occasion (which I cannot now particularly examine, as I observed before) do not (as I think) prove it at all. The texts, 'He that is born of God',⁶ etc., prove too much; for if they are literally understood it will follow that no one is a believer but he who is absolutely perfect—which is contrary to other plain texts. And it is plain that the antithesis carried on throughout that chapter is absolutely between a 'child of God' and one of 'the devil'; thus 'he that sinneth is of the devil; he that is born of God doth not sin.' Again, 'He that doth righteousness' (that is, lives in the ordinary practice of righteousness) 'is righteous, even as he is righteous.' So that if the words are to be rigorously interpreted we must deny anyone to be 'born of God' at all who is not as *perfectly righteous* as even Christ himself.

[14.] I see no reason to recede from the common interpretation of these words, 'doth not sin'—'doth not allow himself to live in any known sin'.

[15.] You need not be informed, sir, that absolute negatives are almost always, *in the New Testament*, used for comparatives; that is a point, I take for granted, that you are much better acquainted with than myself. One thing, however, I beg leave to recommend to your consideration, namely, that St. John in his Gospel thrice represents our blessed Lord as using this phrase of not sinning *absolutely*, when it is evident that it must be understood in a *very restrained sense*.⁷

[16.] You allow that there was no such state attainable under the Jewish dispensation; and yet I believe that there are texts of Scripture full as express for that doctrine in the Old Testament as any in the New. Thus Ps. 19, 'They do no iniquity, etc. I have refrained my feet from every evil way, etc. With my whole heart have I sought thee.' To which a multitude of other texts might be added if time would permit. It is said of Zacharias and Elizabeth (who did not live under the New Testament dispensation) that 'they

⁴Philip Doddridge, *Some Remarkable Passages in the Life of the Honourable Colonel James Gardiner* (London: Buckland & Waugh, 1747), 165–66.

⁵[CW,] 'The Resignation', st. 10, *HSP* (1740), 78.

⁶1 John 3:9.

⁷Tompson cites: John 9:3; 15:22, 24.

walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless'.⁸ Words very full and expressive!

[17.] The doctrine of our Church hath likewise been greatly mistaken concerning this article; which I the more wonder at as her sentiments are so easy to be known in this particular. To imagine her as teaching a doctrine which she requires *subscription against* (see Articles the 9th, 12th, and 15th) might appear a little strange, were it not considered at the same time that it is very easy for persons engaged in a multitude of business sometimes to overlook very plain things.

[18.] I can hardly think, sir, that you have sufficiently attended to the consequences which necessarily follow from this doctrine. As suppose, for instance, that two persons *absolutely free from the corruption of human nature* should marry and have children; it is very evident that they could convey no corruption of nature to their offspring, nor they to theirs, even to the remotest generations; and therefore this *new species* of mankind would stand in no need of a Saviour, that is, in no need of *Christ's righteousness* to justify them, in no need of *his Spirit* to enable them to do their duty, they being possessed of that rectitude of nature which will enable them to act entirely for themselves. How such a state of things as this will agree with the Scripture I leave you to judge, and shall here conclude this subject. But before I take my leave I must crave your indulgence for the many inaccuracies which you will find both in this and the former; occasioned, in a great measure, by the haste with which they were thrown together.

May God give us grace to discern, in all things, what is good and acceptable in his sight; and incline our hearts to hate every false way.

I am, sir, with great respect,

Your obliged humble servant,

P. V.

Source: published transcription; Tompson, *Letters*, 7–17.⁹

⁸Luke 1:6.

⁹Errata from p. 52 inserted, and numbering of the paragraphs added. Slightly abridged version published in *Works*, 26:567–71.

Updated Answer of Executor to Chancery Suit by Vazeille Children

In Chancery sworn the 12th day of July 1755
before me at my chambers in Lincoln's Inn.
W. Spicer¹

Between John Anthony Vazeille and Jane Vazeille,² infants, by Cyprian Rondeau their next friend; versus John Wesley and Mary his wife, Noah Blisson, and Noah Vazeille an infant by the said Mary Wesley, his guardian, defendants.

The answer and examination of the said defendant Noah Blisson to certain interrogatories exhibited before William Spicer Esq., one of the Masters of the High Court of Chancery, by and on the behalf of the said plaintiffs for the examination of the said defendants John Wesley and Mary³ his wife and Noah Blisson, in pursuance of an order made in the cause bearing date the twelfth day of December, one thousand seven hundred and fifty three.⁴

To the first interrogatory this examinant saith that he hath not—nor have or hath any other person or persons by or with his orders, privity, consent, or directions, or for his use—at any time or times received any debt or debts, sum or sums of money, security or securities, goods, chattels, wearing apparel, King's plate, jewels, watches, china, furniture, ready money, bank or goldsmith's notes, bonds, notes, or personal estate or effects whatsoever which belonged to Anthony Vazeille deceased, the testator in the pleadings in this cause named, or wherein or whereto he was any way interested or entitled at the time of his decease, other than and except what are mentioned and set forth in this examinant's answer to the said complainants' bill in this cause, and mentioned and set forth in the first schedule to such answer annexed or under written—which this examinant humbly prays may be accepted and taken as part of this his examination. And save and except five casks of wine which this examiner sometime since received and Jonathan Moulton, on the joint account of the testator and one Vernerobre of Petersburg, which this examinant sold for the sum of sixty-four pounds, or near thereabouts; but how much or what part thereof belongs to the estate of the testator this examinant doth not know nor can set forth.⁵

And this examinant saith that the said first schedule hereunto annexed or under written doth contain a full, true, particular, and exact account, according to the best and utmost of his this examinant's knowledge and recollection and belief of all such parts of the said testator's personal estate and effects, and the produce thereof, as have at any time come to the hands, custody, or power of, or been received by this examinant or any other person or persons by or with his order, privity, consent, or direction and for his use, other than what is particularly mentioned in this examinant's said formal answer and the said schedule thereunto annexed or under written, together with the particular natures, quantities, qualities, true, real, and utmost values thereof and of every part thereof respectively, and how and by whom, or what manner, when, and to whom the same and every part thereof have been used, applied, sold, or disposed of.

And this examinant further saith that there are not to his knowledge or belief any errors, mistakes, or omissions in the accounts set forth in the examinant's said answer,⁶ or in the schedules thereunto

¹William Spicer (1688–1762).

²James Vazeille died in 1754, so no longer appears among the plaintiffs.

³Orig., 'Jane'; a mistake.

⁴A copy of this order has not been located, but it clearly found the initial answers of both Mary (Vazeille) Wesley and Noah Blisson to be inadequate and required this further examination.

⁵This last sentence was added interlinear after the main document was completed.

⁶I.e., the earlier document.

annexed or under written, or any of them.

To the second interrogatory this examinant saith that he hath never made any interest or profit whatsoever of the said testator's personal estate, or of any part thereof. Nor did this examinant ever intermix any of the monies, estate, or effects of the said testator, or the produce thereof, or make use of the same or any part thereof together with this examinant's own, otherwise than that this examinant believes that he has sometimes intermixed some part thereof with his current cash, or paid the same promiscuously with this examinant's current cash into the hands of his banker for safe custody. But this examinant cannot now remember or recollect or set forth what parts or part thereof in particular he did so intermix with his own current cash. But this examinant denies that he did thereby or in any other manner ever gain any increase, profit, or advantage therefrom. And this examinant further saith that the balance which was remaining in this examinant's hands of the said testator's personal estate at the end of each year after the said testator's death will appear by the schedules to this examinant's said answer and the schedules hereunto annexed or under written—this examinant having therein specified and set forth the respective times of his receipts and payments. And this examinant saith that the balance now remaining in his hands of the said testator's personal estate (exclusive of the testator's share in the money arising from the casks of the said wines⁷) is the sum of twenty pounds, seventeen shillings; and no more, according to this examinant's computation thereof and as this examinant verily believes.

To the third interrogatory, this examinant saith that he hath in the second schedule to this his examination annexed or under written—and which this examinant also prays may be accepted and taken as part thereof—set forth according to the best and utmost of his knowledge, recollection, remembrance, and belief a full, true, exact, and particular account of all and every sum and sums of money which the examinant or any person or persons by his directions or on his account hath or have paid, expended, or disbursed for or upon account of the said testator's personal estate (other than and except and over and besides what are particularly mentioned and set forth in the examinant's said former answer and the second schedule thereto). And this examinant saith that he hath in the said second schedule hereunto annexed or under written set forth according to the best and utmost of his knowledge, recollection, remembrance, and belief the particular times of the paying, disbursing, and expending such sum and sums of money, and every part thereof, and on what occasion or occasions, and for what use or purpose, and to what person or persons. And this examinant saith that he verily believes that all and every of such payments and disbursements were just and necessary and such as were reasonable, and really and actually due and ought to have been paid, expended, or disbursed for or upon account of the said testator's personal estate.

Robt. Bicknell⁸
Noah Blisson

The first schedule to which the above examination refers:

1750 Jan. 16	received of P. Gausson for Perrand and Co. of Turin	115.11.0
1755 June 14	received of John Gore & Co for account of Pillar & Co of Lisbon	<u>68. 3. 9</u>
		183.14.9

The second schedule to which the above examination refers:

1752 Dec. 6	paid Mr. Benjamin Bonnell the notary for sundry deeds and certificates for the estate as per bill	17.5.0
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Noah Blisson

Source: British National Archives, C 128/24/1.

⁷The material in parentheses is again added interlinear.

⁸Robert Bicknell, Esq. (d. 1765)

From Mrs. Lefevre¹

[London]
July 18 [1755]

Dear Sir,

I can truly say that I *would* with joy devote all I have and all I am to God, and gladly spend every hour in his service. But the difficulties I find in the way are *indeed insuperable* to *me*, though not so, I think, to everyone, at least if I may judge from some few instances I have seen since my acquaintance with *you*.

You yourself, *even outwardly*, appear to me to spend every hour to the glory of God, and for this reason I look upon you to be the happiest of mankind. When I see you spent with fatigue, your eyes half closed, and your outward man seeming to *hasten* to its dissolution, though I would freely give my own life and strength to increase yours, I almost *envy* you this *glorious fatigue*, and say to myself, 'How happy, how blessed is this man, thus to *spend* and be *spent* in the service of his Redeemer!' Think me not presumptuous when I say that I place you constantly before my mind, as my *living* example. Outwardly it certainly is impossible for me to follow you, but inwardly—O sir, that I could in every faculty of my *soul* be a follower of you, even as *you are* of Christ!

You bid me *love enough*; and doubtless if I could 'love enough' I should (as you say) do enough, for *perfect love is perfect liberty*, liberty to conquer all sin and attain to all holiness. This is the glorious privilege of the children of God; and this my soul pants after. But though I can sincerely say that I love God above all things, yet it is very evident that I do not love enough, because the fruits of this perfect love are not produced in my soul. Sometimes my enemies seem entirely conquered, and my mind is smooth and calm, as the waters after Christ said to them, 'Peace, be still.'² But when I seem thus strong, I am (to my inexpressible shame and confusion) found to be *weakness* itself. Some trifle, which perhaps had appeared too contemptible even to be thought of, will be the means of my *inwardly* falling. But thanks be to God I have this given me,

Quick as the apple of an eye,
The slightest touch of sin to feel.³

To feel, and immediately to fly to that blood of sprinkling which alone can cleanse me from this pollution. But indeed, sir, I find every day more and more the truth of your words, 'that I have need to *watch always*'. I am set as it were in the midst of snares, both friends and enemies conspiring together to keep me from that humility which is so necessary to *one* who wishes to be *really* a Christian. My enemies lead to pride, by railing at me for what is, and *ought* to be, in one *sense*, my glory; and my friends, by having too high an opinion of me. I think there is none except yourself who do not in *some measure* hurt me; and therefore, though I dare not call you *my* friend, as implying any particular attachment on your part, you are in fact my truest and best friend. Praise I now dread as poison; and yet my temper is such as makes some encouragement necessary. Your behaviour to me is exactly fitted to preserve the balance of my mind even; a smile of approbation from you is *that praise* which *encourages* without *endangering*. You will pardon my speaking so much of myself—a patient, you know, must fully lay open his case to his physician; and I have been emboldened even by you yourself to increase the length of my letters. O may your blessed Master reward you for all your labours in his service, and for all your goodness to

¹This may be the letter to which JW was responding in a reply that was seen by Mary (Goldhawk / Vazeille) Wesley, sparking jealousy; cf. JW to Ebenezer Blackwell, Sept. 12, 1755, ; and JW to his estranged wife on July 15, 1759, §7 (*Works*, vol. 31).

²Mark 4:39.

³CW, 'Watch in all Things', st. 10, *HSP* (1742), 218.

Your unworthy, though ever-grateful and affectionate,

* *

Source: published transcription; Lefevre, *Letters*, 167–69 (JW, *Extract*, 94–96).⁴

⁴Abridged version published in *Works*, 26:573–74.

From the Rev. George Whitefield

Norwich
August 9, 1755

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Till Tuesday evening, I knew no more of coming to Norwich than the child unborn. Had I been well enough, and my private business permitted, I should have been some miles in my way towards Donington Park.¹ This I told Mr. H—ly, and acquainted him with every step. He should have written himself, and not retailed our conversation. As I expect to be in town² some time next week, I choose to defer writing more till we have a personal interview. My time is too precious to be employed in hearkening to, or vindicating of myself against, the false and invidious insinuations of narrow and low-life informers. Never was I more satisfied of my call to any place, than of my present call to Norwich.³ The Redeemer knows the way that I take. I came hither purely for his glory, without the least design to make a party for myself, or to please or displease any other party whatsoever. In this way, and in this spirit, through his divine assistance I hope to go on. Blessed be his name, I trust my feeble labours have not been in vain. Sin, I hope, hath been prevented, errors detected, sinners convicted, saints edified, and my own soul sweetly refreshed. But I must add no more. That Jesus may give us all a right judgment in all things, and keep all parties whatsoever from giving a wrong touch to the ark, is and shall be the constant prayer of, reverend and dear sir,

Yours most affectionately in our common Lord,

G. W.

Source: published transcription; Whitefield, *Letters*, 3:133–34.

