

John Wesley's In-Correspondence (1761–65)

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From Mrs. E. S.

Rothwell
January 8, 1761

Reverend Sir,

According to your desire, I have presumed to let you know how the Lord dealeth with my soul. I still retain the same happiness I enjoyed when I talked with you at Birstall. I can truly say I grow in grace, which makes my soul quick as the apple of an eye. Glory be to God! For he makes my cup many times to run over. My heart is in heaven. My treasure is there. And my soul is lodged in the arms of Jesus, while my body is upon earth. The goodness of God to *me* is wonderful, the most vile of all the race. O that I may sink into the depths of humility, and be lost and swallowed up in God. Indeed, I do count all things but dross and dung, for the excellency that is in him. I find nothing molests me, as to the world. I am dead to it and to all creature-love. But I still see a great need of pressing forward, that I may have all the mind that was in him, that his whole image may be stamped on my heart, that I may be filled with all the fullness of God. I can say with David, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, praise his holy name!'¹ I beg the assistance of your prayers and advice, that as I have made a profession before many witnesses I may stand firm, like a beaten anvil to the stroke,² and bring no scandal on the good cause of my God!

I am, reverend sir,
Your humble servant,

E. S.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 113.

¹Ps. 103:1.

²Cf. Samuel Wesley Jr., 'The Parish Priest', line 28, *Poems on Several Occasions* (1736), 66; included by JW in *MSP* (1744), 3:50.

**John Wesley's In-Correspondence (1761–65)
Wesley Works Editorial Project**

(page 2)

By John-Baptist Malassis de Sulamar

[London]

[January 21, 1761]

This day is published, Price 6d.

Demonstrative Reflections of John-Baptist the Arch-Teacher, occasioned by different public Writings upon the Account of the Comedy called 'The Minor'; especially by a letter of John Wesley to D. G. Esq; and that of George Whitefield to Mr. F., with observations, notes, and letters concerning the present beginning of the everlasting reign and glory and triumph of Truth the only true God universal Principle and sovereign Master, being the whole under the former insurance of an hundred guineas to the first who will convince them of being false, or unintelligible, or absurd, or useless in any chief point, term, or article, even of not being the most clear of all writings concerning Truth, and of the nearest importance to mankind.

Sold by J. Marshal, Bookseller, in St. Clement's Church-yard.

Source: Public Advertiser (Jan. 21, 1761), p. 4.

By John-Baptist Malassis de Sulamar

[London]
[January 28, 1761]

This day, an hundred guineas are publicly insured of the *Monthly* or *Critical Reviewers*, *Christian's* or *Spiritual Magazines*, or other sort of learned ones not of the school of Truth, who shall prove the *Demonstrative Reflections occasioned by different Writings concerning the Comedy called 'Minor'*, to be false or absurd or senseless in any chief point, term, or article, or not intelligible to any sincere uncorrupted unprejudiced reader, with common sense and understanding and due attention; even that they are not more intelligible than any other of the writings dictated by the spirit of Truth in their doctrinal part, as owing to be the solution of all. I except few grammatical or logical demonstrations which may be left off by those who cannot understand them, not knowing so much as what is a substantive, an adjective, a verb, a pronoun, etc. I except likewise few phrases lengthened out either by an inadvertency easily supplied to, or by necessary parenthesis, and for brevity sake, as in many places of the sacred Scriptures, especially in Rom. 16:25–27; in Demosthenes, Cicero, Titus Livius, etc.

Any man who is not ready to insure at any rate what he is ready to affirm, is not to be believed upon my account. If John Wesley dares to insure his last assertions in the *London Daily Advertiser* of Saturday,¹ only by fifteen guineas, he will find his man the next day.

None of those who have said that there was no sense in the first advertisement of last Wednesday for the publication of the above *Reflections*, nor the man who said that he believed me out of my senses, would secure their only insolent assertions even by a public declaration of their true nature and directions.

These very *Reflections*, to be sold before for six-pences, are to be given now at J. Marshall's, Bookseller in St. Clement's Church-yard, for six *farthings*.

Source: *Public Advertiser* (Jan. 28, 1761), p. 4.

¹See Sulamar's next posting, Feb. 5, 1761.

From 'M. H.'

[c. January c. 30, 1761]

To the Author of the *London Magazine*¹

Sir,

As many pens have been employed to expose the errors, the gross delusions, of the Methodists, in my opinion none of their pernicious principles, which spread far and wide, have a more fatal tendency than the doctrine of assurance. They insist that they themselves are sure of salvation, but that all others are mere outcasts from God's favour, are in a damnable state. A position is this, big with the most dangerous consequences, and must be far, very far, from a true Christian doctrine, because it contains so little charity—and charity is the brightest ornament, the genius, the very characteristic of the Christian religion. This doctrine was industriously, and too successfully, propagated by the antinomians and other sectaries in the last centuries.

The proofs in support of this doctrine I have collected from an eminent writer among the Dissenters, the pious Mr. Flavel. It is in his exposition of that celebrated work, the Assembly's catechism, where he illustrates the point by the very same arguments which are made use of by the Methodists. 'Is assurance', says he, 'possible to be attained in this life? Answer, Yes, for some have had it. Cant. 6:3, "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine."² 'What a vital, ravishing, overpowering efficacy is there', says he, 'in that voice of faith!'³ I would not be too severe upon a grave writer; otherwise I would ask what assurance is here to produce such a proof from Scripture? As if any fundamental doctrine of the New Testament was to be proved by a very obscure text of the Old Testament, and this from Solomon's Song, which seems to be only an eastern pastoral—at best, can be only a sacred allegory. Solomon wrote many proverbs and discourses about fishes, beasts, and trees. Had they been preserved, there is no reason to believe that they were inspired works. Because God did not inspire men in all things, as is plain from St. Paul, who informs us that this he speaks of himself and not from the Lord.⁴ There is not so much as one word of God or heaven in the whole book of Solomon's Song. And if it really related to Christ and his spouse, very strange it is that when our Saviour often quoted the Psalms, Moses, and the prophets, yet neither he nor any one of the apostles should ever make the least reference to this Song of Solomon's!

'How many sorts of assurance are there? Answer, There is an objective assurance, 2 Tim. 2:19, "Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his."⁵ But what sort of proof is this—"the Lord knoweth them that are his"? The point in reality is this: How do they know that *they* are the Lord's? 'There is also', says he, 'a subjective or personal assurance, Gal. 2:20, "Who loved me and gave himself for me."⁶ But how can this prove personal assurance, when Christ died not for one but all, for the sins of the whole world?

'Upon what testimony is personal assurance built? Answer, upon the testimony of God's Spirit witnessing with ours, Rom. 8:16, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God."⁷ This text indeed comes nearest in sound, though it be very remote in sense. What the apostle

¹While this letter is not addressed to JW, he clearly considered it to be targeting him, and responded (misidentifying the author as 'M. K.') in his letter of Feb. 17, 1761 in the *London Magazine*.

²John Flavel, *Exposition of the Assembly's Catechism* (London: Cockerill, 1692), 77.

³'M. H.' presents this as if it follows in the same text, but it actually comes from John Flavel, *Touchstone of Sincerity* (London: M. White, 1679), 41.

⁴Cf. 1 Cor. 7:12.

⁵Flavel, *Exposition*, 77.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Flavel, *Exposition*, 77.

says is this, that besides the witness of our spirit, or the evidence of our own mind, we have a farther testimony, the public testimony of God's Spirit, that self-same Spirit (αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα) which, as was shown by miracles, had raised Jesus from the death, that we are the children of, or are in covenant with, God. But what has all this to do with absolute assurance, or a certainty of eternal salvation? It refers only to the present privileges of the gospel. Put what sense they please upon it, can they deny but that a father may disinherit his son, and so the child may forfeit his inheritance? As to that passage, 'Give diligence to make your calling and election sure',⁸ how does this prove assurance? It proves indeed that men should labour to secure their salvation. But it does not prove when this labour of diligence shall end. It does not prove when this assurance is to be had; or, if it be had, how are they sure that it is never to be lost? It appears absurd to me that a man should labour for that which he has already obtained.

If they have such an assurance, how is it gained? It must be either from themselves or from others. Not from themselves, for impossible is it for any man to know what God will do unless God has made a declaration of his will. Not from others, because this is that very point which God would never satisfy men about. When this question was put to our Lord, as you may read [in] Luke 13:23–24, 'Lord, are there few that be saved?' what reply did our Lord make? Enough indeed to check their impertinent curiosity, but not a word to satisfy their doubts. He did not say whether many or few, [or] who should or who should not be saved. His answer was (Jesus said to them), 'Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in and shall not be able.' As if our Lord had said, 'Let me give you this plain, short lesson: Trouble not me nor yourselves about the final state and condition of others. These are points not to be determined now but at another time and in another place. Let it be your endeavour to mind that which concerns you most, and will employ you enough—how to secure your own everlasting happiness.'

To pass judgment on others is, virtually, to dethrone God—to usurp heaven's most awful, most tremendous judgment-seat. To be uncharitable towards others is, in effect, to be cruel to ourselves. Remember who has said it, that 'with the same measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again'.⁹ Besides, how is it that they have any absolute assurance of their own salvation? Presumption is no virtue in the sight of God. God may not judge as man judgeth. Our own hearts too, our own most treacherous hearts, may much, very much, deceive us, may deceive us above all things. Our boasted shining virtues may be little or nothing worth. They may proceed from bad motives, or be directed to wrong ends. We may be better than others not because we have more goodness in ourselves, but only because we have not been exposed to the same temptations and trials as they have been.

Besides, how do we know what may happen hereafter? And if we should make an unhappy fall, what certainty have we that we should rise again? Plain it is that the best men may fall, and as plain it is that they may fall forever. The world is no place of safety and security, but it is an enemy's country, which abounds with snares and dangers, and requires our utmost care and diligence to the end of the journey. It is compared by the Scripture to a race, which is an unintermitting exercise, and till we finish the race there can be no absolute certainty of the prize. By the present constitution of our nature, while we have flesh and blood, that is, as long as we live, we are always in continual danger. And where there is continual danger, there cannot be common safety. And where there is not common safety, how can there be any Christian security?

Nay, our very security will and must be the means of our danger. The more secure we are, the more easily, and the more effectually too, we may be surprised. St. Paul therefore very well advises us, 'Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.'¹⁰ The Scripture says much to banish despair, but not a word to encourage presumption. So far is St. Paul from encouraging absolute assurance that he commands us to pass the time of our sojourning here with fear, to work out our salvation with fear

⁸2 Pet. 1:10.

⁹Matt. 7:2, etc.

¹⁰1 Cor. 10:12.

and trembling. And what does the apostle to the Hebrews say? Heb. 4:1, 'Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.' And our Saviour's directions are that we should be as watchful as sentinels on duty: 'What I say unto you I say unto all—Watch!'¹¹ In a word, never sit down secure, but be always upon your guard.

If you would know whether you will be saved or not, consult the Scriptures. Compare your life to the word of God. The word of God is the rule of life. As far then as your actions agree or disagree with this rule, so far and no farther may you expect or not expect salvation. As you observe the precepts, you will receive the promises. The word of God is the only safe rule whereby we may judge ourselves here, because it is the rule—the only rule—whereby we are to be finally judged hereafter, 'in the day', says St. Paul, 'that God will judge the secrets of men's hearts according to his gospel'.¹² Salvation is a conditional grant, upon the terms of obedience. We must first then be assured that God approves our obedience, before we can be certain that God will reward it. We may have a good hope, but no absolute certainty, of salvation.

I am,

Yours,

M. H.

Source: published transcription; *London Magazine* (Jan. 1761), pp. 19–21.

¹¹Mark 13:37.

¹²Rom. 2:16.

From 'R. W.'

[c. January 30,] 1761

'To the Rev. Mr. John Wesley'

Sir,

You have attempted an answer to my two queries (see p. 651, last vol.¹) but I can bestow no better compliment upon your performance than that it is frivolous and fallacious, very unworthy of a good scholar and a fair disputant. You stumble at the very first step.

My first query was whether shocks (in the phrase of the Methodists) or violent operations of the Spirit may not overpower the natural faculties, etc. The words 'shock' and 'violent' you entirely omitted. Then you advance what no one denies, that the ordinary operations of the Spirit do not overpower the natural faculties. These shocks, sir, or violent operations of the Spirit, are too fully evidenced by your trances, ecstasies, and I know not what. These you affirm in your writings, and these appear in the practices of your followers. And as such must destroy free agency, they must consequently confound the distinctions of virtue and vice, and subvert the foundation of future rewards and punishments. As you, sir, then assert and defend such practices, you are, excuse the harshness of the expression, an enemy to religion and a deceiver of the people.

As to my second query, whether it affects the Quakers only I cannot at present determine. Until you are honest enough to publish, in a few plain, intelligible words, your scheme of principles or system of faith, without mean subterfuges and vague declamation, it is hard, it is impossible, to say what you are or what you are not. As I profess sincerity, I must be plain with you. You seem to have as much knowledge of and esteem for the Holy Scriptures as a Mahometan. A Mahometan believes that there really was such a person and prophet as Jesus Christ. A Mahometan believes the Scripture to be true, to be of a divine original. But then by pretended new lights and illuminations, by subsequent and extraordinary revelations, the doctrines of the gospel are made of none effect. That you are an enthusiast, a very great enthusiast, not I, let your own journals demonstrably prove. All impostors set out with pretences to superior degrees of piety and sanctity. As to dogmas, I don't know that it is good English, I know it to be false dog Latin.

Yours,

R. W.

Source: published transcription; *London Magazine* (Jan. 1761), p. 36; *London Chronicle* (Feb. 3–5, 1761), p. 125.

¹See JW's letter 'To Mr. T. H., alias Philodemus, alias Somebody ...', Dec. 1, 1760, published in *London Magazine* (Dec. 1760), 651–53.

From Mary Bosanquet

[London¹]
February 1761

Reverend Sir,

I have just received yours, for which I thank you. But alas, how apt are we to mistake in judging of others! You imagine *saying* and *doing* are with me the same thing, but indeed they are not. For though, blessed be God, I have much light in many things, I have still very little power. O how wide is the difference between an outward and an inward Christian! I now know I may be outwardly devoted and given up to the work of God and yet, whenever Jesus draws near to bless me, never be found at home, never listening to the still, small voice by which alone true wisdom can be learnt. But I am not circumspect in outward things—indeed I am not. I am very negligent in denying myself and taking up my cross. Any thing that would help me in the practice of this would do me much service. Never was my soul in more danger than now, and I feel the want of inward holiness more than ever. It is a very dangerous precipice to be blest to the souls of others, and needs the whole omnipotence of God to save us from being destroyed thereby. For I often find a work of mercy, nay a means of grace, stand between my soul and Christ. I have toiled till my body was almost laid up, when all the time it would have been more pleasing to God had I been hewing wood or drawing water, with my soul evenly carried out after him. O sir, holiness, holiness is the thing we want; to have Jesus our all in all! Till this is effected, whenever I point another to the Lamb of God something in myself cries, ‘Behold me! Behold me!’ and I feel the weight of those words,

Yea though by faith vast hills I could remove,
Yet *all* is nothing without perfect love.²

And why should this be delayed any longer? What amazing answers to many prayers have both you and I received with regard to outward things? And will not the same love more abundantly constrain him to bless us in our souls? — Surely this is an acceptable time! Yet the devil continually strives to discourage me, and suggests, ‘God will not do for *thee* as he has done for others.’ But I *will* trust him. And I *do believe*, if from this time we fix our eye steadily on the prize of our high calling, the Lord will shortly bring it into our hearts. The Lord’s ear is not heavy, nor his hand shortened that it cannot save. O that we may now pierce heaven with our cries, and never cease till we see his full salvation! May the Lord renew your strength, and fill your soul with love!

I am,

Yours, etc.

M. B.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 50–51.

¹Specifically, Bosanquet’s home was in Hoxton, a village near Southwark, but she was active in the London society.

²Thomas Bromley, ‘Brief Essay on 1 Cor. 13’, st. 2.

By John-Baptist Malassis de Sulamar

[London]
[February 5, 1761]

A Demonstration of John-Baptist the Arch-Teacher by the golden argument of an hundred guineas, confuting the assertion of John Wesley, the arch-anti-Truth, in a paragraph of the *London Daily Advertiser* of the 24th of last month.

There John Wesley pretends to teach the world that 'faith is a supernatural *elenchos* of things not seen, etc.'¹ First, considering that assertion in its form, it is the last degree of a non-sense, such as of a drunken man to pretend to explain a word of any of the living solutive languages, as English and others, by a word of any of the three dead enigmatical ones, the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. It is a proud and vain show of a learning of such a language, which learning is certainly false with regard of the doctrinal part of the sacred Scriptures, though it may be true with regard of their historical and moral part.

Secondly, considering the same assertion in its substance, it is a most material falsification and corruption of the said Scriptures, demonstrated by the following explanation: The Greek word *pistis*, and the Latin word *fides*, signify belief, conviction, assurance, which are cold affections of the spirit, as they signify trust, confidence, gratefulness, fidelity, faithfulness, or (good) faith, which are ardent affections of the heart, both according so many different applications. St. Paul explains himself that the Greek word *pistis* does not signify a mere conviction of any kind, but confidence, in the place where he saith that the confidence is the subject of the objects of our hope, their evidence in our heart and spirit, till they be evident in themselves. In another place the same word *pistis* signifies the grateful fidelity in which he lives with regard of Jesus-Christ the God who loved him so far as to have given himself to die in ignominy and sufferings, in order to give to the world the greatest proof and lesson, and example of love which could be proposed and understood.

Here John Wesley falsifies and corrupts still the sacred Scriptures, since St. Paul does not speak of his living in his conviction whatever of Jesus Christ having thus loved him, but of his living in his thankful fidelity to Jesus-Christ who thus loved him. The devil, that is the spirit enemy of the world, has that conviction or proud *elenchos* of John Wesley, proved by me not to have that fidelity of St. Paul.

The Methodistical building falls with the doctrine of the *dark-angel* called its main pillar in the title of the above-mentioned paragraph.

Source: *Public Advertiser* (Feb. 5, 1761), p. 3.

¹No surviving copies of the *London Daily Advertiser* for Jan. 1761 can be located; but this statement can be found many times in JW, perhaps most importantly in the Minutes of the first Conference with his preachers, June 25, 1744, Q. 4, *Works*, 10:126.

By John-Baptist Malassis de Sulamar

[London]
[February 11, 1761]

Let England and the world judge how wise is that man, who, on the account of *Demonstrative Reflections* of mine published in this *Advertiser* the 21st, 24th, and 28th of last month, affirming not to understand what I was about, insolently added that he believed me out of my senses. Thus did he conclude me to be a fool (Matt. 5:22; 2 Tim. 2:17–21), not from my being false, senseless, or absurd, or contradicting myself in any chief point, term, or article, but from his own being unable or unwilling to understand, with giving the least attention due to, the most clear and simple of all reasonings. Thus a man, unable or unwilling to open his eyes, imputes to the sun his own involuntary or voluntary, faithful or unfaithful darkness. Shall that man be able or willing to understand what I am about with calling to witness, as I do, all those who will read the present advertisement, that I will pay him *an hundred guineas*, if he proves by himself, or by any of the most famous learned men in England, that what I am about is not as clear as the sun, in the 14 lines of my first advertisement of the 21st of last month, and from the title and preliminary of these very *Reflections* to the last line of the letter [to] T[homas] S[ecker] A[rch] B[ishop of] C[anterbury] at their end; or if he proves that a demonstration can be clearer, shorter, stronger, of a greater and more extensive importance, of more happy consequences than all of them, as well as that in the advertisement of the 5th¹ instant, striking the doctrine of the *arch-anti-Truth*, called the main pillar of the Methodism, in its very foundation.

To the aforesaid man, and to all those who, stirred up by the same spirit, not the spirit of Truth, have said not to know what I am about, and what I mean by Truth, I declare still this hundredth time: First, that I am exactly about what Jesus Christ was when he said, 'To that end am I born and came into the world, that I should bear witness unto the Truth'. Secondly, that by Truth I mean what Jesus Christ was meaning, that is himself, the only true God universal Principle, and sovereign Master. That some of John Wesley's closest disciples dared to call quibbles compared to his doctrines so publicly and so many times confused in its fundamental points, terms, and articles (Rev. 2:2; 2 Cor. 11:13–15) by me,

John-Baptist the Arch-Teacher, Disciple of Vincit Veritas.²

Truth [is] my God, not the God of John Wesley.

Source: Public Advertiser (Feb. 11, 1761), p. 3.

¹Orig., '12th'; an apparent error (or referring to a republication in another newspaper a week later).

²'Conquering Truth'.

From Jane Cooper
[Draft 1¹]

[London]
[February 21, 1761]

Your obliging request has laid me under an happy necessity of calling to mind the past mercies of God. May every review of them bring trust for future blessings and thankfulness for the present!

Ever since I can remember any thing, I was desirous of happiness. But I did not seek it in God until I was convinced it was not to be found but in him. I thought if I was religious I should go to heaven, but was ignorant of the nature of true religion and unwilling to be under the restraint of that I did know. Yet so great a stranger [was I] to myself that I often thought if I knew what God required I would perform it. Sometimes I earnestly desired to be saved and used every means I thought necessary to obtain that end. I was confirmed at sixteen and made many good resolutions at that time which soon wore off. My mother asked me to go to the Lord's Supper, but I found myself so ignorant that I would not consent to go at that time. I had a strong impression on my mind that I should die when I was twenty-four. I reflected on the conduct of those persons who were put apprentice seven years to learn a trade, and thought I ought to use like application to learn the business of eternity. I went to the sacrament the day I was eighteen and found uncommon satisfaction in it. Now I became a zealous advocate for the slighted ordinance and exhorted others to go to the table of the Lord. I thought I had done all that was commanded me and that if I continued in the same way I should be a very profitable servant.

Soon after this I went to London for eight weeks and began to lose the form of godliness I so much esteemed. I heard Mr. Jones² preach and was affected at hearing of the sufferings of Christ, much in the same manner as I have been at seeing or reading a tragedy. A person where I visited desired me to hear Mr. [William] Romaine. I went, but could not understand him. I was much displeas'd with the woman who sat next [to] me, who I since believe was in deep conviction. The night I left London some persons were debating about the millennium. One of them repeated a part of the 20th chapter of Revelation. I was struck at the awful words and thought if Christ was then to come I was not prepared to meet the Judge. I went home very serious and began to search the Scriptures. I was more strict than ever, often troubled but knew not the cause, and was ashamed to confess my fears. My friends thought I had a fever on my spirits, and I thought so too. I desired the person to write to me who asked me to hear Mr. Romaine, as she had more religion than any one I knew. She wrote to me of the necessity of being born again. I answered it as clearly as if I had been truly regenerated.

I read much, and began to fear that with all my religion I was not converted. I wanted to go to London that I might hear Mr. Romaine. As I was one day reading the 30th chapter of Isaiah I thought the 20th and 21st verses were for me. I was willing to eat the bread of adversity if I could but see my teachers. I pleaded this promise. A year later, I was to go to London for a fortnight with my father-in-law. At the inn where we laid I saw Mr. [George] Whitefield's *Sermons*, which I read as much as I could and determined to hear him. He was not in town, but Mr. [John] Dyer preached upon original sin.³ I did not understand it, but was greatly affected. My father went with me to take care of me (when he could not dissuade me from going). He wondered at the emotion I was in, and went with me again, and to St. Dunstan's, where he was much alarmed at his own state. I went to all the Methodist places of worship I knew, and one evening heard Mr. [Thomas] Walsh at West Street [Chapel]. He preached the necessity of

¹This letter survives in two versions: the original manuscript that Cooper sent to JW and an abridged and polished form that JW published. We give both versions, as an instance to observe JW's editing.

²Rev. Thomas Jones of Southwark.

³John Dyer was curate at St. George's, Southwark, and an associate of Whitefield.

that 'holiness without which none can see the Lord'.⁴ His words were as arrows in my heart. I found all my former righteousness deficient, and was convinced of every sin but unbelief. I resolved upon better obedience. I knew the present would not obtain heaven, but I did not feel I only deserved hell. I called on a woman who told me I was not far from the kingdom of God and that she knew her sins forgiven. I did not believe it. I wanted power over sin more than pardon. My distress for this increased. I wrote to Mr. Romaine to know what I should do to be saved? He desired to see me and told me two things were necessary, to know my want of Christ and my interest in him. He said to ask and I should have, and gave me some little books to take in the country.

I went home with the greatest reluctance, for I knew no Christian in the town I lived in. My former acquaintance thought me melancholy or mad. My poor mother was greatly alarmed for my father began to read prayers in his family and shut up shop on Sundays, by the advice of a Dissenting minister with whom I got acquainted and who was often made a blessing to my soul. I went to Norwich for a few days and found out Mr. Mitchell.⁵ He spoke to me of the certainty of salvation which faith gives and the peace it brings to the conscience. I knew myself a stranger to this, but would willingly have suffered the rack to attain it. I went home again and was in a most unhappy situation for five or six weeks. I before thought I was not bad enough to come to Christ as a mere sinner; now I was too bad for him to receive. The Lord dealt tenderly with me and brought many encouraging scriptures to my mind at different times. But the stupidity and unbelief I felt caused me to mourn in secret. A part of one hymn described the state I was in:

Scarce I begin my sad complaint,
When all my warmest wishes faint;
Hardly I lift my weeping eye,
When all my kindling ardours die;
Nor hopes nor fears my bosom move,
Nor still I cannot, cannot love!⁶

I could not rest thus, though I concluded it would always be the case. I thought I should be miserable all my life and to perish at the last. I found it as easy for me to reach heaven with my hand as to believe Jesus died for me. I felt that no one could come to Christ, except the Father drew him, and was made to pray 'Draw me, and I will run after thee.' Now I knew it was the work of God to believe on him [whom] he had sent. I prayed he would work faith in me, but my soul seemed as distant from God as hell from heaven. I was forced from all self-dependence. I was a sinner stripped of all. Whilst I was on my knees striving to pray, I heard inwardly a gracious voice say, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee.' I felt the truth of it in my heart, and in a moment prayer was lost in praise. I called upon the angels to join in blessing him who died for me! I rejoiced with joy unspeakable while he caused his goodness to pass before me. I knew myself placed on the rock which could never be moved.

But in a few hours after I began to fear I had deceived myself and that all was delusion, that now my state was worse than ever, for that I had committed blasphemy in praising God for a lie. I was more distressed than before and had recourse to prayer. The Lord repeated his mercies and impressed the same words on my mind. I was more assured of his forgiving love and enjoyed much peace in believing that I, who was once afar off, was now brought nigh by his own blood. I heard the 15th of Luke read and saw my picture in the returning prodigal. I was overwhelmed at a sense of his love who, whilst I was yet a great way off, ran to meet me. I could not conceal the emotion I felt. My mother asked the cause. I said I could never be thankful enough for what God had done for my soul and I was pained and the incapacity I

⁴Heb. 12:14.

⁵Possibly Thomas Mitchell, one of JW's itinerant preachers.

⁶CW, 'A Prayer Under Convictions', st. 6, *HSP* (1739), 86.

felt of making equal returns for so much love. She did not understand me, and told me I was always thankful. I now thought I should sin no more. My mind was taken up with God, and I conversed with him as a man with his friend. My confidence was unshaken and my hope full of immortality.

I wanted others to rejoice with me. But they were strangers to Jesus, and intermeddled not with my joy.⁷ I lamented being alone. My father was serious, but thought I carried things too far. My mother was more alarmed, for I could not speak but on a religious subject. A neighbouring clergyman advised her to confine me if I offered to hear the Dissenters or Methodists, which I did at all opportunities though none was nearer than four miles off. Her tenderness gave me much pain. I was sorry to grieve her, but I dared not act contrary to my conscience to oblige her. I could not play at cards nor join in trifling discourse, and my refusal was deemed preciseness.

I was near two years at home after this, when the Lord fulfilled the promise I constantly pleaded and gave me the bread of adversity and blessed it by seeing my teachers.⁸ I was desirous to be made conformable to the will of God. But I thought to believe in perfection was derogating from the priestly office of Christ.

When I first saw you sir, at Norwich, notwithstanding my prejudice to your opinions, I found that reverence and esteem for you which have increased ever since. My understanding was then better informed and my desires were more fervent for all the grace God had in store for me. I found I was an unbeliever of his power, though I had tasted his love and was upbraided with it. I trust my soul is still alive to God and athirst for righteousness. He has borne my manners in the wilderness and sustains me in my utter helplessness. He multiplies pardons and heaps his benefits upon me. Every trial is sent in mercy, every temptation is permitted for my good, and every cross has proved a blessing in disguise. In his light I see things thus. I believe him able to keep me from falling, and to make me perfect, entire, lacking nothing. My present situation requires more of every grace than I have ever yet wanted. I trust he, in whom all fullness dwells, will supply my every want and teach me heavenly wisdom.

I would not have troubled you with so long a letter, but as it is the first time of writing on this subject, you must excuse it. I may say I had not time to make it shorter, and I am desirous to prove by every means that I regard your advice and on all occasions speak with freedom. I am, dear sir,

Your obliged servant,

Jane Cooper

Endorsement: by JW, 'J Cooper / Feb. 21, 1761 / ad. March 4'.

Source: holograph; Wesley's Chapel, London.

⁷Cf. Prov. 14:10.

⁸Cf. Isa. 30:20.

From Jane Cooper
[Draft 2]

[London]
February 21, 1761

Your obliging request lays me under an happy necessity of calling to mind the past mercies of God. May every review of them bring trust for future blessings and thankfulness for the present!

Ever since I can remember I was desirous of happiness, but I did not seek it in God. I thought if I was religious I should go to heaven, but I knew not the nature of true religion and I was unwilling to be under the restraint of that I did know. Yet so great a stranger was I to myself that I often thought if I knew what God required I would perform it. At sixteen I was confirmed and made many resolutions, but they soon wore off. I had a strong impression on my mind that I should die when I was twenty-four. I reflected on those who were put apprentice seven years to learn a trade, and thought I ought to use like application to learn the business of eternity.

I went to the sacrament the day I was eighteen and found uncommon satisfaction. I exhorted others to do the same, thinking I had now done all that was commanded me and that if I continued in the same way I should be a very profitable servant.

Soon after this I went to London for eight weeks, where I heard Mr. [Thomas] Jones (of Southwark) preach and was affected at hearing of the sufferings of Christ, much as I used to be at seeing or reading of a tragedy. I was afterwards asked to hear Mr. [William] Romaine. I did so, but I could not understand him. The night I left London some persons were debating about the millennium. One of them repeated part of the 20th chapter of the Revelation. I was struck at the awful words and thought if Christ was then to come I was not prepared to meet him. I went home very serious and began to search the Scriptures and to be more strict than ever. I was often troubled, but knew not the cause, and was ashamed to confess my fears. My friends thought I had a fever on my spirits, and I thought so too. But as I read much, I began to fear that with all my religion I was not converted. I wanted to go to London that I might hear Mr. Romaine.