¹Orig., 'Dunnington park'; but Whitefield surely meant this residence of Lady Huntingdon, near Castle Donington, Leicestershire.

²I.e., London.

³JW and CW had spent significant time in Norwich a year earlier establishing a specifically Wesleyan society and defending it against the criticism brought upon those connected to the Methodist movement by James Wheatley's indiscretions. JW apparently feared that Whitefield was seeking to win back some of Wheatley's followers to Calvinist Methodism.

From Richard Tompson ('P.V.')

August 15, 1755

Reverend Sir,

[1.] I received yours of the twenty-fifth ult.¹ on Saturday last, and am much obliged to you for the *compliment* you are pleased to make me. You inform me 'that in order to satisfy me wherein we differ you have sent me the *Minutes* of some of your late Conferences; wherein several concessions are made both with regard to assurance and to Christian perfection; some difficulties cleared, and a few arguments proposed, etc.' But I apprehend, sir, by this description, that the pamphlet which I have received is not the same that you designed for me, but *another* sent by mistake in the stead thereof. For, having very carefully examined it from end to end several times, I cannot find one syllable therein relating to either of the particulars above mentioned. The title of it is, 'Minutes of several Conversations between the Reverend John and Charles Wesley,² and others.' It consists of five Conferences, the first of which is dated June 25, 1744 and the last November 16, 1749. The sum of them all relates to the ordering your society.³

[2.] You give it, sir, as your opinion, that 'the whole Christian church in the first centuries enjoyed the *assurance of faith*'.⁴ But I must beg of you to inform me what ground you have for this assertion, for I am not disposed to grant it true without the least tittle of proof; nay, against very strong appearances (or rather very clear evidence) to the contrary.

[3.] You complain of the few remaining points of doctrine explicitly taught by the Ante-Nicene church. But, sir, can you really believe that the whole Christian church, both ante- and post-Nicene, had they believed as you do 'that no person is a true believer in Christ till he knows that his sins are forgiven', could have been entirely silent in an article of such importance? How many instances might be pointed out where it is evident that if they had been of your sentiments they must have declared themselves on this head as plainly as you have done! To name only one, that is the case of the validity of baptism administered by heretics, which was so warmly agitated between St. Cyprian and others. You know, sir, that the ancient church ever held that true baptism always conferred remission of sins; and had they been of your opinion, 'that remission, and the knowledge thereof (by internal revelation), always accompanied each other', how easily might this controversy have been decided! It needed only to appeal to some of those persons who had been baptized by heretics, and ask them, 'Did you receive the knowledge of the remission of your sins when you were baptized?' And which way soever the question had been answered, it had decided the case.

[4.] You assert farther that 'whoever will carefully read the writings of Clemens Romanus, Ignatius, Polycarp, etc., cannot doubt whether either the writer himself, or all whom he mentions as real Christians, possessed the assurance of faith'.⁵ To which I reply: that Clemens Romanus, Ignatius, and Polycarp, enjoyed the assurance of faith I make no question. Nay, I will grant you more than this, if you please, namely that they were endowed with the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost. This may be proved of St. Ignatius in particular from a passage in his Epistle to the Philadelphians. And that great numbers of persons in the Ante- (I add, 'and Post-') Nicene churches, too, enjoyed an assurance of God's favour, I am very ready to grant likewise. But that every true believer therein was possessed of a clear assurance

¹See *Works*, 26:574–75.

²Orig., 'Wesley's'.

³Instead of the 1749 'doctrinal' *Minutes* of 1749 (*Works*, 10:778–805) JW sent the 'disciplinary' *Minutes* issued the same year (*Works*, 10:806–35). He acknowledged the error in his reply of Feb. 5, 1756—delayed because this letter was mislaid.

⁴*Works*, 26:575.

⁵*Ibid.*

that his sins were forgiven I must take the liberty to deny till I see it proved—which, I am confident, never will, never can be done. The contrary must be evident to every attentive inquirer. As to the Epistles of Clemens Romanus, Ignatius, and Polycarp, I have read them over again and again. I have given them a review on this occasion, and cannot find the least intimation either that the writer himself, or any of those to whom he writes, was possessed of an assurance of faith, or anything like it. There is indeed a passage of the Martyrdom of St. Ignatius that seems at first view to intimate such a thing of himself, but I am far from thinking it a clear proof of the fact. For when he affirms that 'he carried Christ within him', instead of asserting that he felt his presence at that time, he only refers to that general promise, 'I will dwell in them and walk in them.'⁶

[5.] As to the Reformed churches, if they have asserted anything of that kind unsupported by antiquity, their authority is of no value at all. For (as our excellent Bishop Pearson observes), 'whatsoever is new in Christianity is certainly false'.⁷ But I apprehend that this is far from being the case (at least I am sure that our own Church stands clear of the charge). Can you point me out the men, among the Reformers, who have taught clearly and plainly that no person is a true believer in Christ till he knows by *immediate revelation* that his sins are forgiven? No, sir, this was never the doctrine of Christ's church till the Moravians⁸ invented it a few years ago.

[6.] You affirm that 'as to the nature of the thing, you think a *divine conviction* of pardon is directly implied in the *evidence* or *conviction* of things not seen'.

[7.] To which I answer: *first*, that a divine conviction of pardon is not *directly*, nor *at all*, implied in that faith which is the procuring cause of justification (of which I was there speaking) is very evident from this consideration, that the thing unseen of which I have evidence is not that my sins *are forgiven* (that would suppose them to be forgiven *before* I believe), but of this other matter of fact, that God is ready to forgive them; and you yourself acknowledge, a little lower, 'that justifying faith cannot be a conviction that I am justified'.

[8.] *Secondly*, though I were to admit that 'a divine conviction of pardon is directly implied in the belief that a person's sins were forgiven', yet that would never prove the point for which it is brought, unless it can be shown (which it certainly cannot, the contrary being very evident) that the least degree of *divine evidence*, and a *clear assurance*, are one and the same thing. But that a person may have a *degree* of divine evidence of a fact who has not a full assurance thereof will (I conceive) appear very plainly from the five following instances.

[9. *Firstly*,] that the Spirit of God did strive with the inhabitants of the antediluvian world, in order to bring them from the error of their ways, is very plain from Scripture. This, to them, was a *kind* or *degree* of *divine evidence* that if they put away the evil of their doings God would again receive them into his favour.

[10.] *Secondly*, that the benefits of Christ's death are conveyed to every worthy receiver of the sacraments the Scripture very plainly declares; and therefore when I receive the Lord's Supper I have a degree of *divine evidence* higher than the former, that all my sins are blotted out.

[11.] *Thirdly*, it being declared in Scripture that 'the worlds were framed by the Word of God', that 'the dead will rise', and that 'God will judge the world'.⁹ Of all this I have a degree of *divine evidence* still higher than either of those specified above.

[12.] *Fourthly*, those immediate communications of God's grace by which I find myself enabled to perform my duty, and to raise up my affections above the things of this world, in a manner far above the reach of my own natural abilities, is to me a higher degree of *divine evidence* that God is with me than either of the former is of those several facts to which they respectively bear witness.

⁶Note in text: 'See Archbishop Wake's *Apostolical Letters*, p. 131, etc.'

⁷John Pearson, Dedicatory Epistle, *An Exposition of the Creed* (1659).

⁸Note in text: 'See Mr. Wesley's first *Journal*'.

⁹Heb. 11:3; Isa. 26:19, etc.; and 1 Cor. 5:13.

[13.] *Fifthly* and *lastly*, those sensible manifestations of God's presence which he is pleased at times to communicate to the souls of his people are to them a degree of *divine evidence* of his favour of a still higher kind than any of those before mentioned.

[14.] And thus, sir, I hope it plainly appears that a degree of *divine evidence*, and a *clear assurance*, are very different things.

[15.] You proceed: 'But if not, it is no absurdity to suppose that when God pardons a mourning broken-hearted sinner, his mercy *necessarily obliges* him to another act, to witness to his spirit that he has pardoned him.'¹⁰

[16.] To which I reply that I am surprised to find anything so very unphilosophical drop from the pen of a person of your abilities—to talk of God's mercy as 'necessarily obliging him'! What strange language is this? Do you not consider, sir, that the exercise of mercy is a mere voluntary thing; and does it therefore follow that because God has been pleased to exercise one act which he was no way obliged to exercise, that therefore he must necessarily exercise another? You cannot, I am persuaded, approve of this slip of your pen in defence of a *darling indefensible* hypothesis.

[17.] You subjoin: 'I know that I am accepted; and yet that knowledge is sometimes shaken, though not destroyed, by doubt or fear. If it were destroyed, or wholly *withdrawn*, I could not then say I had Christian faith.'¹¹

[18.] Amazing indeed! But to speak to both these assertions; and *first*, as to the distinction between shaken, withdrawn, and destroyed, you will, *I trust*, on reflection, be convinced that it is absolutely without a difference. For whatsoever I *doubt*, or *fear* is not true, I cannot possibly, *while that doubt remains*, be assured is true. Would it not be a very absurd and contradictory speech to say I am *fully assured* that my sins are forgiven, and yet I doubt whether they are or not—nay, I fear they are not? You would certainly, sir, think that person not well in his wits who should offer to talk at such a rate. In short, *doubt*, *fear*, and *assurance* are absolute incompatibles; and can no more exist together in one and the same person, concerning any single proposition, than the clear shining of the sun in a room can consist with a total privation of light therein, in one and the same moment of time.

[19.] *Secondly*, with respect to the other assertion, I observe that it proceeds from confounding *assurance* with *faith*, and naming it to be of the *essence* of it, when it is quite a distinct thing from it. Neither does it proceed from one and the same agent. *Faith* is an *act* of *my mind*, assenting to the truth of a proposition; and *assurance* is an act of the *Holy Ghost*, testifying to me that God has accepted me. In consequence of such *antecedent act* must I not believe before the Holy Spirit can testify to me that I am accepted in consequence of *my faith*? And can that which existed before such testimony of the Spirit was given depend on such testimony for its existence? Impossible! It is all over *contradiction* to assert it.

[20.] You next proceed to affirm that to you 'it appears the same thing to say, I *know* that God has accepted me, and I have a *sure trust* that he has accepted me'.¹²

[21.] To which I reply that supposing this were really true, it is, I judge, quite beside the purpose. For to have a *sure trust* is one thing; and to know certainly that my *trust* is a *sure one* is quite another; and it is the former of these only with which our Church is concerned. I may have repented of my sins in such a manner as God requires, and may believe that I have and trust that on that account God has accepted me for the sake of what Christ has done and suffered. This is undoubtedly a *sure trust*, it being founded on the terms required by the gospel. But to be absolutely certain that I have actually performed the gospel conditions is a very different thing. And had I such a certainty I could not be said to *trust* at all, for I should be absolutely certain that the thing was done; and 'What a man seeth, why doth he yet *trust* for?'¹³

¹⁰*Works*, 26:575.

¹¹*Ibid.*

¹²*Ibid.*

¹³Cf. Rom. 8:24.

[22.] If I were to say in your presence, when the sun shines very clear, that I trust the sun shines today, would you not immediately remark the impropriety? Or if St. Paul (in the account of his conversion) had told us that he had a *sure trust* that he saw a light shine above the brightness of the sun, would you not have thought it a very absurd speech? You cannot but perceive that the words 'trust' and 'knowledge' convey very different ideas.

[23.] You say that you agree that 'a man who is not assured that his sins are forgiven may yet have a kind or degree of faith which distinguishes him not only from a devil, but from an heathen; on which you may admit him to the Lord's Supper'.¹⁴

[24.] But, sir, is *this faith* that this man is possessed of *that faith* with which justification is *essentially* connected, or is it not? If it be, the person is a *true believer*, having that faith which is required by the gospel. If it be not, how can you admit him to be partaker of that ordinance which God has appointed to be the effectual conveyance of all the benefits of Christ's life and death, when he wants the qualification which God requires in order thereto? You know that the ancient church would never administer this sacrament to any but those who were denominated the faithful, whose sins they supposed had been remitted in baptism; and in case of any wilful sin after that, they were suspended from the Lord's table till the church thought that God was again willing to be reconciled to them on account of their repentance, and then the sacrament was supposed to be the instrument of absolution. In short, it was called the 'perfection', or 'consummation', of a Christian. But to talk of going to either of the sacraments without faith is a kind of language to which the primitive church was an utter stranger. For as the very learned Dr. Waterland observes: 'Besides a *right faith* in the general, a particular belief with respect to the *graces* and *benefits* of a worthy reception of this sacrament was anciently as well as reasonably judged to be a previous qualification for it.'¹⁵

[25.] To the latter part of this paragraph, 'that the proper Christian faith, which purifies the heart, implies such a conviction', I shall only reply that I am of a very different opinion.