A year after, I went to London with my father-in-law. At the inn where we lay I saw Mr. [George] Whitefield's *Sermons*. I read what I could and determined to hear him. He was not in town, but I was much affected with Mr. [John] Dyer's preaching. Afterwards I not only went to St. Dunstan's, but to all the Methodist places of worship I knew, and one evening heard Mr. Walsh at West Street. He preached the necessity of that 'holiness without which none can see the Lord'.¹ His words were as arrows in my heart. I found all my former righteousness deficient. I knew this could not obtain mercy, but I did not feel I deserved hell. I wrote to Mr. Romaine to know what I should do to be saved? He desired to see me and told me two things were necessary, to know my want of Christ and my interest in him.

I went home with great reluctance, for I knew no Christian in the town where I lived. My former acquaintance thought me mad. My mother was greatly alarmed. Not long after I went to Norwich for a few days and found out Mr. Mitchell. He spoke to me of the peace which faith brings to the conscience. I knew myself a stranger to this, but would willingly have suffered the rack so I might attain it. I went home and was, for five or six weeks, in a most unhappy situation. Before, I was not bad enough to come to Christ, now I was too bad for him to receive. Yet the Lord dealt tenderly with me and at different times brought many encouraging scriptures to my mind. But still the stupidity and unbelief I felt caused me to mourn in secret. Still I was constrained to say,

Scarce I begin my sad complaint,
When all my warmest wishes faint;
Hardly I lift my weeping eye,
When all my kindling ardours die;
Nor hopes nor fears my bosom move,

¹Heb. 12:14.

Nor still I cannot, cannot love!²

I could not rest thus, though I concluded it would always be the case. I expected to be miserable all my life and to perish at the last. I found it as easy to reach heaven with my hand as to believe Jesus died for *me*. I felt, 'no one can come to Christ, except the Father draw him'.³ Now I knew it was the work of God to believe on him whom he has sent. I prayed he would work faith in *me*, but seemed as distant from God as hell from heaven. I was cut off from all self-dependence. I was a sinner stripped of all.

I was on my knees striving to pray when I heard inwardly a voice say, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee.' I felt the truth of it in my heart, and in a moment prayer was lost in praise. I called upon the angels to join with me in blessing him who died for *me*! He caused his goodness to pass before me and I rejoiced with joy unspeakable.

Yet in a few hours after I began to fear I had deceived myself and all was delusion. I was much distressed and had recourse to prayer, and the Lord repeated his mercies and impressed the same words on my mind more strongly than before. I was more assured of his forgiving love and enjoyed much peace in believing. I now thought I could never sin more. My mind was taken up with God, and I conversed with him as a man would with his friend. My confidence in him was unshaken and my hope full of immortality.

I wanted others to rejoice with me. But they were strangers to Jesus, and intermeddled not with my joy. I lamented being alone. My nearest friends thought I carried things too far. My mother was more alarmed, for I could not speak but on religious subjects. A neighbouring clergyman advised her to confine me if I offered to hear the Methodists. This I did at all opportunities, though none was nearer than four miles off. Her tenderness gave me much pain. I was sorry to grieve her in anything, and yet, I did not dare to oblige her by acting contrary to my conscience. I could not play at cards nor join in trifling discourse, though my refusal was deemed preciseness.

I was near two years at home after this. Then the Lord fulfilled his promise. He gave me the 'bread of adversity and the water of affliction', but my eyes did 'see my teachers'.⁴ I was now more desirous than ever to be made conformable to the will of God. But I thought to believe the doctrine of perfection was derogating from the priestly office of Christ.

When I first saw you sir, at Norwich, notwithstanding my prejudice to your opinions, I found that reverence and esteem for you which have increased ever since. My understanding was then better informed and my desires more fervent for all the grace God had in store for me. I trust my soul is still alive to God and athirst for righteousness. He has borne my manners in the wilderness and sustains me in my utter helplessness. He continues to multiply his pardons and heap his benefits upon me. Every trial is sent in mercy, every temptation is permitted for my good, every cross has proved a blessing in disguise. In his light I see this. I believe he is able to keep me from falling, and to make me perfect and entire, lacking nothing. My present situation requires more of every grace than any I have been in before. But I trust he, in whom all fullness dwells, will supply my every want.

I would not have troubled you with so long a letter, but indeed 'I had not time to make it shorter'. And I am desirous to prove by every means that I regard your advice and on all occasions speak with freedom. I am, dear sir,

Your obliged servant,

Jane Cooper

Source: published transcription; JW, *Letters Wrote by Jane Cooper* (1764), 31–34.

²CW, 'A Prayer Under Convictions', st. 6, *HSP* (1739), 86.

³John 6:44.

⁴Isa. 30:20.

From Mary Bosanquet

[London]
March 7, 1761

Dear Sir,

The Lord has of late laid me on the hearts of many of his children, so that several of them said they could not rest till he had delivered me. For this fortnight he has been many times very nigh. But yet the sons of Anak seemed to triumph,¹ till on Thursday morning, being at prayer, I felt an hope that he would keep me *every moment*. Yet I durst not say, 'Christ *has* delivered me' but 'he *will* bruise Satan under my feet shortly'. And I felt, as it were, a claim to Jesus such as I never remember before. On Friday I saw his exceeding willingness to save, and could almost believe. At intercession I felt every word sink into my soul. Yet soon after I was surrounded with such sorrow and anguish that I could not forbear crying out exceedingly. I then felt a little power to believe, and my soul was calm. And I could not pray for any thing but that he would do with me what seemed him good. When I waked this morning, my soul seemed absolutely empty, only I found power to lie before Jesus. After we left you we went to Mr. [Jasper²] Jay's, when the power of God was present indeed and even I could say, 'He *will* keep me without spot unto the day of redemption.'

What the Lord has done I know not, but I find an exceeding great change. Those sins that held me in the closest bondage, I know not what is become of them. I am accused almost every moment, but before I can look the thing is gone. I feel no desire but for Christ, no fear but of losing my hold of him. Yet I am often so tempted to give it up that it is almost more than I can bear. I have but little love for God, though I love nothing so well. I feel a little difference every hour, and I long to see Jesus glorified. Yet I do not seem to be so joined to him as I would. Only under his peculiar care, it seems, the man of sin is taken out of my heart, but I am not assured he shall never return. I find more need of watchfulness and prayer than ever, and of the means of all kinds. May there not be a measure of pure love, and doubts remain? Be that as it may, I will trust in Jesus. And though a host of foes surround me, I know he can deliver me from them all, and cast them under my feet.

I remain,

Yours, etc.

M. B.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 107–08.

¹Cf. Num. 13:23.

²For his first name, see his letter to JW of June 4, 1761.

By John-Baptist Malassis de Sulamar

[London]
[March 13, 1761]

Elijah was the only prophet of the God sovereign Master of Israel. The prophets of faith were four hundred and fifty. That is a sensible figure of the present time if since the days of Jesus-Christ having made himself visible upon the earth to this end, that he should bear witness unto the Truth, no man in the world but I can be proved to have taught what Truth is, meanwhile the new prophets of Baal, that is the teachers of the universal counter-sense of Truth, are four hundred and fifty thousand and thousand. None of them, nor any man in the world, knew before me that name of the Father of Jesus Christ, of which he said that he had declared it unto men and that he would declare it again unto them. None of the same teachers is willing now to acknowledge it and give glory to it with me. But they mind to cause his people, all men, all his sons and brethren and servants, to forget it after he has newly declared it unto them by me, as our fathers have forgotten it after he did declare it unto them by himself.^a

Those who follow the example of the former prophets of Baal must know what they deserve themselves by the punishment of these false prophets. Either none of them wants an hundred guineas, or none of them can confute any of my demonstrations as I did confute, even the 5th¹ of last month, the chief article of the doctrine of the arch-anti-Truth, called the main pillar of the Methodistical building.

John-Baptist the Arch-Teacher, Disciple of Vincit Veritas.

Truth [is] my God, not the God of John Wesley.

^a See the *Demonstrative Reflections*, pp. 3, 5, 6–7, 30–50, at J. Marshall's, Bookseller, in St. Clements Church-yard. Price six farthings.

Source: *Public Advertiser* (Mar. 13, 1761), p. 4.

¹Orig., '12'; apparently repeating the error of the previous advertisement.

From Elizabeth Jackson¹

March 14, 1761

Dear Sir,

I find the Lord exceedingly enlarging my soul. At the first he gave me to love him with all my strength— as this increases, so does my love. No tongue can tell what he gives me to know of himself. Such abasing sights of the most adorable Saviour's love to man! To know him, and him crucified, is a mystery indeed! No mortal could endure the full fight of this, the earthly tabernacle would fail before it. The little I see of it so inflames my soul with love to him that I can hardly live among men. From this arises such an absolute death to all below that nothing but obedience to his dear majesty makes me content to stay here. His will is my law. He has erected his throne in my heart, and all that is within me does him homage.

I am pained to see him no more glorified among me, and more especially amongst his own people. They must in a measure have forgotten him, or the world could never hold their hearts.

Another thing pains me, and that is that I can² speak no better of him. My language is too mean to speak his praise. It often sits silent on my tongue. Indeed I feel such a vileness in this earthly body as seems to dim the lustre of its glorious inhabitant. But this still enhances his goodness, and increases my wonder at his condescension. I am likewise well aware of the weaknesses and imperfection of my human mind, which I endure with a love, gratitude, and adoration of him that bore such a cross for *me*.

As for wanderings, my power is not always the same. Sometimes I can resist them in a moment. They seem more hard to be overcome when there is any indisposition of body. But this is no interruption of my union. I always find myself joined unto the Lord. I would speak this with reverence, and humbly desire to sink ten thousand times lower yet, if it be possible.

I am much obliged for yours, and esteem it a favour that you will take any notice of,

Your unworthy servant,

Eliz. Jackson

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 3 (1780): 673–74.

¹This is almost certainly the woman in *Some Account of the Experience of E. J.* (Bristol, 1770). She may be the widowed member of that name in the society in Bristol in the mid-1780s; see *WHS* 4 (1903), 60.

²Orig., 'cannot'; changed by JW in his personal copy of *AM*.

From Cornelius Bastable

March 17, 1761

The necessary cares of a large family confine me much. However, I use my little time as well as I can. In the Lord's time I shall be enlarged. I devote my time, my thoughts, words, works, gifts, business, wife and children, constantly to the Lord; and I every moment feel my sacrifice is accepted. I have uninterrupted converse with God. My heart is entirely free to worship the Lord. He is the life of my soul, and my portion forever. His presence does not forsake me for a moment: he holds a helpless worm in his hand, and blesses me with the beams of his glory. I cannot conceive how weak and feeble I am; and yet how strong the Lord makes me!

C. B.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 378.

From Mary Bosanquet

[London]
March 19, 1761

Dear Sir,

When I wrote to you last I was in a very low degree happy, being full of doubts and fears. But the next morning I found the presence of God in a manner I never had known before. I was then very happy, but still had doubts and accusations thrown at me every moment. In the evening I found the Lord exceedingly near, so that this was the happiest day I had ever known. The next day I found a longing desire after the whole mind that was in Christ, and such an expectation as was indeed a hope full of immortality. Yet after that, although my soul cleaved to Jesus with all its powers, yet I was, for a quarter of an hour, so surrounded with the powers of darkness as I cannot express.

Last Sunday I was more blest than ever, and an unspeakable assurance was given me of standing before the throne, clothed in white linen, with the name of God and the Lamb written on my forehead. But I have, at times, doubts and fears and manifold temptations. And I find great need of self-denial and watchfulness, that the very appearance of sin may be done away. I find many things, which though they are not sin, yet they are not the image of God. Likewise Satan is continually suggesting something or other to take up my mind. Sometimes I find it hard to put away his suggestions—especially with regard to my intercourse with *such a person*. Yet I can say I have no will in this; whether God continues it and blesses it, or whether he makes the way plain to give it up, I leave it all to him. But at present, I thank him and stand astonished! I did not expect such an end. I do not *love any one less* for having more love to God, only I find my love *to all* is changed. But I would not willingly give Satan a handle, while I am a very babe. For which reason I would use all the distance, caution, and even strictness of expression I did before. And then I believe it will be more, yea, far more blest to me than ever. Pray for me, that I may not hinder any blessing! I am so ignorant, I know not how to pray. I do not know what I want. But I know I am in Jesu's hand, and I want to be what he would have me be.

I remain, dear sir,
Yours, etc.

M. B.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 160–62.

From Mary Bosanquet

[London]
April 1, 1761

Dear Sir,

May Jesus now stand as a wall of salvation round me, and enable me in his light to see light! Indeed I shall need it more than ever. I had no intent of drawing you to speak more freely. But feeling a strong desire for your soul's prosperity, I just spoke what was uppermost in my heart, with much prayer that it might not be productive of any evil. I still find my soul cast on Jesus, and can truly say from the centre of my heart,

Would ought on earth my wishes share?
Though dear as life the idol be,
The idol from my breast I'd tear,
Resolved to seek my all in thee.¹

And I can appeal to him and say, 'Show me but any thing, and I will give it up without hesitation.' But if my Lord does for a time please to unite me to any of his creatures, or help me though them, I dare not throw the blessing away. Only let us fix our eye on God alone, and write nothing but what we can spread before him and call him to witness, 'My aim is thy glory.' Then we may commit it into his hands and fear nothing.

I remain, dear sir,
Yours, etc.

M. B.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 217–18.

¹Cf. CW, 'In Desertion or Temptation', st. 13, *HSP* (1739), 149.

From George Bell¹

Whitehall
April 6, 1761

Reverend Sir,

It is about three years since I was justified. I had not long been in this state before Satan told me I need not pray, nor communicate, nor go to the chapel any more. But it was not long before the snare was broken, and I continued in all the ordinances of God.

In August last, examining myself, I found I was still unclean of heart. Not long after I heard that God had cleansed the hearts of several among our brethren. On this, I considered how I might attain it, and the plan I marked out was this. I thought to get daily more of every grace, till I had a single eye; and then to walk diligently in the light, till I had a clean heart. This I thought the only way. And when I heard any speak otherwise, I thought they were sadly deceived.

On the 28th of February, being alone in my room, the power of God came upon me, so that I durst not open my mouth. But after a while, my heart being ready to burst, I cried out, 'Lord, fill my soul with love.' On Sunday I had such another visitation, and wondered what the Lord was going to do with me. On Monday he so overcame me with his love that I fainted away for some time. The next evening, as I was reading the Scripture, I felt a greater power than ever. I saw the Son of God wounded for *me*, which so pierced my heart that I sunk into nothing before him. I saw myself at an immense distance beneath his feet. I saw I was the least of all saints. It seemed as if my spirit was just ready to force its way out of the body. I saw his love so great to *me*, I thought I should die with desire. I saw the necessity of having my heart cleansed, that I might love him with all my heart. I cried, as before, 'Lord, fill my heart with love.' But instead of this he began to empty me of sin. His Spirit sat upon me as a refiner's fire. I now felt what I had condemned in my brethren as folly. I found it was 'with burning and fuel of fire'² that I must be cleansed from sin. In this state I continued till Thursday. I then was at brother [Joseph] Guilford's and we went to prayer. But my heart was as a stone, and when the Lord would have taken possession of it I shrunk back. Daniel Owen, however, received the blessing. I cried the more, 'Lord break my heart.' And my desire was so strong that for two days after I could hardly fetch my breath. On Saturday night I went to Joseph Guilford's again, and the Lord *did* break my heart. But yet I had not what I desired. I was brought to the birth, but there was not strength to bring forth. On Sunday I cried vehemently to God, and continually expected his coming. I offered up my soul to him incessantly till, in a moment, he sealed me for his own. I knew he had saved me from all sin, and left none remaining in me. I felt he had given me a clean heart and renewed a right spirit within me. I now truly ceased from my own works. I found no more self-will, no anger, no pride—nothing in my soul but pure love alone. On Monday I saw the Lord at the right hand of God, ready to hear and answer my prayer. I saw my soul in the arms of Christ, and could not help crying out, 'I am one of the lambs that he carries in his bosom.' I find I cannot live a moment without him. O he is altogether lovely! My heart runs over with love to him. I want a larger heart to praise him! Let not this seem strange to you, but cry to God that you may experience the same.

I am, reverend sir,

Your affectionate brother in the Lord,

George Bell
Corporal, in the King's Life-Guards

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 3 (1780): 674–76.

¹George Bell (fl. 1760s) converted in London about 1758. The noisy prayer meetings over which he officiated in 1761 excited Methodists across England. He claimed the power to heal miraculously, and predicted that the world would end on Feb. 28, 1763. When JW resisted these claims, Bell withdrew from Methodism. Hence JW's comment in *AM*: 'Such was George Bell! What is he now?'

²Isa. 9:5.

From Mary Bosanquet

[London]
April 6, 1761

Dear Sir,

I have a great desire to inform you, as I am able, of the particular instances of the love and power of God as they are at present manifested among us. The Saturday before you left us,¹ while we were at prayer at Mr. Jay's, Mrs. Jay cried out, 'Pray for my dear Mrs. Cayley.'² They did so. At the same time she was at home pleading with God for a clean heart, till he spoke to her with power, 'Thou art all fair, there is no spot in thee.' She then believed. Yet in the evening, she said with tears, 'God offered me the blessing, but I let it go. I cannot believe.' I told her the fight I had had to believe and hold fast my confidence. This comforted her much. The next day she was more confirmed. And on Monday the Lord told her, 'I have made thee a pillar in the temple of thy God.' And though Satan still strove hard, accusing and afflicting her, the Lord shone on her soul more and more, and her peace now flows as a river.

The Sunday after you went,³ Mr. M.⁴ preached at Spittlefields. After the sermon, the power of God was very present. Many were groaning and weeping before the Lord, when Sarah Webb,⁵ falling down to the ground, cried aloud, declaring that God had set her soul at liberty. At the same time one at the bottom of the chapel declared the Lord had made him whole. The flame now began to spread, and everyone seemed to feel God was in that place. Fourteen or fifteen persons desired in the evening to give God thanks for the blessings they then received.

I remain, dear sir,
Yours, etc.

M. B.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 278–79.

¹Mar. 7; JW departed London on his spring preaching tour on Monday, Mar. 9.

²Sarah Dyer (c. 1729–91), of London, married Cornelius Cayley (1727–79) on May 24, 1756. Her husband soon fell under the influence of James Wheatley and abandoned her. She remained in London and became close to Mary Bosanquet and Jane Catherine March.

³Mar. 15.

⁴Likely Thomas Maxfield.

⁵In *The Desideratum* (1760), II.30, JW described Sarah Webb as the wife of Mr. Webb, tallowchandler in Grub Street, age 46.

From Jane Cooper

[London]
April 14, 1761

Reverend and Dear Sir,

God has been more gracious to my soul than I could ask or think. I find him as a place of broad waters, deep and large, and I feel my inability to fathom that depth of love. In Jesus are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hid. And he has begun to reveal them to the most ignorant soul. But it is impossible to describe the goodness of God to so unworthy an object!

From the last morning you preached I was stirred up to seek him more diligently than ever. You then discovered my heart to me, and what was wanting there. I was kept in prayer, and would have parted with all things so I might win Christ. I wanted to love him with all my heart, but my own wisdom was his rival. Nothing less than omnipotence could destroy this. And his own right-hand got the victory. I was made sensible how completely foolish and entirely helpless I was. My vehement soul stood still, and I saw Jesus was all my salvation. He was all my desire, and I knew he was made unto me sanctification and redemption. He appears as a priest, upon the throne, who shall bear the glory for ever. I feel my continual need of him in all his offices. He is truly precious to my soul. But I want to know him more, and the power of his resurrection. I am happy in his love. But I want more intimate acquaintance and a deeper union with him. I see the just shall live by faith. And unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given. If I were an archangel, I should veil my face before him and let silence speak his praise!¹

Source: published transcription; JW, *Letters Wrote by Jane Cooper* (1764), 35.

¹The phrase 'let silence speak his praise' appears to have emerged recently in Methodist settings. Cf. two uses in letters in *A Collection of Letters, on Sacred Subjects* (Sheffield: Ward, 1761), 12, 38.

From Mary Bosanquet

[London]
April 16,¹ 1761

Dear Sir,

On Easter-Day² we had a love-feast indeed. M. W— was there, who had for some months been in great darkness, having quite lost the assurance of her pardon. But God restored it to her that day, and soon after gave her such a sight of her idols and inbred corruption that she could not bear it, but wrestled with the Lord to take it away *just then*. And he quickly answered her prayer.³ Two days after, she was seized with a violent fever. Miss [Jane] March, visiting her, found her rejoicing in God and having no will either to live or die.

There was much of the presence of the Lord during the whole love-feast. This was redoubled while Mr. Jones prayed. Several cried out much, particularly Mrs. Streaton, having such a fight of her sinful nature as she never had before, but with a full persuasion that God would take it away.⁴

Mrs. Mitchell had, some time before, found the blessing! And so had many more.

When we met on Friday, April 3, John Fox said though he knew he was saved from sin, and loved God with all his heart, yet his mind was not always stayed upon him. But he saw this as well as the former blessing was to be received by simple faith. And it was not long before his soul was brought as into the immediate presence of God, who from that hour did every moment *keep his heart and his mind* also.

When he mentioned this, Daniel Carney said, 'Mr. M.⁵ spoke some time since concerning the necessity of watching over the wandering of the eye and ear. This struck me exceedingly, for I remembered how often, when I was happy in God, my eye was nevertheless wandering, to look at my child or something else that did not profit. I cried mightily to be delivered from this, and one morning pleaded that promise, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee."⁶ I said, Why not now, Lord? Thou canst give it me *now!* Immediately it was to me according to my faith. I have found no wanderings since.'

Brother [Benjamin] Biggs and [Joseph] Calvert received the same blessing, about the same time. This morning Sarah Guilford,⁷ and another of our brethren, testified the same thing. And they all declare this is as different from what they received before as that is from justification.

Friday, April 10, brother Dupee⁸ said, 'I was much helped last week by what my brethren said of having their *minds* wholly fixed on God. I cried earnestly to him, and have ever since found my mind so fixed as it never was before.'⁹

At the same time brother Marston said, 'Ever since I received a clean heart, I was convinced that I wanted a farther power, in order to say my mind constantly on God. And a few days since as I was walking I said, "Lord, I want to have my mind always so deeply fixed that nothing may hinder me a

¹Reads 'Apr. 6' in *AM*; but account runs through Apr. 16.

²Mar. 22, 1761.

³Wesley added a note in *AM*: 'M. W. soon cast away her shield.'

⁴Wesley added a note in *AM*: 'Mrs. S[treaton] lived in love, and died in peace.'

⁵Likely Thomas Maxfield.

⁶Isa. 26:3.

⁷Sarah (Spiers) Guilford, the wife of Joseph Guilford

⁸Orig., 'Depay'; likely the Stephen Dupee who appears the Foundery Band Lists in the early 1740s.

⁹Wesley added a note in *AM*: 'He and Sarah Guilford witnessed a good confession to the end.'

moment.” It was answered, “If thou canst believe, it shall be according to thy faith.” I replied, “Lord, I *do* believe.” And since then my soul goes out to God continually. Nor does any thing I do or meet with hinder my intercourse with him.’ He added, ‘God has indeed wrought a quick work in my soul, for a few months ago I lived in all manner of wickedness. And a quick work he *will* work in every soul that does but cry earnestly to him.’

Thursday, [April] 16, Miss [Jane] March and I went to see M. W., though it was very improbable we should be admitted. But we had spoke only two or three words when her mother asked us to go up, and left us alone with her. She told us she had that morning entreated the Lord to bring Miss March and me, that she had been much persecuted in various ways but continued always happy in God, having an uninterrupted witness in herself that he had indeed cleansed her from all sin.

I am many times much tried. But stronger is he that is with me than all that are against me. And blessed be his holy name, he does keep me night and day. But I long to be so entirely dedicated to him that my mind may be fixed on him every moment, with

That speechless awe that dares not move,
And all the silent heaven of love.¹⁰

I want not only to walk in the way, but in the *highway* of holiness—so that every breath I draw, every word I speak, every drop of my blood, and every grain of my strength, may be holiness to the Lord. Yea, I want to be more abundantly nothing, and my Jesus to be all in all! I believe the promise standeth sure, ‘Draw near to me, and I will draw near to you.’¹¹ I find many times nothing so helpful as to cast my soul just as it is at the foot of the cross, forgetting all that is past both good and bad, and only pleading, ‘Thou Lord must ordain my peace, for thou Lord hast wrought all my works in me.’ I then love Jesus, and give up my will that moment, as if I had not one more to live.

This is indeed a time of blessing which the Spirit of God is pouring out on all around us. May we be as ready to receive, as he to give, that none of us may be at last constrained to say, ‘The summer is over, the harvest is ended; and we are not saved.’

I remain, dear sir,
Yours, etc.

M. B.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 333–36.

¹⁰CW, Hymn 156, st. 10, *HSP* (1749), 1:260.

¹¹Cf. James 4:8.

From Mary Bosanquet

[London]
April 17, 1761

Dear Sir,

If we continue to cry, God will surely hear and answer with abundant blessing. But we have indeed need to watch and pray. There is something very amazing in the whole affair of our intercourse with each other, we shall understand it better in eternity. Instead of reasoning about these things, I can now look to Jesus. Yet I think we should use much self-denial, with regard both to our thought, words, and actions. Then every thought, as often as it comes into our mind, may drive us afresh to Jesus; and as it were sound in our ears, 'Cleave to Jesus! Behold the Lamb of God!' And if we so use every thought of each other, we shall have reason to bless God we ever met. May he preserve you from cleaving to any creature! It is not easy to describe the pangs which a soul that cleaves to any thing must suffer before it is entirely healed.

There is something in the account you give of yourself which quite struck me. Had you been in my heart, you could not have described it more exactly. A little while before God blessed my soul, I felt just what you speak of—only Satan was busier, and sin strove much more in me, than it seems to do in *you*. Sometimes I thought I had lost my desire, and seemed to be quite faint. At other times, when the blessing was held out to me, Satan said, 'Nay, but you can never receive it till that idol is taken out of your heart.' This would throw me into bitter anguish. And what gave an edge to his fiery darts was this, I felt my will was not given up. One day mentioning this to Molly Mulford, she said, 'Cast it all away. Only come to Christ just as you are, and plead, "Lord, I *would* love thee"; and whether you feel it or not, he will hear.' Her words were accompanied with a wonderful power. And you know the blessing I found them.

Do *you* seem to be a great way off? You are not out of God's reach, not farther from being healed than the man covered with leprosy was the moment before Christ said, 'I will. Be thou clean!'¹ Jesus hath joined the glory of the Father and the answer of your prayers in one, for in this is his Father glorified, that you bear much fruit. And will he not care for his own glory! I had not only nothing in me that I liked, but all that I dislike—a heart bowing down under a weight of sin. But what was all that to Jesus? *All* diseases he heals as well as *one*. He does not expect you to bring him *fruit* in order to fetch the *root*. All you want he will give with a new heart. All he asks of you is to *claim your right*. Do you seek a sacrifice beside? O, he is all-sufficient! And he has paid the full debt both for actual and original sin. By his stripes you are healed. And why should you be without the blessing any longer? It is his will that, from the time you read this, you should never sin against him any more. Now believe and his blood shall so flow over your soul that not spot shall be found there. He will keep your heart, as with a garrison, that it shall never open to anything but his love. There needs but one grain of faith and the mountains shall be removed. You now believe your sins cannot condemn you, that he has taken away the guilt. Only believe he who loved you in your sins will keep you from moment to moment.

You cannot help your great abundance of business. But you do not serve a hard master. And I am sure he loves your soul as well as your body. Now he *has* strengthened that, according to your day. And he will supply your soul with strength to stand and praise him even in the fire.

I rejoice that you have time for retirement, though I believe you find the same trial I have done. Whenever I went to pray, I felt as if a swarm of devils had surrounded my soul, so that I could only say in broken sentences, 'Lord, I can do nothing. If thou force me to be saved, well; if not, I must perish.' All you say of your wanting desire and earnestness, I can still say with regard to a farther blessing, that of having my whole mind fixed on God, as well as my whole heart. I want that constant, uninterrupted intercourse with God which [Gregory] Lopez speaks of when he says that for thirty-six years he had never

¹Matt. 8:3 and parallels.

discontinued one moment making an act of love with all his strength.² For want of this, I do not keep quite clear of idle reasonings. I never had a clear, *abiding* witness that I was saved from sin. But I feel my soul hangs on Jesus, and I do believe he will keep me for ever. And my peace is more solid than it was at first, and my soul seems more sunk into God. But what I judge more by is the change I feel—my one desire is to do his will, and I feel nothing but love to every creature, let them use me well or ill. My love to God (glory be to his name) does not decline, and my acquaintance with him grows deeper and deeper. But I am hindered still by wandering thoughts. O pray for me, and stir up all you can to seek all my Saviour has to give, till all his dear will be accomplished. I am,

Yours, etc.

M. B.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 388–90.

²Bosanquet had likely read 'the Life of Gregory Lopez' in the abridged form JW published in his *Christian Library* (1755), vol. 50, pp. 337–406; see p. 394 for this reference.

From Mrs. W.¹

[London]
April 18, 1761

Dear Sir,

The Lord has indeed done great things for me and my house. Glory be to his name. And blessed be the day I was born, and made free with the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

I dare not number the souls that have been blest under the prayers of such a wretch as I am, nor under my favoured roof. We shall know them in their white robes, when we sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb. O what a joyful song! What a rapturous meeting!

Many will not believe what the Lord has done. O bear me upon your heart at the throne of grace, that I may so walk as to prove the work divine! I tremble now and then. But the Lord is my strength, and will complete in heaven what he has begun upon earth.

Strangers continually come and desire me to pray with them—which I do, after I am convinced they are serious. In less than fifteen minutes the Lord justified three, who all rejoiced with loud cries of deliverance. Two more received pardon three days after. Scarce a day passes without such fresh instances of the goodness of our God, so that we stand and gaze upon each other, with tears starting in our eyes and with praises that our mouths cannot utter. How has my Redeemer brought me from the brink of hell, to a land flowing with milk and honey?

Yet though I find joy and peace in believing, the outworks of the soul are sorely assaulted at times. But the Lord is the watchman who neither slumbers nor sleeps, and all I have is in his hands. My joy is always heightened at the assurance of seeing my Saviour's servant receiving the gracious salutation of, 'Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.' Then shall follow (after many others) my two maids, my son and daughter, together with

Your dutiful and affectionate servant,

M. W.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 52–53.

¹The identity of this correspondent remains unclear; see H. J. Foster, 'Mrs. W—', *WHS* 7 (1909): 73–78. It is likely the woman mentioned by JW in his *Journal* on Sept. 14, 1763 (*Works*, 21:428): 'I was ... not a little refreshed by the conversation of one lately come from London [to Bath], notwithstanding an irregularity of thought almost peculiar to herself. How much preferable is her *irregular warmth* to the *cold wisdom* of them that despise her! How gladly would I be as she is, taking her *wildness* and *fervour* together!'