[26.] Concerning Christian perfection, you say that you 'believe two who were made perfect in love never did or will marry together'.¹⁶

[27.] It might be sufficient to answer this by asking, *Why* is the marriage state proper for those only who are tainted with sin and corruption? But to speak to it more directly: that two persons absolutely free from sin have been married, and that by the express command of God himself, is evident from the case of our first parents. And as 'marriage is honourable in *all*' I cannot see why two perfect persons (supposing there were any such) might not marry now. I am sure the contrary can never be proved. But if it could, the difficulty is not one jot removed. For the question will still return. Suppose that two persons already married should attain to such a state? The very same consequences would inevitably follow as on the other supposition. And I suppose you will hardly venture to affirm that God will never make any married couple (capable of having children) perfect. If you did I should ask you, *first*, what ground you had for such an *arbitrary hypothesis*, and *secondly*, how you came to marry yourself, when you judged it would be an infallible means of keeping either *yourself* or *your wife* from that state which is of *all others* the most desirable? I might go on to ask you farther on this subject, why persons are subject to death, notwithstanding they are (in your opinion) delivered from *all* the corruption of human nature, when the reason assigned in Scripture why the body is subject to death is *because of sin*. But as you have been pleased to touch this subject but very lightly I am unwilling to press upon you any farther, and shall therefore conclude. May God grant both you and me a right judgment in all things.

[28.] I did intend to have postponed my answer till the next week, when I should have had leisure to have put it in better order, had I not been informed you were going from London. However I hope, notwithstanding my haste, that nothing has dropped from me on this occasion contrary to that respect

¹⁴*Works*, 26:575.

¹⁵Note in text: '*Doctrine of the Eucharist*, p. 339, etc.'

¹⁶*Works*, 26:575.

which I am desirous of always showing to you. If you meet with anything that you judge looks that way, please to esteem it contrary to the intention, and without the knowledge of, sir,

Your very affectionate, humble servant,

P. V.

Source: published transcription; Tompson, *Letters*, 21–33.¹⁷

¹⁷Transcription republished in *Works*, 26:576–80.

From the Rev. Samuel Walker¹

[Truro, Cornwall]
September 5, 1755

Reverend and Dear Sir,

[1.] However I may justly think my opinion not worth your regarding, yet at your request, and upon an occasion than which nothing can, in my judgment, be of more importance to the interests of vital Christianity in these kingdoms, I would not believe myself at any rate justified, did I not represent what occurs to me upon your present very critical circumstances.

[2.] The main stress of the matter lies here, in this necessarily previous question, 'whether it be unlawful for the Methodists to abide in the Church'. For if not, 'tis their duty to abide. And then, if it be not lawful for them to depart, it cannot in the very nature of the thing be necessary or expedient they should. Nay, whatever necessity there should seem to be, it is certainly the will of God they should not depart while it is not lawful for them to do so. The necessity can be no real necessity, and the departing is taking the affairs of the Head of the Church out of his hand. While it is their duty to abide it must be necessary, and expedient, and for the good of the Church of Christ they should. Here, sir, lies the great point, and that which should be alone canvassed. For if you set it on the foot of expediency, or as hereby it is stated as a matter indifferent in its nature (which certainly is not the case in the present question), so being removed from its proper basis, the Word of God, it becomes a matter of human judgment, and is left to be determined by men's opinions. However great your authority may be, yet you cannot expect the body of the Methodists will subscribe to your judgment. Indeed you will not—nothing but dispute can be looked for while what seems inexpedient to one will seem expedient to another. And if you will allow and have me speak my real sentiments in a matter of so much importance, and wherein I have earnestly sued for light and direction since your pamphlet came to my hands, I verily think the publishing it can do no good, and will probably do much hurt; whether by setting the Methodists a-disputing on the one part and the other about the fitness or unfitness of separation, or by giving occasion to the enemies of true Christianity to triumph, or its friends who are not Methodists to fear, when they shall find such a thing is in question among you, as well as by reason of some things up and down which bear hard upon Mr. Whitefield and the Dissenters, and which seem not of importance in the present question. Dear sir, I am very heartily persuaded of your zeal for true religion, and your goodwill to the Church of England, as far as is consistent with the former. Lay the matter before God, and search the Scriptures whether it be lawful for you to separate, and what is indeed separation. The resolution which God gives you is that, and that only, which should be laid before your friends and the world, if you will preserve peace among them, or, as it seems to me, do farther service to practical religion in these kingdoms. The main matter is whether it be lawful. When this is determined it will be time enough to think if it would be expedient. Rest not till you be yourself fully determined upon that point. And in your search beware that you be not biassed by

¹Samuel Walker (1714–61) was educated at Exeter Grammar School and Exeter College, Oxford. He graduated in 1736, was ordained in 1737, and in 1746 became rector of Truro, Cornwall. During his first year there, under the saintly influence of George Conon, master of Truro Grammar School, he became a model evangelical clergyman, and great crowds attended his services. He formed a religious society in his parish, with rules comparable to those both of Dr. Josiah Woodward and JW, though there is no evidence that JW and Walker knew each other personally. On Aug. 30, 1755, JW passed through Truro, and greatly appreciated an accidental conversation with some members of Walker's society. This prompted him to write (a letter not known to survive) asking for Walker's advice about the threatened rift between the Methodist societies and the Church of England. JW included with his letter a draft of a proposed publication on the subject, apparently the document prepared for the Conference, 'Ought we to Separate from the Church of England?' (see *Works*, 9:567–80) or a revision of it. Some of the objections Walker raises in this letter are reflected in the revised version of that document that appeared as *Reasons against a Separation from the Church of England* (1758; *Works*, 9:334–49).

consequences which have nothing to do with the lawfulness of things, being altogether conversant about the expediency of things lawful. I know you will search the Scriptures, which no doubt are clear enough to determine any meek inquirer whether it be lawful for him or not to abide in the communion of that Church to which he belongs. I am going great lengths, and am condemning myself of impertinence; yet considering you will not be offended, and desiring to offer whatever may in my judgment be of weight, I venture to say you must: 1) Be determined in your own breast whether it be lawful to separate or no. 2) What is, and what is not, separation? 3) Supposing you determine it is not lawful, whether you have taken any steps toward it already. 4) If so, and separation be unlawful, whether you ought not prudently to put a stop to them. 5) In this view, what you are to do with lay preachers. This, I know, is a tender point; but methinks it comes into the very heart of the question. For is it not likely that a handle hath been given from hence to press a separation? Perhaps some of the preachers may have been seeking it. Doubtless there being such persons raised the desire of their being ordained in those of your people who contend for a separation. Now if the laws of the Church of England admit not such preachers, then herein is a step made in separation; and that whatever necessity there may be of them. Put this together, and may you not have cause to think that either you will not be able to stop a separation, or must somehow or other stop these preachers? As long as they remain there is a beginning of separation; and that also which will keep the people in mind of it. I am only, you will please to observe, stating the case, not offering any advice, which I would by no means presume to do in so nice a matter. If you say, 'I dare not separate from the Church,' what will you do with the lay preachers? If, 'I dare not lay aside the lay preachers,' how will you prevent a separation, in part begun already in them? You must needs come to some resolution of this point, and I pray God to direct you to that which will be most for his glory. That middle way you have trod in permitting, not appointing them,² puts the matter quite out of your hands, and deprives you of all your influence. If you are persuaded that they are extraordinarily called, and that there is such a necessity as justifies a separation and departure from the laws of the Church in this particular, why should you not appoint them to preach, and so keep them under your own direction? If you are not satisfied yet whether the necessity or their call might justify your appointing them to preach contrary to the law of the Church, ought you not to tell them they are doing what you cannot judge lawful, and therefore that you dare not encourage them in it? As long as they are either permitted or appointed you seem to stand upon the brink of a separation. I take this matter of the lay preachers to be the leading inquiry. Their permission or appointment is in fact a partial separation from the Church of England, the essence of which, considered as such, consists in her orders and laws rather than in her doctrines and worship, which constitute her a Church of Christ. I have always thought this matter might have been better and more inoffensively ordered from the beginning, and doubt not but that a method might be still fallen upon, which conducted with prudence and patience would reduce the constitution of Methodism to due order, and render the Methodists under God more instrumental to the ends of practical religion.

[3.] Since writing the above I hear through Molly Bosoine³ that this point of a separation is warmly contended for by some, and that you are hard pressed upon it. I beseech you, sir, to be determined in your own mind that, as you do not think a separation lawful, so you will not yield to it on any hand, nor be drove into it by any apprehensions whatever. You may not do evil that good may come. Say the worst that can happen, that some of your leaders and many of your people leave you, yet I question not this would turn to God's glory in you, and give you opportunity of more abundant usefulness among the sinful people of England than perhaps you have ever yet known. I am sure it will open you a way into the heart of every honest man in it. Do the thing which is right, and fear no consequences. You can never fail of doing well while you do so. And remember, sir, how needful it is something should be done in your lifetime. Is there not much cause to fear there will be little peace afterward? Consider, sir, upon what

²JW offered this fine distinction in 'Ought we to Separate', III.I (*Works*, 9:572), but omitted it from *Reasons*.

³In the copy at MARC this name is crossed out and replaced with 'Busvine'; neither person has been identified.

grounds do those of your friends who plead for a separation proceed? As far as I can collect from your pamphlet, they do not object 1) to the doctrines, nor 2) to the laws of the Church of England, as affording any conscionable cause of separation. Nor 3) to the liturgy, objecting to it because a form, or to anything therein in such wise as that they cannot join with it in the whole with good conscience. They do not say 4) that they are violently thrust out of it, but 5) that the administration is bad (would a man withdraw his subjection from the king upon a like ground, because the civil ministers did not act as they ought?); and 6) that they should be a more compact body if separate; and 7) insist that you have made a step towards separation already in the lay preachers. Now, sir, is there not much cause to believe they have not much considered the point whether it be lawful to separate? Doth it not look rather as if it had escaped them?

[4.] I beg leave now to offer my thoughts concerning the expediency or in expediency of a separation, which however are of no weight till the lawfulness of a separation be determined; and concerning which I would again say, that nothing this way should by any means be published to the world, as it would necessarily set all the world a-disputing. Those who dissent from your judgment would probably print in their turn, and this matter would quickly be canvassed in every society in England. 'Tis easy to see with what effect. I heartily wish there may be no printing about it, and that if there be any difference among the principal people, it may be determined in the fear of God among themselves. Nay, I would not it should be so much as mentioned to any one soul beside. For you know how little able any of us are to bear disputes, and what inveterate enemies debates are to brotherly love and godly edification.

[5.] Now as to any expediency (the lawfulness of a separation supposed) that the Methodists separate, the inquiry is, 'To what end?' Will it probably promote, or probably hinder the interests of Christ's kingdom? I submit these inquiries to your consideration:

1) Will it be likely to make the body of Methodists more confirmed Christians? If it be said, 'Yes, for hereby they will not hear God's Word badly taught, nor be present at a slovenly performance of his worship, and will have the Word and worship in gospel purity and simplicity'; it must be weighed on the other hand: How many will be lost who will not go in with a separation. How many will be hurt by dispute. How teachers sufficient in number or ability may be found for the several congregations. How discipline can be preserved so as that the Word and worship shall be done to edification. Whether the Methodists will not be more apt to decay, being then either left quietly alone, or attacked for their separation, not their practice, as now, which will have an evident tendency to make them rest on their separation, etc., etc.

2) Will it render the Methodists more useful to others? There is not the least appearance of it, but just the contrary. Hereby Methodists will come insensibly to separate themselves from all conversation with others. Hereby others will be afraid of them, and few will come near to hear them.

3) What effect will it probably have upon bystanders? (1) Upon those ministers who are zealous for the power of godliness? Will it not throw a prodigious objection in their way, and put it more out of their power to pursue the interests of religion by any schemes which are not common, particularly by societies? This seems an important matter, as many are now raised up of this sort, and there is good hope of many more. (2) Upon those who are coming nearer the truth? Can it be expected they will not stumble at it? (3) Upon the infidels and Socinians? Will they not be glad they are fairly rid of you? (4) Upon every man in England who would do service? Will it not be a bar to him? (5) Upon every careless sinner? Will it not supply him with something to defend himself.

[6.] Upon all these accounts a separation seems inexpedient. But on the other hand there is a strong expediency 1) that the Methodists should remain in the Church, and that with the strictest observance possible of all the laws of it. The more regular they are, the readier access will they gain, and the more evidently will the difference appear where we should always endeavour to make it seen, in the power and practice of godliness. 2) That if any of them depart, you, sir, do not follow them, but declare publicly against it. Such a conduct in you would probably reconcile the hearts of multitudes to you and those who should abide in the Church with you; while for my own part (and I dare believe I speak the general sense of the kingdom), I should make little account of the separatists.

[7.] I shall be glad if anything I have said may be of the least service upon the present weighty matter, and shall very willingly give you my further sentiments relating to it if at any time you desire

them. I have but one word more to add, and that is that if you determine to print your pamphlet, you will first lay it before some judicious person who is not immediately connected with you, such as the excellent Mr. Adam,⁴ to whom you may direct to be left at Mr. Munby's, Bookseller, in Hull, Yorkshire, whom I may possibly consult upon this occasion, having a literary correspondence with him; and that I shall wish to see a good many things left out of it, but most particularly that clause about the Athanasian Creed.⁵

I am, reverend sir,

Your most humble servant, though unworthy brother,

Saml. Walker

Source: manuscript transcriptions: (Walker's record copy) Pitts Library (Emory), Samuel Walker Papers (MSS 437); and (by John Nelson) MARC, DDCW 8/1, pp. 47–63.⁶

⁴The word 'excellent' is underlined, apparently by Thomas Adam, who added at the bottom of the page, 'Woe be to me if I do not say from my heart, "God be merciful to me, a sinner."'

⁵The Athanasian Creed is criticized in 'Ought we to Separate', III.8 (*Works*, 9:571); but this was omitted (apparently in accordance with Walker's suggestion) from *Reasons*.

⁶The holograph from Walker to JW is not known to survive. We have access to its contents through a copy Walker made for his records (at Emory), and a copy made by John Nelson for CW (at MARC). We give here a transcription of the copy at Emory; in *Works*, 26:582–86 Baker transcribed the copy in MARC, since he knew the Walker copy only by a highly revised published version in Edwin Sidney, *The Life and Ministry of the Rev. Samuel Walker* (London: Seeley, 1838), 164–73. There are only slight differences in the content of the two copies, but a comparison will show numerous instances of emphasis (by underlining in the manuscript; shown as italics) in Baker's transcription. These instances of emphasis do not appear in Walker's copy; they were likely added by CW, highlighting points he wanted JW to address.

From the Rev. Samuel Walker to the Rev. Thomas Adam¹

[Truro]

September 18, 1755

Dear Sir,

I have not time to do more than heartily to thank you for the communication of your kind and most friendly sentiments in the last favour I received from you, as well as for the small tract² it brought with it, which, unless I am prejudiced in favour of the author, is particularly fitted to be of service at that season.

Taking another opportunity to answer your letter, I am willing now to inform you that Mr. John Wesley, when last week in the parts, communicated to me a pamphlet he had drawn up for the preachers, requesting my opinion upon it.³ The case is of last importance to the interests of true religion—viz., whether the Methodists should separate from us. I gave him my sentiments freely, as well as I could digest the matter in my thoughts in the short time allowed me for an answer. But I thought the thing of more moment than to be left to so poor a judgment as mine, and therefore requested him to seek further light, and mentioned you as one likely to help him to it. He sent me word that he would apply to you. I thought it not amiss to send you a copy of my letter to him,⁴ and shall be glad to see what your sentiments are in answer to him. Since mine to Mr. Wesley, I hear he is warmly pressed upon by the lay preachers, especially one [Thomas] Walsh, and that most of the preachers in the north are warm upon it. This information was given me by a Methodist who, as well as I remember, had it from Mr. Wesley and is otherwise perfectly acquainted with all their affairs.

Yours always, etc.

Source: Pitts Library (Emory), Samuel Walker Papers (MSS 437); Walker's manuscript copy for his records.⁵

¹While this letter is not to JW, it provides helpful context for the letters between JW, Thomas Adam, and Samuel Walker. Thomas Adam (1701–84) was born at Leeds, where his father was town clerk, was educated at Christ's College and Hart Hall, Cambridge, and in 1724 was presented to the living of Winteringham, Lincolnshire, where he remained until his death, refusing many offers of more prosperous livings. During his lifetime he published *Practical Lectures on the Church Catechism*, a paraphrase on Rom. 1–11, a volume of sermons, and some ephemera. His reputation grew posthumously among evangelical circles by his exposition of the Gospels, and especially by his spiritually analytical diary, extracts from which became extremely popular under the title of *Private Thoughts on Religion*.

²Thomas Adam had just published *Practical Lectures on the Church Catechism* (London: Hitch and Hawes, 1755).

³JW shared with Thomas Adam a draft of 'Ought we to Separate from the Church of England?' (see *Works*, 9:567–80) or a revision of it; and had on Adam's suggestion sent it to Walker as well.

⁴The letter of Sept. 5; above.

⁵A revised transcription published in Sidney, *Life of Walker*, 161–62.

From Thomas Walsh

Limerick
September 23, 1755

Honoured Sir,

I have received two letters from you,¹ it is certain with a great deal of pleasure, as I did not hear from you for near a month. When they came to me I was confined to my bed by a fever. On Thursday the 11th instant I went to Shronell. It rained all the way. I was wet to the skin. I had neither dry clothes nor a fire to dry myself by, so I was obliged to preach in my wet clothes. Wet and cold, sweat, etc., occasioned a violent headache, pain in my bones, etc. Yet I preached next morning, and then took to my bed. I would observe something with regard to this *sickness*: 1) It was deeply impressed on my mind before I left Limerick that I should be sick. 2) I was more afraid of being sick at Tyrrelspass and Shronell than at any other place in Ireland, yet the Lord laid his hand on me in both these places. 3) I had very remarkable manifestations of the love and goodness of God to my soul before this illness. In the sickness I had peace; after it I was much comforted. On Saturday the 21st I came hither in a chair. I have preached these two nights, and am not much worse for it. The people are exceeding civil and tender, and, I trust, more alive and better united than they have been for some time past. I had it in my mind to go to Castlebar for a fortnight.

You desire I would go into the north, but you may judge how unfit I am for either at present. Dear sir, I find, as it were, an infinite desire to preach the gospel, and if I could to set the nation on fire. But the providence of God keeps me weak, and often visits me with afflictions of body. I do not murmur, neither do I count my life dear unto myself. But I find need of patience, because I have not more health and strength to preach the gospel, which I love more than my necessary food.

It is certain my own sin and imprudence may occasion many of my troubles. My soul is too great for my body. In this sense, indeed, my spirit is willing, but my flesh is weak.²

I think to remain here a little till I recover some strength, and then, if possible, to visit either Castlebar, the Athlone circuit, or the north. If I cannot, I must be resigned.

Dear sir, you will not think I make light of your directions. No, God is my witness that next to my immediate duty to him, I desire to follow them as regularly as the shadow follows the substance.

I write largely, plainly, and constantly to the preachers. I hope they fear God, and, in general, labour faithfully. The Lord is with us still. Pray for, and still advise,

Your very affectionate son,

T. Walsh

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 2 (1779): 366–67.³

¹Neither of these letters are known to survive.

²See Matt. 26:41.

³Titled in *AM*: 'Patience in Suffering'. Transcription republished in *Works*, 26:591–92.

From the Rev. Samuel Walker to the Rev. Thomas Adam¹

[Truro]
October 2, 1755

... I hope they, I am sure I, have no cause to repent our conversings together. Yet we are not come nearer in sentiment. Reserving my fuller opinion to another occasion, I will say for the present that I cannot agree with Mr. Wesley's definition of faith, and way of coming at assurance which follows from it. If faith be a certain *sure confidence* of God's love to *me*, then previous to any sanctifying evidence there is assurance of my acceptance; and that inward immediate assurance is the witness of the Spirit. For my part, I take this definition of faith to be unscriptural, and the conclusion which cannot but follow from it concerning acceptance unsafe. It hath had this effect with most of the Methodists I have conversed with, that they have thought believing to be feeling, and faith by them hath been placed in the affections instead of the heart; the consequence of which hath been doubting when the stir of the affections hath been less.

With regard to others, this account of faith hath produced hard judgments. For if a sure confidence of God's love to me be the essence of faith, then whoever want it are unbelievers; whereas if faith be the sinner's trusting his soul with Christ, from a persuasion first of his own misery and next of Christ's sufficiency, then this trust will be rather manifested as the first grace of the new heart when the other graces which always accompany it become so. And, whether a man have sure confidence or not, is surely a living principle (and therefore saving) if it dispose the heart to a determination for God as a Lord and portion, and do influence to a true self-denial and mortification of inward sin. There are many mistakes, in my way of reckoning, arising from this definition. And though the authority of the old Puritans be pleaded for it, yet upon a closer examination I do not find they meant as Mr. Wesley doth. Might not his notion of faith have arisen this way? When he first went out, unacquainted with experimental religion, he saw many falling into great fears under his preaching, and observed that by and by they were comforted in the news of the gospel. What then is faith, says he, but the assurance of God's love to them which I hear these people speak of? Whereas, as much as there was of faith in it, this confidence could only be the fruit of it. [But to say no more of these dry disputations. In this day of darkness and licentiousness, it becomes all the friends of the Gospel to bear with one another; and while they differ in opinion and denomination, to unite together in heart and endeavour for the support of the common cause.

It is my great comfort there are good men of all persuasions, who are content to leave each other the liberty of private judgment in lesser things, and are heartily disposed to unite their efforts for the maintaining and enlarging Christ's kingdom. This I take to be the most promising symptom of our day, and I am hoping great things from this spirit of moderation and peace.^{2]}

Source: Pitts Library (Emory), Samuel Walker Papers (MSS 437); Walker's manuscript copy for his records.³

¹While not to JW, an excerpt from this letter provides further context for the letters between JW, Thomas Adam, and Samuel Walker.

²A portion of the manuscript.

³A revised transcription published in Sidney, *Life of Walker*, 153–55.

From Thomas Walsh

Limerick
October 8, 1755

Honoured Sir and My Dear Father,

My last gave you an account of my illness at Shronell. I have had a relapse since, but it continued only two days. Yet I am quite weak and spent, although I endeavour to preach once a day, sometimes twice. If God did not remarkably comfort my soul at this juncture, the various internal and external exercises I have would certainly make me miserable. My sorrow, indeed, is not worldly, nor on account of any perishable thing. It is for the church of God. Passing by, then, all bodily pain, I will give you some brief hints of my inward trouble.

1. On my own account, because I am not more holy, because I have not a clean heart. I have not that strength to do, much less to suffer, what I am fully convinced a preacher of the gospel should be endowed with. I have not strength to travel as I desire, and as it seems many places want it.

2. On account of others, as first: Brother Oddie¹ is ill of a fever in Dublin. 2) Brother Morgan,² after labouring usefully for some time in Waterford, is running away from the work, from a consciousness of his inability; yet it seems he has more extensive gifts than some who have preached for years. 3) The Athlone Circuit has only brother [Robert] Swindells on it; for brother Fisher³ is gone to Dublin, and I understand he is ill too. Brother Seccomb,⁴ for whom I wrote to meet me here, is gone to Castlebar. The north and Cork, etc., are pretty well supplied, the former having brother Deaves⁵ and Kead,⁶ the latter brother [Joseph] Cownley and [John] Haughton.

I often wondered of late how your soul sustained the burden you have borne for years, but I considered the power of God which was with you. This is a specimen of my present state. I am comforted on the other hand, because, 1) God ruleth over all. 2) I know he is my God, and I love him, and according to my little grace and strength do him the best service I can.

Our congregations here are very large. This day I have appointed an hour to meet with some of the army. There is a prospect of doing good among them. Many of them attend the Word. They are Scots, and it is hard to get them to submit to our discipline. When I shall leave this, and where I shall go, I cannot devise now. Dear sir, pray for us, and for

Your ever affectionate son,

T. Walsh

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 20 (1798): 440–41.⁷

¹James Oddie (c. 1730–90) served as a travelling preacher between 1752 and 1771.

²James Morgan (1736–74) became one of JW's travelling lay preachers in 1755.

³John Fisher (fl. 1750–60) appears in the Minutes as a travelling preacher in 1752 (*Works*, 10:251), and served through about 1760. Little else is known about him.

⁴Thomas Seccomb (d. 1759), a native of Cornwall, appears first in the 1755 Minutes as one of JW's travelling preachers. Orig., 'Sicomb'.

⁵James Deaves appears in the *Minutes* as a travelling preacher first in 1753 (*Works*, 10:267), and remains listed through 1767 (10:344). He served mainly in Ireland.

⁶Thomas Kead appears in the *Minutes* as a travelling preacher first at the 1752 Conference in Limerick (*Works*, 10:251) and served through 1762. Orig., 'Kend'.

⁷Transcription republished in *Works*, 26:602.

From the Rev. Thomas Adam¹

Wintringham
October 10, 1755

Reverend Sir,

As you are pleased to desire my opinion of a matter which is, and is judged by yourself to be, of very great importance, 'a formal separation of the Methodists from the Church of England', I shall make no apology for giving it to you in as explicit, though short, a manner as I can, so far as relates to yourself and the difficulties you are under about it.

As you are not satisfied in your conscience of the lawfulness of a separation in form, but on the contrary have advanced many reasons against it, which seem weighty to yourself, and at the same time judge it to be inexpedient, methinks your way is plain before you, separation from an establishment without a clear and full conviction of the lawfulness, expedience, and absolute necessity of it, being *utterly unlawful*. And if any considerable number of the Methodists should persist in carrying their design of a separation into execution, you and others, your present scruples subsisting, will be obliged in conscience to disavow and declare openly against it. What confusion among yourselves, and what detriment to religion in general, would follow upon this; what occasion of triumph it will give to your opposers, and what a contradiction it is to your avowed design of restoring practical, vital religion, especially in the Church of England, may easily be discerned.

Be pleased, sir, to keep your eye and heart steadily fixed upon this single point, and let no by-respects, no personal considerations, no retrospects, nor concern for Methodism in its present state, influence you in your determination—viz., What is the one conscionable, scriptural way of extricating yourself from your present embarrassments? Which, all things considered, must be owned to be very great, and should be a warning to all how they venture upon a revolt from the authority and standing rules of the Church to which they belong. I fear, sir, that your saying you do not appoint, but only approve of the lay preachers, from a persuasion of their call and fitness, savours of disingenuity.² Where is the difference? Under whose sanction do they act? Would they generally think their call a sufficient warrant for commencing preachers, or be received in that capacity by your people, without your approbation, tacit, or express? And what is their preaching upon this call but a manifest breach upon the order of the Church, and an inlet to confusion? Which in all probability will follow upon your death, and, if I mistake not, you are upon the point of knowing by your own experience.

Upon the whole, therefore, it is humbly submitted to your most serious consideration, whether the separation is not wide enough already, particularly in the instance of unordained persons preaching and gathering societies to themselves wherever they can; and whether all the Methodists might not serve the interests of Christ better as witnesses and examples of a living faith, and expect a greater blessing from the God of order upon their talents, gifts, and graces, whatever they are, by returning to a closer union with the Church, and repairing the breach they have made, than by making it still wider, and separating what they think the gospel-leaven from the lump.

I pray God direct you to judge and act in this, and everything else, for the good of his Church, and your own future peace, and am, reverend dear sir,

Your unworthy brother and servant,

T. A.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 2 (1779): 371–73.³

¹See Thomas Adam to Samuel Walker, Sept. 18, 1755, above.

²JW shared with Adam 'Ought we to Separate', where this distinction is made (*Works*, 9:572).

³Transcription republished in *Works*, 26:603–04.