From Mrs. W.

[London]
April 23, 1761

Dear Sir,

On the Wednesday that Jenny went to town, Mr. Guilford and some others came to see me.¹ He asked if I thought the Lord was ready to bless me? I told him, 'I know he is waiting for me', then desired we might go to prayer directly. I found power to throw my whole soul upon the Lord. And he supported me and brought me through Jordan. The same day my maid Betty, and another in my house, found remission of sins.

Jenny returned the next evening, and the Lord blest my prayer for her. She was quite disburdened of her wisdom, and became a fool for Christ's sake. My maid Betty, not hearing me pray so earnestly for her as I did for the other, began praying the more earnestly for herself, and the Lord gave her the blessing. Then were our mouths filled with laughter and our souls with love and praise.

The next morning it came strongly to my mind that the Lord would hear my prayer for my children. I kneeled down and asked. He heard and answered. The girl felt her sins forgiven. Afterwards she cried out, 'Now, Lord, give me a clean heart. Bring *me* also through Jordan.' The Lord heard. She soon praised him for deliverance from sin, and is still steadfast in the faith.

My son quickly after came from town, and the Lord justified him freely. I sent for one who had been seeking God twenty years, and the Lord justified him also. The succeeding days were blest to many souls, and to mine in particular. Hearing of the blessing given to others of having their mind continually staid on God, I cried mightily to him for it, and for Christ's sake it was given me. This mercy confirmed the other. I find I am a worm, and Jesus is all in all. Pray that the Lord would keep me low at his feet, and make me useful to his people. I think he will soon ripen me and take me home, and I do long to see him face to face. Yet I dare not wish for this or any thing, but that his perfect will be done.

I am

Yours, etc.,

M. W.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 53–54.

¹Joseph Guilford (d. 1777) had been a soldier, was converted under the influence of Thomas Olivers, and became an itinerant in 1761; see Atmore, *Memorial*, 169–71.

From Mrs. W.

[London]
April 30, 1761

Dear Sir,

As you have not received my former letters, I will venture to write again. Since I received the blessing, many poor, dear souls have been with us before the throne of grace, and not in vain. Mourners have rejoiced and wise men have become fools for Christ's sake. Lately I was called to London, not knowing for what. I went to prayer with my mother and the Lord justified her. Her maid came to our house, longing for Christ, and God revealed him in her. I cannot tell you how good our dear Master has been, and continues to be to his unworthy creature. O that I could declare what he has done for *me* and all the ends of the earth!

Mr. Edward Perronet and Mr. J. Anson¹ came to me yesterday. The former questioned me much. I simply answered him, and he at last prayed that he might feel what we enjoyed. The Lord has now laid a great burden upon him, and he believes he shall partake of the blessing.

I remain,

Yours, etc.,

M. W.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 54–55.

¹Possibly John I'Anson, of Southborough.

From 'R. W.'

[c. April 30,] 1761

'To the Reverend Mr. John Wesley'

Sir,

I have perused that something, or rather nothing, which you give the appellation of an answer (see p. 91¹). I should really be ashamed to put my name to such a performance. But to deny is not to disprove. Nor will the affectation of low humour pass for solid conclusive argument. I shall only take notice of what immediately relates to myself.

You are pleased, sir, to send me to your school for instruction, but I must decline the acceptance of a master who seems to be entirely unacquainted with the first rudiments of language, even of common grammar. You say that 'dogmas' is Greek. If it be, point out what case and number it is of. You further assert that it is mere heathen Greek, which shows what an adept you are in the sacred language. If you will refer to Ephesians 2:15, you will see that it is a word made use of by an apostle. Consult the best of commentators, among the ancients, St. Chrysostom, on the place and it will appear that it is so peculiarly a scriptural expression that it implies not less than Christianity itself. For this reason it is that Christians are frequently termed οἱ τοῖ δόγματοῖ. And, if I mistake not, in the rescript of Aurelian against Paulus Samosatensis, as it is recorded by Eusebius, the Christian bishops are particularly distinguished as ἐπίσκοποι τοῖ δόγματοῖ. Who I am, and where I live, is nothing to the purpose. I have no inclination to be dragged from my beloved obscurity into public view. Very prudential too it is for controversial writers to conceal their names, for I have observed that they too often entirely leave the subject in dispute, only to follow personal altercations. I am,

Your very humble servant,

R. W.

Source: published transcription; *London Magazine* (Apr. 1761), p. 190.

¹JW's letter 'To Mr. G. R., alias R. A., alias M. K., alias R. W.', dated Feb. 17, 1761.

From William Green¹

Rotherham
[c. May] 1761

My Dear Mr. Wesley,

How acceptable are the few lines I have this day received from you! I have sometimes concluded you did not receive my letter, otherwise you had forgotten us. . . .

I hope your Yorkshire friends will have the pleasure of seeing you once more. Do you inquire how the work of God prospers? I can bless the Lord, and say that our dear Immanuel is working with us and for us daily. Jesus has even this day laid his hand on a sturdy rebel, who has been a hearer for years. He possessed much wisdom and little grace, and hence many of us looked upon him as in a very dangerous condition. But the Lord has conquered him, and wounded him in such an extraordinary manner that he can neither work, eat, nor drink, by reason of the concern he feels for Jesus. For so it has been with him today, and I trust the Lord who has thus wounded will heal in his due time.

Many have joined our society of late, and multitudes come to hear; so that what I have long hoped for will, I hope, shortly be accomplished—viz., a house for God. The ground work is set out and hopes are entertained that it will be up in the month of August. And O that it would please the Lord to send you down among us to preach in it the first time!² O my dear Mr. Wesley think—think of the happy days and nights we have enjoyed together in Yorkshire! How often have our cups run over with the love of Jesus when hearing, singing, and praying. If a drop be so sweet, what will be the fountain where we shall drink for ever? Come, my dear sir; I will put the people again in remembrance to pray for you, and I hope the Lord will put it into your heart to visit us once more in the summer. Please to favour me with a line the first opportunity.

Source: published transcription; James Everett, *Historical Sketches of Wesleyan Methodism in Sheffield and its Vicinity* (Sheffield: James Montgomery, 1823), 155.

¹William Green (d.1777) was a schoolmaster, originally of Thorpe in Yorkshire. In the early 1740s he moved to establish a school in Rotherham and was one of the Methodist pioneers in the town. His house was used as the first place of worship for the town's infant society, while as a local preacher he helped introduce Methodism into the surrounding villages. Green was also involved with bookselling and was responsible for distributing large amounts of Methodist literature. After the death of his first wife, in 1749 Green married Jane Holmes of Sheffield, a devout Methodist. The couple were instrumental in the erection of the first purpose-built chapel in Rotherham, well-known for its octagonal shape, which opened for worship in 1761. See Samuel J. Russell, *Historical Notes of Wesleyan Methodism in Rotherham Circuit* (Rotherham: Garnett, 1910), 8–31.

²JW's Sermon Register 1 records that he preached three sermons in Rotherham on July 30, 1761.

From Jane Cooper

[London]
May 2, [1761]

Believe while memory remains in me, gratitude will continue. I know many are the troubles of the righteous, but out of them all doth the Lord deliver. I have never desired to hide any distress or difficulty from you at any time. Is this any reason why you should tell *me* what those are which now surround you? If I could remove the least of them by knowing it, I should be importunate.

From the time you preached on Galatians 5:5,¹ I saw clearly the true state of my soul. That sermon described my heart, and what it wanted to be truly happy. You read Mr. M—'s letter, and it described the religion which I desired. From that time the prize appeared in view, and I was enabled to follow hard after it. I was kept watching unto prayer; sometimes in much distress, at others in patient expectation of the blessing. For some days before you left London, my soul was stayed on the promise I had applied to me in prayer: 'The Lord whom you seek, shall suddenly come to his temple.'² I believed he would, and that he would sit there as a refiner's fire. The Tuesday after you went, I thought I could not sleep unless he fulfilled his word that night. I never knew as I did then the force of those words, 'Be still and know that I am God.' I became nothing before him, and enjoyed perfect calmness in my soul. I knew not whether he had destroyed my sin. But I desired to know, that I might praise him.

Yet I soon found the return of unbelief, and groaned, being burdened. On Wednesday I went to London and sought the Lord without ceasing. I promised, if he would save me from sin, I would praise him. I could part with all things, so I might win Christ. But I found all these pleas nothing worth, and that if he saved *me*, it must be freely for his own name's sake. On Thursday, after I had been with sister [Sarah] Guilford and brother [John] Dixon, I was so much tempted that I thought of destroying myself, or never conversing more with the people of God. And yet I had no doubt of his pardoning love. But

'Twas worse than death my God to love,
and not my God alone.³

On Friday my distress was deepened. I endeavoured to pray and could not. I went to Mrs. D., who prayed for me and told me it was the death of nature. I opened the Bible on: 'The fearful and unbelieving ... shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.'⁴ I could not bear it. I opened it again on Mark 16:6–7, 'Be not affrighted. You seek Jesus of Nazareth. ... Go your way; tell his disciples he goeth before you into Galilee. There shall you see him.' I was encouraged and enabled to pray, believing I should see Jesus at home. I returned that night and found Mrs. G.⁵ She prayed for me, and the predestinarian had no plea but, 'Lord, thou are no respecter of persons.' He proved he was not by blessing me.

I was in a moment enabled to lay hold on Jesus Christ, and found salvation by simple faith. He assured me the Lord, the King, was in the midst of me, and that I should see evil no more. I now blessed him who had visited and redeemed me, and was become my wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. I saw Jesus altogether lovely, and knew he was mine in all his offices. And glory be to him, he now reigns in my heart without a rival. I find no will but his. I feel no pride, nor any affection, but what is placed on him. I know it is by faith I stand, and that watching unto prayer must be the guard of

¹JW preached on Gal. 5:5 on Feb. 15, 1761, in the West Street chapel in London.

²Mal. 3:1.

³CW, 'The Resignation', st. 2, *HSP* (1742), 76.

⁴Rev. 21:8.

⁵The woman for whom Jane Cooper was a servant.

faith. I am happy in God this moment, and I believe for the next. I have often read the chapter you mention (1 Cor. 13), and compared my heart and life with it. In so doing I feel my shortcomings, and the need I have of the atoning blood. Yet I dare not say I do not feel a measure of the love there described. Though I am not all I should be, I desire to be lost in that love which passeth knowledge. I wish for no joy but what increases love.

Source: published transcription; JW, *Letters Wrote by Jane Cooper* (1764), 35–37.

From Jane Catherine March (?¹)

[London]
May 2, 1761

Reverend Sir,

As I am sensible you rejoice in the prosperity of your children, I send you some account of the goodness of the Lord to my soul. I have always found Jesus a gracious Saviour, doing abundantly more than I could ask or think. From the time that he cleansed my heart from sin, my soul was ever happy in his love, though at times I was much tried and tempted, and suffered much in various ways. Satan did indeed sift me as wheat, but he gained no advantage over me. His chief temptation was to deny the work of God—not to believe I was sealed with his Spirit. I cried earnestly to the Lord that if it was not done yet, he would

Seal my soul his loved abode,
The temple of indwelling God.²

And on Easter Monday, at chapel, I found I had access unto the Father through the Son, and he showed me he had made with *me* an everlasting covenant. I then knew my soul was *sealed* in heaven with the blood of Jesus. I could say, 'I am the Lamb's wife', and was answered, 'The spotless bride'.

From this time, I never found a doubt that God had taken away the root of sin. But yet as the light shined clearer, I saw many things lacking in my soul. I wanted to have my whole *mind*, to have all my *thoughts* fixed on God. Above all, I wanted to live every moment in a spirit of sacrifice. Especially for about a week past I could not be contented with a bare rest from sin. I longed to have every breath I drew holiness unto the Lord. My peace did increase, yet I found Satan had power to inject wandering thoughts, and thereby cloud my understanding so that I could not clearly discern the state of my soul. But on April 30, as I was at chapel, the power of God overshadowed me and I was constrained to wrestle with the angel of the covenant for near two hours. My cry was, 'Let my whole *mind* be fixed on thee!' And I saw the blessing held out to my view. About the middle of the sermon, I had power to say, 'I will

Dare to believe, through Jesu's power,
That I shall never wander more.³

I trust to thy faithfulness, to keep my *mind*, as thou hast kept my heart. I *will* believe, in spite of all these suggestions, and according to my faith it shall be unto me.'

At first, indeed, this faith was weak, but it grew stronger and stronger. The next day Satan assaulted me on every side, to draw my *mind* from God. He brought this and that thought before me, but none of them could fix upon me. I am enabled to stand on my watch-tower, and to keep the eye of my soul continually fixed on the Lamb of God, and all his darts fall to the ground. My Lord said to me, 'I will

¹*AM* attributes this to a *Mr. J. C. M.* This is likely a misprint. JW had been corresponding with Miss Jane Catherine March since early 1760, and this is likely the first surviving letter from her. If so, it must have been followed by a letter expressing some renewed doubts about her experience of sanctification, given JW's letter of June 17, 1761. Jane Catherine March was a pious single woman, of significant financial means, who became active in London Methodist circles (perhaps through her relationship with Mary Bosanquet) by early 1760. She may have lived in Eltham.

²Cf. CW, 'Groaning for Adoption', st. 4, *HSP* (1740), 132.

³This is set apart as a hymn in *AM*. No source for this exact wording is found. It may well be an adaptation of CW, 'Hymns for Those Who Wait for Full Redemption', Hymn 16, st. 2, *HSP* (1749), 2:166: 'I dare believe thro' Jesu's power, / That I, ev'n I, shall sin no more.'

keep thee in perfect peace, and thy mind shall be staid on me.’⁴ And it is so indeed. ‘Salvation hath God appointed for walls and bulwarks.’⁵ He hath made my soul as a strong city, immoveable as Mount Zion. Pray that the fruits of righteousness may appear in my life, and that I may daily grow in the knowledge and love of Christ.

O what reason have we to keep close to Jesus, to lay up every opportunity for his service, and to keep our souls looking to the Lord, that we may be made meet to appear before him! ‘Happy, and holy is he that hath his lot in the first resurrection!’⁶ May this be *your* blessed lot! And I trust it will. For Jesus loves you, and longs to give you all the holiness your soul stands in need of. The Lord, I doubt not, will come suddenly to his temple, and fill your soul with his glory. I am, reverend sir,

Your obedient servant,

J. C. M.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 110–11.

⁴Cf. Isa. 26:3.

⁵Isa. 26:1.

⁶Isa. 20:6.

From Mrs. W.

[London]
May 2, 1761

Dear Sir,

I rejoice at your approving of my ardour for the cause of God, in whose strength I hope to go on, so as to amaze myself, as well as those who depend upon sinning as long as they live. The Lord has graciously given me a clean heart and I hope to use it in his service. I find I speak less than I did, and what I do speak I know is according to the will of God. And he enables me to baffle the assaults of wise, reasoning men by simply declaring, 'I love the Lord with my whole heart, mind, and soul.'

I was thought to be stepping into eternity last week. But the Lord spared me, to go up with my children and servants to Jerusalem, to worship. He was there of a truth. I rejoiced exceedingly that ever I was born. I delivered my children into the Lord's hands, with all I have and all I am. I find my love to the Lord deep and solemn, and can always rejoice in him. It is not in my power to describe the blessings that are showered upon us. I trust the Lord will enlarge my powers, and that I shall employ them all for his praise. I think he is willing to give *me* as much as any daughter he has on earth. O pray that I may so use the grace received as to gain souls for him. Do not think I boast, I feel myself a scrap of dust. But the Lord has lifted me up. And for his own glorious name's sake, he will sustain me to the end. I am not able to stir, unless Jesus help me. I am nothing! Christ is all in all!

Before you left town I was agonizing with excess of desire to love God alone. I knew the power was ready, whenever I asked for it in faith. I found it was like throwing myself into a rapid stream, where I must swim or perish. The Lord gave me faith, and a sweet serenity. Satan assaults, but Jesus keeps the citadel. Yet as I get strength, my inward trials are stronger and stronger. But I rejoice, knowing they shall all work together for good. To love Jesus is heaven upon earth. But I know no greater pain, next to hearing his name blasphemed, than to be debarred from declaring his mercy wherever I am. O what a day will that be when we shall see his face, and live with him for ever!

Pray that I may be steady. I carry much sail, and need much ballast. But the voyage is short. My Pilot commands the winds, and I do not fear gaining the wished-for port. I remain,

Yours, etc.,

M. W.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 55–56.

From Mary Bosanquet

[London]
May 5, 1761

Dear Sir,

If one who has so much more grace than me was deceived, how can I stand against all the snares thrown in my way? I have no security but this: I am all weakness, Christ is all strength. I dare not look forward in any thing. I only judge for this moment. O pray for me that the Lord may teach me in all things! The ways of God are past finding out. May his dear will be done!

In order to obtain the blessed *fruit* of love, your surest way is first to get the *root*. It is the will of God you should *now* receive it, and then all the rest will follow. O let us look to Jesus! He knows our inmost soul, and he will heal our every wound. Do *you* fear you have not begun to be a Christian? O how dreadfully did I fear this the last quarter of an hour before the Lord gave me the great blessing! Continually was Satan darting that at me, 'Thou art not justified!' For a time it much discouraged me. But I found the readiest way was to go immediately to Jesus and say (whether I could *feel* it or not), 'I cast me afresh on thy atoning blood. I *will* trust in it. And if I perish, I will perish at thy feet! I *will* believe, for I am thine.' I held to this, whatever Satan could say. And this going continually to Christ is all we want in every state. Were you ever so polluted, wash in the all-cleansing blood and you shall be white as snow. O fly every moment to your ark! I know the Lord is nigh to bless you. Cast yourself, again and again, on that precious blood that flowed so freely for you! Claim *your* Saviour! He is all your own, he hath given himself for *you*! Yea, his very life he did not withhold, but bought *your holiness* with blood divine.

I am,

Yours, etc.,

M. B.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 554–55.

From Mrs. W.

[London]
May 30, 1761

Dear Sir,

I cannot tell how often I have been prevented, when I have intended to answer your encouraging letter. Indeed, sir, I must praise the Lord Jesus. O he is lovely, and is more precious to me every day. Glory be to his name, he fulfills his promises to my happy soul every hour, and I am in pain when I am not some way employed to his honour. His tender care of me melts me down, till I lose myself in him. And when I think how near the time is come that will deliver me to my Beloved, my soul grows too big for my breath and I almost faint for joy. O what a calling is ours! To live with Christ Jesus my Lord, and that for ever! And does he not give us a foretaste of our bliss? Because my bodily strength was little, he has renewed it. Instead of creeping out of bed at ten, I am now waked by my spouse and rise at four, and all my family meet before five. Prayer is sweet. I would not accept the empire of the world, to keep me from that food of immortal souls. When temptations harass, till my body almost faints, my Lord is present with me. And glory be to his name, I can count it a blessing when I am the most tried. I know it comes through him, to me his child, whom he eyes with earnest tenderness.

My son is much blest. He cries aloud for a clean heart, and attends the ordinances with keenness. Harriot is a proof of what the Lord can do in a child. Her prayers are indeed surprising. Many are struck at her confident petitions and boldness in declaring her love to the Lord. My house is a heaven upon earth. Hallelujah to the Lord. I am,

Yours, etc.,

M. W.¹

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 56–57.

¹In his personal copy of *AM*, JW wrote after this letter: 'Did it continue so? Jane Cooper went to paradise, but where are the rest?'

From an Unidentified Woman¹

May 30, 1761

Dear Sir,

I would not wish to appear more in the sight of man than I am in the sight of God. Therefore I would willingly tell you all my weaknesses. Indeed I am encompassed with many infirmities, and can truly say,

I loath myself while God I see,
And into nothing fall.²

I have but just set out on my journey to the heavenly Jerusalem. I *would* have my religion extend to all my thoughts, words, and actions. I *would* not only follow Jesus now and then, but every moment. I want my attention to be always fixed on him. I want to have *all* I say or do bear the motto of 'Holiness unto the Lord!' But in answer to your questions, I think I have found wanderings since. I know useless, unedifying thoughts have passed through (though not lodged in) my mind. Therefore I judge I have not received the blessing which others have. But from that time my soul has been greatly established. Since then I have always found a clear witness that my heart never departs from God (which I often doubted of before), and I have had more communion with God, and am enabled to discern that I do offer unto the Lord an uninterrupted act of love. But though I feel my soul continually go out after God, yet my attention is often uselessly employed. I live too much *without*, not enough *within*. My life is not sufficiently a hidden life. I *would* find in the whole creation nothing but God and my own soul. I have more need of Jesus than ever. My soul is all weakness, and falls upon him who is all strength. Pray for me, that I may be *all* like him!

May the Lord Jesus bless you, and make you spotless in his sight, and preserve you unto that great day! I remain,

Yours, etc.,

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 112–13.

¹We know it is a woman because JW adds a comment in *AM* after the letter: 'Is it thus with her now?'

²Cf. CW, 'After a Relapse into Sin', st. 12, *HSP* (1740), 155.

From Jasper Jay¹

[London]
June 4, 1761

Reverend Sir,

On Aug. 27, 1757, after a long night of distress, God was pleased to give me the first sense of his pardoning love. Some time after, I fell acquainted with my wife, who was justified before me. In 1758 we were married. We heard Mr. Whitefield constantly, and sometimes the preaching at the Foundery—both were blest to my soul. For some time I lived in a clear sense of pardon. But I saw by degrees such a depth of wickedness in my heart that I have many times wondered how I stood under it, without giving up all for lost. For more than three years and a half was I thus led up and down in the wilderness, finding no help, but a heart desperately wicked and continually departing from God. My wife was nearly in the same condition, but she saw there was a farther rest remaining for the people of God. This I vehemently denied, which (together with the plague of her own heart) made her very unhappy. Yet I often wished it were so, but I could not think it possible that ever I could be cleansed from *all sin*.

In the latter end of February I was on a journey, when my wife wrote me word of the work God was doing in London; adding that one of my acquaintance had got a *clean heart*. I started when I read that word. However, I thought, 'Certainly it is a season of refreshing', and therefore I hastened home. But that word still followed me, 'Such a one has a clean heart'. Yet I determined to detect her if possible. A little while after I spoke to her, but it was as if the Lord had put a bridle in my jaws. I could not contradict. I could only say at last, 'If you have this blessing, pray that I may have it also.'

The next day was the fourth of March. You remember, I suppose, what happened that morning.² I saw the maid the Lord had blest, and she constrained to acknowledge this is the finger of God. She fell on her knees and prayed that God would bless me and my wife also, warned me of reasoning with Satan, and bid me come to Christ, just as I was, and he would have mercy upon me.

I went home. My soul thirsted for God. My wife prayed with and for me. And all the remainder of the day was spent in prayer, with scarce any intermission. I was not now distressed—I called God *my Father*, and knew he *could* save me *now*. I went to the chapel, and my desire still increased. When you met the bands and prayed with them, my thirst increased even to agony. Yet I returned without the blessing.

The next day I was asked to go to Joseph Guilford's. While we talked together, the Lord gave me such a sight of his holiness and his love that I knew he was willing, for Christ's sake, to make *me* also holy. Yet I felt myself so helpless, I said, 'I know not if all my desires will not be gone in five minutes.' He began praying, and the Lord quickly said to my soul, 'I am thy salvation.' I held this near an hour with a trembling hand, while several were wrestling with God for me. Meantime Satan was ready to tear me in pieces, till as I was on the point of letting go my hold, I cried vehemently 'Lord! Wouldst thou have me believe thee?' As soon as I spoke, he answered, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.'³ My soul fell upon him. I *did* believe, and peace sprung up like a river in my soul. I cannot tell you what a glorious liberty I was now brought into. I hanged upon him, and felt him my salvation. I loved him with all my heart. Satan roared against me, but the Lord was as a wall of fire round about me. He told me, he would be with me even to the end. Blessed be God for such a precious Saviour! Now, Christ was all in all to me, and all my heart was love.

My wife seeing it, was deeply distressed for her own soul. She cried, and mourned, and would not be comforted. Two days after, when she had been for several hours roaring for the disquietness of her

¹The author is not identified in the published form, but JW added the name in his personal copy of *AM*.

²JW was still in London on Mar. 4.

³Acts 16:31.

heart, she went to bed but could have no rest. About twelve she cried out, 'Lord, I can never be poorer! I am naked. I am a sinner stript of all. Save me, or I perish!' He spoke, and she shouted aloud, 'Amen! Hallelujah! The Lord Omnipotent reigneth!' We now rejoiced together. I bless the Lord, since then he has been always with me. My heart is continually burning with love to God and all mankind. I lie at his feet and loath myself. He talks with me all the day long. I find him building up the ruined places, and making my soul as a watered garden. I now know what it is to *have* nothing and yet possess all things. He suffers me many times to be tempted, but he is always with me. I have not grace for the next, but by the blood of the Lamb, I conquer *this* moment. He helps me to believe on him. And he says, 'Be it unto thee according to thy faith.'⁴

But after a while I found my mind wandering as I walked in the street. It was about some business I had to do, but which I need not have thought of then. I told brother Biggs of it. He said, 'You want to have your *mind* stayed upon God, as well as your affections.' I saw the thing clearly. It was not long before some of our brethren spoke of having received this blessing. Not long after, a sermon of Mr. M's⁵ put me upon a closer self-examination than ever. And I clearly saw, that I *did* love God with all my heart; but that this was wanting still, that 'every thought' should 'be brought into subjection to the obedience of Christ'.⁶ This I expected to receive at the Lord's table, but did not. Then I prayed the Lord to show me the hindrance. And he *did* show me [that] I had been seeking it, as it were, by the works of the law. I then pleaded the blood of Jesus Christ, and cast myself upon him, believing. And I felt his power delivering me, I think more clearly than when he took the root of bitterness out of my heart. The deadness to all things which have found since is more than I can express. Indeed Satan tempts me in this also, but through my Lord I am more than conqueror.

I remain,

Your obedient servant,

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 162–65.

⁴Matt. 9:29.

⁵Likely Thomas Maxfield.

⁶2 Cor. 10:5.

From Howell Harris

Bideford
June 20, 1761

Dear Mr. Wesley,

I am answering by this post a kind and humble letter I received the other day from Mr. Johannes,¹ in reply to mine from Yarmouth. I thought it my duty, as matters will not permit him to stay in England further than the beginning of July, to send you this letter, hoping it will be possible for you to see him before he goes. And if the meeting would be at Bristol, perhaps providence would open a door for me to have the pleasure of being present to see the most agreeable sight in the world—brethren looking each other in the face in truth, old love revived, and the cause of distance and former jealousy removed, Satan disappointed, and the love and humility of the Saviour prevailing over all misunderstanding, and a generous regard for the universal good of the whole English Reformation bearing down all lesser considerations whatsoever. He seemed through the whole of his epistle to be really poor in spirit and without guile, and sincerely disposed to any general conference. He appears to be without any partial view to his own plan and brethren, declaring positively that he esteems everyone who honours the Saviour's sufferings and seeks salvation by his blood as a brother indeed, though he belongs to another denomination. And he declares further that if he can do anything for his Master's interest and the soul's happiness, he is ready for it, wishing that the whole earth may be covered with the knowledge of the Redeemer and his atoning blood.

God can do great things. His cause, his name, his people, his work, and his servants are in him one. Let us on earth then endeavour to imitate those in heaven, where there is but one tongue, one language, one happiness, one life, and where all make but one family. The nearer we all come to the same mind, and the more we grow up in a likeness to our great Head, the more we shall convince the poor, blind world that we are of him indeed, whose will is expressly revealed and made known to all on this head. This spirit of bearing and forbearing would be the glory of our church. And this great work, the late revival, was ushered in by this heaven-born spirit; and if continued in it, it will flourish and prove a blessing to thousands now and many in future generations. All that now walk in the light by it have personal happiness.

What will not a heaven-born soul do or suffer for one truth? And what should we not be willing to do for the love of the brethren, while we endeavour to unite the scattered parts of the glorious body of our exalted Lord? If the attempt is great, great will he be who is first in the motion. And it will be great in you if, as an unshaken son of the old Church of England and of primitive Christianity, you can invite Mr. Johannes to give you the meeting, to remove, if possible, misunderstanding and mutual jealousies, and come to some terms of friendship. And happy will it be if he, in the same spirit, accepts of the sincere English invitation. I should be exceedingly glad to know, if possible, when and where you are likely to meet, that, if I could not be favoured with being present, I might all that time bow the knee before the dear Lord and Master, praying that he himself would, as thousands are concerned, be present to help in taking such steps as might best promote his interest and glory in this fallen and yet favoured nation. Such is the humble supplication of

Your most unworthy brother and servant,

Howell Harris

Source: published transcription; Edward Morgan, *Life and Times of Howell Harris* (London: Hughes and Butler, 1852), 223–25.

¹Johannes de Watteville (1718–88), the adopted son of Baron Frederic de Watteville and husband of Count Zinzendorf's daughter, was elevated to the role of Bishop in the Moravian movement in 1747.

From Mrs. H. Clark¹

July 10, 1761

Reverend Sir,

Glory be to God, my soul is still kept in peace, and I can rejoice evermore! Glory be to his name, I do grow in grace, and in the knowledge of God my Saviour! But the deeper I drink into the Spirit of God, the more I see of my want of his fullness. O could I ever have thought my dear Lord had such blessings to bestow on such an unworthy creature! Tongue cannot express what I enjoy in my soul. It is sweet to converse with the Lord, and (blessed be his name!) he has given me to converse with him every moment. O praise the Lord for me! For I cannot praise him enough. He has done great things for us. He has made my husband and me of one heart and of one mind. We know nothing but happiness, and we take delight in nothing but striving to have more of the mind of Christ. I would have wrote to you sooner, but I thought it was making too free. Will you pardon my freedom? I find I have greater need than ever of prayer, and watching against every device of Satan. And glory be to God! I can watch over every thought, and know from whence it comes.

You are much laid upon my mind to pray for you, and God blesses my soul in so doing. I beg your prayers for me. And may the Lord bless you with all the blessings of the new covenant! I do not know how soon I may be in travail. If I never see you here, I hope to meet you at the right-hand of God, to praise my Lord for ever. I am, reverend sir,

Your unworthy daughter in the gospel,

H. C—K

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 165–66.

¹Only the first and last letters of the last name are given in the printed form, but JW gives the full name in manuscript in his personal copy of *AM*.

From Alexander Coats

Leeds
July 14, 1761

Reverend Sir,

Heartily wishing you all true happiness in time and in eternity. This perfection you speak of in your letter,¹ I bless Jesus, I never thought nor spoke against since he was pleased to bless me with the least grain of the experimental knowledge of his infinitely sweet and glorious self! Only this fairly proves me to be far from perfection. For I come infinitely short of that love to him that I should (and I think I can say) would have for him. If you, reverend sir, or any can say that they are perfect in this, O what a heaven is this upon earth! O for this blessing! He knows I would firm have this. I am not for a false Christ. My heart is for a whole Christ. Yea I desire nothing more. Christ (glory to him) offers himself to sinners. If they ever expect him to be theirs they must take and receive him their Lord God and their mediator, also their king, priest, and prophet—in one word, their God and Saviour wholly—their all.