From Henry Rimius¹

[London]
c. October 17, 1755

Reverend Sir,

I should be extremely obliged to you if you would be so kind as to resolve me the following question.² Has ever a writing appeared in this country before the year 1753 in which the Moravian hymns were exposed besides that printed in 1749 under the following title: *Hymns composed for the Use of the Brethren by the Right R[everend] and most illustrious C[ount] Z[inzendorf]; published for the Good of Mankind?*³

It is especially of moment to me to know whether or no the Moravian hymns *from the year 1749 to 1753* were treated of in this country in any controversial writing published against them. I hope, reverend sir, you will be so kind as to inform me particularly of that circumstance, and in case such thing has existed, to let me have a sight of these writings.⁴ I am, with great esteem

Source: manuscript draft; London, Lambeth Palace Library.⁵

¹Henry Rimius (d. 1756) was a librarian at the British Library who wrote several items against the Moravians.

²Rimius wrote this above 'the following', which was struck through: 'I beg leave to ask you a question, which I believe nobody is better able to resolve than you. According to the information I have, no writ'.

³Rimius did not appear to know that this was in fact published by JW himself (see *Bibliography*, No. 159), nor does Wesley mention this in his reply on Oct. 24.

⁴Rimius had previously written, and struck through, the following: 'you will do me a great deal of pleasure in case such ... in granting me a sight thereof, or referring me'.

⁵Transcription published in *Works*, 26:605.

From the Rev. Samuel Walker

Truro
October 20, 1755

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I would not transmit to you Mr. Adam's letter without acknowledging your favour of the 24th of September,¹ and adding my thoughts upon the matter of it.

Those who press you for a separation insist it is not lawful to abide in the Church, you say, upon these considerations:

1. 'Because of the assent and consent required to the liturgy—and this especially because of several things therein which they apprehend to be contrary to Scripture—and also because they dare not confine themselves to forms.' These are no other than the objections which the Dissenters have made; and whatever weight they might have, yet I believe are not in the least a ground upon which these gentlemen proceed in pushing for a separation. For why was not this objection made sooner by them? Did they not know that such objections were? Or, in truth, are they not *desirous* to separate, and so willingly take hold of anything whereby they may persuade themselves 'tis unlawful to continue in the Church?—Besides, the assent and consent can never be required in such sense as is imagined, which were to suppose the compilers of the liturgy thought their human compositions infallible. It must be understood as assenting and consenting to the liturgy as being in such manner agreeable to the Scriptures that you contentedly join in it and willingly conform to it. There is but one book in the world without defect; and if the unavoidable defects of men were a sufficient ground for separating from a church, it is easy to see there could be no abiding under any establishment that could be invented.—And how is it they dare not confine themselves to a form in public ministration? This is going far indeed. Appeal to their own consciences; they cannot say this in the presence of God, that they dare not confine themselves to a form in public² worship, wherein only they are required to do so, as I can find?—Upon the whole I ask, did the *first thoughts* of separation arise from this difficulty with regard to the liturgy? I dare answer in the negative. That must have sprung from a supposed necessity of having ordained ministers over the Methodists. And if this were the case, what is there more in this objection than the sophistry of a deceiving heart, by which they who make it may have been too easily led away? When we have a mind to do a thing, experience shows how easy it is to find reasons for doing it, and to deceive ourselves out of the truth.

2. 'Because of the laws of the Church, if they include the Canons.' If the Canons were never authorized by Act of Parliament, they cannot be properly part of the Church establishment, which as such is merely a civil thing. The Church establishment binds the conscience as a civil constitution, which it becomes by the authority of the government; wherefore whatsoever is not so established (I mean by the king, lords, and commons), not being an act of government, cannot bind the conscience. But you are doubtless better informed upon this point than I can be, and must needs have observed that such a submission hath never been exacted to the Canons as hath been to the rubric and liturgy, which I take to contain the laws of our Church.—As to the spiritual courts, may not a man lawfully remain in the Church because of them? If discipline be lost we lament it; but surely nothing shall revive discipline but a revival of vital religion, for which we ought to pray and labour in our several places.—I must needs observe here again that your friends are seeking occasions whereby to satisfy themselves in doing that they have before set their hearts upon. Excuse me if I cannot help seeing at the bottom of this a factious submissive spirit. Which is more evident still in their:

Third and fourth reasons for a separation—viz., 'Because many of the ministers are bad men, disclaim an inward call, and preach contrary to the gospel.' What hath this to do with the establishment?

¹See *Works*, 26:592–96.

²John Nelson, in DDCW 8/1, made the common scribal error of jumping from one 'public' (before 'ministration') to another.

*These are not the establishment.*³ We must separate from the notions and practice of all such, and thereby show ourselves true members of the Church of England. —Were the faults of ministers a sufficient cause of departing from a church, there could be no such thing as remaining long in any church whatever. —Yea, and what security is there that by and by, for the same reasons, it should not be as necessary to separate from the Methodists themselves? Such a principle can possibly produce⁴ nothing but perpetual confusion as long as the world lasts, since it would lay every man under an obligation of conscience to leave his church when he thought many of the ministers belonging to it did not live and preach as they ought. You can hardly think of anything which would be more destructive of love, peace, and order.

After all, I heartily wish your friends would think (at least you would think for them) *what manner of spirit they are of*. It is evident they affect to be teachers, and so would persuade themselves and you, it is not lawful to abide in the Church, by such arguments as would never have got into their heads had not a conceit of themselves, and an ambition of their being ministers, first got into their hearts. I speak thus plainly, because I see *they seem almost to have overcome you*; and to make you sensible of what I believe neither themselves nor you suspect, that the real foundation of their unkind contest with you is a lurking *vanity and pride of heart*.

What I have said upon the second reason will make my assertion that ‘the essence of the Church consists in her orders and laws, not her worship and doctrines’, more easy to you; though perhaps not altogether so, by reason of that point—lay preachers.

I cannot think it were anyhow authenticated for a few clergymen to take upon them to establish a church and ordain ministers.

What you have said concerning the impossibility of laying aside lay preachers entirely defeats the scheme I hinted at. However, you shall need maintain your ground with constancy. Do what is right, and fear no consequences. Sure I am, you have cause to stand firm to your first principles upon this occasion. Many of the clergy up and down are speaking the truth. Should you be deserted by some, there will not be wanting such as will support you, or rather the cause of vital Christianity I am persuaded you have at heart.

As I am not sure whether I have got your direction, be pleased to own the receipt of this in a line to, dear sir,

Your most humble servant and unworthy brother,

Samuel Walker

Source: manuscript transcriptions: (by Walker in letter to Thomas Adam) Pitts Library (Emory), Samuel Walker Papers (MSS 437); and (by John Nelson and CW) MARC, DDCW 8/1, pp. 47–63.⁵

³This sentence is omitted in DDCW 8/1, probably another scribal error by Nelson.

⁴CW takes over the transcription of DDCW 8/1 at this point.

⁵The holograph from Walker to JW is not known to survive. We have access to its contents through a copy Walker included in a letter to Thomas Adam on Nov. 4 (at Emory), and a copy made by John Nelson for CW (at MARC). The transcription here is made by collating the two copies; cf. *Works*, 26:606–08.

From the Rev. Samuel Walker to the Rev. Thomas Adam¹

[Truro]

November 4, 1755

... The benefit of this society is now appearing in a circumstance I had before little thought of. By the help of it, I trust we shall keep our people in the generality clear from the peculiarities of Methodism. That notion of a witnessing faith is now invading us, and one at least of the society is possessed by it, and very zealous to introduce it. It is not the least, among many bad consequences following upon that opinion that they cannot think well of those who either are without it, or speak not of it in the way themselves do. This young man, together with one or two more who I suspect are looking towards it, is of a peculiar turn, remarkably warm in his constitution, not humbled in such a manner as to be patiently waiting for salvation, and therefore ready to catch at anything which may minister present comfort. A feeling assurance is therefore exactly fitted for him, and he seems to have lost all apprehension of the power of godliness but as consisting in sensible feelings. Upon recollection I believe all those Methodists I have conversed with, who have been strenuous in this point, have been of like constitution and temper with him. I find talking signifies just nothing, and the Scripture is made to speak unaccountably.

This circumstance hath turned my thoughts upon Mr. Wesley's writings, and I have now before me *Minutes of some late Conversations between Mr. Wesley and others*, printed at Dublin, in 1749. The first was held at the Foundery, June 25, 1744, when Mr. Piers, with some other clergymen, were present. When I read this tract some years ago I thought it a strange performance. But now, on the review, I am surprised at the inconsistency and unscriptural assertions which run through the whole of it. Religion in the heart, according to their then notion of it, seemed to be nothing else but a continuation of rapturous impressions, and the whole of it founded upon their description of faith. 'Christ loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*'; or at least that witness of the Spirit which immediately follows 'thou art pardoned, thou hast redemption in his blood'. It is not of the least strange things in these minutes that Prov. 8:15, Eph. 4:32, 2 Cor. 13:5, Heb. 8:10, 1 John 4:10, 5:19, are the scriptures, and the only ones, upon which this determination is founded. When the Methodists had been thus taught to seek justification, and to seek on such an impression the witness of the Spirit, why are not all other feelings equally his? Why not a hot feeling of a conceited heart to go and preach, a divine call? Why not a like impression, the spirit of supplication? And then who shall resist the Holy Ghost? How can they conceive the least good hope of any that are not this way? In truth, I cannot see the least difference is made in their account of others, and that they regard alike the orderly and profane. It is impossible anything less than confusion should be the consequence. But two things are singularly remarkable in these *Minutes*, which do sufficiently show the inexperience of those gentlemen at that time: one, that they express not the least sense of the apostasy of man's will; and the other, that by rejecting the imputation of Christ's righteousness, they ascribe the merit of our justification to faith, and not to him. In truth, I thought a while ago that this scheme did (however undesignedly) set up works in the place of Christ. For if faith be a work as well as any other, and we are justified by it (which we must needs be if justification by Christ's obedience unto death be disallowed) then we are justified by works.

I am free with non other as with yourself in speaking of these matters, holding it by no means fit to be the opposer of those who had been made so great instruments. Nevertheless, I would gladly see them going upon a more scriptural and reasonable foundation, and purpose to write to Mr. Wesley soon upon the occasion of the trouble his people are bringing upon me, when I shall give him a few hints upon these matters, yet so as to avoid disputes, which would be no way profitable with a (between friends) weak and warm, though honest man, as I take him to be.

¹While not to JW, an excerpt from this letter provides further context for the letters between JW, Thomas Adam, and Samuel Walker.

Yet I will wait an answer to mine, which I sent with yours, and desired him to own the receipt of his answer to my first letter (of which you have a copy) and what I write him in return I now transcribe.²

Source: Pitts Library (Emory), Samuel Walker Papers (MSS 437); Walker's manuscript copy for his records.³

²Walker transcribes his letter of Oct. 20, 1755.

³A revised transcription published in Sidney, *Life of Walker*, 156–58.

From John William Fletcher¹

London
November 29, 1755

Reverend Sir,

I was very much surprised to hear you read part of a letter written on the impending revolutions; they have often been, for some years, the subject of my meditations, and of many conversations with a great divine abroad.² That gentleman, as eminent for his uncommon learning as he is remarkable for the use he has made of it from his youth, showed the greatest inclination to dive into the apparent obscurities of the prophecies contained in the Bible. That inclination increased with his knowledge and piety; it followed him everywhere. When upon his travels he generally got what light he could from the learned in that uncommon branch of knowledge, and had several conferences with Sir Isaac Newton and others.

For these fifty years he has spent his time in making himself perfectly master of the oriental languages, which are become as familiar to him as Greek and Latin, and in comparing and explaining the various prophecies scattered in the Old and New Testament. Therefore, if his labours have been attended with a blessing from above, and a measure of God's Holy Spirit, he is, in all appearance, a man most likely to discover what God has been pleased to hide, for a time, under the veil of prophetic figures. As I have often read his works, both those that have been printed and those which he has not yet been able to publish on account of the strong opposition of several people, I shall take the liberty to give you a short account of his system.

It is, as far as I can judge, pretty much the same as the gentleman's whose letter you read lately; and supported by the numerous train of his arguments it seldom fails either to silence or convict those that oppose it. It agrees with the tenor of the whole Bible. It gives such grand ideas of God's justice in punishing the wicked, and his faithfulness in remembering the gracious promises he has made to the faithful. It squares so well with history and chronology (I would almost say with the present state of the world) that if it is not true, one must confess it is at least very probable. This has been owned by numbers of clergymen, and even by some of those who, because 'the Lord delays his coming', think that the world shall always remain in the same state.

Let me beg of you, sir, for the sake of that gentleman, whom I have great reason to honour, not to judge absolutely of him by what I shall say; considering that clear water running through a foul pipe may easily contract a disagreeable and muddy taste. I confess I want a competent knowledge of Scripture, and the degree of profane learning necessary to illustrate it; so that if you observe in these sheets any

¹John William Fletcher (1729–85), born Jean Guillaume de la Flechère in Nyon, Switzerland, and educated at the University of Geneva, planned an army career, following his father's example. But while in England serving as tutor to the sons of Thomas Hill of Tern Hall, Shropshire, he came under the influence of the Methodists, and sought Holy Orders. He was ordained both deacon and priest in the Church of England in 1757, for some time assisted JW as a valued clerical colleague, and in 1760 accepted the living of Madeley, Shropshire, which became the evangelical centre for a populous industrial area. He was a faithful parish priest, and widely revered as a genuine saint. In the controversy with the Calvinist evangelicals that erupted in 1771 Fletcher became JW's chief spokesman, issuing a series of *Checks to Antinomianism* remarkable for both the force and clarity of their arguments and the charm of their English. In 1781 Fletcher married Mary Bosanquet.

In a long autobiographical letter to CW (May 10, 1757) Fletcher described how during the winter of 1754–55 he attended the services at West Street or the Foundery every Sunday, found his own experience reflected in the sermons, and in Jan. 1755 'was enabled to cast [him]self upon Christ so as to have peace and assurance and power over sin'. A letter read by JW at one of the services Fletcher attended sparked this response, the earliest known of many letters between the two men.

²Patrick Streiff identifies this gentleman as Théodore Crinsoz de Bionens, Fletcher's uncle; in *Reluctant Saint? A Theological Biography of Fletcher of Madeley* (Peterborough: Epworth, 2001), 45.

inconsistency, it is probably all my own.

According to that divine's opinion, we are come to the last times, the grand catastrophe of God's drama draws near apace. He shall soon be avenged, first of his unfaithful servants, and next of his barefaced enemies. In a few years he will purge his floor, and burn the chaff with unquenchable fire. Every Christian ought then to prepare himself for that day, which will come as a thief in the night; and to labour for a living faith, the ark which alone will carry us safe to the harbour, amidst the universal deluge of woe which is going to overflow the earth.

Here follow some of the reasons on which his opinion is founded.

First, consider Nebuchadnezzar's dream,³ which is a rough sketch of the world's four universal revolutions. Three are past long ago: the empires of the Assyrians, Persians, and Greeks have disappeared. The 'iron legs', that represented the strength of the Roman empire under the consuls and emperors, have had the same fate. The 'feet' only remain, which being 'made of clay and iron', partly weak and partly strong, express plainly the remains of the Roman monarchy, which is nothing but a weak compound of spiritual and temporal power, that does not 'cleave' better together than 'iron' to 'clay'. And whereas the feet of the statue ended in 'ten toes', so was the Roman empire divided into ten kingdoms, these were still 'united together by the clay', i.e., the pope's erroneous religion and idolatrous worship.

'In the days of these ten kings', says the prophet Daniel, 'shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed. For it shall swallow up all these kingdoms, and stand forever. Forasmuch as a stone cut from the mountain without hands'⁴ (a small number of true Christians sent from Mount Sion, without the hand of mortal man, and by the Spirit of God alone; or Jesus himself, the cornerstone that was cut off by God's justice on Mount Calvary) 'shall smite the feet of the statue', the last of the four monarchies; 'and the pieces of it shall become as the chaff, carried away by the wind, and no place shall be found for them; but the stone that shall smite the image will become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth.'⁵

Secondly, compare with this the vision of the seventh chapter,⁶ where the fourth beast that had 'iron teeth to devour all' answers clearly to the 'iron legs' of Nebuchadnezzar's image. For as this had 'ten toes', so had that 'ten horns'; viz. the ten kingdoms into which the Roman empire was divided—those of Burgundy and Lombardy; that of the Vandals, the Eastern and Western empires, England, France, Spain, Portugal and Poland. Betwixt these ten horns did another come up, i.e., the pope—who aggrandized himself at the expense of the other kings, and before which three of the horns fell, the kingdoms of Lombardy, Burgundy, and that of the Vandals, who were once possessed of a great part of France, Spain, and Africa, but are now no longer known but in history.

'This horn had eyes'; i.e., an appearance of wisdom, and a great deal of fraud; 'and a mouth that spake great things against the Most High. It warred against the saints'; and so has done the pope; millions have fallen, as so many victims to his cruelty, pride, and persecuting spirit. But we are near the time when, having fully 'prevailed against them, they shall be given unto him for a time, times, and a division of time'. But after this last raging of Antichrist, 'his body shall be destroyed; then the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess it forever and ever. This will be the end of the matter.' And if any one meditates thereon with singleness of heart, his 'thoughts' like Daniel's, 'will be troubled in him', and his 'countenance changed', and he will 'keep the matter in his heart'.

³See Dan. 2.

⁴Dan. 2:44–45.

⁵If Fletcher is quoting in the second half of this paragraph (the material shown in quotes is in italics in *AM*), he is apparently quoting his uncle. This move between Scripture and apparent quotation from a commentator happens repeatedly in this letter.

⁶See Dan. 7.

Thirdly, compare again this vision with that which is contained in the following chapter, where the prophet, having foretold the ruin of the Persian empire, the conquest of Alexander, and the division of his dominions between four kings, comes at once to 'the little horn'⁷ that should spring from one of them; namely, from that of Greece or Macedonia. For as the Spirit of God had shown the prophet before all that concerned the beginning of the fourth kingdom, he passes lightly over it, to come to the main point, the rising of the 'little horn', at whose destruction the empire of the saints shall begin.

Let it be remembered here that Constantine, having transported into Greece the seat of the Roman empire, renewed (as it were) that of Macedonia, of which Byzantium was one of the chief cities; and that it was under him and his successors that the bishop of Rome increased in honours, and began to lift up himself above all the bishops and patriarchs in the world; so that in two or three hundred years, he 'waxed exceeding great in the pleasant land, and cast down and stamped upon' kings and emperors, those 'stars' in the 'heaven' of government; he took away 'the daily sacrifice', abolished or quite disfigured the true worship of God and Jesus, and cut down the truth to the ground with his army.

Here the prophet saw a saint asking another saint, 'how long' the church should be corrupted and desolate?⁸ And the answer was, till the end of 2300 days, and then the sanctuary should be cleansed. Here is a number given, a number by which we may know that we are come to the very time the Spirit of God had in view. A number which fixes the beginning of the things that are coming upon the earth. Let us take some notice of it.

1. When shall the sanctuary begin to be cleansed, in such a measure as to deserve to be taken notice of by the Spirit of God? At the end of 2300 days, which are proved to be prophetic days, and to signify each a whole year, by the prophecy of the seventy weeks, and many other places of scripture.

2. What is the epoch⁹ from which we must begin to reckon those 2300 years? It is evident it must be the time of the vision itself, which the prophet has taken particular care to observe; for in the first verse of the chapter, 'In the third year of the Reign of King Belshazzar', says he, 'a vision appeared to me, even unto me Daniel.'

3. But how can we know certainly the time of Belshazzar's reign? I must own this question is not so easily answered as the others. But it can be resolved with some knowledge of history and chronology, for if we compare the writings of sacred and profane historians, if we trust the canons of Ptolemy, which have been tried by astronomical observations, with Petarius, Usserius, Prideaux, and others, we shall agree that Belshazzar (the same whom the historians call Niricassoolassar, or Neriglissor) having killed Evilmerodac, the son of Nabocolassar or Nebuchadnezzar, seized upon the Assyrian throne A.M. 3476, i.e., 559 years before Christ; or, as Torniel will have it, about twenty years after—because asserting that Evilmerodac (instead of two years that the above mentioned chronologists give to his reign) enjoyed the diadem twenty-three years, which would make the reign of his successor, our Belshazzar, begin about 538 years before Christ. If we admit the first opinion, which is more probable, it follows that the third year of Belshazzar's reign falls in 556 years before Christ, which is the epoch wanted, add to it four or five years on account of the difference of the Judaical year of 360 days (and ours that is 363 and above); add three years more for the time that Belshazzar had reigned when Daniel had the vision, and we have about 550, which being subtracted from 2300, give the year 1750 for the cleansing of the sanctuary—or for such a tolerable progress in the cleansing of it as may be taken notice of, and attract the eyes of all those who wait for this cleansing of God's church.

4. If any one should ask what happened so remarkable about that time as to show that the sanctuary is in some degree cleansed, or that this important work is really carried on with any tolerable success; I would answer that God was working at that time, and still works, such a work as never was seen since the apostles days. He has sent some chosen servants of his, both in these kingdoms and abroad,

⁷Dan. 8:9ff.

⁸See Dan. 8:13.

⁹Fletcher uses 'epocha', apparently trying to transliterate the Greek term.

who, by the manifest assistance of God's Spirit, have removed the filthy doctrine of justification by works, and outward Christless performance of moral duties, which pollute the sanctuary and make it an abomination to the Lord. The Holy Ghost *is* given, and the love of God *is* shed abroad in the hearts of believers, as in the days of old. And the Lord has taken to himself servants that will rejoice to stand boldly for the truth, to remain unshaken in the evil day, and to fight manfully his battles, when he shall call them to it. I own that the cleansing is but begun, but this first revolution may, in all probability, be the forerunner of a greater. God has called. A few have obeyed his call. The generality still shut their eyes and ears against the tender invitations of their Lord, and continue to pollute the sanctuary, and to look on the blood of the Lamb as an unholy thing. Shall not God carry on his work? Shall the creature still resist his Creator, and the arm of flesh be stronger than the living God! Not so. He will not always strive with obdurate hearts. What the gentle breathings of his Spirit cannot perform, he will do with war, sword and fire, plague and famine, tribulation and anguish. He is going to gird on his sword, and his right hand shall teach him terrible things. Nations refuse the sceptre of his mercy; what remains then, but to rule them with an iron sceptre, and break them in pieces like a potter's vessel?

5. If this answer, satisfying as it is, does not content those who will not believe even what they see, I would answer farther that the calculation abovementioned is so far from being made to reach farther than chronology will allow (as I have heard some object) that it might admit of an addition of twenty-one years, according to Torniel, as I said before; which would put off the cleansing of the sanctuary till 1770. Chronologists may mistake in a few years, but cannot err upon the whole. And as God is true and faithful, so it is manifest that the prophecy of 2300 must be fully accomplished in our days, or those of the next generation.

6. To set the argument drawn from the number 2300 in a clear light, it is necessary to prove that it was not designed to show the time of the cleansing of the sanctuary by Judas Maccabaeus and his brethren from the pollution of Antiochus Epiphanes; nor the cleansing of Jesus and his apostles, who freed the Church of God from Pharisaical hypocrisy, and Sadducean profaneness; nor lastly that of Luther, etc., who cleansed the outside and washed white the sanctuary, but were not able to remove the filth of unbelief that remained within. Many arguments might be drawn from the number itself which agree with no cleansing but that *in* these days. But it will be easier to draw them from the general drift of the prophecy, and the context of the chapter. Observe first these words, 'at the time of the end shall this vision be fulfilled', where the word 'end' signifies plainly the catastrophe of God's drama, the last act of the wicked tragedy men have been acting for near 6000 years, and the πανζων ἀποκαλυψις of our Lord Jesus Christ. Again, in the 19th verse, the angel said to Daniel, 'Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation, for at the time appointed the end shall be'. What end is here spoken of, if it is not that of God's universal scheme?

Ponder also these words (ver. 26.) 'Wherefore shut thou up the vision, for it shall be for many days'; which agrees far better with our times, than those of Antiochus, Paul, or Luther. Observe again these words of an angel to Daniel, chap. 10, 'I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days', for the vision is for many days (where it is plain that 'latter days' here, and 'end' in the 8th chapter signify but one and the same thing). The angel, according to his promise, tells the prophet in the 11th chapter many particulars of those things that shall soon come upon us, and of that time of trouble, which will be matchless and unheard of before; 'Then', adds the angel, 'thy people shall be delivered, everyone that shall be found written in the book'. And who is the man so little conversant with history as to say that here is meant the persecution of Antiochus, which, though fierce for awhile, by no means answers the angel's words. Or the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, for though the troubles of the Jews were beyond expression, yet the Spirit of God had a far more distant prospect, as can be proved by the assurance the angel gives Daniel, that 'at that time his people should be delivered'; which neither was then, nor has been hitherto—the Jews fighting still in a shameful banishment, and expecting yet that promised deliverance. An argument as strong as the foregoing may be drawn from the first resurrection, which is to take place soon after that deliverance, 'when many of them that sleep shall awake'; whereas, at the second and last resurrection not only 'many', but all the souls of dead men shall re-enter their bodies. But more concerning this afterwards.

7. As what I have been writing on the number 2300 forms a complete proof, I shall not trouble you, sir, with longer digressions upon the various prophetic numbers that occur in the Bible concerning the things we expect to see in a short time. Let me only beg of you to observe the harmony of the following ones.

Rev. 10:6, 'And the angel swore by him who liveth for ever and ever that when the seven thunders should have uttered their voices', χρόνος οὐκετι ἔσται,¹⁰ 'there will not be a time more'; which word 'time', in St. John and Daniel, signifies [both] a year and a prophetic year (viz., 360 years). If it be true that the seven voices here mentioned signify the reformation of the seven Protestant countries, it will follow that from the Reformation there will not be a whole time, or 360 years, 'till the mystery of God be accomplished, which he told for our comfort, his servants the prophets'.

[Rev.] Chap. 11:2. 'Do not measure the porch, for it is given to the Gentiles, and they shall tread under foot the holy city forty-two months.' Ver. 3, 'My two witnesses shall preach 1260 days.' Chap. 13:5, 'Power was given to the beast to fulfill forty-two months.'

The 'woman' (or true church) flying from the serpent, retires to a place where she is fed for a time, times, and part of a time; which number plainly signifies 3 prophetic years and a half, and falls in a wonderful manner with the 42 months that are allowed the beast or pope; and the 42 months during which two, or a few, witnesses will, in spite of opposition, maintain the truth as it is in Jesus, against antichrist and their false brethren.

N. B. 1260 days is equal to 42 months, or 3 years and a half, Daniel 12:11. From the time that the daily sacrifice should be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be 1290 prophetic days. It is easy to observe that there is some years difference between the numbers of Daniel and those of St. John. The reason is that the apostle had the beginning of the war against antichrist in view, whereas the prophet looked farther—viz., to some remarkable battle that he shall lose, and in which he shall be utterly destroyed; as for his second number, it seems to refer to that happy year when the remotest nations of the earth shall have embraced the Christian faith.

You may probably have observed, sir, that the various numbers which come to the same, or very near, must be reckoned from the time the bishop of Rome showed himself plainly to be the head antichrist, 'and set himself up as a god in the temple of God'; which was not in a very remarkable manner till the end of the fifth century. Add then 500 years to 1260, and you will see that in a few years these plain prophecies concerning the preaching of the two witnesses, the flight of the woman into the desert, and the duration of antichrist's reign will soon be accomplished.