Reverend sir, he does and will reward his children according to (but cannot for) their best works. For that work that can bear weight in the balance of justice must have 4 or 5 more grains added than the greatest saint that ever lived or can live of sinful men dare pretend to: 1. Liberty – something they are not bound to do. 2. Propriety – it must be whole our own and of our own. 3. Utility – it must be profitable to God. 4. Proportion – to the reward provided, and expected. 5. Perfection – it must be perfectly begun, carried on, and finished. I think this may suffice to refuse the place for merit and also show the very best saint their absolute need of a whole Christ.

I believe precious Christ can as easily perfectly sanctify and justify at that very instant. But except in the happy thief—on the cross—I see not an instance. I believe he will perfect my soul (through infinite mercy) ere and where he is about taking it from my body. (O that it were wholly cleansed just now! O what must this be!) And I may believe he will give me a perfect body when he raises me again. O may precious Jesus enable me to lay down my soul and my life together; this I earnestly beg, for his name's sake.

Reverend sir, you put the question 'Who was Pelagius?' I thought your own mother church had informed you 'Sir, he was an erroneous man', when they guard their members against his errors. Your description of him differs. I am informed he was a monk of Bangor and that in the beginning of his time wrote several good tracts. But after fell into those errors—such as: 1) free will; 2) that Christians could live in this life without sin; 3) that God never commanded, nor condemns, impossibilities; 4) that Adam should have died, though he had not sinned. Sir, I have heard more, and that from good hands, but let this suffice.

Reverend sir, plain dealing may be and is offensive to some, but I hope not to Mr. John Wesley. All I intend is fairly to lay my mind open before you, and that in a fairer manner than ever any of your people heard me in any discourse (or, I think, ever shall). Only, sir, remember we are both before precious Jesus. Let us deal honestly, for he sees the inside.

Sir, you believe I have an honest heart. I feel it is very deceitful. I pray your belief more absolutely true—God make it such! For he has put something in it that earnestly desires to be so. For my darkness and ignorance ye charge me with I acknowledge. May the Lord give me more light and more heat of true love.

Reverend sir, I do not cast them out of my charity that differ from me in perseverance. I believe ye do. And yet I believe you a servant of Christ's, and I think I can pray ye may shine with far greater glory than poor worthless me. O precious Jesus, let me be only with thee. The very meanest station in glory is fair and good for me, the poor miracle! The greatest miracle—I think this shall be my greatest thought through precious Christ, to the glory of God, essentially.

¹Coats is replying to JW's letter of July 7, 1761.

I am not for dispute and controversy. Sir, do not cramp my conscience. For I will not (God helping me) give up that point. And though I am no more than a butterfly to a great eagle, Jesus Christ is strong. Glory to him. He shall be king. Here I am determined to fight. And, dear sir, I lay open to conviction in the name of Jesus. If I am wrong, I can say it is not my intention but owing to my ignorance of the word of God. Only I cannot believe that Christ's sheep shall perish eternally, nor that it is possible they may be damned when God says it is impossible they can be deceived. O precious Christ, give me power to give all diligence to make my calling and election sure. For I reckon the evidence of the truth and power of grace in the soul, at highest, is only the surest proof of justification and the stronger argument for my hope of glory (but Christ is the foundation thereof only).

Reverend sir, whom I own I love, think what you will. I have troubled you with this long blundering scribble that ye may see still clearer into poor Coats.² That so we may not have to talk in such a manner before others, but betwixt you and me. Not that I am afraid. For if I dare venture on Mr. Wesley, who am so far inferior, even as a poor weak child to a giant, I dare say you do not think I will be cowed with the rest and hold no point, sir, I am ashamed of. For I hold it before Jesus Christ, my God and Saviour and Judge; and will I be ashamed of it before a worm of earth? Precious Christ strengthening me, I will not. Ye may remember I honestly told you my sentiment last Conference as far as was asked—that I believe perseverance in grace was: 1) the privilege of every truly justified believer; 2) his absolute and indispensable duty while he lived. Let us never separate the end from the means. When God does, we have no business with that. But you nor I cannot expect this, sir.

Ye say I must preach no doctrine contrary to yours. Reverend sir, I look at this. St Paul, the inspired apostle and one of the special ambassadors of Christ and holy penmen of the holy Scriptures could say so, or let them be cursed who did. But who since all the apostles were gone? Only suffer me to speak the truth as I believe by the grace of Christ it is the truth in him, according to his clear written Word—my only book, rule, and delight too (glory be to God)—and according to that sound conscience he has been graciously pleased to give me, and ((God helping)³ me) I will labour with you and among your people, whom I love with heart and hand. But among your perfect folk (precious souls) I have not a deal of encouragement. O may you direct and determine both you and me to think, speak, and act to his glory alone while we breath, and to love one another. I am willing and determined in strength divine to act with all the love, forbearance, and moderation [that] God shall, or may, be pleased to give, provided I can keep to his only Word and preserve a good conscience.

Reverend sir,

Yours in the Lord, to serve you to his glory, while I am worthless,

Alexander Coats⁴

Address: 'To Rev Mr John Wesley'.

Endorsement: by JW, 'ad 16'.

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/610/42.

²Orig, 'Couts'.

³A small portion of the letter has been torn off here, at one of the fold lines. The likely text is reconstructed.

⁴He spells the last name 'Couts'.

From James Morgan¹

London
July 20, 1761

Dearly Beloved Sir,

The best and most material news I have is that the kingdom of our Lord is coming daily with more and more power. Indeed, 'Jesus doth bless, and believers increase.' Our meetings are generally full and solemn. I lately prevailed with Mr. [James] Neale (he desires to be remembered to you in all love and respect) to supply one of the chapels on a Sunday, and indeed the power of the Lord was with him at West Street yesterday fortnight. He stayed till Thursday, when, at his request, I returned with him to Henley and preached to his few people there.² At my return I spent two days at Brentford, where, I may speak it to the glory of God, that he was present of a truth, while without mentioning any person, I exhorted them to mutual love and exact discipline.

Though I endeavour to preach daily, it is often with very great difficulty. Speaking becomes more and more labourious to me. My stomach and digestion are so bad that the physical gentlemen³ (some of whom seem concerned for me), without my application, say if I preach above twice a week I shall shortly preach none at all. I praise God I am not over careful about that matter. Frequently

Th' immortal principle aspires,
And swells my soul with strong desires,
To grasp the starry crown.⁴

They have had no preaching at Canterbury for several weeks, and are therefore quite uneasy. I have letters weekly from them, but hitherto we do not help them. But as brother Jones comes to town this week, I think to be there by next Lord's day, and so to continue till I hear from you.

Your presence is wished and prayed for in town. O that it may be in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel! More than can be expressed, is earnestly desired for you, by, dearest sir,

Your ever affectionate, etc.,

James Morgan

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 21 (1798): 491–92.

¹James Morgan (1736–74) became one of JW's travelling lay preachers in 1755. By 1766 ill health led him to settle in Dublin. See Atmore, *Memorial*, 281–86.

²Rev. James Neale (1712–92), a graduate of Pembroke College, Cambridge (M.A. 1746), was Master of Henley-on-Thames Free Grammar School (1747–62) and curate in Bix, Oxfordshire (where he was known as sympathetic to Methodists). In later years he was curate of Aldboure, 1783–89.

³I.e., those who give medical advice or 'physic'.

⁴CW, Hymn 163, st. 2, *HSP* (1749), 1:267.

From Mr. J. D.

[London]
July 23, 1761

Reverend Sir,

I had convictions from five years old, and many sweet drawings from God as my years increased. But it was on Nov. 5, 1756 that, by hearing a sermon of Mr. [George] Whitefield's, I was awakened to see my lost estate and began earnestly to seek for redemption. My convictions increased by hearing Mr. Charles Wesley, and I was quite miserable for want of Christ, till he preached Sept. 29, 1757 on those words, 'I will not let thee go except thou bless me.'¹ That very day, after I had long wrestled with God in prayer, about ten in the evening, as I was on my knees, God manifested his love and enabled me to believe in Christ. About ten days after, God gave me a clearer witness of my pardon. And about a fortnight after that, as I was at prayer, God did indeed fill my soul with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

I was carried on thus for about a twelvemonth, being almost a stranger to sin and temptation. In the year 1759 I heard deliverance from sin preached. But it was not become burdensome to *me*, to make me heartily wish for that deliverance. I came by degrees to see my want of a new heart, though not how it was to be attained. At times my corruptions were very grievous to me. Though from the time of my being justified, I never lost my sense of the favour of God for more than twenty four hours. Mr. [John] Berridge's preaching helped me much. At the love feast, after he had declared his experience, several of our brethren declared theirs and clearly pointed out the way to full salvation. My soul was broken in pieces. I went home as fast as I could and sought a place to vent my tears and cries, and resolved I would never leave the Lord till he gave me a clean heart. I saw that all I wanted was faith, and this I trusted God would give me. One night as two or three of us were praying together the power of God came so upon me that all my strength was taken away, and I seemed like a woman in travail. And many promises were applied to my soul, but I let them go again.

The last sermon you preached before you went out of town was a great blessing to me.² The Lord again brought the promises very nigh, yet I could not hold them fast. On Monday morning I felt inward sin tear me like a lion. I went out of my house, angry with my wife, and groaned before the Lord. While I was gone she wrestled with God in prayer, with many tears, and opened the *Golden Treasury* on those words, "Weep not. Behold the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of Jesse hath prevailed." He rose triumphantly and destroyed the work of the devil. Therefore sin shall not have dominion over you.³ Immediately her tears were turned into tears of joy. When I came home she showed me the words. God applied them to my soul also, and melted it into love. Now said I, let us go to prayer that God would remove this bent to backsliding from us. God again brought the promises very nigh, but I could not hold them. While I was on my knees, it came into my mind to go to Mr. [Joseph] Guilford's and pray with him. I ran away immediately. But in the way I was sorely tempted with blasphemous thoughts. I found him and his wife, and two more with them that the Lord has blest there. I told him freely the cause of my coming. He began wrestling with God in prayer for me. Quickly the power of God came upon me, so that I expected to swoon away every moment. Yet I felt I could not believe. My soul was in such an agony as cannot be described, while we all prayed by turns for three hours. Many promises now came into my mind—but with many temptations, doubts, and fears, and innumerable reasons continually suggested why I should not take them to myself. At last I resolved at all hazards to believe, and rose from prayer easy and happy. I came home much composed, and all night the Lord comforted me. I told my wife, who was very happy too, I knew God had changed me and I believed he had taken away the heart of stone. The

¹Gen. 32:26.

²This would be on Sunday, Mar. 8, 1761.

³Carl Heinrich von Bogatzky, *A Golden Treasury for the Children of God ... consisting of select texts of the Bible* (London: A. Linde, 1754), 274, quoting Rev. 5:5.

next day Mr. Biggs came to see us. We prayed together, and such a spirit of prayer was given me, with such boldness of faith, as I never experienced before. My wife was now enabled clearly to believe, so we praised God together. O what ecstasies of love did my soul experience! My first love, in my justification, (which I then thought nothing could exceed) was little compared to this. I was every moment in the dust before the Lord, and did indeed enjoy heaven upon earth. Yet I soon found there is no state on this side the grave exempted from suffering. I wrestled (not indeed against flesh and blood, but) against principalities and powers. And many times my soul has been sorely distressed by the wiles of Satan, so that for a time I knew not where I was nor what state I was in. Many times I have been on the very point of giving all over for lost, till the Lord again spoke in my soul and answered for himself.

I find at present I have, as it were, every thing to learn. I feel myself to be nothing, yea less than nothing in the presence of God. Every day I come infinitely short of what I ought to be. I am astonished at the goodness of God to me! Methinks I am all imperfections. But glory be to my Lord, I am a stranger to guilt. His precious blood is upon me every moment. I am now learning to live the life of faith, and indeed it is a delightful lesson.

Whether I am wholly saved from sin or no, that I cannot determine. But I am from all guilt, and so is my wife. Yet how foolish am I! how weak! how blind! O pray for me that my faith fail not, and that I may endure to the end! I am, reverend sir,

Yours, etc.,

J. D.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 279–82.

William Grimshaw

[Haworth]
July 23, 1761

[After apologizing for missing Conference at Leeds, wrote] The disappointment is more my own loss than yours, for there are several things that have for some time been matter of so much uneasiness to me that I thought, could they not at this time be somehow accommodated, I should be obliged to recede from the connexion; which to do, would have been one of the most disagreeable things in the world to me. I would fain live and die in this happy relation I have for many years borne, and still bear with you.

Two of the most material points were concerning *imputed righteousness* and *Christian perfection*. But as to the former, what you declared to be your notion of it at Heptonstal is so near mine that I am well satisfied. And as to the latter, your resolutions in Conference are such, if John Emmot informs me right, as seem to afford me sufficient satisfaction.

There are other matters more, but to me not of equal importance, to which notwithstanding I cannot be reconciled. Such as asserting: 'A child of God to be again a child of the devil, if he give way to a temptation.' [or] 'That he is a child of the devil who disbelieves the doctrine of sinless perfection.' [or] 'That he is no true Christian who has not attained to it.' etc. These are assertions very common with some of our preachers, though in my apprehension too absurd and ridiculous to be regarded, and therefore no means of equal importance with what is above said. And yet [they] have a tendency, as the effect has already shown, to distract and divide our societies. You will perhaps say, 'Why did you not admonish them? Why did you not endeavour to convince them of the error of such absurd assertions?' In some degree I have, though perhaps not so fully or freely as I ought, or could have wished to have done. For I feared to be charged by them, perhaps secretly by yourself, with opposing them or their doctrines. These things I mentioned to brother Lee,⁴ who declared, and I could not but believe him, that you did and would utterly reject any such expressions. I am therefore in these respects easy, and shall if such occasions require, as I wish they never may, reprove and prevent them with plainness and freedom.

'*Sinless perfection*' is a grating term to many of our dear brethren, even to those who are as desirous and solicitous to be truly holy in heart and life as any perhaps of them who affect to speak in this unscriptural way. Should we not discountenance the use of it, and advise its votaries to exchange it for terms less offensive but sufficiently expressive of true Christian holiness? By this I mean (and why may I not tell you what I mean?) all that holiness of heart and life which is *literally, plainly, abundantly*, taught us all over the Bible, and without which no man, however justified through faith in the *righteousness of Christ*, can ever expect to see the Lord. This is that holiness, that Christian perfection, that sanctification which, without affecting *strange, fulsome, offensive, unscriptural* expressions and representations I, and I dare say every true and sincere member in our societies, and I hope in all others, ardently desire and strenuously labour to attain. This is attainable—for this therefore let us contend. To this let us diligently exhort and excite all our brethren daily, and this the more as we see the day, the happy, the glorious day approaching.

I have only to add that I am determined through the help of God, so far as I know or see at present, to continue in close connexion with you, even unto death—and to be as useful as I am able or is consistent with my *parochial* and other indispensable obligations, chiefly in this round [circuit] and at times abroad; to strengthen your hands in the great and glorious work of our Lord, which you have evidently so much at heart, elaborately so much in hand, and in which he, blessed for ever be his name, has so extensively and wonderfully prospered you.

Source: published transcription; Whitehead, *Life*, 2:295–97.

⁴Thomas Lee (1727–86), a native of Yorkshire, was accepted as an itinerant preacher in 1758, having assisted William Grimshaw in his circuit for several years previously.

From Mrs. H. Clark¹

July 29, 1761

Reverend Sir,

Yours was a great blessing to me. Glory be to God! I find no fear of pain. Indeed the devil will bring the time to my mind. But I cry to my God, 'What have I to do with it? Thou hast promised to be with me, and give me strength according to my day.' I do not find anything that hinders my waiting upon God. It is my soul's delight to come unto him, believing that he will give me what he sees is good for me. My Patty uses more prayer than ever, but she says she does not love God so well as she did. She desires that you will pay for her, for she always prays for you. Brother Palmy is gone to live at Brentford. God grant we may never go but where we are sent, nor speak but when we are called thereto! Dear sir, pray for me, for I know nothing yet as I ought to know. Only this I know (glory be to his name!), that he has saved me from sin. Yet, what I have received is not for me to trust in, but I am to grow up into him my living Head every day. And this is the desire of my soul, that my every breath may breathe his praise. O may the Lord fill you with all his fullness!

I am, reverend sir,

The unworthiest of all my father's children,

H. C—K

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 166–67.

¹Only the first and last letters of the last name are given in the printed form, but JW gives the full name in manuscript in his personal copy of *AM*.

From Mrs. W.

[London]
July 30, 1761

Dear Sir,

Mr. [James] Morgan thinks Mr. [James] Neale is a proper person to board my son with.¹ But I was willing to see the family first. So I set out in the stage for Henley, and took a post-chaise for the last ten miles. But the man, being drunk, drove full gallop down Henley hill and overset the chaise with such violence that it was dashed in pieces. I was taken out with my flesh full of bruises and my soul full of the spirit of my God.

The hay-makers (who took me out) wondering I was alive, I began to tell them how good Jesus was. In this manner I crept over the bridge with a train of people, all of whom I exhorted to praise God.

Mr. Neale took tender care of me. The next day I was enabled to return home, Jesus all the time shining upon my soul. O it is sweet to suffer with Christ! I would not have missed one pain for any earthly joy. I must be a Christian indeed. I feel nothing less than the whole mind that is in Jesus will satisfy my soul. But I find I can be nothing that is good but what the Lord makes me from moment to moment. I dare not think of taking a step without looking to him. What a mercy is it that he careth for me?²

I remain,

Your humble servant,

M. W.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 109.

¹I.e., James Neale, Master of the Free Grammar School at Henley-on-Thames.

²JW adds the note in *AM*: 'I can no more doubt of her really experiencing what she then wrote than I can doubt of her vilely casting it away.' Cf. the footnote he added to the letter of Mary Bosanquet dated Apr. 16, 1761.

'A. B.' to the Printer of the *Leedes Intelligencer*

c. August 3, 1761

Dear Sir,

I was a little surprised to find Mr. Wesley intimating in your *Intelligencer* on the 21st ult. that no notice had been taken in the public papers of the shock of an earthquake at Shaftesbury. 'Tis true I have seen nothing of it in the newspapers, for it is by mere chance if I see any but your weekly *Intelligencer*; but I find an account of it in the London magazine for June,¹ which I suppose was taken from some of the periodical papers. Mr. Wesley's account is indeed much more particular and circumstantial than the other, for which the public is obliged to him.

But I could have wished that Mr. Wesley would have seen the account in the magazine, for then he would scarce have missed sight of the preceding article, which might have been no less alarming to him, as it is to others, than the shock of an earthquake. It is a letter found near Haverhill in Suffolk, directed to Mr. George Carter, threatening him and others charged with 'opposing the gorspel being preached, if they persist in such opposition, to vent it on their parsons or houses, boasting of numbers persuaded of the goodness of their cause and determined to stand by one another and setting mallis at defians. Signed for the rest, your friendly Monitor, five hundred, or the Gorspel Legion.'²

Now whether this new method of furthering the 'gorspel', as it is called, be adopted by some of Mr. Wesley's spirited missionaries, or by some renegades from his party, or by some who (fired with emulation) have set up for themselves on a quite fresh plan, he will, in the eye of the world, be generally looked upon as more or less partaker of the sin, if it be a sin; and therefore, as he regards the opinion of mankind, will think it incumbent upon him to vindicate or disclaim the practice; and if he judges it wrong, as I hope and believe he will, to exert his best endeavours to suppress it. His warmest adherents, however well disposed some of them may be to enter into so promising a scheme, will hardly venture openly to justify it without the sanction of his opinion. And they who have blamed his past conduct will be apt to interpret his silence on such an occasion as an approbation of so uncommon a proceeding. This I think a more interesting affair to Mr. Wesley than the shock of an earthquake, and therefore I am in hope he will not take it as an unfriendly part to be acquainted with it in this manner, especially as no other so expeditious and effectual a way of acquainting him with it occurred to, sir,

Your humble servant,

A. B.

Source: published transcription; *Leedes Intelligencer* (Aug. 4, 1761), p. 3.

¹There is no account of the earthquake near Shaftesbury in the June issue of *London Magazine*; 'A. B.' is surely referring instead to the *London Gazette*.

²'A. B.' has reproduced the misspellings of the original, so they are retained here. The full text of the supposed letter (taken from the *London Gazette*, June 6–9, 1761, p. 3) reads:

Mr. Carter

Bumstead

On the receipt of this goo and tell Hemsted Pickett and Milleway and all the resst of your Heaverill gang of the bandity that so vilinously oppoose the gorspel being preeched that if we meet with any more affronts or abuse when we come again as we intend to doo on the 17th instant we are resolved to reveng itt on your parssons or houses for as we have lifted up under the banner of Christ we are on and all determin'd to stand by on another[;] our number is larg and our caus good therefor we sett all your mallis att defians[.] Don't say you had no notis or worning for wee are so prepar'd that we fear you not therefor tak care what you doo[.] I am order'd by my brethren in the Lord to sighne for the rest

your friendly Moneter Five Hundred

or the Gorspel Legion.

From Ruth (Crowther) Hall

[York]

August 4, 1761

Dear Sir,

You ask, Whether I pray, 'Forgive me my trespasses, as I forgive them that trespass against me.'¹ I scarce find that any do trespass against *me*. But I continually say, 'Lord, I know nothing by myself, but do thou forgive whatever thy pure eye seeth amiss.' And I hope I do grow in the knowledge and love of God, though not so sensibly as I desire.

You enquire concerning my dreams. Blessed be God, they are sanctified. I do not always dream. But when I do, I feel much the same as when I am awake. I am still thinking, or saying, or doing something for God and eternity. And I often find the real teaching of God's Spirit in dreams. Sometimes the devil would put a cheat upon me. But I fly to the law and the testimony.²

I will gladly embrace every opportunity of writing, as long as I have breath, by the grace of God. I am, dear sir,

Your affectionate sister,

Ruth Hall

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 610–11.

¹As in the Lord's Prayer; cf. Matt. 6:12.

²Cf. Isa. 8:20.

From Alexander Coats

Haworth
September 29, 1761

Reverend Sir,

Whom I can say I love in and for the dear Lord Jesus's sake, and do sincerely pray he may love and bless you forever.

I met with three of my brethren who were at the Conference—viz., brothers Johnston, Thourson, and Cattloe¹—by whom I was informed you received letters from several saying that since you and I parted I had been more bitter in preaching up doctrine quite contrary to those received and taught by my brethren than ever. And as a proof of your both receiving and believing such an information they presented me your letter, by which I was convinced you had both received and believed it. Nor did I think that ye would take much notice of any thing I could say to the contrary in my own defence, thinking ye would (no doubt) credit those who wrote better than you would do me. I therefore desired brother Johnston to write some few words, which he obliged me to dictate, and to do what he thought fit, which he promised to do. Nor do I doubt but he hath done. But upon second thoughts I judged it necessary and my duty to write once more with my own hand, and from my own heart, also.

And therefore permit me, reverend sir, to use freedom and deal plainly with and declare plainly the whole truth before God unto you. As I believe serious reflection and self-examination absolutely necessary and (if I may say so) very efficacious of true religion or practical religion and godliness, so I began (though lately indeed) to reflect and examine the whole of my past conduct before God and men only since God the second time quickened and convinced and spoke peace to my soul. For he was first pleased to do so when I was very young, and even then did he hold me for some years under strong conviction and at last one day at a sermon of a godly minister spoke peace to my soul (I now know). But I concealed the whole from either my parents or any other. And thinking now the flames^[?] were all pretty well over, and rejoicing at this (I dare not say rejoicing in Christ only!) for the mercy, I then set out in company of young people, and women also, and soon fell asleep in security—I may say in the arms of sin and the devil! And there [I] lay (but not without many challenges of conscience) for near twenty-four years! But then the Lord (O amazing, longsuffering patience and infinite mercy) struck home indeed, without the instrumentality of any man or any means known to me (O amazing love!). How wonderful are his counsels.

I say to examine myself especially since that time, and more particularly since I set out in preaching. And now I do declare plainly before the dear and great Lord Jesus that I think I am only to begin and set out yet after true practical godliness (I dare not challenge my principles). And though upon examination finding them good, yet I now believe that cursed self and cursed pride (which I now see are born brothers) have intimated themselves often into the form and manner of my preaching. I am now persuaded that, be the matter of our preaching ever so good, yet self may be the root and bottom of all; that the thing done may be materially good in itself as to the matter of it and yet not truly done with a single eye to the glory of Jesus as to the manner of it.

For even upon examination to the utmost of my power finding the matter good, and acknowledging it was my indispensable duty to believe, meantime and precisely according to this truth I have been exceedingly tenacious and dogmatical—even in very circumstances, as well as in essentials. And therefore with respect to those points I dares not receive, I have indeed fired with fury sometimes. Drawing a conclusion from these premises, and judging it my duty, I sometimes fired hard and thought it was fire from heaven. But I now see, at least I think, that a great deal of the flame was from me—in plain words, from the deceitful fire, the cursed *Ignis fatus*² of self and pride. Even though I had and still have a zeal for the truth of God, yet I think my zeal was not duly tempered. This the Lord has convinced me of,

¹The last named would be Jonathan Catlow; the other two are unclear.

²Vicious fires.

nor do I think it was in the power of any man born to have done it. And I was the more prompt to this fiery zeal by the conduct of those who differed from me, which indeed was not as I wish they had been or may be. But here I will not impeach any. One thing is clear, opposition begets opposition.

There might be faults on both sides. I know I was not free. (God free us both.) Yea, and I am now convinced that I have sometimes been too severe, but too facetious also many times in speaking of many things. And also when I have thought I have seen and heard and met with many things contrary (as I thought) to the profession people made, I have been hardly beset with evil thinking—a very devil in some disguise. Only (hast thou not reason) O precious Christ for thy great name's, merit's, and mercy's sake avenge me of this crew that hath so stole in upon me; for in thy name and depending only on thine own gracious assistance and acceptance, I declare an eternal war against all these damned deceitful imps of hell (O help me, my God!). God help me to consider this, as a crucified Jesus ought surely to be the principal subject of our discourses, even so this surely ought to be done with a crucified soul and life, and a crucified style! Amen Lord Jesus.

On the whole, reverend sir, as I dealt plainly in writing before to you (though not without some invective perhaps, though I dare not say I saw it), even so I do now. And if my Lord tells me more yet, I will in his name declare it. I had before my last awakening been [a] hypocrite far too long; in strength divine, I never will more. I am determined in the strength of Jesus to preach him as far as he enables me to know him, in all his glorious threefold offices. And I am determined in his name to deal with those who may differ from me with all that wisdom, love, tenderness, and moderation that precious Christ shall be pleased to bestow upon me, worthless me. As for those who speak of higher attainments than I yet know, if they will but be loving (and I could heartily wish leave off disputing and forcing one to say something) I am determined to let them alone. And I dare say, since they have begun some of this, I can put them in my heart. So that, except they do me the height of injustice, they cannot say but that I have been more moderate the last few weeks I was in Birstall round than ever they heard me before, though some told me they believed I was come to stop the progress of the work of God, which I thought was a terrible word. But glory to God, to him I could appeal.

Reverend sir, I do not deal thus plainly in order to force myself upon you. I am in the very mind with respect to staying in the connection I was when I wrote to and spoke to you—that except you send me away, or that I am so used that I cannot stay among the people whom I love, then shall no man have me, however worthless I be, and I think plainly there is none so [worthless]. O God give me power while I breathe constantly to watch and pray and trust in precious Christ Jesus only—according to the full meaning of each expression. If ye will judge it fit (and I pray God direct you) to intimate your mind to me once more in a letter, I desire particularly to wait for it. And I hope I will see the mind and will of God in determining both you and me what we ought to do in this matter, for I dare not stir one step except I can in a measure see the will of precious Christ in it, especially in a matter of such moment and importance as I think this is. O precious Christ direct us. For I am not willing to go away from your connection, sir; that I neither dare nor will deny.

I have now told you the truth of my heart as far as I know my heart. And I humbly hope you will be plain and explicit to me, and as soon as you conveniently can after receiving this. And I beseech you, reverend sir, pardon my prolificacy, for I write on just as it comes and could not help it. Had I time to write it over again, I could contain the whole (I think) in less room than the one half to you (and some words are interlined with a cross mark after the word interlined and in the place of where it should have been).

I am, reverend sir, with humility,
Yours in the Lord Jesus Christ, while I am

Alexander Coats³

³He spells the last name 'Couts'.

Address: 'To the Rev Mr John Wesley / at the Foundry near upper Moorfields / London'.

Postmark: 'OC/5'.

Endorsement: by JW, 'ad. Oct. 10'.

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/610/43.

From Hannah Harrison¹

September 30, 1761

Reverend Sir,

On September 14, 1750 I heard Mr. [Samuel] Larwood preach at Acomb. By this means my understanding was something enlightened. In November I was convinced of unbelief. I continued seeking the Lord till May 22, 1752, when after hearing a sermon on the almost Christian,² I went home in utter despair. I attempted to pray, but could not. I then cried out in anguish of spirit, 'What must I do?' When to my great surprise I felt those words applied, 'Believe and thou shalt be saved.' Immediately I was filled with love and peace. But my simple heart was soon beguiled. For being ignorant of Satan's devices, I was drawn into a snare of which I had not once thought myself in danger. My old tempers began to revive, and gained such advantage over me that I not only lost my love and joy, but even my confidence in God. Yet I was preserved through fire and water till the year 1755, when I heard of some who professed to be saved from sin. One of these being my intimate friend, I undertook to convince him of his mistake. But he convinced *me*, and I began with all diligence to fight against all sin. This I continued till September 1758. I then gave up the contest, having lost all hope, and being worn out with fatigue both of body and mind. I fell asleep one night under painful apprehensions of waking in hell, not from a sense of the wrath of God, but from a deep sense of my unfitness for the kingdom of heaven. I awoke in the morning with those words, 'I have set thee as a seal upon my arm.'³ I could then, and not till then, rejoice in hope. And from this time I could sensibly feel grace conquer sin, till my soul was emptied of every thing contrary to love. I could no longer resist the will of God, but solemnly gave myself up to him. Yet for some time all the evidence I could produce arose from the nature of the change. But all this time I found the want of a clear and *direct* witness. For although I was *rationally* persuaded the work was done, yet being liable to many suggestions of the enemy, a kind of heaviness which I could not avoid often fell upon my mind. Whereupon I cried to God for a *direct* witness, which I received about Feb. 1759. And this I have never lost, but can acknowledge, to the glory of God, it is as clear now as at the first. I know not how to describe the difference between the witness and the work itself. But this I know, many in whom we believe the work is wrought are often in doubt concerning it; whereas the testimony of the Spirit enables the soul to rise superior to these doubtful disputations which sometimes hinder the progress of those who are really saved from sin.