It is worth observation that, as the tyranny of antichrist will last 1260 years, so his last raging, or that tribulation which will be so uncommon, shall last also 1260 common days, and not prophetic ones. Because of the elect's sake those days shall be shortened, according to our Lord's merciful promise. This observation will cast a great light upon all those numbers, and prevent many objections.

Having thus laid the prophetic numbers as the foundation of the edifice, I shall now give a short sketch of the above-mentioned gentleman's superstructure.

Seducers will come saying, 'here is Christ, or there, and they shall seduce many'; 'we shall hear of wars and rumours of war'; 'a kingdom shall rise against another kingdom'; 'there will be plagues and famines, troubles and earthquakes, but this is but the beginning of woes'. For the man of sin (recovered of the wound he received by the Reformation) shall gather an incredible strength. And Satan, knowing that he has but a short time, will rage beyond all expression. God, whose wrath is justly stirred up by the iniquities and unbelief, nay open profaneness of the Protestants, will give them into the hands of their enemies, as he formerly delivered his ungrateful people into the hands of the Assyrians; for his 'judgments' always 'begin at his house'. Then will come that dreadful persecution described in a hundred places of the sacred writings. 'As the love of many will be cold', and there will be, comparatively, no faith upon the earth. The apostasy foretold by all the prophets will soon take place—begin, in all probability, by the Lutherans in Germany, and follow in all Protestant countries. Here cruelties unheard of

¹⁰Orig., 'χρόνος οὐκ εσται'.

since the beginning of the world will be the refining fire of our decayed faith. Part of the reformed will be carried away into captivity, part will remain to serve their cruel conquerors, who (notwithstanding their falling away from the pure outward worship) will treat them in a most terrible manner.

As for Christ's faithful witnesses, having withstood this grand apostasy with all their might, and confirmed their weak brethren, by whom they will often be betrayed into the hands of their enemies, they shall, for the greatest part, seal their faith with their blood, get the palm of martyrdom, and water the earth with rivers of blood, that the Lord may the sooner cover it with his promised harvest.

Those that shall escape, being hidden and saved in a wonderful manner, will be the seed of that harvest, and will remain concealed three years and a half (see Rev. 11, the death and resurrection of the two witnesses), when God, giving them an extraordinary measure of his Spirit, with an undaunted boldness, shall call on them to 'lift up their voices like trumpets', to proclaim pardon in the name of Jesus, and to rouse deluded nations and bid them come out of Babylon, that they may not partake of her plagues and be consumed at the appearing of the Lord. Then shall the tenth part of the city fall, or a great kingdom (leaving the party of the man of sin) will turn to God and give the signal of an universal reformation. Others shall join it in time, and all together will get the better of God's adversaries, in spite of their desperate resistance.

Rome shall be destroyed, and antichristianism will share the same fate. The greatest wonders and signs shall attend these revolutions, insomuch that Turks and Jews, heathens and savages, will know the hand of the Lord, bow their stubborn hearts to his grace, and 'give glory to him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever'.

Give me leave here, reverend sir, to propose to you a thing that many will look upon as a great paradox, but has yet sufficient ground in Scripture to raise the expectation of every Christian who sincerely looks for the coming of our Lord. I mean the great probability that in the midst of this grand revolution our Lord Jesus will suddenly come down from heaven, and go himself, conquering and to conquer.¹¹ For what but the greatest prejudice could induce Christians to think that the coming of our Lord spoken of in so plain terms by three Evangelists is his last coming, before the universal judgment, and the end of the world, since there is hardly anything in those chapters that may have given occasion to such a thought.

1. Jesus himself says, that 'immediately' (εὐθὺς) after the tribulation, which has been proved to be very near, the powers of heaven will be shaken, and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. And to the end of the chapter, our Lord does not say a word of the end of the world and the universal judgment, of which he does not speak till the end of the following chapter—so far from confounding his third coming with his second.

2. I read the very same account in the 13th [chapter] of St. Mark, when Jesus having spoken of the general apostasy, and 'the abominable desolation spoken of by Daniel' (which of course cannot be that of the Jews at the taking of Jerusalem) he adds, 'Let him that readeth understand. In those days the sun shall be darkened', etc., and then 'shall they see the Son of man', etc. Who does not perceive that Christ will come to give the finishing stroke to the great work begun by the might of his Spirit, to establish his kingdom upon earth, and to bring those happy days, 'when ten people shall lay hold of an Israelite, saying, lead us to the temple of the Lord'; 'when the kid shall feed with the lion, and a child lead them': when he that dieth young 'shall die an hundred years old'; and when 'righteousness shall cover the earth, as the waters fill the seas'. I cannot conceive how so many divines have such an idea of God's wisdom as to think (contrary to the plain text of his word) that so happy a time will last but a few days; and that this *Ἀποκαλυψις ζῶν πανζῶν* will no sooner take place, but the earth will be destroyed by fire. Such must be however the inconsistent opinion of those who confound our Lord's second with his third coming.

¹¹I.e., Fletcher is defending a specifically 'pre-millennial' physical return of Christ.

3. After our Lord's ascension, the angels promise the apostles, who then represented all true believers, that they should see Jesus Christ coming from heaven, but said not a word of the end of the world.

4. The second coming of our Lord was so frequently talked of in the apostles' days that many expected it daily; so that St. Paul, who knew it was yet afar off, thought it necessary to refute the strong expectation of the Thessalonians concerning the nearness of Christ's appearing. 'That day will not come', says he, 'before the apostasy, and the revelation of the man of sin, the son of perdition'; which is the same as if he had said, You shall know that the Lord will shortly come, when you shall see the universal apostasy that I foretell you. Nay the apostle goes a great deal farther, for in the same chapter he assures us that the Lord 'will destroy the man of sin by the brightness of his presence'. Can any thing be plainer?

5. Our Lord told his apostles at the Last Supper that he should not drink any more of the fruit of the vine till he should drink it new in the kingdom of heaven—which kingdom will be set up on earth thousands of years before the end of the world.

Having thus established the second coming of our Lord, give me leave, sir, to remove a specious objection:

Those who dislike an opinion because it is not generally received, will object that all that is said in Matt. 24, Mark 13, etc., of our Lord's second coming is certainly spoken of his last, immediately before the judgment, because Jesus says that the angels shall gather his elect from the four winds, which seem to imply the resurrection and the judgment following it. But so far from granting it, this is the very thing that shows our Lord did not speak of the end of the world and the judgment. Else why should not the reprobate be gathered from the four winds, as well as the 'elect'? Shall these only be judged, while the mouldered bodies of the wicked shall rest in peace? Is this scriptural?

What then can be the meaning of that 'gathering of the elect'? The question would be too deep for a short sighted man to answer, had not the Spirit of God revealed it to St. John, and all the believers who with an humble mind search the writings of the prophets. I will begin at Rev. 17, to show by the by how well everything I have wrote concerning the man of sin, and his destruction, agrees with the account St. John gives us of his visions.

There he gives such strong characteristics as at once points out Rome, and the pope. They agree extremely well with St. Paul's and Daniel's description. The beast, and the ten kings that defend it, 'having made war with the Lamb, shall at last be overcome by him', whereupon 'the ten kings' (13:16) 'forsaking the whore', or popish idolatry, shall rebel in their turn against the pope, and with the Lord's unexpected assistance shall destroy him, his city, and all his adherents.

The 17th chapter is a sublime description of the vast alteration which this fall of Babylon will cause in the world; pride and luxury falling with the same blow.

The 19th chapter contains a magnificent account of the sudden manner in which God's kingdom shall take place: 'Christ comes down' (this is again his second appearing, not distinguished enough from the third by our divines), Christ comes down to be avenged of his enemies, who are all destroyed in a last and decisive battle, whereupon all 'the kingdoms of the earth, become the kingdoms of our Lord'.

The 20th chapter displays to our expectation, the most glorious scene that can be on earth. 'Satan is bound for a thousand years', and if they are prophetic ones, for 360,000.¹² 'Thrones are set up, and judgment is given to those that sit on them'; which probably refers to what our Saviour promised his apostles, that at this coming, 'they should sit upon twelve thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel'; 'and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, as

¹²Note added in *AM* (by JW): 'I should rather be of this opinion, for a day is before the Lord as 1000 years, and 1000 years as a day. How would at last vanish the pitiful objections of unbelievers concerning God's choosing to create a world, where the good were to bear no proportion to the wicked! What a fine instance should we have of God's mercy, and of the efficacy of our Saviour's blood! How gloriously would these words be explained, "I punish to the third or fourth generation, but show mercy unto thousands of them that love me"!'

well as the souls of those that had not worshipped the beast nor its image, etc.': and, having been gathered from the four winds (Matt. 24) 'they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the 1000 years were finished. This is the first resurrection, on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.'

This takes away all the difficulty arising from that gathering of the elect so long before the day of judgment, and it confirms the ideas you give us in your hymns of God's wrath and mercy.

His wrath doth slowly move,
His mercy flows apace.¹³

Nor can I conceive, that Jesus would accept of a kingdom without his *members*, without the 'heirs of God and joint heirs of Christ'.¹⁴

The world, however, shall not last always in this happy state: Ezekiel and St. John are very express on this article. Satan shall be loosed at last out of his prison, and seduce two powerful nations, Gog and Magog; but this second almost universal rebellion will be quenched as prosperously as that of antichrist. How long the world shall last after this no one knows, not even the angels of God. But it is certain that all those things must come to pass before the conflagration of this globe spoken of by St. Peter, as well as before the second resurrection and judgment (see the end of chapter 20). We have in the 21st chapter an account of the *palingeny*¹⁵ of the earth after its purification by fire, of the New Jerusalem, and of the ravishing happiness of those who shall have persevered unto the end.

This is, sir, a short account of the gentleman's system, which far from fearing a severe examination does never appear in a better and clearer light than when it is compared with the writings of all the prophets and apostles, with the prophetic psalms, and in a word with the whole Bible.

Give me leave to conclude with some reflections that naturally flow from what has been said on that system.

1. Many people, I know, look on the meditations of prophecies, so expressly enjoined by St. Peter, as one of the greatest instances of presumption and enthusiasm; because they believe there is no sure ground to build upon, and that it is a land of darkness, in which the most enlightened Christians will never fail to stumble and fall shamefully. But is it probable that God, who foretold to a year, and very clearly, the deliverance of the Israelites from their Egyptian bondage; the return of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon, and the building of the second temple; and the birth and death of the Messiah; is it probable (I say) that he should have been silent, or not have spoken as clearly concerning his coming to destroy the destroyers, and to set up that kingdom which we pray for when we daily say, according to our Lord's appointment, 'Thy kingdom come'? If God had exactly foretold, for the comfort of believers, the various revolutions that have happened to his church in ages past, is it possible that he should have left himself without a witness concerning the most important of all, I mean the last? If he showed the prophets the first acts of his drama, is it not highly probable he has not forgot the last, without which his wisdom, justice, and mercy would always remain hid under a thick cloud?

2. Let none say that Jesus himself, as man, knew not the end of the world; and that Moses says, 'hidden things are for the Lord, but revealed ones for us and for our children'. I acknowledge that the end of the world, and the time of the purification of this globe by dissolution and fire, is a secret too deeply hid in the glass of God's decree for any man to fathom, before God himself is pleased to reveal it. But

¹³Fletcher is abridging slightly the second half of st. 3 of the versified Ps. 103 by Nahum Tate and Nicholas Brady that JW included in *CPH* (1738), p. 11: 'His waken'd wrath does slowly move, / His willing mercy flows apace.'

¹⁴Rom. 8:17.

¹⁵'Regeneration'.

nobody talks here of the end of the world. Nobody fixes either the hour or day, nor even the year of Christ's second appearing. Since he did not think fit to reveal it to us, we ought to stand in continual readiness for it. For, supposing this system to be true in all points, supposing the tribulation is to begin next year, it will still be impossible to determine whether Jesus will come down in ten or fifty years. So that our Lord's words are true, in all their extent, even now, for that day and hour, and even that year, 'knoweth no man'. Yet we expect to see the full cleaning of his sanctuary by the fire of persecution, the destroying of antichrist and unbelief, his great enemies, the subduing of all nations to his easy yoke, the calling of the Jews, the fulfilling of God's gracious promises to that long scattered seed of Abraham, and the bringing of those times when the fear of the Lord shall cover the face of the earth, as the waters do that of the sea. Where is the child of God that dares to say that all these things must not come to pass before the end of the world; and if so, when should they happen but in the time he has been pleased to fix in his holy Bible? Where is that man that makes God a liar, because he is an unbeliever? Shall the Lord say, and shall he not do? Shall he promise, and shall he not perform? If he has borne with the wickedness of the world so long, not being willing that any man should perish, shall he delay, to all eternity, to fulfill his threatenings? God forbid! The day is fixed, it is foretold. And though the *vision* was to be 'after many days', as the angel said to Daniel, yet it may be fulfilled in a few days for us, who live in the last times.

3. It is lawful, yea needful, that we and our children, should often think of these things, for 'hidden things are for the Lord', but these 'are revealed for us, and our children'.¹⁶ They are revealed in all the prophets from Moses to John, and more especially in the Revelation of this beloved apostle. Let but those objectors ponder the word *Αποκαλυψις*, and they will be ashamed to say that we must not look into those things because they were never revealed unto us.

4. If Jesus told his disciples that it was not theirs to know the times when those things should be accomplished, it does not follow that it must be hid from us, who are far nearer concerned in them than they were. Besides, how should they have understood and bore those things before they had received the Comforter, since they thought them bitter after they had obtained the divine gift, when they had some knowledge of them? Add to this that Daniel's vision was to be 'closed till the end', and could not be perfectly known till very near the time of the fulfilling of it.

5. It is remarkable that more books have been written upon the prophecies these last hundred years than were ever known before, and all (those at least which I have read) agree that these things will, in all probability, soon come upon the earth. I know many have been grossly mistaken as to the year. But because they were *rash*, shall we be *stupid*? Because they said 'today', shall we say 'never', and cry '*peace, peace*' when we should look about us with eyes full of expectation?

6. I know that a good part of a hundred thousand Protestants, scattered in France, expect some great revolution that will turn at last to their good, and reunite them to the children of above 200,000 of their brethren that were either expelled the kingdom or forced to leave it, because they 'would not take the mark of the beast in their hands, or on their foreheads'.¹⁷

Let us not judge rashly, nor utter vain predictions in the name of the Lord. But yet let us look about us with watchful eyes, lest the enemy take an advantage of us, and we lose the opportunity of rousing people out of their sleep, of confirming the weak brethren, and building up in our most holy faith those who know in whom they have believed. If we are mistaken in forming conjectures, if the phenomena we hear of every where are but common providences, if these things happen not to us but to our children (as they most certainly will before the third generation is swept away), is it not our business to prepare ourselves for them, to meditate on them, and to warn as many people as we can prudently, lest their blood should be required at our hands, were they to fall because of a surprise? Let us pray to God more frequently that for the elect's sake he would still more shorten the days of the tribulation, and add daily to the true church such as will be saved. But let us not forget to *rejoice* with Abraham in seeing by faith the glorious day of our Lord; and to hasten by our fervent prayers that glorious kingdom, those

¹⁶Deut. 29:29.

¹⁷Rev. 13:16.

happy days, when the narrow shall be the way to destruction, when saints raised from the dead shall converse with living saints, and the world of spirits be manifested, in a great measure, to the material world; in a word, when Jesus will be All in All.

What a glorious prospect is this! Let us then often think of these words of our Lord: 'Behold, I come quickly. Blessed is he that mindeth the saying of this prophecy.'¹⁸ Let us join to 'the Spirit and the bride', who say, 'Come!' 'O let him that heareth say, "Come!" And let him that is athirst come,' for 'He that testifieth these things says, Surely, I come quickly. Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus.'¹⁹

J. F.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 16 (1793): 370–76, 409–16.²⁰

¹⁸Rev. 22:7.

¹⁹Rev. 22:17–20.

²⁰Significantly abridged version published in *Works*, 26:613–16.

‘Graticola’ to the Editor of *Gentleman’s Magazine*

[December 1755]

Mr. Urban,

I find the account in your *Magazine* for November (p. 514), said to be taken from the *Public Advertiser*, concerning an earthquake which threw down great part of a rock near a ridge of mountains called Black Hamilton in Yorkshire, to be word for word the same with what has been since published in a pamphlet generally ascribed to Mr. John Wesley, the Methodist teacher, entitled *Serious Thoughts Occasioned by the Late Earthquake at Lisbon*. As the author relates it in his own person, and describes the place as seen by himself after the fracture, it must be supposed that he also communicated the account to the newspapers which he afterwards incorporated with his book.¹ This, however, I should not have made the subject of a letter.

But I have other observations to make upon Mr. Wesley’s pamphlet, which I think of some importance. ‘The late ingenious and accurate Dr. Halley’, says this writer, ‘fixes the return of the *great comet* in the year 1758. And [he] observes that the last time it revolved it moved in the very same line which the earth describes in her annual course round the sun, but that the earth was then on the other side of her orbit. Whereas in this revolution it will move not only in the same line, but in the same part of that line wherein the earth moves.’ The consequence of this occurrence must be that in 1758 the earth will be set on fire and burnt to a coal.² But to prevent any unreasonable panic that this prediction founded on Dr. Halley’s authority may produce, I desire to acquaint the public by your means that whoever consults Dr. Halley himself will soon discover that the author of this pamphlet has confounded the comet of 1682, whose period is 75 years, with that of 1680, whose period is 575 years;³ and has, *totidem verbis*,⁴ applied what the Dr. says of the latter, which will not appear till 2255, to the former, which will indeed appear in 1758.

Yours, etc.,

Graticola

[This is supplemented by a letter from G. Witchell, calculating that the comet due in 1758 will remain more than four million miles from earth.]

Source: published transcription; *Gentleman’s Magazine* (Dec. 1755), 548.

¹JW had indeed published the account as a letter to the editor in *Felix Farley’s Bristol Journal* (Oct. 11–18, 1755), p. 3. An issue of the *Public Advertiser* where this was reprinted has not been located, but that is the attribution when it appears in *Gentleman’s Magazine* (Nov. 1755), 514. In this latter setting JW’s theological reflections ending the original letter are excised.

²Cf. JW, *Serious Thoughts Occasioned by the Late Earthquake at Lisbon* (1755), 21–22.

³JW will admit in a revision of the 6th edition of *Serious Thoughts* that he indeed missed Halley’s transition from predicting the comet of 1682 (now popularly called Halley’s comet) would return in 1758, to describing the closer trajectory of the ‘great comet’ of 1680 described by Newton. See Edmund Halley, *A Synopsis of the Astronomy of Comets* (London: John Senex, 1705), 22–24.

⁴‘In so many words’.

[From John Walsh]¹

c. December 1, 1755

It may seem strange, sir, that I whom you have no personal knowledge of should write with the freedom I am now going to take. But I trust you desire as much to instruct as I to be instructed. I have long laboured under a disease which comes the nearest to that which is named scepticism. I rejoice at one time in the belief that the religion of my country is true. But how transient is my joy! While my busy imagination ranges through nature, books, and men, I often drop into that horrible pit of deism, and in vain bemoan my fall. The two main springs which alternately move my soul to these opposite opinions are, first, 'Can it be that the great God of the boundless universe, containing many thousand better worlds than this, should become incarnate here, and die on a piece of wood?' There I lose my belief of Christianity.

But on the other hand I think, 'Well, let me examine the fitness of things which deism boasts of.' And certain it is I discern nothing but beauty and wisdom in the inanimate parts of the creation. But how is the animate side of nature? It shocks me with powerful cruelty, and bleeding innocence. I cannot call the earth (as Fontenelle does) 'a great rolling globe, covered over with fools',² but rather, a great rolling globe, covered over with slaughter-houses—where few beings can escape but those of the butcher-kind, the lion, wolf, or tiger. And as to man himself, he is undoubtedly the supreme lord, nay, the uncontrollable tyrant of this globe. Yet survey him in a state of deism, and I must pronounce him a very poor creature. He is then a kind of Jack Ketch,³ an executioner-general. He may, nay, he must destroy, for his own subsistence, multitudes of beings that have done him no wrong. He has none of that heavenly power to restore life. And can he be fond of the permission to take it away? One who like me is subject to the tender passions will never be proud of this:

No dying brute I view in anguish here,
But from my melting eye descends a tear.

The very beasts are entitled to my compassion; but who can express the anxieties I feel for the afflictions sustained by virtuous men, and my abhorrence of the cruel! Yet in deism I can discern no reward for the one or punishment for the other. On this view of things the Castilian king might well say he 'could have directed God to amend his creation'.

I think upon the whole the God of wisdom would not have made a world so much in want of a Redeemer as this, and not give it one. Therefore at present I am again a Christian. O that the Son of God would confirm me his! As yet my soul is like a weather-beaten bird, that hovers over the great ocean, tired, and afraid of dropping. Death and eternity are ready to receive it, the pleasant land is out of sight, hid by fogs and mists, and the way unknown to gain the happy groves.

I was formerly apt to mention my scepticism both to clergymen and laymen, with a view of lessening the evil. But they rather increased it. Few clergymen cared to discourse on the subject; and if they did, they generally expected that a few weak reasons should eradicate at once strong and deep-rooted

¹John Walsh (fl. 1740–80) was the brother of Mary (Walsh) Leadbetter. John apparently had a brief career in the army, as he is referred to once as 'Lieutenant Walsh' (*AM* 11 [1788]: 538). For years he had 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 incidentally for bringing JW into touch with the Rev. John Berridge there.

²Cf. Bernard Le Bovier de Fontenelle, *A Plurality of Worlds* (London, 1702), 80.

³Orig., 'Jack-catch'.

prejudices. And most laymen discovered an utter ignorance of the religion they pretended to believe, and looked upon me as if I had the plague for owning I did not believe it. What method could I take? I long avoided speaking of religion to any but its great Author—who, I hope, has at last led me to one that is capable of removing my spiritual darkness. May the Giver of all goodness reward you in that day, when (according to the prophet Daniel) 'The wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever!'⁴

Source: published transcription; JW, *Journal*, Dec. 2, 1755 (*Works* 21:35–36).⁵

⁴Dan. 12:3.

⁵Transcription republished in *Works*, 26:616–17.

From an Unidentified Correspondent

c. December 12, 1755

Scarce any nation passes a century without some remarkable fluctuation. How should it be otherwise? For how can that be perpetually stable wherein man, full of instability, is principally concerned? It is certain, therefore, that all the quiet in a nation is ordered by divine wisdom, as all the confusions and convulsions are permitted by divine justice. Let us view the present state of Great Britain in this light, resting assured that all which befalls us is intended to promote our good, in this world, and that which is to come.

This land is ripe for judgments. How few are there herein who even intend to please God in all they do! And all besides are subjects of divine wrath. For all who live without any regard to God are wilful sinners against God, and every hour liable to the stroke of his offended justice.

And what shall these do when visited by the sword, the plague, the famine, or the furious elements?¹ O that they would turn to God, through the Saviour of sinners! Surely then they would find mercy! Yea, and probably see the salvation of God, even in the land of the living.

But what shall the Christians do in the time of public calamities? Be still, look up, and follow Providence. 'Be still', O my soul, in the midst of tumults and the distress of nations. Take no comfort in anything but in the consciousness of divine love. Listen to his voice, and quietly wait to see the hand of God over all. If you are uncertain what to do, 'look up', and expect wisdom from above. If you fear, look up for courage and faith to act well on all occasions. If the sword is at your throat, look up for submission to the wise and gracious will of God. Look up for power to pray without ceasing, and in everything to give thanks. 'Follow Providence.' Do not run before but after the hand that leads the simple-hearted, with a steady attention, and a determinate purpose to do what is pleasing to him.

But what shall the Christians do if the storm come, if our country be actually invaded?² The general answer must be the same: Be still; look up; follow Providence. A particular answer is hard to give yet. Only so far one may say:

1) We must take great care of our spirits. If we sink into the world's fears or joys, we shall lose our hold on God. The spirit of the Christians and the spirit of the world are entirely different. They can never agree in what appertains to the work of God, either in his dispensations of grace or justice. 2) Everyone should deeply consider what he is called to. Some may think it would be a sin to defend themselves. Happy are they if they can refrain from judging or condemning those that are of a different persuasion. Certain it is, some have fought and died in a just cause with a conscience void of offence. To some therefore it may be matter of duty to repel the common enemy. 3) They who believe they are called to this should proceed in all things in a Christian spirit. They should if possible join in one body. They should endeavour to avoid trifling company and conversation. They should learn the exercise with prayers and hymns. But who of us is sufficient for these things?

Source: published summary; JW, *Journal*, Dec. 12, 1755 (*Works* 21:37–38).

¹See Ezek. 7:15.

²A series of skirmishes occurred between the English colonists in North America and French forces (with the support of several native American tribes) in 1754–55. This was part of growing conflict between England and France that broke into formal hostilities in May 1756, marking the beginning of the Seven Years War.

From John Walsh

December 21, 1755

Sir,

As far as I know my own mind, I have now surmounted all my Scripture difficulties, the chief of which were these: Michael and the devil fighting for the body of Moses;³ a wall at Aphek falling on 27,000 of the Syrians;⁴ the deity's approbation of David's cruelty to the Ammonites and others;⁵ the witch of Endor,⁶ with all the accounts of witches, devils, or magicians; and the strangeness of worshipping by sacrifice.

But though there remains with me no scruple of moment from Scripture, there is one of consideration from nature, which one is vastly great; and perhaps the more so for being little understood. No book of religious controversy that I have seen takes the plurality of worlds for an objection to Christianity; nor [do] the few deists I know suppose it to be one. What you mention, sir, of many worlds being finite as well as one is convincing; but were I sure of only those in our own system I should yet wonder why we were thus preferred to the rest. Mercury is reckoned much smaller, and nearer the sun; Jupiter much larger; and Saturn much further, with a nobler apparatus.

But even supposing this hypothesis to be just, the joy of angels and of all worlds at the birth of ours might intimate that this, though neither the largest nor the brightest, would receive the Messiah. Small and inconspicuous was the kingdom of Jewry; yet in it were all nations of the earth to be blessed.

I still fear, sir, that I shall not soon obtain the fullness of faith; my advances are slow, but I will not retreat:

To faith's triumphant harbour, crowding sail,
Dart the swift ships before th' inspiring gale.
E'er storms arise, and angry billows roar,
They leave the deep, and gain the blissful shore;
But my poor bark disastrous lags behind,
Each quicksand fears, and shakes with ev'ry wind;
Yet, still resolved to strive till all be passed,
It hopes to gain, though slow, the port at last.

This letter is probably my last of the kind; each doubt being told, sir, and a belief impressed that you are the long-desired restorer and strengthener in Christ of a half-believer, who nevertheless begs leave to subscribe himself,

Your weak brother,

J. W.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 2 (1779): 376–77.⁷

³See Jude 1:9.

⁴See 1 Kings 20:30.

⁵See 2 Sam. 12:29–32, etc.

⁶See 1 Sam. 28.

⁷Titled in *AM*: 'A Deist emerging into Light'. Transcription republished in *Works*, 26:618.