I am, reverend sir,

Yours affectionately,

H. H—n

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 282–83.

¹Hannah Harrison (born c. 1734) was the daughter of Ebenezer Harrison of York, one of the earliest circuit stewards. The Harrisons had been members of the Presbyterian church until her mother died. At age thirteen Hannah was seized with severe pains in her head that left her totally blind. This letter describes how Hannah and her father came under Methodist influence. See John Lyth, *Glimpses of Methodism in York* (York: W. Sessions, 1885), 64–69.

²Cf. Acts 26:28.

³Cf. Song of Sol. 8:6.

From J. J.

[Leeds?]
October 31, 1761

Mr. Samuel Massey lived at Seacroft, near Leeds. He was a great bigot to the Church [of England], and an utter enemy to the Methodists. He heard indeed Mr. Charles Wesley preach one sermon, but did not receive any benefit from it. But God, who is rich in mercy, was afterwards pleased to convince and convert him without any outward means.

As soon as he was converted (being about eighty years of age) he joined the society, and rejoiced exceedingly for a short time. Soon after he was sorely tried, being urged to think he and all that would be saved must leave the Church [of England]. But by conversing with a friend upon that subject he was reconciled, and he continued to go to the Church the remainder of his life. Afterwards he was very happy for about two years, and then believed he had a clean heart.

For four years he was opposed almost by everyone he conversed with. But he said it did not make him unhappy whether they believed him or not, although he felt himself grieved on their account.

The last three years of his life hardly anyone doubted of his testimony. September 20 he went to church as usual. In the time of the service he was overcome with sleep in a very uncommon manner. On Monday he went to see some of the society, but in returning home he fell down and hurt his arm. However he got, as well as he could, to his own house. Yet he had no one there to help him. For after his wife died, he would not have any woman of the society as a servant, lest anyone should be offended. Nor would he have any of the world, because he could not bear their ways. On Tuesday one of the society went to see him, and found him drowsy and almost deprived of his reason. So he continued the following day, and only for about two hours every morning he had his reason perfectly well. All his conversation then was about the perfect love of God, exhorting all about him to seek it. When any came that was unawakened, he often repeated those words,

We want we know not what,
We want our wants to see,
We want, alas! what want I not,
When thou art not in me!¹

It was all one to him to live or die. When he was asked if he was ready to die his answer was, 'Yes, love, I am.' On Sunday morning all his drowsiness left him and he made his will, his memory being as well as ever. When he was asked what he owed, he told them every particular, and also what was owing to him. One of our friends asking him if he would leave the Bible for the use of the desk, in the preaching-house, as he had promised, he said, 'Yes, love, and blessed be God it is all written on my heart.'

He said, 'O the enemy! O the enemy! It is his last onset, but he has no place in me'; and in the afternoon he went to God.²

J. J.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 301–03.

¹Cf. CW, 'A Poor Sinner', st.7, *HSP* (1742): 148.

²Samuel Massey was buried at St. Mary's Church, Whitkirk (near Leeds) on Sept. 29, 1761.

From the Rev. George Whitefield

Newbattle, Edin[burgh]¹
November 11, 1761

Through divine mercy, here I am. Travelling thus far hath agreed with me. Four of the most eminent physicians have had a consultation.² They think my case reversible, and have advised exercise, mustard seed, and some other medicines. The event must be left to him who orders all things well. Silence is the painful thing. But even in this the Redeemer gives me to acquiesce. I spoke a little at Leeds and Newcastle, and once at Edinburgh in a private room. If I go to Glasgow, perhaps I may be honoured to speak a little more. May you my dear sir never be stopped till you breathe your last! I am extremely obliged to those that have enquired after me for their sympathy and love. 'Less than the least of all' must be my motto still. O for a full enjoyment of my God! Come Lord Jesus, come quickly! You and yours will continue to pray for me. As the Redeemer enables, you shall not be forgotten by, reverend sir,

Yours,

G. W.

Endorsement: by JW, 'Mr. Whitefield Nov. 11 1761 / ad. [Nov.] 24'.

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/610/132.

¹Newbattle was a small village about seven miles from Edinburgh.

²Whitefield had been struggling with exhaustion for months.

From Hannah Harrison

December 28, 1761

Reverend Sir,

I neither have, nor desire to have a witness that 'sin never will enter more'. My everlasting life depends upon patiently continuing in well-doing. I have learnt to *count it all joy*, when I fall into divers temptations.¹ But I am neither preserved in, nor delivered out of, temptation without using every means. I should be sorry to let a sentence escape me without examining what is my end in speaking? Without this, when by more light I am made sensible such things might have been done or said better, I should feel great trouble, if not condemnation. I feel great love to Jesus Christ. But when I think of God the Father, I can find nothing but boundless inconceivables. Many unnecessary things are presented to my imagination. But as soon as they appear to be such, I can as easily dismiss them as I can move my hand. I am now looking for the power to follow that excellent advice:

Let all your gestures fixt attention draw,
And wide diffuse on all infectious awe.
Present with God by recollection seem,
Yet present by your cheerfulness with them.²

I am

Yours, etc.,

H. H—n

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 390–91.

¹Cf. James 1:2.

²Cf. John Gambold, 'Religious Discourse', st. 7, in Wesley, *HSP* (1739), 60.

From Thomas Maxfield¹

[London]
December 28, 1761

I have considered the thing, since you spoke to me about meeting at Mrs. [Jane C.] March's. And I don't think to be there, or to meet them at any time. It is enough that I was arraigned at the Conference. (At which I earnestly defended him and silenced all his accusers.²) I am not convinced that it is my duty to make James Morgan, etc., my judges. If you, sir, or any one of them, have anything to say to me *alone*, I will answer as far as I see good.

Source: published transcription; JW, *Journal*, Feb. 5, 1763 (*Works*, 21:404).

¹JW reprinted this letter in his *Journal* on Feb. 5, 1763, writing: 'I now seriously considered whether it was in my power to have prevented this [the current controversy among London Methodists over Christian perfection]. I did not see that it was; for though I had heard from time to time many objections to Mr. Maxfield's conduct, there was no possibility of clearing them up. Above a year ago, I desired him to meet me with some that accused him, that I might hear them face to face. But his answer was as follows:'

²This is JW's insertion.

From Thomas Maxfield¹

[London]
January 14, 1762

If you call me proud or humble, angry or meek, it seems to sit much the same on my heart. If you call me John or Judas, Moses or Korah, I am content. As to a separation, I have no such thought; if you have, and now (as it were) squeeze blood out of a stone, be it to yourself.

Source: published transcription; JW, *Journal*, Feb. 5, 1763 (*Works*, 21:404).

¹Continuing in his *Journal* for Feb. 5, 1763, JW writes: 'The next month I wrote him a long letter, telling him mildly all I heard or feared concerning him. He took it as a deep affront and in consequence thereof wrote as follows:'

From Hannah Harrison

January 20, 1762

Reverend Sir,

I am far from believing that looking back upon an hour's conversation to be loss of time. Beside the spirit of judgment which I continually exercise, I have many solemn seasons of examination, in which I discover many things which might have been said or done much more to the purpose. My reason for this exercise, is I know I am very liable to deviate from the path in which, by grace, I am enabled to walk. Were I incapable of this, I too might possibly imagine seasons of self-examination to be useless.

I have a hope full of immortality, which is as an anchor, both sure and steadfast. 'Tis long since I had the shadow of a doubt of my final acceptance with God. But yet I cannot say that I am sealed to the day of redemption.

I am not sensible of any decay in the love of God; and 'tis the delight of my soul to keep his commandments. My happiness is augmented or impaired as the cause of God prospers or not.

Though I am possessed of every natural passion, 'tis long since I felt a desire inordinate either in kind or degree. It is the chief desire of my heart to improve what I have received, till all the faculties of my soul are not only *regulated* but *strengthened* and *confirmed*.

I am

Yours, etc.,

H. H—n

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 391–92.

From Lawrence Coughlan¹

January 26, 1762

Reverend Sir,

I bless God, I do hold fast whereunto I have attained. Christ is all and in all to my soul. In all his works my God I see, the object of my love. Two or three years ago you wrote the following words with a diamond pencil on a window in Whitehaven, 'God is here.' Those words have often since been made a great blessing to my soul. I am often so filled with gratitude and love that I can only let silence speak his praise.² Sometimes it is drawn out in sweet, holy mourning for those who are as sheep without a shepherd. At other times, God shows me what a poor, helpless creature I am. And the sense of this always abides with me, so that I am often amazed at my own ignorance. And whatever good I feel or do, I can truly say, it is the Lord. I now hear a voice say, 'In a few years thou wilt turn out worse than ever.' But blessed be God, I hear and follow *his* voice. Therefore I take no thought for the morrow. This day is put into my hands, and I have only to make the best of it.

I have need to watch against my own will. But is there not what we may call an *innocent* will? For instance, I *will* to be at London, from this motive only, that I may hear more of the praise of God. So I choose or refuse this or that kind of food, that I may be more fit to serve God. But I am not uneasy about it. If I was, I apprehend it would be a sinful will. No, I am entirely resigned, knowing God will cause all things to work together for good.

I remain, reverend sir,
Yours, etc.,

Lawrence Coughlan

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 336–37.

¹Lawrence Coughlan (d. 1784), an Irish Roman Catholic convert to Methodism, was an itinerant preacher by 1758. In 1764, shortly after JW supported the ordination of John Jones by Erasmus of Arcadia, Coughlan (perhaps encouraged by Thomas Maxfield) sought and received ordination by the same hand, without JW's knowledge or approval. When opposition to Coughlan fulfilling the priestly role in JW's chapels based on this ordination arose, he stepped out of the connexion and established a dissenting meeting house in Bermondsey, Surrey. Here he was contacted by a group of Anglicans and Congregationalists in Conception Bay, Newfoundland about coming as their minister. To enable this, Edmund Keene, Bishop of Chester ordained Coughlan properly in Apr. 1766 and he was sent as a SPCK missionary to Conception Bay, serving 1767–73. On return to England, Coughlan served in Lady Huntingdon's connexion until his death. See Atmore, Memorial, 80–83; DEB, 258–59; and Vickers, Dictionary, 80.

²The phrase 'let silence speak his praise' appears to have emerged recently in Methodist settings. Cf. two uses in letters in *A Collection of Letters, on Sacred Subjects* (Sheffield: Ward, 1761), 12, 38.

From Samuel Furly¹

[Kippax]
[c. February 1,] 1762

Your favouring me with so speedy an answer to my letter, and indulging me with so many² more lines than usual gave me a real pleasure, as affording me an agreeable evidence of the continuance of your friendship; which perhaps I desire with too much earnestness, at to which possibly I may be attached with undue eagerness of temper. For it must certainly be allowed that nothing but the love and grace of God ought either to be coveted or esteemed but within the proper limits of just moderation. You cannot, however, if you give credit to what I now say, have the least ground to imagine that in a year or two I should as much forget as if I never knew you. But yet give me leave to say, you have had no reason for such an apprehension.³

'Trampling on, etc.', or counting it a needless thing, is what I term unscriptural blasphemy; and surely not without sufficient reason. Those who do this can be looked upon in no other light, whatever their pretense may be, than as given up to such a delusion as will land their souls in everlasting darkness. And suffer me, dear sir, to say if you do not take the utmost care to prevent this, I fear you will not give up your account with joy. Whatever I have said relating to this point is what I have heard with my own ears, and not received upon the report of any man. Nor in this matter ought allowances to be made for human infirmities. It is a crime of the deepest dye. Here I cannot help making one observance, obvious to every considerate mind: that those who can slight the blood of their Redeemer will not long retain a due reverence for you, their teacher. You may probably live to see this from those whom you have taught to look upon themselves as perfect, in a manner you little expect. Methinks I see a storm blowing up from a certain quarter that will be discharged with all the marks of uncontrollable impetuosity, and burst upon your own head. Perfection, which now tramples on the blood of God's eternal Son, will then make its appearance with all the signs of Satan's contrivance, introducing confusion, rage, and devastation among the people of the Lord.

Source: MARC, MAM JW 3/20 (on leaf of letter from John Wesley, dated Jan. 25, 1762).

¹This is likely a draft, or possibly a transcription, of Furly's reply to JW's letter of Jan. 25, 1762. It is written on an unused portion of that letter. There are no known comparative materials to confirm that it is Furly's hand, but it is certainly the content of his response.

²Orig., 'speedy'.

³This paragraph actually follows the next in Furly's draft, but he begins it with '(first part)'. It is moved to the top here to show the most likely form of the actual letter.

From Ruth (Crowther) Hall

[York]

February 1, 1762

Dear Sir,

Be not afraid that either men or devils should have been able to hurt my soul. The mighty power of God is over all things for good. I have the happiness to inform you it is well with me. I have gained a good deal of ground over my natural temper, and great comfort redounds to me thereby. The zeal of God's house does, as it were, eat me up. I am always fully employed. Time seems to be too short for me to do the great work that lies before me. God's commandments are exceeding broad, his holy law very extensive. And yet such is his goodness that to us it is no larger than the present capacity of the soul. O the length, and breadth, and depth, and height of the love of God in Christ Jesus! How few there are that live up to the light? Yet blessed be God, some do. And they know what it is to suffer with Christ, as well as for Christ. There are they that, being purified and tried, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament for ever.

For some time I have had an earnest desire to have such a testimony as Enoch had.¹ But I do not see whether God has promised such a *particular* testimony as extends to every thought, and word, and action. I shall be glad of your help, in this and whatever you see I need.

I am, dear sir,

Your affectionate sister,

Ruth Hall

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 662–63.

¹I.e., that 'he had pleased God' (Heb. 11:5).

From Erasmus Middleton¹

Horncastle
February 27, 1762

Reverend Sir,

I was convinced of sin last Good Friday, and from that day closely attended all the ordinances of God. In the middle of May I found a sense of his pardoning love, and continued full of love till I gave way to my constitutional sin, which caused me many a sorrowful hour. But for about three months last past I have found a great deliverance from it. The tenth of last month I went to hear the preaching at *autumn in the morning*. As I drew near to a place where I used to step and pray I found an uncommon backwardness, till on a sudden I was constrained to cry out vehemently, 'A clean heart, a clean heart, O God! I cannot rest in any thing short of the fullness of thy love.' And this continued, with many tears and violent sweats, to the end of my walk, which was about three quarters of a mile. I was obliged to stay some time at a distance from the house, before I could stop my cries and tears. I shall never forget how loath I was to leave heaven—for it was heaven indeed! No tongue or pen can express the sweets of the overflowing love of my dear Jesus. It appeared to me as if he held me by the hand, and presented me at the throne of grace to his Father, who smiled upon me and seemed willing to grant me whatever I could ask. I remained all the day full of love, though scarce expecting it to continue. But the next day likewise I found my soul as it were lost in God, through Christ. And sin with all its remains was quite gone. Nor had I any temptations for about a fortnight. Then Satan told me I had deceived myself. But my heart was staid upon the Lord, and I am continually borne up with that word, 'Resist the devil and he will flee from you.'²

O could I but tell you what the Lord has done for my soul! He has given me such a sight of my unworthiness that I appear to myself as a crawling insect! I feel no will of my own, but am continually crying out, 'Lord, not mine, but thy will be done!' I cannot express how I thirst after all righteousness. It is my constant prayer. And my meditation of it is sweet. The devil fights strongly. But Jesus keeps me at the inexhaustible fountain, and I am so filled with his love that my ravished soul can hardly help breaking out into ecstasy of joy, both when I am in company with our people and when at work. But I much want the advice of those that have more experience. For we are young and ignorant in this dark corner, and holiness and sanctification is a language little understood among us. So that when I have spoken any thing, I have generally met with a repulse rather than encouragement. Only one here is earnestly longing for it, and we often wrestle with God together. I hope you will bestow a line or two upon me, and pray to the Giver of all good gifts to bestow his wisdom upon

Your unworthy friend in Christ,

Erasmus Middleton

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 338–40.

¹Erasmus Middleton (1739–1805), born in Horncastle, Lancashire, recounts here his evangelical conversion. He would matriculate at St. Edmund Hall, Oxford in 1767, and be one of five students expelled in May 1768 for their public praying and preaching. He went on to a series of ministerial appointments among the Evangelical Anglicans, and played a prominent role in founding the Protestant Association.

²James 4:7.

From Thomas Rankin

Rye
March 8, 1762

Reverend Sir,

God is at work here in a wonderful manner. At first, many were much tempted against me for enforcing the rules of our society. But I found nothing but cutting to the quick would do. And now, glory be to God, there is such a work begun as I never was witness of in so short a time! At one meeting five received pardon, two at another, three at another, and four at another. At the love feast at Ewhurst, five declared God had cleansed their hearts from all sin. Some of these had found peace some months before; two of them, only a few days. Some more have found the same blessing since. At Rye five have received remission of sins, the rest are on the full stretch for God. One of those at Ewhurst who have found peace is the minister of the parish.

I am enabled to see the subtlety of the enemy at his very first approach, so that though he comes again and again, he gains no advantage over me. Indeed he harasses my body, but my soul is full of love and faith and the Holy Ghost. Often he suggests, 'What a meeting you have had now? Now you have done well!' But my Lord covers all his work with a veil, and points me to Jesus, and I am safe. I can every moment say, 'Not unto me, but unto thy name be the glory!'¹ Thou hast done it. If thou art pleased to make use of a ram's-horn still, thy will be done!

I am, reverend sir,

Your loving, but unworthy son in the gospel,

Thomas Rankin

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 218–19.

¹Cf. Ps. 115:1.

From Emma Moon¹

Potto
March 11, 1762

Dear Sir,

On May 3, 1757 one was speaking of two persons that were made perfect in love. While he spoke, God said to my heart, 'This is what thou wantest; without it thou canst not be happy.' From that day my convictions were exceeding great. And though for near two year and a half I had enjoyed the pardon of all my sin, constant power over outward sin, and a daily sense of the love of God shed abroad in my heart, yet I saw and felt such a mystery of iniquity within me which made me groan as the worst creature living. Often did I reason whether the Lord was able or willing to deliver my soul? But I believed, 'He has done this for many. He *may* do it even for *me*.' For two years I continued mortifying my passions, and using every ordinance of God. Then, as I was hearing his word one Sunday, I found my heart affected in an uncommon manner. And on a sudden my spirit was taken up on high, and surrounded with God. What I then saw it may not be expedient to utter, though whether in the body or out of the body I could not tell.² I afterward found such a deep and humble thankfulness as I cannot declare. For six weeks I felt no evil move in my heart, nor could any temptation touch my spirit.

But yet I was not satisfied that the Lord had renewed my heart. I then desired him to discover whatever there was in me contrary to his will. In a few days he did. As I was in secret prayer, he withdrew the veil and let me see such a depth of unbelief as for some time overwhelmed my spirit. For many days I could not pray nor read. I then threw myself before him, desiring of him that if there was any way for my escape he would show it me. Before I rose I felt those words, 'The God of peace shall bruise Satan under thy feet shortly.'³ I then found power to pray, to read the Scripture, and to watch my heart in every motion. But I ran into an extreme—by too great abstinence I threw myself into a fever. Satan then suggested, 'It cannot be till the point of death, and it may be, not then neither.' But the Lord strengthened me by those words, 'I have set before thee an open door, and none can shut it.'⁴ I found great resignation, yet continually cried, 'As the hart panteth for the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.'⁵ On a sudden my spirit was taken up as before, and surrounded with the arms of love, sealing on my heart, 'Thou art the redeemed of the Lord. I will make thee all-glorious within.' Immediately I saw such a light within me as swept away all darkness. I found such power to believe, and such a change pass upon me, as I cannot declare. But in a short time it was suggested it is impossible for Satan to tempt any whom God has renewed. Being so ignorant, and having no instructor, I readily believed this and cried out, 'Lord, let me not rest a moment till thou hast indeed renewed my soul.' Again his Spirit bore witness, 'Thou *art* renewed.' But I was afraid of deceiving myself. And soon the enemy darted, 'Thou hast thrown away his grace, and there is no mercy for thee.'

I cannot tell what I then felt for six weeks. My spirit was torn with temptation every moment. My fever returned, and on the third of March 1760 I was brought to extremity. Satan enforced upon me, 'Where is thy deliverer now? Thy desires are vain. There is no hope for body or soul. Thou wilt lose thy reason, die in despair; dishonour the cause of God, and shame his people.' I cried out, 'Lord, will it be so!' I gave soul, body, and all things to the Lord. Self was slain. My fever was taken away. And every motion of my soul was only, 'Thy will be done.'

¹Emma Moon (fl. 1755–88; maiden name unknown) was a native of Potto, near Yarm in the North Riding of Yorkshire. The wife of a sheep-raiser, she was converted under the influence of an older Methodist woman from Birstall. See Tyerman, *John Wesley*, 2:409.

²Cf. 2 Cor. 12:2.

³Rom. 16:20.

⁴Rev. 3:8.

⁵Ps. 42:1.

I remained a few hours with a strong impression, 'Thou art going to rest on the bosom of love.' It was then that Jesus appeared more glorious than the sun at noon-day, giving me power to believe and to receive him for my all, with such a weight of love as pen cannot describe. He spoke into my heart, 'Be thou holy',⁶ and 'I have sprinkled thee with clean water', and 'thou shalt be clean'.⁷ The scripture I was before delivered by was now again sealed upon my heart, and he united me to himself with those words, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.'⁸ I found his Spirit bearing witness in the clearest manner that the work was done. My heart shouted, 'Victory! Glory to Jesus! Let all that he has created, praise him for ever!'

I have ever since, to this day, found a clear witness that the Lord has made an end of sin and brought his pure righteousness into my heart. But I wonder he looks upon *me*! I find such weakness and ignorance in all I say, or do, or write that I am apt to think I had better do nothing. But I see an unspeakable depth of holiness, glory, and love in Jesus! I want to be all spirit, and stand every moment in the full sunshine of his love!

I am continually watched, and almost daily persecuted for the cause of God. I often stand in the front of the battle, to bear the buffetings of men and devils. I want instruction. Teach me wherein I have done or do amiss. Pray for me. May our dear Lord strengthen and settle you and me, with all his weight of love! I am,

Yours, etc.,

E. M—n

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 393–96.

⁶Cf. Matt. 5:48.

⁷Cf. Ezek. 36:25.

⁸Heb. 13:5.

From Mary Bosanquet

[London]

Friday Evening [March 12, 1762]

Dear Sir,

On March 7 Mrs. Jay received a clean heart. Yet she was greatly tempted, and so disturbed by wandering thoughts that she began to doubt, whether she was saved from sin or not? But on the second of April she was, as it were, caught up into the third heavens. She thought her soul lay prostrate before the Lord, and she cast her crown at his feet. And ever since her mind has been so stayed on him that she has been kept in perfect peace.

I am much tempted still, especially when I pray. So that I can only say, in Mr. De Renty's words, 'In spite of all these things, still I am thine, and so I shall continue without reserve for ever.'¹ What have we to do but trust and watch? Trust our souls, and the whole management of them to him who has bought them with his blood, and watch steadily and constantly: (1) against every thought, word, and deed that does not draw our souls to Christ; and (2) for that blessed moment when he shall give us a fuller manifestation of his love. O that my Jesus may give you such a hunger after himself that the cry of your soul may never cease, night or day, till all your heart is love! Lord, is any thing wanting on *thy* part? Wilt thou muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn? While thou are filling his children on every side, shall he be constrained to say, 'My leanness, my leanness?' Far be that from my tender-hearted Lord! He loves you more than his own life.

And *you* will take the perfect power,
As sure as God is love!²

Saturday Morning

I will freely unburden my mind. Before I knew what it was to *love God with all my heart*, I thought my soul would be so fixed that it would be continually ascending as a flame before him. But instead of this, though I feel my *will* is given up and my *love* is fixed on Jesus, though he is my all, yet crowds of thoughts frequently press into my mind. And sometimes Satan brings the things I used to be tempted with, and then accuses me. But I can say all the time,

Jesus, to thee my soul I raise,
My soul in thee securely boasts,
Exults and triumphs in thy praise,
And glories in the Lord of hosts.³

Meantime I cry to God to fix my mind on him, so that it may wander no more. And I am confirmed in the expectation of this by the experience of many of my brethren, though others cannot believe there is any such thing to be attained and are offended at our mentioning it. Joseph Guilford, in particular, at one of our meetings fought exceedingly against it. Afterwards in prayer he said, 'Lord, if there be such a blessing, I am as ignorant of it as the table.' Yet he cried mightily, and after he had wrested some time the Lord gave it to him. He is now all praise and prayer. The Lord *will* work. And who shall hinder him!

¹John Wesley, *An Extract of the Life of Monsieur de Renty, a Late Nobleman of France* (London, 1741), 19.

²Cf. CW, Hymn on Mark 11:24, st. 12, *HSP* (1742), 251.

³Cf. CW, 'Fight the Good Fight', st. 16, *HSP* (1742), 256.

Some call this 'loving God *with all their minds*'. Might they not rather say they had received a farther degree of faith, enabling them always to stay their minds upon God? But let us call it what we will, it is always given instantaneously.

Eternity seems to be brought so nigh that I think the Lord is just going either to take me to himself or to manifest himself more abundantly to the church. I do indeed delight in the thought of departing. Yet I cannot help wishing to see one prayer answered first, one soul entirely cast on God! And I do believe I shall see it. I believe, I know, you will be blest. I can so commit you to my loving Saviour, that I am sure he will keep you for ever!

I am

Yours, etc.,

M. B.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 442–44.

From Sarah Oddie

Barton Forge¹
March 18, 1762

Dear Sir,

I am still more and more astonished at the goodness of God! What am I, O Lord, that thou shouldst vouchsafe to take up thine abode in so unworthy a creature! Yea, and to give me the advantage of thy most excellent ones, to help my weakness on? It surprises me that they should take any notice of one so insignificant. I think of you often, when tears of joy are streaming down my face! I believe God does bless your precious soul, and I pray him to fill you with all his fullness, and to return a thousand fold into your own bosom all the good you have done to me.

God of his great mercy kept me when I was a child from what the world calls sin. I was then under great fear of death, and that fear put me upon many duties. I got the strictest books, and copied after them as far as I could. I prayed eight stated times every day. I was strict in going to church and sacrament. Thus I was rich, and increased in goods, and needed nothing—thinking what I could not do, Christ would make up for me.

In 1750 I heard of your societies and became acquainted with some of them. They gave me some books, by which and by the holy Scriptures I was soon convinced I had been in the dark all my life long. It was then the commandment came home to my conscience, and a sight and sense of my sins brought me into such misery that I had no ease in the day, nor rest in the night. My continual prayer was, though with little hope, 'God be merciful to me a sinner!' But in Lent 1752, as I was dressing myself to go to church, I was on a sudden filled with the love of God. The fear of death was gone. I wished for nothing so much as to be with him whom my soul loved. It was not long before my joy abated, and I began to doubt if it was not a false peace. But I went to God in prayer, and before I rose from my knees he manifested himself afresh. This set my soul at liberty from all doubts, and my heart was again filled with thankfulness.

In this state I continued almost a year, when God began to show me by degrees the wickedness of my heart. I found many tempers contrary to the will of God, but generally one at a time. Then God gave me power to agonize and wrestle with him till that was under my feet. No sooner had I the victory over one but another showed itself. I made use of the same method, till that also was conquered: and hereby I was greatly encouraged. Yet I thought, sometimes, my heart was more desperately wicked than any one's in the world. And how was I grieved that after all God had done I should find so many things in me to oppose him!

In the year 1759 I knew not an thing that hindered my deliverance from all sin, unless it were the hurrying business in which I was engaged, which took up so much of my time and thought. But being about this time with Mrs. [Jane] Green of Rotherham, while she was more than commonly hurried with business, I was convinced that as she rejoiced evermore so might I, in any outward state whatever. And the beauty of holiness which I saw in her made me long for it more than ever. But the more I strove to please God in all things, the more I saw of my imperfections. I could not find that I could do this for one day. I always found at night that I had done something wrong, or spoke too many words, or kept silence when I should have spoken. So that I went heavily, though I had a constant sense of the pardoning love of God. I do not indeed remember, that ever I was one hour in darkness since I was justified. But this was my sorrow,

Pardoned, but yet alas! unclean.²

In January 1760 I determined to give myself up entirely into the hands of my Redeemer, fully resolving that the care of my soul should have every moment of my leisure time, and leaving it to God to

¹Probably Barton-under-Needwood; see *Works*, 21:5 n. 15.

²CW, Hymn on Acts 1:4, st. *HSP* (1739), 106.

give me what he pleased. My soul was then in a great calm.

On the first of February it was said to my heart, 'I have showed thee how unable thou art of thyself to do what thou desirest, and now I will do it for thee. My love shall constrain thee to obey me, and my grace shall be sufficient for thee.' I felt such love, peace, and joy as tongue cannot express. This continued all day, while a stream of loving tears ran down my face. Next morning I awakened all in tears of joy, full of wonder, with the greatest confidence that God had brought me into the liberty of his much favoured children. For a week together I awoke every morning in the same joyous surprise. The Bible was a new book to me. I saw Christ in every line, and his all-sufficiency to keep me in the state to which he had brought me.

And ever since, glory be to God! I have found him faithful to his word. I have loved God and all mankind at all times. I have served him from love only. And whatever I have been employed in, I have offered it to him, with a pure intention to please him. Formerly I used to feel some anger or resentment when men treated me ill. But now I find it is all turned into tender compassion for them. I am ever under the eye of my indulgent Father, and look to be guided by him in every step I take. And since I have done this I find my business is dispatched in less time, with fewer words, and to greater advantage than ever before. He is a present help in time of need. And amidst all the cumber, hurry, and trials of so large a family and so great a charge, 'Careful without care I am.'³

Indeed sometimes I see that some things might have been done, or some words spoken, better than they were. But those are shown me by my loving Father to improve his loving but ignorant child. Therefore I receive the instruction with thankfulness, and set myself to improve thereby.

And what shall I now say to the King? When I attempt to praise him, I am as one dumb before him. I cannot find words to express my heart. I am forced to say, 'Let silence speak thy praise.'⁴ I lie in his hand, thirsting for more of his image, more of his love, till I am wholly lost in him. His blessed word and all his ordinances are right precious to my soul. His dear children are my companions: I have nothing, and yet possess all things. I think myself the most highly favoured creature under heaven. Death is always welcome. Christ is always present and precious, especially in sickness and pain. What in his love possess I not? In him I find every thing to make me holy and happy. Thanking you for all favours, I remain, dear sir,

Your obliged child in the gospel,

Sarah Oddie

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 449–52.

³CW, Hymn 6, st. 2, *Redemption Hymns* (1747), 7.

⁴See letter of Lawrence Coughlan to JW, Jan. 26, 1762.

From an Unidentified Correspondent

April 5, 1762

Dear Sir,

The present state of my soul is: him having not seen, I love; in whom though I see him not, yet believing, I rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. My chief consolation flows from the expectation of seeing him as he is. And having this hope, my desire is to purify myself even as he is pure.

I have found of late an hour of sore temptation, but have been saved through all. I have no doubt of the love of God to my soul, or of his saving me eternally. But I have doubted whether I loved him with all my heart, and sometimes thought I have felt *evil*. But I do not reason about it, as in times past. For I have power to go to Christ through all, and I always find him to receive me graciously, and to love me freely. I continue to prove, great is his faithfulness. My soul is more deeply acquainted with God, and more sensible to the utter helplessness of man, and of my inability to breathe one wish heavenward without the influence of his Spirit.

I have been greatly tempted to a refined sort of antinomianism—so to see all in Christ as not earnestly to seek after the mind that was in him, a full renewal in his image. O how many unsuspected wiles of Satan! What need have we to hear our Lord's voice, and to follow it!

I am, etc.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 273.

From Lawrence Coughlan

April 12, 1762

Reverend Sir,

I stayed two nights at Chester after you, and indeed it was a time of love. In the meeting of the bands several of our friends spoke. Old Mr. [Jonathan] Pritchard was the first. He said, 'For some time I have been longing for a clean heart, yet I thought God would not give it to so vile a sinner. And the first night Mr. Wesley preached I felt something across my heart, like an iron bar, cold and hard. But hearing Mr. Wesley insist on the word *now*, I said, "Lord, here I am, a poor sinner. I believe thou canst save me *now*, and give me a clean heart." In that moment Jesus said to my soul, "I will. Be thou clean."¹ Immediately that bar was broken, and all my soul was filled with love. Nor could I doubt but Jesus had made me clean, through the word which he had spoken to my soul.' And three more were enabled, before we parted, to declare the same.

I find Christ to be exceeding precious to my soul, and it is my one desire to do his will. My soul is as a watered garden. My life is hid with Christ in God. And I believe when Christ who is my life shall appear, I shall appear with him in glory.

I remain, reverend sir,

Yours, etc.,

Lawrence Coughlan

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 337–38.

¹Matt. 8:3 and parallels.

From Emma Moon

Potto
April 14, 1762

Dear Sir,

As the Lord has made your instruction so great a blessing to my soul, I think it my duty to let you hear from me. What you said of being 'settled in the pure love of God' was greatly blest to me. While you spoke to me, I saw the grace set before me and my heart was drawn out to the Lord in prayer, with a constant waiting upon him for the blessing. Till at the love feast in York, under your prayer, the Lord revealed himself with such a weight of love that my bodily strength was all removed, by his glorious appearing, and he said to my soul, 'Thou shalt never wander more.' In this unspeakable blessing I found my whole soul to centre in the arms of Jesus, being all united and swallowed up in his infinite love to *me*. For two weeks after the enemy seemed to stir up earth and hell to tear it from me. He then tried his smother wiles, suggesting, 'There is no scripture for this.' But I found those words ever before me (and I knew they were a scriptural promise), 'I will keep his soul in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on me.'¹ Yet I prayed the Lord to make it still plainer. And at the end of six weeks, as I was in secret prayer, I beheld him appearing glorious and sealing this scripture on my heart, 'All mine are thine.'² I then found more of his love than ever before, even more than when he spoke the destruction of sin, whereby my spirit was overwhelmed in love for three days and nights together. Ever since I have found steadiness of mind, though often surrounded with the hurries of my family and of the world, in which I must act, and speak, and think according to my calling. For while I am in the body, I am exposed to the various scenes of life. Have the happy souls you are with never an useless or unprofitable thought cast before them? I find a constant looking to the Lord. But I want to be every moment free from this life, and ever be swallowed up in the ocean of his love. I find my soul to be so shallow [that] I contain but a small measure of his love. I have need to pray the Lord to enlarge my heart, and strengthen me to bear the fullness of it.

Since I saw you, I seldom bow my knee but I have such uncommon desires for your soul as I cannot express. I could struggle with the Lord for you, while I have any life, that he would fill your soul with every grace which he hath purchased with his precious blood. Remember me, as one of the unworthiest of his creatures, in all your prayers. I am,

Yours, etc.,

E. M—n

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* (1781): 444–45.

¹Cf. Isa. 26:3.

²John 17:10.

From Mary Bosanquet

[London]
May 1, 1762¹

Dear Sir,

Many here have now experienced the blessing of having their minds continually stayed on God. And Satan is so bruised under their feet that he cannot distress them at all. But it is not so with *me*. My mind is still frequently hurried and distressed. And particularly when any one says, 'Believe *now*, and you shall have the blessing.' I am always assured of the love of God, and know he will withhold from me no good thing. Yet I am greatly pained for the want of this, and wish I could wrestle for it continually.

I pray from my inmost soul that you may be filled with all the fullness of your great Lord and Master, and changed from glory unto glory, till you 'behold without a veil his face'² I am,

Yours, etc.,

M. B.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 497.

¹Orig., '1761'; corrected by JW in his personal copy of *AM*.

²Cf. 2 Cor. 3:18.

From John Manners¹

Dublin
May 4, 1762

The work here is such as I never expected to see. Some are justified or sanctified almost every day. This week three or four were justified, and as many, if not more, renewed in love. The people are all on fire. Such a day as last Sunday I never saw. While I was at prayer in the society, the power of the Lord overshadowed us, and some cried out, 'Lord, I *can* believe.' The cry soon became general, with strong prayers. Twice I attempted to sing, but my voice could not be heard. I then desired them to restrain themselves and, in stillness and composure, to wait for the blessing; on which all but two or three, who could not refrain, came into a solemn silence. I prayed again, and the softening power of grace was felt in many hearts. Our congregations increased much, and I have no doubt but we shall see greater things than these.

Source: published transcription; JW, *Journal*, July 26, 1762 (*Works*, 21:375).

From John Manners

Dublin
May 8, 1762

The work of God increases every day. There is hardly a day but some are justified or sanctified or both. On Thursday three came and told me that 'the blood of Jesus Christ' had 'cleansed *them* from all sin'. One of them told me she had been justified seven years and had been five years convinced of the necessity of sanctification. But this *easy* conviction availed not. A fortnight since, she was seized with so *keen* a conviction as gave her no rest till God had sanctified her and witnessed it to her heart.

Source: published transcription; JW, *Journal*, July 26, 1762 (*Works*, 21:375).

¹John Manners (1731–64) was converted by Methodist preaching about 1755, and is listed as a travelling preacher by 1758 (see *Works*, 10:282.). Cf. Atmore, *Memorial*, 247–50.

From Dorothea (Garret) King¹

[Dublin]
May 11, 1762

Dear Sir,

On Sunday morning last I wrestled much with God, for a witness of the work he had wrought in me, till these words were deeply impressed upon me, 'Thou art all fair, my love.' But still I could not believe, though it followed me all day, 'Thou art all fair; there is no spot in thee.'² But in the evening, under the word, the bar of unbelief was removed. Immediately my heart expanded before God, as the opening flower before the sun, and I sensibly found my Lord enter by his Spirit, to take full possession of it. O may he for ever reign, the Lord of every motion there! For these two days I have been in the fire, but glory be to God, the flames have not hurt my soul, which looks to him every moment. I am like a helpless infant, more afraid than ever of the least appearance of evil; none of which I find within, yet still I keep a jealous eye over my heart.

I remain, dear sir,

Yours, etc.,

D. K—

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 501–02.

¹Dorothea King (1732–1817) was one of the legendary characters of early Dublin Methodism. The daughter of a merchant, Thomas Garret, she married a creditor named King to save her father from debtor's prison. The marriage was cruel and unhappy, ending in separation. After her conversion she became a class leader of great spiritual repute and in 1784 married the retired itinerant John Johnson; see Crookshank, *Ireland*, 1:123, 384, 387.

²Song of Sol. 4:7.

From John Manners

Dublin
May 11, 1762

God still continues his marvellous loving-kindness to us. On Sunday last Dorothea King entered into 'the rest'. She had been seeking it for some time. But her convictions and desires grew stronger and stronger as the hour approached. A while ago she told me she grew worse and worse, and her inward conflicts were greater than ever. But on the Lord's day she felt an entire change while these words were spoke to her heart, 'Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee.'¹ She now walks in sweet peace, and rejoices evermore. Her father received the blessing a few days before her and is exceeding happy.

The fire catches all that come near. An old soldier,² in his return from Germany to the north of Ireland, fell in one night with these wrestling Jacobs, to his great astonishment. He was justified seventeen years ago, but afterward fell from it for five years. As he was going to Germany, in the beginning of the war, the Lord healed him in Dublin, and in spite of all the distresses of a severe campaign, he walked in the light continually. On his return through London he was convinced of the necessity of sanctification. And soon after he came hither, his heart was broken in pieces while he was with a little company who met daily for prayer. One evening as they were going away, he stopped them and begged they would not go till the Lord had blessed him. They kneeled down again and did not cease wrestling with God till he had a witness that he was saved from all sin.

The case of Mr. Timmins is no less remarkable. He had been a notorious sinner. He was deeply wounded two months since. Ten days ago, on a Friday, God spake peace to his soul. The Sunday following, after a violent struggle, he sunk down as dead. He was cold as clay. After about ten minutes he came to himself, and cried, 'A new heart, a new heart!' He said he felt himself 'in an instant entirely emptied of sin and filled with God'. Brother Barry likewise had been justified but a few days before God gave him purity of heart.

Source: published transcription; JW, *Journal*, July 26, 1762 (*Works*, 21:376–77).

¹Song of Sol. 4:7.

²William Price (d. 1795), of Tonyloman; cf. *AM* 19 (1796), 503 (and *Works*, 21:376, n. 44).

From Ruth (Crowther) Hall

[York]
May 12, 1762

Dear Sir,

The blessing I lately received was given as the minister was pronouncing those words, 'The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ which was shed for *thee*, preserve thy body and soul to everlasting life.'¹ I then found an uncommon degree of assurance that I should see eternal life. This was increased by the strong application of that Scripture to my heart in the night season, 'After ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.'² At our love feast on the Sunday following I was confirmed still more, and could say, 'Now, I believe. I do now feel the full assurance of hope.'

Now, my Lord, I claim a share,
In thy never-failing prayer.³

I am now happy in the love of God. I see more and more into the depth of God's mercy in Christ Jesus. And yet I know nothing in comparison of what is to be learnt in the school of Christ.

I have much exercise at times among our people. Well did Mr. C. W. observe, 'He who prays for the mind of Christ, prays for all that men and devils can inflict upon him.'⁴ But it is enough that the servant be as his Lord. Hold out faith and patience a little longer, and we shall appear before our God in Sion!

I am, dear sir,
Your affectionate sister,

Ruth Hall

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 663–64.

¹Liturgy for receiving communion, *Book of Common Prayer*.

²Eph. 1:13.

³Cf. CW, 'Communion of Saints', Pt. III, st. 2, *HSP* (1740), 192.

⁴Hall appears to be citing an oral comment of Charles Wesley.

From Hannah Harrison

May 12, 1762

Reverend Sir,

I have been brought extremely low by a fever, by which I often lost the command of my thoughts. My ideas were extremely wild, and my head sometimes turned. I felt much weakness, weariness, and pain, but nothing contrary to full resignation—being sensible (when I had the use of my reason) that all would work together for good.

If by being 'always happy' you mean am I ever unhappy, I answer in the negative. But I am far from believing the whole of Christianity lies in rejoicing and praising God. Did we but rightly divide our time, we should find seasons too for weeping and lamentation.

My thoughts are employed upon various subjects, and it requires great care to go so far and no farther. But I still find if at any time the subjection of my meditation appears unnecessary, I can as easily divert my ideas as I move my hand.

I am

Yours, etc.,

H. H—n

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 392–93.

From John Manners

Dublin
May 15, 1762

God still makes me a messenger of good tidings. His work goes on. Our last night's meeting was remarkable for the presence and power of God, while several were relating what he had done. One said, 'All that day in which God delivered me, I felt the blessing just at hand but could not open my heart to receive it. I was fast shut up till under the sermon in the evening I felt God open my heart, remove the bar of unbelief, and give me power to receive the blessing freely.'

There are now three places in the city wherein as many as have opportunity assemble day and night to pour out their souls before God for the continuance and enlargement of his work.

Source: published transcription; JW, *Journal*, July 26, 1762 (*Works*, 21:377).

From Mary Bosanquet

[London]
May 16, 1762

Dear Sir,

Since your departure many have been brought into the glorious liberty. And such a spirit of prayer has been poured out upon several as was never known among us before. To this prayer there is a constant answer, so that almost at every meeting we hear of some either justified or sanctified in answer to the prayer of faith. One instance of this is old Mr. Watkins, who is now rejoicing with joy unspeakable.

Sarah Ryan brings good accounts from Bristol. A— K— was long prejudiced against her. But for some weeks she has been quite broken down, yea roaring for the disquietness of her heart. The night before Sarah Ryan came away, a few of them who had received the blessing met with Ann Sh— and Miss [Dorothy] Furly. When Sarah Ryan came in she said, 'It is much on my mind, if we are true witnesses, God will give *you* the blessing.' Before they parted, Ann Sh— was in a grievous agony, screaming in a dreadful manner. Sarah Ryan prayed, 'Lord, give her a promise.' She cried out, 'Not a promise, I want the God of promise.' When Miss Furly and she rose up they were in amaze, feeling a change but not knowing what it was. Nancy S— has since received a clear witness of what was then wrought in her. Many are greatly stirred up, and those who used to oppose now wonder and are silent.

Some time ago, James Th—¹ had so clear a sight of his sinful nature as almost sunk him into despair. He went to the chapel, and thought as he entered, 'my heart is so desperately wicked I shall soon fall into some grievous, outward sin.' Under the sermon a cry for deliverance was deeply fixed in his soul. About a fortnight ago Benjamin Biggs and brother [Joseph] Calvert called at his house. While they were at prayer, God so showed him his unbelieving heart that he almost thought, 'I cannot be delivered.' But presently after, as he was musing in himself, God broke in upon his soul. Unbelief vanished away. And from that time God has confirmed him more and more.²

I am,

Yours, etc.

M. B.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 609–10.

¹This is likely James Thwayte (1733–1803), who was converted to Methodism at the age of 21 and began to preach in 1758. He and his wife frequently hosted gatherings at their London home and were active in the 1760s revival. Thwayte was one of the itinerants who were ordained by the Greek church leader Gerasimos Avlonites in Dec. 1764. JW's censure of this ordination led him to withdraw from the connection and build a chapel in which to preach, which flourished for a while then failed. See *WHS* 22 (1740): 141–43.

²Wesley added a note in *AM*: 'But what is he *now*?'

From Emma Moon

Potto
May 24, 1762

Dear Sir,

I have received yours, to the unspeakable comfort of my soul. And though I have delayed a little in writing, my heart never delays in praying for and being present with you daily. I thank the Lord in every remembrance of you, whom I find so dear to himself, his cause, and to me, the most unworthy of all to whom you ever wrote.

I have daily more and more reason to bless the Lord for his unnumbered mercies. I have always a sweet sense of his tender love, but I want to be constantly swallowed up herein. Time is very precious to me, and yet it appears as if I made little improvement thereof. I seem always to have too little time, never any to spare. My family is ever calling for my assistance for this life, and the Lord is ever calling me to pursue his work, so that I am constrained to cry, 'Lord! My moments fly away, before my work is half performed.'

Blessed be God, I find an increase of love, and joy, and peace! This world appears a vain shadow, swiftly flying from me and I from it. I have lately found an uncommon despising of all things here below, and yet at the same time more abundant thankfulness to the Lord for every thing. I often see such scenes of blessings to be thankful for as appear like an unfathomable ocean, without a bottom or a shore. I am lost in amazement. For the more I gaze, the more the ocean swells, and I (poor dust and ashes) sink into a silent nothing before him.

I have no confidence of persevering to the end in any way but constantly obeying all the commands of God. And in this I find the Lord seals his word by his blessed Spirit upon my heart, and that in so deep and powerful a manner as I cannot describe or explain. He then shows me that scripture is mine, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.'¹ My prayer is that he may keep me to the end, and fully accomplish his blessed word in me.

I always can tell *you* my whole heart, for your soul is unspeakably near to me. May the Lord bless and preserve you every moment from all the snares, and baits, and smiles, and frowns, and powers of earth and hell, to rejoice every moment in his love! O remember me in all your prayers, the most ignorant and weak of all his creatures! I desire your reproof in whatever you may fear amiss in me, and your direction in all things. I am,

Yours, etc.,

E. M—n

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 446–47.

¹Heb. 13:5.

From an Unidentified Correspondent
[same correspondent as April 5 above]

May 28, 1762

Dear Sir,

I am often ashamed of myself for writing so freely to you. I think my letters have an appearance of self-sufficiency. And yet I do not know how it is that when I begin to write, I cannot help it.

One lesson I see God means to teach me by all the various occurrences that have lately happened, is the folly, weakness, and instability of human nature. Lord, what is man! The name of Jesus alone shall be exalted. Hereby we are forced to depend alone on him, in whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

My desire is to sit at the Saviour's feet, and hear his words which are spirit and life. I feel the necessity of inwardly following God, and being free from all care and every incumbrance of spirit, that my soul may be at leisure to receive the communications of his love and power. Fellowship with God is the thing my soul thirsts after—to live in his presence, and to be taught by the Spirit, to walk in the truth, and do the will of my heavenly Father in all things. I find more communication with God, and knowledge of the Three-One Jehovah. My soul beholds, as with open face, the glory of the Lord. The veil is more withdrawn, and by faith I enter into the holiest, and feel the preciousness of that blood which alone speaks my peace. So that I can say,

For ever here my rest shall be,
Close to thy bleeding-side;
This all my hope, and all my plea,
For *me* the Saviour died!¹

I am, etc.,

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 274.

¹CW, 'Christ Our Righteousness', st. 2, *HSP* (1740), 96.

From John Manners

May 29, 1762

Since my last account many have been sanctified and several justified. One of the former is William Moore. He was a long time struggling for the blessing. And one night he was resolved not to go to bed without it. He continued wrestling with God for two hours, when he felt a glorious change and the Spirit of God witnessing that the work was done.

We begin now to meet with opposition from ever quarter. Some say, 'This is rank enthusiasm'; others, that it is 'either a cheat or mere pride'; others, that it is 'a new thing' and that they 'can find no such thing in the Bible'.

Source: published transcription; JW, *Journal*, July 26, 1762 (*Works*, 21:377–78).

From John Manners

June 3, 1762

The Lord increases his work in proportion to the opposition it meets with. Between Monday morning and Tuesday night I have had eight bills of thanksgiving: for two justified, three renewed in love, and three backsliders healed.

Source: published transcription; JW, *Journal*, July 26, 1762 (*Works*, 21:378).

From Dorothea (Garret) King

[Dublin]

June 4, 1762

Dear Sir,

I am ready to cry out, 'What is my Father's house? What am I, the vilest?' Yet oh what showers of blessings are daily bestowed on such a worthless worm! My God delights in the happiness of his children, of whom I see myself the least. But the witness abides. Yeah, I cannot but believe, even for the work's sake. In the midst of business I find my soul looking and leaning on my God. My inbred foes are all gone, and I walk in liberty unspeakable, in the unclouded blaze of day. Yet for the most part my joy is solid, not transporting; being mixed with deep humility. I have lately had a fever. During the violence of this, my thoughts were sometimes unsettled. But in my greatest pain I found no will for ease or health, life or death.

I remain, dear sir,

Yours, etc.,

D. K—

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 502.

From Dorothea (Garret) King

[Dublin]
June 15, 1762

Dear Sir,

I dare not call in question the work wrought in my soul, lest I should grieve the Spirit of God, who now bears testimony in my heart that I am saved from my inbred sin. Indeed, a few days ago I was accused that a word I spoke proceeded from pride. I pleaded with my Lord to search, try, and prove the ground of my heart. Soon after I found my soul abundantly strengthened, and at the same time humbled to the dust. And while I walked in awful reverence before him, these words were spoke to my heart, 'A garden enclosed, a fountain sealed is my beloved.'¹

I am not sensible of losing sight of God for a moment, unless it may be called so that now and then a thought passes through my mind which I seem for a moment to look at. Sometime since, I found strong attacks on falling asleep. Immediately I resisted in agony of prayer, and I always came off conqueror. Since I was brought into light, my dreams have always been pure and sometimes heavenly. Sometimes I have a clear intercourse with the unseen world. I do not recollect many of my sleeping thoughts. Only I remember twice I found myself sensible that God had delivered my soul.

I remain, dear sir,
Yours, etc.,

D. K—

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 503.

¹Cf. Song of Sol. 4:12.

From John Manners

Dublin
June 15, 1762

There is no end of the mercies of God. Three days of this week are gone, in which God has justified five sinners. On Sunday in the afternoon I preached at three in the Barrack Square. And a more solemn time I have not seen. The hearers were as many as my voice could reach, and all remarkably attentive.

In the evening a cry ran through the society, and four were justified that night. Two of these, Alexander Tate and his wife, were but lately joined. The power of God first seized her and constrained her to cry aloud till she heard the still, small voice. He continued calling upon God and would not cease before God answered him also in the joy of his heart.

Source: published transcription; JW, *Journal*, July 26, 1762 (*Works*, 21:378).

From John Manners

Dublin
June 19, 1762

We have had eight this week whose sins are blotted out, and two more have entered into that rest. One of them says she has enjoyed the love of God nine years but felt as great a difference between the state and the state she is now in as if her soul was taken into heaven!

Source: published transcription; JW, *Journal*, July 26, 1762 (*Works*, 21:378).

From Ruth (Crowther) Hall

[York]

June 22, 1762

Dear Sir,

Indeed I do not intend to be shy or reserved. I speak quite freely to you at all times. But how is it that this does not appear so to you? Unless it be that our language is confounded, or that some preternatural power is endeavouring to hinder what might be of the greatest use to us or others. With regard to evil reports, I have not been troubled with them since I saw you.

Jesus is very precious to me. He keeps my simple heart. I find strength sufficient for the day, and the day enough for all the grace I have. I trust my eye is always single. Yet I am in a strait as to your next question. I often find pleasure in what I speak and do, yet I hope it is not sinful. For instance, I eat pleasant food and am thankful, when coarser might sustain the body. If I am a sinner in this, convince me of it. I find as much zeal as ever I did, and think I do exert all the power and strength I have to do all possible good to all men. Nor am I conscious of many omissions. May you abound in every good word and work! And when time is no more, may you shine as the sun in the kingdom of our Father!

I am, dear sir,

Your affectionate sister,

Ruth Hall

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 664–65.

From John Manners

Dublin
June 26, 1762

Last week eleven were justified, or sanctified, and this week eleven more, eight of whom received remission of sins, and three a clean heart. And a troop are waiting for the moving of the water. Among them whom the power of God has seized lately are two eminent sinners, each of whom lived with a woman to whom he was never married. One of them already rejoices in God, the other mourns and will not be comforted. But the women are gone; they put away the accursed thing immediately.

I had much fear about the children, lest our labour should be lost upon them. But I find we shall reap, if we faint not. Margaret Roper, about eight years old, has been thoughtful for some time. The other day, while they were at family prayer, she burst into tears and wept bitterly. They asked what was the matter. She said she was 'a great sinner and durst not pray'. They bade her go to bed. She no sooner came into the chamber than she began crying and clapping her hands, so that they heard her across the street. But God soon bound up her broken heart. Being asked how she felt herself, she said, 'Ten times better. Now I can love God. I wish you would sit up and sing with me all night.' She has been happy ever since and as serious as one of forty.

Source: published transcription; JW, *Journal*, July 26, 1762 (*Works*, 21:378–79).

From John Manners

Dublin
July 3, 1762

Our joy is now quite full. The flames rise higher and higher. Since Saturday last, eight sinners more are freely justified, and two more renewed in love. Our house was once large enough. Now it is scarce able to contain us. And we have not many in the society who are not either wrestling with God for his love or rejoicing therein.

Source: published transcription; JW, *Journal*, July 26, 1762 (*Works*, 21:379).

From Dorothea (Garret) King

[Dublin]
July 5, 1762

Dear Sir,

How shall I express my gratitude for your concern for so unworthy a creature? I cannot, but may my Lord repay it a thousand fold.

My soul sinks in the deepest abasement before God. I am less than nothing, a cumberer of the ground. I am pained at my unprofitableness. O teach me how I shall glorify my God, who has done so great things for me!

As yet (glory be to my great Deliverer!) I feel no risings of sin. And the more I cry to God to search and prove me, the clearer the witness grows. But oh, methinks I am like a grave, in which the mercies of my God are buried!

Short wanderings sometimes dart through my mind, but nothing intercepts my sight of God. Sometimes when I am in much business I find but little happiness, till I can retire, in which I find a heaven indeed. But at other times in the midst of business my joy is great.¹ I earnestly desire an interest in your prayers.

I remain, dear sir,
Yours, etc.,

D. K—

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 504.

¹Wesley added a note in *AM*: 'She is the same now as she was then, only more rooted and grounded in love.'

From Ruth (Crowther) Hall

[York]

July 7, 1762

Dear Sir,

You know [that] among the simple children of God, out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. So I find it. The language of my heart is, 'O Lord, how good thou art!' My adorable Jesus is the rest of my soul—it is always quiet, always still. Nothing drives me from my centre, and nothing draws me from it. My soul is dead, but it is alive also—blessed death that leads to eternal life below! My tears now tell my sins forgiven, and heaven even now flows into my heart.

Yeah they are freely, abundantly forgiven. (To you I may speak freely.) I can find no traces remaining of what I once was. I am changed indeed. I am become a new creature. My soul is strongly drawn heaven-ward and waits to receive from his fullness, till my last, great change shall come.

O what a refreshment is it to me to talk thus simply to you! There are but few to whom I can thus speak. They would call it pride, and setting myself up. But this I should not mind, did it not imply that they were hurt by it, rather than helped. O my Jesus! Thou art the life of my delights. When shall I see thee without a veil between?

I believe I have a *single eye* in all things. I do not know that I do anything, small or great, to *please myself* but because I think it right so to do. I do generally *reprove* all that sin in my sight, directly or indirectly. I *would* be *zealous* of all good works, but it is so little I do that I am ashamed to say I *am so*. I am ready to hide myself because of my unprofitableness. I am out of conceit with all I do, and cannot bear to look at any thing but Jesus. My works are not perfect before God, but *his* works are perfect. And I feel I am interested in all he *did*, all he *suffered*, and all he *has*. I want to forget that I have a being, and to know no existence but his. I think I do use the little strength I have in instructing the ignorant, reclaiming the wicked, and relieving the pains of those who suffer in body or mind. I am generally some way employed herein. I am not conscious of any *willful omissions*—unless my not speaking among the bands may be styled omissions. However, I have broke through and have been blest in speaking.

I am, dear sir,

Your affectionate sister,

Ruth Hall

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 665–66.

From an Unidentified Correspondent

Limerick
July 20, 1762

There is a glorious work going on at Limerick. Twelve or fourteen have a clear sense of being renewed. Several have been justified this week; and on Sunday night, at the meeting of the society, there was such a cry as I scarce ever heard before, such confession of sins, such pleading with the Lord, and such a spirit of prayer, as if the Lord himself had been visibly present among us. Some receive remission of sins, and several were just brought to the birth. All were in floods of tears; they trembled, they cried, they prayed, they roared aloud, all of them lying on the ground. I began to sing, yet they could not rise but sang as they lay along. When we concluded, some of them could not go away but stayed in the house all night. And, blessed be our Lord, they all hitherto walk worthy of their calling.

Source: published transcription; JW, *Journal*, July 28, 1762 (*Works*, 21:380–81).

From an Unidentified Correspondent

Limerick
c. July 20, 1762

I will just tell you, the Lord has made your last visit to us a great blessing. Such times were never before in Limerick. The fire which broke out before you left us is now spreading on every side. Four were happy before you left us; several others can now rejoice evermore and pray without ceasing. And this certainly they could not do did they not love God with all their heart.

Source: published transcription; JW, *Journal*, July 28, 1762 (*Works*, 21:381).

From an Unidentified Correspondent

Limerick
July 25, 1762

Blessed be God, his word runs swiftly. Last night his power was present indeed; and another was assured that God, who had before forgiven his sins, had now 'cleansed *him* from all unrighteousness'. There are now two women and thirteen men who witness the same confession. And their lives agree thereto. Eight have lately received the remission of their sins. And many are on the full stretch for God and just ready to step into the pool.

Source: published transcription; JW, *Journal*, July 28, 1762 (*Works*, 21:381).

From Emma Moon

Potto
July 29, 1762¹

Dear Sir,

I have great cause of thankfulness for your care in so thoroughly searching my heart. I hope you ever will. But I am so weak and ignorant I scarce know how to answer. I do not always pray in words, but I find a constant prayer in my heart to God. And this he is pleased frequently to answer, with springs of strength and comfort. Yet I desire to be every moment more fervent in this blessed duty. I am enabled to rejoice evermore, yea in every trial and affliction I meet with. I am astonished that the Lord should pour his blessings upon me, who can thank him no more! Indeed I *do* render him all my powers in thanks and love to him. But this seems to be as nothing to his immensity of love to *me*.

When I meet with the contradiction of sinners, I feel much love and pity for their poor souls. But in general, while I am with them they seem to melt before me. I find more to bear from those who know, or have known, the grace of God. Some of these are constantly deriding holiness, and calling the experience of those that are *renewed* 'delusion'. This kind of contradiction meets me daily, and makes me sink as into dust and ashes before the Lord and all his creatures, willing to be trodden under foot of all men.

As to pride, anger, and vain desire, I know my soul is cleansed from them. And though I am tempted to them all, yet they can never affect my spirit or touch my heart. My will is wholly devoted to God. But I am so ignorant I have need to cry to the Lord to teach me every moment. I desire not to live, but to do his will. It would be a hell to me to dishonour the Lord, or grieve his people.

I hope you will caution me whereinsoever you fear evil in me or near me. This above all will endear your soul to me, and I hope make you love and pray for me the more. I cannot tell what joy I feel in hearing how the Lord prospers your labours. O may your hands never hang down! May your knees never be feeble. But may the Lord appear victorious for you and in you every moment! May your care and labour for other souls never be a hindrance to your own! I never bow my knee to the Lord but my heart is drawn out in prayer that your peace may flow as a river, and your righteousness as the waves of the sea! And I cannot doubt but the Lord will conquer every hindrance you meet with, and bring you forth into the Canaan of peace and plenty, to sing his praise for ever and ever.

I am,

Yours, etc.,

E. M—n

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 447–48.

¹Misdated '1761' in *AM*.

From an Unidentified Correspondent

Congleton, Cheshire
August 1, 1762

The work of God for some time stood still here. But at the love feast on the 21st of March last (glory for ever be to God!) there was an outpouring of his Spirit among us. Five persons were assured of their acceptance with God, of whom by his free grace I was one; four believed he had not only *forgiven* their *sins*, but likewise 'cleansed them from all unrighteousness'.¹ Many more have since found him gracious and merciful, nor is his hand yet stayed at all.

Source: published transcription; JW, *Journal*, Aug. 3, 1762 (*Works*, 21:382–83).

From an Unidentified Correspondent

Burslem, Staffordshire
c. August 1, 1762

Before Mr. [John] Furz² came into these parts, we were biting and devouring one another. And many who once had known God were 'in their works denying him'.³ The society in general was cold and dead, and only two were converted to God in a whole year. But, glory be to God, the case is now altered. Those grievances are removed. The power of God is present with us, and the fire of his love is kindled among us. We are very weak, but blessed be God we are all alive. Many are crying out in the bitterness of their souls, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.'⁴ Sometimes we have had two, at other times six or seven justified in one week. Others find the very remains of sin destroyed and wait to be 'filled with all the fullness of God'.⁵

Source: published transcription; JW, *Journal*, Aug. 3, 1762 (*Works*, 21:383).

¹Cf. 1 John 1:9.

²John Furz (1717–1800) first appears in the Minutes as an itinerant preacher in 1755 (*Works*, 10:273) and served through 1782. See Atmore, *Memorial*, 148–54; Jackson, *EMP*, 5:108–34; and Vickers, *Dictionary*, 130.

³Cf. Titus 1:16.

⁴Luke 18:13.

⁵Eph. 3:19.

From Thomas Maxfield¹

September 23, 1762

Experience teaches me daily that they that preach *salvation from the nature of sin* will have the same treatment from the others as they had and have from the world. But I am willing to bear it.

Your brother is gone out of town. Had he stayed much longer and continued, Sunday after Sunday, to hinder me from preaching, he would have forced me to have got a place to preach in where I should not have heard what I think the highest truths contradicted.

Source: published transcription; JW, *Journal*, Feb. 5, 1763 (*Works*, 21:404).

¹This letter is in the midst of the continuing 'London blessing controversy'.

From the Rev. Benjamin Colley¹

London
September 28, 1762

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Though it is through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom, yet what happiness redounds to us in the midst of our sufferings when we reflect that they will shortly end and pain shall be no more! What then have we to do here but to strengthen one another's hands, that we all may be good soldiers of Jesus Christ? We are as 'the filth and off-scouring of the world'.² But what of that, if we appear so to man; we do not to God, who sees the heart. This is our glory—our crown of rejoicing, that whilst we are despised of men, we are approved of him who sees things as they are and not according to appearance.

But my dear sir, I travail in pain for *you*, till Christ be wholly formed in you. I do love you, and cannot forget to pray for you. Shall I be teacher awhile? Shall I endeavour to point you out the way? Nay, shall I rather bring to remembrance your own doctrine? Your late observation upon a passage in Ephesians I know is the truth. And cannot you—I say, cannot *you*—put it into practice? Try sir, *enim quid tentare nocebit?*³ This is the scripture: 'in whom believing (πιστεύσαντες)', or *after* ye believed (being indefinite) 'ye were sealed'.⁴ Now you plainly see faith must go before the reception of the promise (I do not mean a believing of the report, or that it will be, but that it is done). This is confirmed by our Lord's words (Mark 11:23), 'Whosoever shall say ... shall not doubt in his heart' (the doubt spoils all) 'but believe that the things which he saith are come to pass (γίνεται – *siunt*) he shall have whatsoever he saith.' In the next verse, 'When you pray, believe you do receive (πιστεύετε ὅτι ἐλάβετε) and ye shall have it (καὶ ἔσται ὑμῖν).' St. John, in his first epistle, 5:15, strengthens this assertion by saying, 'If we know that he heareth us, whatsoever we ask, we KNOW we HAVE the petitions we desired of him.'

Now herein lies the difficulty. When we are determined to cast ourselves upon the truth of the promise of God, Satan (in order to prevent our being blessed) draws our eye from God, to see how things are *within*. Immediately faith fails, and we really are no better than we were. But in order to succeed, we must not hearken at all to his injections, but keep our soul up to the light. For according to the old saying, *nequeo simul forbere et flare* – 'I cannot look upward and downward at once.'

Notwithstanding [that] this is an important truth, it is looked upon as the greatest absurdity. Hell seems mightily to oppose it, as being that artillery whereby we shall most of all weaken, yea subdue, the powers of darkness. We shall be so habituated to it bye and bye that it will be as natural to believe whilst we pray that God hears and answers as it has been heretofore to disbelieve.

Now certainly it is hard for a season, and flesh and blood do not care to be put so much out of the way, but [would] rather say, 'Let us build a tabernacle here.'⁵ It is far easier to say 'I will wait the Lord's time', or 'I believe God *will* fill me with all his fulness', than 'agonize to enter (ἀγωνίζεσθε εἰσελθεῖν)'⁶ farther into the grace wherein we stand—or *now* to receive a part of that fulness. To put faith into practice, nothing is plainer than that we must have some particular point to aim at. And this of necessity must overturn the general notion of a gradual work. Do not take me wrong sir, I mean the notion which

¹Benjamin Colley (d. 1767) of Tollerton, Yorkshire, was converted by itinerant John Manners and joined the Methodists in 1761. He received episcopal ordination and by early 1762 was assisting JW as a clergyman in the London chapels. He was briefly drawn in with the 'enthusiasm' of George Bell and Thomas Maxfield, but reclaimed by Manners and appointed to Newcastle upon Tyne in 1763. See Atmore, *Memorial*, 78–80.

²1 Cor. 4:13.

³'For what danger can there be in making the trial?'

⁴Eph. 1:13.

⁵See Matt. 17:4 and parallels.

⁶Luke 13:24.

the generality of the people hold of sliding with an insensible ascent into perfect holiness. Gradual, or step by step, signifies that I have got something to set my foot upon firmly and can plainly see I have ascended a step higher. My next aim must be at the next step, and so on step by step (*gradibus*), till I have got to the top of Jacob's ladder. This sort of progression, I think, either is or might be made obvious to every capacity, and then would cease the contentions about *gradual* and *instantaneous*.

As to the outward state of the church, I have reason to believe in general it is well. We may be assured, whenever the Lord works mightily, Satan and his nature in the heart of man will be offended. It is true, here are some irregularities (when are there not?)—unavoidable ones. But as they creep in, so will they creep out. Sion, however, prospers—both lengthens her cords and strengthens her stakes. Blessings descend in abundance. May the Lord grant you a part in them. And that you may return to us again in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ is the unfeigned prayer of, reverend sir,

Yours in the best of bonds,

Benjamin Colley

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 20 (1797): 408–10.

From Jane Cooper

London
September 29, 1762

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Thank you for another proof of your care for my soul in the enquiries you make. I bless my Lord, his grace is sufficient to make me answer without hesitation every question your propose. I have for many months enjoyed such a continuance of the presence of my beloved as makes me feel I am less than the least of his mercies. The beholding of him who is fairer than the sons of men, the sight of Christ crucified, prevents the touch of pride and makes me hate the garment spotted by the flesh. The testimony that I desire is not from man, and the approbation of God never makes me high-minded. Rather I rejoice unto him with reverence. He teaches me to delight myself in him. And I feel I cannot be displeased with any thing that is his choice. I know that I please him, for he testifies of my works that they are wrought in him.

Indeed Jesus is unspeakably precious

Words are too mean to speak his worth,
Too mean to set my Saviour forth.¹

He daily makes to me new discoveries of his grace and power, and every fresh manifestation more effectually unites my heart to him who is altogether lovely. I love my friends in him. He gives the affection I feel, and it always leads to him. I believe when quit of the inconveniences of mortality I shall love with greater 'strength and elegance' every friend to whom Jesus has now united my soul. And what we know in part, we shall prove in eternity. 'God is love, and whoso dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God and God in him.'² My desire for you is that you may increase with all the increase of God, and return to us in the fulness of the gospel of peace. I believe you will, and that you will be a blessing to me and many.

I think Mr. [George] Bell is willing to take any advice you think proper to give. I repeat what I have said before: they that seek dissension are not friends to the work of God. I trust you labour for peace, and the God of peace shall be with you always.

I daily give up all to Jesus, and have no sacrifice to make which is not offered up already. He gives me strength for all he calls me to bear. And I find it easy for the love which 'believes' to 'endure all things'.³

May the God whom you serve bless your labours with great success! I wish you good luck in his name. The weapons of your warfare are might through him. You need not fight uncertainly, as one that beateth the air, but prove in every circumstance, 'This is the victory, even our faith.'⁴ Continue to show your care over me, by reprovng and advising me as you judge needful. I am sensible of all my obligations to you, and am, dear sir,

Your obliged and affectionate servant,

Source: published transcription; JW, *Letters Wrote by Jane Cooper* (1764), 37–38.

¹Cf. Isaac Watts, 'The Names of Christ', st. 1, as included by JW in *CPH* (1741), 112.

²1 John 4:16.

³1 Cor. 13:7.

⁴Cf. 1 John 5:4.

From Jane Catherine March

[London]
October 7, 1762

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I have found you much laid on my heart, and have power to commend you to him who is able to help you—and who, I believe, will withhold from you no manner of thing that is good. He delighteth in the prosperity of his servants. And my heart's desire and prayer for you is that Jesus may set you as a seal on his heart, and disclose to you all the secrets of his love, the hidden mysteries of his kingdom. This is a time when you have need of his eye to guide you. He will direct you in all your paths. I rejoice that that word is true, 'My grace is sufficient for thee.'¹

I believe I need not ask you to forgive the freedom of my style, because I am persuaded you would have me simply write the language of my heart. I desire to consider you as my minister, and to treat you with the respect that character claims.

I have abundant reason to praise my Lord, for I feel him to be my portion, and he makes me happy by giving me himself. I only thirst for a deeper knowledge of Jesus, whom to know is eternal life. There is no complaining in my streets, for the voice of joy and gladness is heard in my land. The Lord hath rooted and grounded me in his love, and taught me to *come* to him for a supply of my present wants. I strove, I laboured to do and to suffer the will of God, but I was continually foiled because I did not *believe*: as my day, my strength should be. I mean I stood in some measure in the strength of the present grace, without coming every moment for a fresh supply. The many arguments I had heard against the doctrine of salvation from sin, and the continual attacks of Satan with 'How can these things be!' and 'How is this or the other thing consistent', etc., made me reason much whether there was *sin* in my heart? I could not believe there was, and yet I did not dare to say there was *not*. But after much reasoning about the matter, sometimes fearing every thing was a delusion, I alway[s] left off just as I begun and felt the truth of those words, 'Man by wisdom knew not God.'² I strove to search him out by my reason, but I found *faith* alone revealed the Saviour to my heart. When I was taken sick, my reasonings all dropped for a season, and I felt a power to take God at his word. My soul was quite happy, and I could not doubt but his precious blood had cleansed me from *sin*. I have not doubted ever since. I feel it such a self-evident thing, something so *real*! Neither do I find that the enemy hath power to bring his temptations so close to my heart. But I dwell in the light, and that light shows me what I am. I do not *now* seek to find out the state of my soul by my reason, but I look to Jesus that his Spirit may reveal his thoughts of me, and I find the whispers of his voice is 'peace'. I feel I live in the possession of that promise, 'I will not leave you comfortless, but because I *live*, ye shall live also.'³ And it is true in him and no lie, for by believing eternal life abideth in us.

I am weak and helpless, but in the Lord I have righteousness and strength. Help me to praise my everlasting friend, for great is his goodness, great is his bounty. Pray for me, and believe me

Your obliged servant in the Lord,

J. C. M.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 327–29.

¹2 Cor. 12:9.

²Cf. 1 Cor. 1:21.

³John 14:18–19.

From Jane Catherine March

[London]
October 16, 1762

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I thank you for yours.¹ The Lord is good to all who trust in him. Whoever make the eternal God their refuge will prove him to be the strong city and experience that he hath appointed salvation for walls and bulwarks. The desire of my heart is to receive the law from his mouth and to lay up his words in my heart. For they are spirit and life, and man liveth by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God. My chief blessing of late has been in understanding more fully the union between Christ and my soul, and how much I am *one* with him. That word has been unspeakably precious to me, 'As the Father hath loved *me*, so have I loved *you*. Continue ye in my *love*.'² We may well long to know what manner of love it is wherewith he hath loved us, because it passeth knowledge. When I read the Scripture, every text is so full of meaning that my understanding is too shallow to search into all the riches contained therein. The word of God is like himself, incomprehensible; and I daily learn to know that I know nothing, and can only understand as he, by his Spirit, explains the hidden mystery. And I rejoice that the secret of the Lord is with those who fear him.

I am more and more convinced that one thing is needful; and by his grace I am determined only to know Jesus Christ and him crucified. His *will* I desire to make my rule of action in every minute thing. And if I watch always, I am persuaded I shall hear that voice behind me saying, 'This is the way, walk ye in it.'³

That the Lord may bless and fill you with holiness, is the prayer of
Your obliged and obedient servant in Christ,

J. C. M.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 329–30.

¹Wesley's letter dated Oct. 9, 1762.

²John 15:9.

³Isa. 30:21.

From Thomas Maxfield

[London]
October 16, 1762

We have great opposition on every side. Nature, the world, and the devil will never be reconciled to Christian perfection. But the great wonder is that Christians will not be reconciled to it; all, almost everyone who call themselves ministers of Christ, or preachers of Christ, contend for sin to remain in the heart as long as we live, as though it were the only thing Christ delighted to behold in his members.

I long to have *your* heart set at full liberty. I know you will *then see things* in a wonderful different light from what it is *possible to see them before*.

Source: published transcription; JW, *Journal*, Feb. 5, 1763 (*Works*, 21:404–05).

From the Rev. John Fletcher

Madeley
November 22, 1762

Reverend and Dear Sir,

As providence would have it, I had prevented¹ your advice in forming a society in my parish some weeks before I received the favour of your last letter.

The debates about the illegality of my exhorting in houses (though only in my own parish) grew some time ago to such a height that I was obliged to lay my reasons for it before the bishop. But his lordship very prudently sends me no answer. I think he knows² not how to disapprove, and dares not to approve, this Methodist way of proceeding.

Brother [William] Ley³ arrived safe here yesterday, and confirms the melancholy news of many of our brethren overshooting sober steady Christianity in London. I feel a great deal for you and the church in these critical circumstances. O that I could stand in the gap!⁴ O that I could by sacrificing myself shut this *immane barthrum*⁵ of enthusiasm which opens its mouth among us!

The corruption of the best thing is always the worst of corruptions.

Going into an extreme of this nature (or only winking at it) will give an eternal sanction to the vile aspersions cast on all sides upon the purest doctrines of Christianity, and we shall sadly overthrow in the worst manner what we have endeavoured to build for many years.

The nearer the parts that mortify are to the heart, the speedier is amputation to be resolved upon.

You will say perhaps but what if the heart itself is attacked? Then let the heart be plucked out as well as the right eye.⁶ Was not Abram's heart bound up in Isaac's life? Yet he did believe that if he offered him up God was able to restore him even from the dead. And was not God better to him than⁷ his hopes?

I have particular regard for [Thomas] Maxfield and [George] Bell. Both of them are my correspondents. I am strongly prejudiced in favour of the witnesses, and do not willingly receive what is said against them. But allowing that what is reported⁸ is one half mere exaggerations, the tenth part of the rest shows that spiritual pride, presumption, arrogance, unyieldingness, stubbornness, unteachableness, party spirit, uncharitableness, prophetic mistakes—in short, every sinew of enthusiasm is now at work in many of that body. Nor do I fear it upon anybody's bare word. I have some of Bell's own letters to ground my fears upon. May I presume unasked to lay before you my mite of observation?

If I had it in my power to overlook the matter as you have, would it be wrong in me calmly to sit down with some unprejudiced friends, lovers to both parties, fix with them the marks and symptoms of enthusiasm, and insist—at first in love, then (if necessary) with all the weight of my authority—upon those that have them, or plead for them, either stand to the standard of sober Christianity or openly

¹I.e., anticipated.

²Orig., 'knowns'.

³William Ley (1739–1803), a native of Exeter, was active as a Methodist preacher 1758–63, though his name never appears in the Minutes. This may be because of Ley's intention to seek ordination. He matriculated St. Edmund Hall, Oxford in Apr. 1764, completing his studies the following year. He was ordained deacon in Oct. 1765, and took a curacy in Lakenheath (Suffolk). In 1769 he was ordained priest, and appointed vicar of East Tilsbury, a position he held until his death.

⁴Cf. Ezek. 22:30.

⁵'Monstrous pit'; Virgil, *Aeneid*, Book viii.

⁶Cf. Mark 9:47.

⁷Orig., 'that'.

⁸Fletcher wrote first 'what brother Ley hath told me', then struck it out and wrote 'what is reported'.

departing for a time. Fear not, dear sir, the Lord will take care of the ark. Though hundreds of Uzziahs should drop off, most would return with Noah's dove.⁹ Have faith in the word, and leave the rest to providence. *Deus providebit*¹⁰ is a comfortable motto for a believer.

I am, with most hearty prayers that God would fill you more than ever with wisdom, steadiness, meekness, and fortitude, reverend and dear sir,

Your sincere though unworthy friend and servant,

J. Fletcher

I apprehend that in the present juncture you may receive much light by weighing with impartiality the follow scriptures: 2 Thess. 3:14; 2 Tim. 2:25; 1 Cor. 5:11¹¹ (mind the word 'railer'); Matt. 18:17; 1 Cor. 14:32–33; etc.

Source: holograph; MARC, MA1977/495/19.¹²

Note: Fletcher did not mail this letter to John Wesley directly. He enclosed it in a letter he sent to Charles Wesley a few days later, saying Charles could pass it on if he did not think Fletcher was too harsh or imprudent. It does not appear that Charles passed the note on to John.

⁹Cf. Gen. 8:8ff.

¹⁰'God will provide.'

¹¹Fletcher writes '4:11', but his comment makes clear he means chapter 5.

¹²A close transcription of this letter, showing Fletcher's original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 166–68.

From an Unidentified Supporter

c. January 1763

Be not over alarmed that Satan sows tares among the wheat of Christ! It ever has been so, especially on any remarkable outpouring of his Spirit; and ever will be so, till he is chained up for a thousand years. Till then he will always *ape* and endeavour to *counteract* the work of the Spirit of Christ.

One melancholy effect of this has been that a world who is always asleep in the arms of the evil one has ridiculed every work of the Holy Spirit.

But what can real Christians do? Why, if they would act worthy of themselves, they should, 1) pray that every deluded soul may be delivered; 2) endeavour to reclaim them in the spirit of meekness; and [3]) lastly, take the utmost care, both by prayer and watchfulness, that the delusion of others may not lessen their zeal in seeking after that *universal holiness* of soul, body, and spirit, 'without which no man shall see the Lord'.¹

Indeed this *complete new creature* is mere madness to a mad world. But it is, notwithstanding, the *will* and *wisdom* of God. May we all seek after it!

But some who maintain this doctrine in its fullest extent are too often guilty of limiting the Almighty. He dispenses his gifts just as he pleases. Therefore it is neither *wise* nor *modest* to affirm that a person must be a believer for any length of time before he is capable of receiving any *high degree* of the 'spirit of holiness'.²

God's *usual method* is one thing, but his *sovereign pleasure* is another. He has wise reasons both for hastening and retarding his work—sometimes he comes suddenly and unexpected; sometimes not till we have *long* looked for him.

Indeed it has been my opinion for many years that one great cause why men make so little improvement in the divine life is their own *coldness*, *negligence*, and *unbelief*. And yet I here speak of *believers*.

May the spirit of Christ give us a right judgment in all things, and *fill* us 'with all the fullness of God',³ that so we may be 'perfect and entire, wanting nothing'.

Source: published transcription; JW, *Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, §21 (*Works*, 13:180).

¹Heb. 12:14.

²Rom. 1:4, etc.

³Eph. 3:19.

From Adam Oldham¹

Manchester
January 8, 1763

Reverend Sir,

Amongst the many relations you have of the work of God under your direction, I think it my duty to add to your consolation by acquainting you of the happy union in your little society here. I think we are in a prosperous way, growing up into the mind that was in Christ Jesus. It is my province once a week to enquire what fresh members we have, and who are justified in the preceding week. And it appears to me as if every soul was pressing towards the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Many, most, nay near all that came after me, are preferred before me. I find them exceeding kind, most of them being willing to lend me their helping hand. But what had almost borne me down was Mr. [John] Furz's enjoining me to take part of Mr. Morris's class. I durst not refuse, though it threw me into great conflicts. I cried to God, and he strengthened my hands. About a month since, one in the class found the blessing of a clean heart. The power of God was so awful that we were obliged to be silent before him. I mustered up all my resolution, that I might not expose myself. But I was obliged to submit, after some struggles, to lie as clay before him. I find my soul in solid peace, and crying for the indubitable seal. Many help me with their prayers, so that I expect God will soon give me what I long and wait for. Pray for

Your assured friend, but unworthy brother in Christ Jesus,

A. O.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 331–32.

¹JW wrote in the full name in his personal copy of *AM*. Adam Oldham was one of the first Trustees of the Birchin Lane preaching-house in Manchester, though he fell afoul of the society in the 1750s. At this point he was restored and active again as a Methodist layperson.

From John Manners

January 17, 1763

Reverend Sir,

Since I was able, when I could be spared from the round, I have laboured a good deal in fresh places. And in the spring I shall think it my duty to do it more, especially since there is such an universal call as I never knew before. The language of most places is, 'Come over and help us.'

After much opposition, I joined nineteen together in society in Malton, and fifteen in Pickering. There will be a glorious work in both places, if one may judge of the future by the present. The power of God greatly accompanies his word, and prevails over the hearts of sinners.

We have added, during the last three or four months, upwards of eighty members to the societies. And a proportionable number have been justified by faith and have found peace with God. And indeed it is no wonder, for there never was such a spirit of life and of joy among the people in general as is at present. The ways of wisdom are not only ways of pleasantness and peace, but as new as at the first entrance therinto. By this, the ways of God are distinguished from all the ways of sin. The Lord was pleased to bless with the remission of their sins seven persons lately, in one place where they had but a small share of public means. But they forgot not to assemble themselves together, neither did God forget to meet with them.

When I was in Malton last, I went on the Sabbath-day to preach at Settingington [Yorkshire]. The congregation being very large, we asked the owner of the town for a place large enough to contain them. He answered us, 'As it is for the worship of God, I dare not refuse it. And I will send as many of my servants as can be spared to hear for themselves.' But before I had finished my discourse the curate, Mr. Hebdon, came and called aloud among the people for the church-wardens and constable, who followed him out and received a charge to pull me down. They came and told me. I desired them to give my respects to Mr. Hebdon, and tell him if he had any thing to say to me I was ready to answer for myself. But he was gone. I then finished my discourse in peace. He threatened in the following week to banish all the Methodists from town and country. But in going from an entertainment the next Saturday night, he fell from his horse and broke his neck!

God has been pleased to take lately to himself six or seven persons of our little number. [These include] William Shipton, Dinah Holmes, and Richard Richmond of York. The two former were saved only as by fire. Which, although it proves God abundantly merciful, yet shows what a poor use too many make of all the means which God gives them. The latter, nearly a Lazarus in condition, lived five or six years in the clear light of God's countenance—in the most solid peace, and a becoming resignation to the dispensations of providence—and then died.

Hannah Wood of Cave, when her departure was at hand, bid the nurses call her husband, for she had only three minutes to live. When one was gone, she bid them hasten him for she had but two to live. When another was gone, she said she had only one. And in a minute she expired. She fell into the arms of death as a man falls upon his couch when weary. She lived a steady uniform Christian, a loving wife, a tender mother, a good mistress, and then died the death of the righteous.

Margaret Banks of Stockton, a young woman, all the time of her long illness exhorted all around her to seek and serve God, telling them she knew she was going home too, and should be happy with him for ever. She praised and sang praises to God day and night. When I asked her if she did not rather choose life than death, as she was young, she answered, 'No, I had rather die now. I have no desire to live.' Her last words were, 'I am happy.'

I am,

Your obedient son and servant,

John Manners

From the Rev. James Rouquet

Bristol
January 22, 1763

Dear Sir,

The word is, 'Only believe!' O that I could believe! Jesus help my unbelief! This is all I wait to prove, and I believe that he hath not said unto me 'Seek my face' in vain. O that I may seek aright, and never rest till I also have apprehended that for which I am apprehended of God in Christ Jesus!

Dear sir, pray for me. I would be the Lord's freeman. I would be all faith, all love. I think I would. And yet were this my *one* desire, I believe the Lord would soon come to my help. I find that the converse of Christian friends is a great blessing. I am glad of the opportunities I enjoy, and I believe our meeting will be more profitable than ever as our friend Mr. [George] Stonehouse has freely declared his sentiments, and engaged me in a dispute (by writing) concerning perfection. To me it is the one thing needful. Therefore I cannot avoid being explicit on this head, in these meetings especially and to the Sunday morning congregation. And I find an unspeakable blessing in my own soul in so doing, as also in pressing the present now.

I doubt not but you have heard good news of your brother. It rejoices my heart to see his strength renewed, both in body and soul, and that the Lord hath blessed him to several. I observe a quickening among the people. Five or six I am told have lately been justified. I heard that two more had been set at liberty in Newgate [prison], but I cannot find out who they are so I let it drop. I believe Mr. O. has been of real service here, but I could wish he would speak a little more to the main point. I think he might press the matter more home. It might be a means of bringing the people forward. Indeed I fear the confusions in London have made the hands of many hang down. There is no reason for it, but such is our frame. Above all I lament that any professing this renewal should be found so wanting in the main branches of it. Is it anything short of the whole mind that was in Christ—loving God with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves? Doth not this imply that we should walk even as Christ walked? Whoever abideth in him *ought so to walk*. Surely then if we are as Christ was in this world, we shall walk in love like him. Like him endure the contradiction of sinners, much more the infirmities of his children. For everyone that is perfect shall be as his Master. For my part, I freely own I stand in doubt of every man whose *meek and lowly walk* doth not prove that he hath learned of Jesus. God grant I may never rest, till the tree being made good, all its fruit is good also—sound unto the praise, and honour, and glory of God! May God fill you with wisdom and the abundance of his grace! And at this time more especially, comfort your heart and establish you in every good thing, to the praise and glory of his grace in Christ Jesus.

I am, dear sir,

Your very affectionate friend and servant,

James Rouquet

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 105–06.

From Thomas Westell¹

Manchester
February 1, 1763

Reverend and Dear Sir,

In my last I informed you that my dear wife lay very ill of an inflammation in her bowels. This last week she grew worse in body, but quite patient and resigned to the will of God. Several persons asked her particular questions relating to the state of her soul, to whom she replied (as she ever did to me), 'I have no doubt or fear, either as to my present or eternal salvation.' On the 27th and 28th her intimate friends repeated the same questions, and to their great satisfaction found her confidence unshaken, and her hope of immortality stronger and stronger, till she was in the pangs of death. But she was sensible to the very last. Saturday morning, 29th, about one o'clock the child heard her in instant prayer and praise. The last words she was heard to speak were, 'O death! Where is now thy sting! O grave! Where is now thy victory!'² She then fell sleep in the arms of her Beloved, without a sigh or groan.

My little girl received a sense of the pardoning love of God a few months since (she will be ten years old the 24th of next May), and daily enjoys the light of God's countenance. On Sunday last she had that promise applied to her soul, 'I will create in thee a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within thee.'³ The first time she was much surprised, but it was repeated to her till she believed it to be the voice of God. A little after she saw, by the eye of faith, Jesus Christ in glory and an innumerable company of glorified spirits, with her dear mother, rejoicing and praising God. I have reason to be humble and thankful. Please to remember me in all your prayers, and bear with my many infirmities. I desire ever to remain

Your son and servant for Christ's sake.

Thomas Westell

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 156–57.

¹Thomas Westell (c. 1719–94) became one of JW's first itinerant preachers within a few months of completing his apprenticeship as a joiner in Bristol in 1741. He retired to his native city in 1778. His name is often spelled 'Westall'; as in Atmore, *Memorial*, 486–87. His wife's name was Mary ('Molly'); see JW to CW, Feb. 8, 1763, *Works*, 27:319.

²Cf. 1 Cor.15:55.

³Cf. Ps. 51:10.

From Thomas Maxfield

[London]
February 5, 1763

I wrote to you to ask if those who before met at brother [Joseph] Guilford's might not meet in the chapel. Soon after you came to town the preachers were brought into the meeting, though you told me again and again they should not come. (True. But since I said this there has been an entire change in the situation of things.¹) Had I known this I would rather have paid for a room out of my own pocket. I am not speaking of the people that met at the Foundery before, though I let some of them come to that meeting. ...² If you intend to have the preachers there to watch, and others that *I think very unfit*, and will not give me liberty to give leave to some that *I think fit* to be there, I shall not think it my duty to meet them.

Source: published transcription; JW, *Journal*, Feb. 5, 1763 (*Works*, 21:405–06).

¹This is a note Wesley is inserting when he published Maxfield's letter in the *Journal*.

²Wesley indicates the elision in his extract.

From Jane Catherine March

[London]
February 8, 1763

Dear Sir,

I feel for your present trials, but I hope the Lord will support you. It is a matter of comfort that you did not force any of those people to separate from you. I fear for them. And yet I believe they are devoted to God, though there appears a want of bowels of compassion. I have observed in them an inattention to that command, 'Be ye merciful as your Father which is in heaven is merciful.'¹ True is that word, 'God is *love*, and he that dwelleth in *love* dwelleth in God, and God in him.'²

I praise the Lord that in some measure I experience the salvation you preach. Yet not in all the fullness thereof. I find my heart given to God without reserve. My desire is unto him, and unto the remembrance of his name. But I do not feel always the same fervour. Sometimes I experience a kind of heaviness of spirit. I think I am always sensible of the multitude of mercies with which I am surrounded, and in some degree [am] thankful for them, though I have not such a lively sense at sometimes as at others. I find temptations to *pride*, but my soul takes refuge under the shadow of the Almighty. I do not feel anger, though I am not so well pleased with all I meet with. I am sensible I want more tender compassion for all in affliction. I often think I was formerly more unfeeling than anybody. And in all the outward trials I meet with, my greatest is that I am too little sensible of them. I want that mind that was in Jesus when he wept over Jerusalem.

I am found fault with by some for being blind to the faults of those I love much. I know it is a comfortable way. For if I was to dwell upon all the evil there appears in everyone, I fear my love would be lessened towards them. Before I was a Christian I could love nobody, unless my affection was founded on esteem. You will give me your opinion on this head. If we judge of every action rigorously, I know not where we shall find any saved *from sin*. I believe all the degrees of grace you preach are both scriptural, and attainable, but I doubt whether anybody is truly or properly *sinless* before God.

I am, dear sir,

Yours, etc.,

J. C. M.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 330–31.

¹Luke 6:36.

²1 John 4:16.

'Philodemas' to the Editor of *Lloyd's Evening Post*¹

[c. March 1,] 1763

Sir,

Going accidentally to visit a friend on Monday evening last, I was alarmed to find the whole house in a consternation, and much more so when I found this confusion was the consequence of [George] Bell's false prediction *that the world was to be finally dissolved that night*. As I had no desire to be melancholy, I civilly took my leave, and could not help reflecting afterwards on the instability and insufficiency of human reason, and was astonished to think that bigotry and enthusiasm should prevail over the dictates of reason and religion. When I consider who this Bell is, what station of life he follows, what opinions he endeavours to propagate, I cannot help saying they are sufficient to excite in every honest heart, every lover of his country, horror and indignation.

I have always considered Methodism, taken in the most favourable light, as the most destructive and dangerous system to government and society that ever was established. The very doctrines it teaches tend only to make its professors obnoxious to society, and I can affirm from experience that it is imprudent to put any confidence in them. Neither good subjects, good servants, and (what may concern the male creation more) good wives, can reasonably be expected to be found amongst them. Nursed up in enthusiasm and pretended miracles, attended with the dangerous doctrine of *assuring grace*, they have learnt to look upon the rest of their fellow creatures as no part of the divine creation. That is to say, as a set of wretches reserved for vengeance hereafter; contrary, with submission, to the designs of an omnipotent and merciful God, who has created every man to be saved, according to the tenor of Holy Scripture, if his own perverse will and voluntary transgressions do not obstruct his gracious intentions.

But to return to Bell, for one to pretend to know the impenetrable secrets of God concerning that particular time is directly giving the lie to our blessed Saviour, who says, 'That of that day and hour knoweth no man, no not the angels of heaven, by my Father only' (St. Matt. 24:36). When men are lost to all sense of shame, and have bid a final adieu to the dictates of religion and conscience, what is it they have not effrontery to pretend to? What execrable measures will they not eagerly pursue to accomplish their destructive purposes? He that should burn a house, and justify the action by his being a free agent, would perhaps be more excusable than these wretches, for the mischiefs they may do by inculcating the principles of enthusiasm. We need only take a slender view of the evils it has produced: What disturbances and disunion in families before happy and unanimous! What ingratitude and slothful negligence in servants before industrious, obedient, and careful! What distress, shame and poverty among the lower class of its professors, occasioned by the lucrative views and extortions of its teachers! Finally, what contempt of the national church and her doctrines!

It is incredible to think what numbers, particularly of the low vulgar, this torrent has swept away with it. Scarce a street in this metropolis where the common people reside but is infected more or less with it—some boasting their sins are forgiven, some in despair, many raving mad, others neglecting their necessary occupations for the sake of it and living in beggary and misery. What a strange infatuation has possessed us? What! Are the doctrines of Christianity so entirely extinguished that we must have recourse to fools and madmen to revive them; or, what is more, are the principles of the gospel no where to be found but in the Foundery or the Tabernacle?² Or are our manners and morals to be reformed at the hazard of despair and presumption? May God preserve every honest person from having any share in this dreadful complication of evils, and direct everyone to seek for truth in God's holy church, where truth is only to be found.

My principal motive is to prevent the unwary and credulous from being seduced by strange doctrines. It may be necessary to admonish them that false *Christs* and false *prophets* have appeared, and

¹While this letter is not addressed directly to JW, he published a reply in the same paper, dated Mar. 18, 1763.

²I.e., the preaching centers for Wesley and Whitefield.

wolves in sheep's clothing have entered in and ravaged the flock.³ And what shall we think when we see men endeavouring to break in upon the fences of our holy religion, thereby making way for the subversion of the whole? Is not this paving the way to erect the kingdom of *Antichrist*? Is not this climbing up into the sheepfold, and not entering in at the door? And are not these the men whom the Divine Author of our religion justly styles 'thieves and robbers'?⁴

If these remonstrances may have any authority to reclaim those who have not as yet sued out their patent for Antichristian principles, or serve as a caution to prevent any one from embracing them, I shall think myself sufficiently recompensed.

I am, sir,

Your humble servant,

Philodemas⁵

Source: published transcription; *Lloyd's Evening Post* (Mar. 2–4, 1763), p. 210.

³Cf. Matt. 7:15.

⁴Cf. Matt. 6:19.

⁵This pseudonym means 'love of the people' in Greek.

From the Rev. Benjamin Colley

[Yorkshire]
March 15, 1763

Oh Sir!

Is it possible? I say, is it possible for an enthusiast, that for conscience-sake has acted imprudently and ungratefully, to find favour again? Can forgiveness be had? Nay, will the acknowledgment of my behaviour be looked upon to be genuine? Will it not rather appear to spring from a selfish motive? *Truly*, upon due consideration, I cannot see how you can receive, or put any more confidence in, one so base as I have been. But is not the same humanity *still* in your breast? You know the infirmities of men, how liable we are to be imposed upon by Satan. I am one of those deluded ones. *Will you, can you* have pity upon me? I feelingly acknowledge my faults this day, that I have abused your manifold favours and am no more worthy the least notice from you. But dear sir, will you cover my faults with love? I believe the Lord has forgiven me. But how shall I give sufficient proof of my repentance towards you? I cannot do it otherwise than by my future obedience; and that, through the grace of God assisting me, I shall endeavour after.

But yet I do not see that my coming down into Yorkshire *itself* was wrong. But the *manner* of it gives me pain, that I should so set at nought that humane and gracious offer of yours. Oh dear sir, give me a line to ease my mind. I am ashamed and confounded. I do not know how I should dare to look you in the face again, but that I believe, according to our Lord's command, you will forgive; and that according to what I heard you say at York, your forgiving is forgetting.

John Manners has been with me. And since his departure I have had many a sorrowful reflection upon my own conduct. Nor could I in anywise be satisfied till I had made a sincere confession to you. It has struck so upon me that I thought I should not be able to preach any more. But the Lord takes it away when I stand up. He does bless my labours, and I trust will continue to do so, for my heart is still toward him, singly to do his will. If you cannot receive me again into your fraternity, only forgive me and I shall be content.

I am, dear sir,

Your unworthy servant,

B. Colley

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 157–58.

From Penelope (Madan) Maitland¹

May 2, 1763

Dear and Much Honoured Sir,

Next to praying that I may never be found a hypocrite in the sight of God, my desire is never to be one to man. I hope therefore you will forgive this intrusion on your time, as it is to satisfy myself by a declaration of my sentiments. The God of my salvation led me to, and has (I humbly trust) blest your preaching for some years to my soul. I trust also that, through the grace of God, my sole motive for hearing yourself, or anyone else is that I may know more of the Lord Jesus, believe in him, and love him more, become more conformed to his image, and obedient to his will. I would not be mistaken, either by being thought a *professor of perfection* or *seeker* after it, which perhaps my attendance where it is preached might occasion me to be. There is no tongue, though ever so persuasive, no life though ever so exemplary, could (in my present way of thinking) make me believe any who told me they were without indwelling corruption. Sin does not indeed *reign* in the mortal bodies of believers—but ‘covered it lies and still kept down’,² which is very plainly, and strongly affirming it is still there. ‘The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it’³ save God? I freely own, it appears to me one of the most refined and fatal delusions that ever Satan injected, to perplex, if not destroy the work of God, to set us on seeking any sinless holiness but that of him ‘who became sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him’.

Believe me, I mean not by this that we should so trust to what was done *for us* as to neglect what is done *in us*. But I think, when once I have lost sight of my sinful heart, I shall soon lose sight of my need of Christ. Mr. Maxfield’s receipt⁴ for this is indeed a very good one, namely ‘to believe away my sinful heart’. But is this agreeable to the will of God who has given us his Holy Spirit, for this very end, to convince us of sin?

I think, sir, in your second *Thoughts on Perfection*, you say you mean by this term ‘rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, and in everything giving thanks’.⁵ This is indeed a high state of grace, and what we should daily press after, and pray for. But (entreating your pardon for the liberty I take in offering the opinion of so incompetent a judge and insignificant a person as I am) I beg leave to say I think even this cannot be called ‘perfection’, as they can only be *imperfectly* done by us, and a *perfection*, any way *imperfect* is too gross an absurdity, and an irreconcilable paradox, to admit of any defence.

Would it not be safer then to call it a high state of grace, than perfection? Can *this* be a decent and becoming expression in the lips of mortals who have to do with a God ‘who chargeth his angels with folly’?⁶ It is surely a dangerous expression, making them *spiritually proud* who have so far put out their eyes as to think they have attained it, and those *mad* who have not, yet believe it attainable. Indeed there have not been wanting instances of both these. It is the prayer of my heart daily for myself that the everlasting Spirit of truth may, for his infinite mercy’s sake, vouchsafe to guide me into all truth, that the knowledge of the truth may make me free, and that I may stand fast in that glorious liberty, never abusing it, but that I may be sanctified through the truth.

¹Penelope Maitland (1730–1805), was one of nine children of Martin Madan (Sr.) and Judith Cowper Madan, and a sister of the Rev. Martin Madan. She married General Sir Alexander Maitland in 1754.

²CW, ‘Psalm 32’, st. 1, in JW, *Collection of Psalms and Hymns* (2nd edn.; London: Strahan, 1743), 70.

³Jer. 17:9.

⁴I.e., recipe or prescription.

⁵JW, *Farther Thoughts upon Christian Perfection* (1763), Q. 11.

⁶Job 4:18.

I hope, sir, that neither myself or any of my family shall ever forget the greatness of our obligations to you, under whose ministerial labours God has graciously imparted a measure of his grace. And I hope we shall never be left out of your prayers, that he may daily carry on 'the work of his grace in us, performing it, until the day of Jesus Christ'.⁷ I beg leave to assure you of my great and unfeigned esteem, and most hearty prayers that God may abundantly bless you, and after long glorifying him on earth, crown you with everlasting glory.

I am, dear sir,

Your affectionate and most obedient humble servant, etc.

Source: published transcription; *WHS* 5 (1905–07): 144–45.

⁷Cf. Phil. 1:6.

From Jane Catherine March

[London]
May 14, 1763

Dear Sir,

I have wrote nothing more concerning Jenny Cooper. Nor has she wrote any thing of her last six months' experience, except what may be found in her letters.¹ I have often wished she had, for during that time she ripened apace. She was favoured with much of the divine presence, and obeyed that command, 'Hear ye him.'² She attended to the voice of her Shepherd, and her conversation was in heaven. She lived as one redeemed from the earth, and of all the Christians I ever conversed with, I never observed such a fervent love to all as I saw in her. And in the acquaintance I had with her, particularly the last six months, I never saw any thing that had the appearance of evil.

It is a mercy that we are enjoined to be followers of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. They overcame through the strength of him who loved them, and washed them from their sins in his own blood. And the same Lord who is rich in mercy unto all that call upon him, has also undertaken our cause. And he who has delivered, and doth deliver, will continue to deliver to the end.

I praise the Lord I feel peace, and understand more fully the love of the Father in giving his only-begotten Son, that whoever believeth on him may not perish. Jesus has truly opened a new and living way into the holiest. An open door is set before us; we may enter in and find pasture. I rejoice in that word, 'It hath pleased the Father that *in him* should all fullness dwell.'³ And from his fullness we receive grace for grace. O how sweet a life is the life of faith, which teaches us to depend on Christ alone for all we want; which saves the soul from all confidence in the flesh, while it enriches and fills it with love, peace, joy, long-suffering. It debases, empties, and sinks it into nothing, so that all boasting is excluded. There is hardly any thing so blest to me as reading the word of God, and sometimes I think I never believed the Bible till within these last nine months. Every word seems so spoken to my heart. I so feel, 'All is yours.'⁴

May the Lord abundantly bless you, and fill you with all his life and love. I often think that I do not enough love and honour you, or see the use God makes of you in his vineyard. I am, dear sir,

Yours, etc.,

J. C. M.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 382–83.

¹See John Wesley, *Letters Wrote by Jane Cooper* (London: [Strahan], 1764).

²Matt. 17:5.

³Col. 1:19.

⁴1 Cor. 3:22.

From Francis Gilbert¹

Antigua
May 16, 1763

Reverend and Dear Sir,

After a most pleasant passage, I arrived here in five weeks after leaving the Lizard, and in less than seven from our leaving London—the Lord graciously hearing my prayers, in not suffering us to lie one night in the Downs. The first week or two I found myself remarkably dead, yet was wonderfully preserved in peace and was sensible to little or no condemnation. But I saw plainly that, whilst I had great reason to be thankful, I had abundant cause to be humbled. Afterwards my soul began to revive. Though I could read, pray, or meditate but little, through want of sleep, for my rest was interrupted every day by the constant rolling of the ship, as she went almost continually before the wind. I preached every Sunday, but few of the sailors attended; though the captain and mate constantly did, except once. I frequently went into the steerage among the sailors, and found great liberty in speaking to and in praying with them. But I am sorry to say that I left the ship without any visible fruit of my weak labour. Yet I must acknowledge we had but little swearing. When I came on board I found the mate seriously disposed, and well-affected to religion, yet he was a stranger to himself. But I trust I left him better informed, and more sensible of his want of a Saviour. I think the Lord, like an indulgent father, answered my prayers in every thing, especially in giving me a cabin to pray in every morning and evening, where the captain, mate, and all the passengers constantly attended.

When I landed I was received with great affection by my brothers and sisters. At present I am at my eldest brother's, about nine miles from the capital, where I have preached several times. I have found most liberty when I have directed my discourse to the whites—being at a great loss how to speak to the blacks so as to be understood. My youngest sister still rejoices in God her Saviour, and my brother and several of my sisters are waiting, I trust, by the way-side. I have paid my respects to the governor, and informed him of my intention of preaching, and that I hoped he would not oppose me. To which he answered that he would not, and trusted that I would be so prudent as not to meddle with government affairs. He also permitted me to go to the barracks and speak to the soldiers. Indeed the ground seems to be prepared for the seed. For many are ready to hear, and I trust from a better principle than mere curiosity. My brother has already taken a house for proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation in. O pray for us sir, especially for me, a very unfit and unworthy instrument for promoting the glory of God. But let the Lord send by whom he will send. I trust I shall ever, whilst upon praying ground, continue to offer up my weak petitions to the Lord that he may bless you with every blessing of the new covenant, and with comfort among your spiritual children.

I am, reverend and dear sir,

Your unworthy son in the gospel,

Francis Gilbert

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 159–60.

¹Francis Gilbert (d. 1779), son of a prosperous planter in Antigua, had taken refuge in England in disgrace. There he and his brother Nathaniel came under the influence of JW and Perronet and were converted. In 1759 the pair returned to Antigua as evangelists to pioneer Methodist work in the West Indies. See Vickers, *Dictionary*, 135; and *WHS* 55 (2005): 16–18.

From the Rev. Richard Conyers

Helmsley
June 7, 1763

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I have had information from many hands of your design of calling upon me at Helmsley in your return out of Scotland. I take this opportunity frankly and freely to declare to you, sir, that my house and my heart are and ever shall be open to you. I presume our archdeacon will be with me from Stokesley on Wednesday evening, as he always takes a bed and spends a night or two with me when he is upon his visitations, which is at this place on Friday next. How far you may think proper to alter your design of preaching here upon that account, I leave to yourself. I speak not this out of fear, for I love *you* as I love *my own soul*. My only apprehension is that he being upon the spot may shut my church-doors against you. But if you only mean a friendly visit to me, I shall be glad to see you, let who will be here. And it will be the comfort of my heart to have you preach to my flock in every room of my house, at any time when you come this way. As far as the doctrine you teach has come to my knowledge, I know not one part to which I could not subscribe both with *hand* and *heart*. You have my prayers for the divine blessing and protection upon you. May he conduct you safely through all dangers to his everlasting kingdom! And O that I may bear some humble part in that blessed work of praise, and be a partaker with you in the joys of the Redeemer's kingdom!

I am, reverend and dear sir,

Your affectionate friend and servant in Christ,

Richard Conyers

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 216–17.

From Samuel Meggot¹

Barnard Castle
June 7, 1763

Within ten weeks at least twenty persons in this town have found peace with God, and twenty-eight the pure love of God. This morning, before you left us, one found peace and one the second blessing; and after you was gone, two more received it. One of these had belonged to the society before, but after he turned back had bitterly persecuted his wife, particularly after she professed the being saved from sin. May 29 he came, in a furious rage, to drag her out of the society. One cried out, 'Let us go to prayer for him.' Presently he ran away, and his wife went home. Not long after, he came in like a madman and swore he would be the death of her. One said, 'Are you not afraid lest God should smite you?' He answered, 'No, let God do his worst. I will make an end of her and the brats, and myself too, and we will all go to hell together.' His wife and children fell down and broke out into prayer. His countenance changed, and he was quiet as a lamb. But it was not long before an horrible dread overwhelmed him; he was sore distressed. The hand of God was upon him and gave him no rest, day or night. On Tuesday in the afternoon, he went to her who prayed for him when he came to drag his wife out, begging her with a shower of tears to pray for his deliverance. On Thursday he wrestled with God till he was as wet all over with sweat as if he had been dipped in water. But that evening God wiped away his tears and filled him with joy unspeakable.

This morning, while brother Story was at prayer, God gave him a witness in himself that he had purified his heart.² When he was risen from his knees, he could not help declaring it. He now ran to his wife, not to kill her but to catch her in his arms, that they might praise God and weep over one another with tears of joy and love.

Source: published transcription; JW, *Journal*, June 12, 1763 (*Works*, 21:416–17).

¹Samuel Meggot (c. 1715–64) was originally from Haxey, Lincolnshire. He began preaching on his own in the area, came to JW's attention, and was considered for becoming a travelling preacher in 1758, but Conference was not yet ready to approve him (see *Works*, 10:282). Even so, JW encouraged his work as a local preacher in the Dales area in the early 1760s; see JW, *Journal*, May 8, 1742 (*Works*, 19:261–64), and June 12, 1763 (21:416–17).

²George Story (1738–1818) a native of Yorkshire, had been admitted on trial as an itinerant in 1762, and was currently serving in the Dales area (see *Works*, 10:293–94).

From Francis Gilbert

Antigua
June 18, 1763

Reverend Sir,

When I arrived here, I found but little life in the family, and this seemed to be owing to some servants whom I had sent out the year before. But thanks be to the Lord he is now giving us more life. The Negroes have no religion, except the two which were in England with my brother, who have not only retained their faith but have received an abundant increase of it. There are two or three more who I trust have a work on their souls. I have been puzzled to know what method to take to instruct the Negroes, not being able to speak in such a manner as to make them understand me. But yesterday the Lord pointed out a way. Going to see a Negro woman, I took my brother's waiting man to show me her house, and whilst I was speaking to her my sister told me unless I spoke in their dialect she could not understand me. Upon this the Negro man spoke to her, and in such a manner as astonished me. As he does not neglect private prayer, and has light sufficient to instruct the blacks for the present, I propose to take some pains to instruct him and another. And I trust, through the grace of God, they will be useful.

I was soon informed of several who were dissatisfied with their present condition, and enquired if I did not intend to preach, for they would gladly hear me. So I perceived the Lord had prepared the ground to receive the seed. Accordingly I have taken a house. But it is not half large enough, though it will contain 200 persons. It has been crowded every night, while a number of attentive hearers stood without. And what is remarkable, a great part of the congregation every night consists of gentlemen and ladies of the greatest note in the island. For a few of the first nights we had much noise. But now we are quiet. I preach in St. John's every Sunday afternoon and every Tuesday and Thursday at sunset. At Parham, the second town in the island, I preach one Sunday in the morning, the other in the afternoon before I preach at St. John's. Here I also preach on a Wednesday evening. I preach at my brother's house every Monday, Friday, and Saturday nights, and the congregation is increasing here also. I was constrained to publish the gospel at Parham sooner than I intended, for some in the island had fixed a day and given notice that I was to preach there at that time. Preaching was almost always a burden to me. But now it is my pleasure to preach Jesus, and the more so because the land is pestered with deists, as well as overspread with infidelity. It has been a greater cross to me to stand up before a few simple people in London than I find it to speak before a St. John's congregation. I find such boldness in publishing the gospel that I care not who is present. But after all, I must acknowledge I have such a sense of my unfitness that I often believe little good will be done by my preaching, and I am astonished that the politer and more learned sort of hearers will hear me a second time. However I bless Jesus Christ that a sense of my insufficiency does not discourage me, and that I find something more than a willingness to do my best, as long as it shall please my Master to employ me. I think I may say I am growing in grace, which astonishes me more than all. But God is love. I feel constant peace, and by looking to Jesus I am always happy. Yet I have a heart which puts me in mind that I am the chief of sinners. At present we have had no persecution, but a few lies told.

My moments are much taken up in private meetings. My brother¹ and I meet every day we are together, in order to speak freely to each other. He is very zealous and encourages the work much, and without him I cannot see how I could have made a beginning, for the preaching of the gospel here is attended with great expense. My youngest sister (an account of whose conversion you saw last year) is growing in grace, and is the only one in the family, except Bodily and the two blacks, that has faith. I find her very useful to me. We have agreed to watch over each other in love, and we meet together every day, in order to help each other forward. Once a week I meet all the family, as also the white servants. And once a week I meet my brother's children, also the house-Negroes and a class of other Negroes beside. I perceive there will be visiting work enough for me when I am in town. Next week, if not this, perhaps I may preach at the barracks. I thank Jesus Christ I have my health better, and am stronger in body than I

¹Nathaniel Gilbert.

have been, I think, for some years back. May the Lord strengthen you in body, and fill you with all joy in believing! O do not forget in private and public to pray for

Your unworthy son in Christ,

Francis Gilbert

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 384–86.

From an Unidentified Correspondent

c. June 20, 1763

God is the same yesterday, today, and forever! He was, is, and will be all in all! Being a *minute* part of the *whole*, let me consider myself *alone*. Where was I before my parents were born? In the *mind* of him who is *all in all*. It was God alone that gave me a being amongst the *human* race. He appointed the *country* in which I should begin my existence. My *parents* were also his choice. Their *situation* in mind, body, and estate was fully known to him. My parents are answerable for my education in infancy. My *capacity* was from above. That I improved so little was mostly owing to my connections, but partly to my own inattention or idleness. In most things, whilst an infant, whether good or evil, I was certainly *passive*, i.e., I was instructed or led by others, and so acted right or wrong. In all the incidents of life, whether sickness, health, escapes, crosses, spiritual or temporal advantages or disadvantages, I can trace *nothing* of *myself* during my childhood. And till I became a subject to my *own will*, perhaps I was innocent in the eyes of infinite justice; for the blood of Jesus Christ certainly cleanseth from all original sin and presents all *spotless* who die free from the guilt of actual transgression.

At what time I became a subject of my *own will* I cannot ascertain, but from that time in many things I *offended*. First, against my *parents*; next, against God! And that I was preserved from outward evils was not owing to the *purity of my own will*, but the grace of Christ overruling and preventing me.

My *natural will* ever cleaved to *evil*, and if I had ever any *good* in me, it came from above. What is called 'good nature' is a divine gift and not from the corrupt root. My *will* could not produce good, and in various instances it was in a manner annihilated, before *grace* could fix any good in me. In other words, my *will* acts from the motions of the *Old Adam*, where I transgress; but what is good in me is from the grace of Christ working, whilst my *own will* is made *passive* or *unresisting*. Thus my life has been so far holy, as I gave up my *own will* and lived in God, who is *all in all*.

From the time I could sin, I trace the divine goodness in preserving me from innumerable evils into which my own will would have led me. The unknown temptations and evils perhaps are infinitely more numerous than the *known*. If my *will* was only *not resisting*, when I received or did any good, how little was it concerned in my conviction, my conversion, my peace, and the sphere of life I engaged in, after receiving such divine blessings? My concern about my soul's welfare, the *time* of my conversion, the *ministers* raised up to be the instruments of it, the place of my first hearing the gospel, and various other circumstances that instrumentally brought about those great and blessed events in my life, were no more from anything in myself than my birth and education. Rather, my *will* was overpowered, and *grace* triumphed over it.

From these reflections I conclude that whatever blessings I have enjoyed as to parents, country, education, employments, conversion, connections in life, or any exterior or interior circumstance.... All came from God, who is all in all! And whatever in my past life is matter of repentance and lamentation has arose chiefly from my *corrupt will*, though partly from a defective judgment, ever prone to err! So that upon the whole, I have great cause to be thankful that God has been so much the all in all of my life; at the same time, I must bewail that I ever followed my own corrupt will in anything.

My present state of life, I believe, is from God! In a bad state of health, out of employment, and retired from all engagements in the world. I use the means for my recovery, and it is not from any evil principle that I am a cipher; but I cannot yet obtain health, business, or a sphere of usefulness. Nor can I ascertain how far I am culpable as to being what I am. My present duty is *submission* to the divine will. I study for improvement and pray for such blessings as I want. Is not God *all in all* as to my present state? I have no desire so strong as this, Let thy blessed will be done in and upon me. And the prayer which governs my soul continually, O may my *will* die day by day, and may God in Christ Jesus be all in all to me all in me and mine, during our life, in our last moments, and to all eternity! Amen.

Source: published transcription; JW, *Journal*, June 24, 1763 (*Works*, 21:419–21).

From George Clark¹

London
June 27, 1763

Reverend Sir,

My answers to your questions when you visited the class, I thought gave very little evidence of that work of grace I think the Lord hath lately wrought on my soul; for which reason I trouble you with this, by which you may judge whether it be genuine or not.

But perhaps it may not be amiss to speak of the former work first, whereby you will see how God hath saved a sinner. From my infancy I was of an exceeding stubborn, self-will disposition, and strongly inclined to all wickedness. And having little restraint from those I was with (my parents leaving me to the care of others), it grew up with me, so that before I was twenty there was scarcely a sin I had not been guilty of. This continuing five years longer, it at last grew to such a height that I had no conviction for sins of uncleanness, and the money I got by cheating was the sweetest to me. Yet what is surprising, once at this time the Lord visited me with his love, sweetly constraining me to retire to prayer every day for a fortnight together and to forego every sin and sinful companion. But using no other means of grace, and having none to speak to upon religion, I returned to my sins as a dog to his vomit, and was worse than ever. So that for intolerable swearing I was reproved by my abandoned companions. After I married I reformed outwardly a little, but did not turn to God, nor did I so much as use a form of worship. I had much anxious care, children coming fast, my wife's mother and my own mother living upon us, that we had a hard struggle to get a subsistence, especially in the year of the hard frost and the year after.

Soon after my wife was seized with a consumption, and my mother hearing you was at dinner at Mr. H—'s sent you a letter, upon which you came and prayed with her, and in a few days I buried her and two children. Her mother then leaving us, I had only my own mother and a girl of my wife's by a former husband to maintain. Being now in a manner free, I got more money than my family's necessities required, and had a good name among men for sobriety and honesty. Now the Lord began to work, and as I was considering the trouble I had gone through, I inadvertently took up J. Taylor's *Golden Grove*, wherein reading his exposition on the creed, I was convicted of unbelief.² I threw myself on my knees, and for the first time I prayed as a sinner. Afterwards I went to hear Mr. Doughty of Clerkenwell,³ and thought him an excellent preacher. Yet still I was not convinced of sin, and at this very time lived in the commission of my bosom sin, and for the sake of a thousand pounds was going to marry a wicked old woman. But a person at that time asking my mother to go and hear you, and my going with her, and having heard you three times, prevented it. At first I did not like your preaching. You talk so much of faith, of which I had no conception. But staying the meeting of the society, and your telling them that they had almost forgot that the faith you preached was productive of good works, I thought you now spoke well. Soon after we were admitted into the society, and from that time I was enabled to forsake all sin and sinful company, even the woman and man that were as my own soul. The word sinking into my heart whenever I heard it, discovered to me my inward sins and the sinfulness of my past life, and so deprived me of rest that I seldom slept a whole night, and made me to spend part of it in prayer and reading.

¹George Clark (1710–97) was born a son of the governor of the British colony of New York, but returned to London with his mother as his parents became estranged, and was raised in near poverty. After marrying at the age of twenty-five, he took over the newspaper business of his wife's late father. But he soon lost his wife to consumption and their two children to small-pox. It was in this situation that he was drawn to hear JW preach and eventually joined the Methodist society in London in Nov. 1746. He would go on to become one of the most honored class leaders in the society, and a defender of Christian perfection. JW published extended extracts from Clark's journal in *AM* 5 (1782): 298 – *AM* 6 (1783): 468.

²Jeremy Taylor, *The Golden Grove* (London: Royston, 1651).

³Likely Rev. John Doughty, of St. James's church, Clerkenwell.

This continued from Nov. 1746 to the 15th of Feb. following. But the night before I was more than commonly heavy, yet I was not so when I rose in the morning, my burden being gone and my heart as light as a bird, and my prayers having free access to the throne of God. I found that I was no longer condemned, though I had not as yet the witness of the Spirit that my sins were forgiven. Nevertheless, I was not long kept in suspense, the Lord at the chapel pouring such a measure of love into my heart that my body could hardly bear the weight thereof. And I became feeble as a child, and was obliged to sit or kneel most part of the service, and those words were strongly and constantly applied to my heart: 'I am the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin.'⁴

Now was the name of Jesus sweet to my soul, and all the ways of God pleasant. Now I could believe, love, and obey, and it was my meat and drink so to do. My joy continued several weeks, though not every day alike—my evil nature soon making itself manifest and, in part, robbing me of the enjoyment of my God.

Now I began a good fight of faith, not indeed before I had on the armour, but before I knew how to use it. And I lay under the disadvantage of not having an experienced leader that knew his own sins forgiven.

They of the society which came to see us were rather for exalting than bringing me down to the feet of Jesus. I had felt but very little of the wrath of God, or his displeasure at sin, in the time of legal repentance (not feeling the terrors of hell for one hour). Therefore being but little sensible of the sinfulness of sin, I did things for a time that were contrary to the commandments of God. But the Lord bore with me, and convinced me of and removed the evils, so that I soon learned to walk outwardly according to the gospel. Nevertheless I continually found, and that more and more, that my inward parts were very wickedness, feeling pride and anger so strong within me that very often I could not stand against the same. And through reasoning, my faith being very weak and not being acquainted with the devices of the enemy, he got an advantage over me.

For two years I was thus tossed about, feeling evil desires very strong at the same time, and continually beset with doubts and fears. Then the Lord gave me to pray for grace to be kept one day only, and not to be careful for another, and from that time (except I had sinned) I have had no doubt of my acceptance, or abiding fear of falling. But still the root of bitterness made itself manifest, and often to the confusion of my face, and sometimes, I thought, to the reproach of the gospel. But the Lord was merciful, and forgave all my sins, and at times gave me to feel much of his love, together with a clear testimony of my acceptance, though my temptations and trials from the world were very great, and at one time from Satan in a very uncommon manner. But that strong and constant sense I had of in-bred sin was worse than all. Indeed I had sometimes so piercing a sense of it, and so little hopes of enjoying the promises, that I have often wished for a dissolution of soul and body.

But though I felt this and more than can be expressed in words, and prayed and strove to be delivered, that I might serve God in righteousness and holiness without fear, yet did I seek it rather by the works of the law than by simple faith, believing that sin would die by degrees, but not expecting a total release till near death. And thus I believe I had continued till this day, notwithstanding the plain Scripture doctrine I sat under, if the Lord himself had not convinced me by the great work he lately carried on in the hearts of so many of my brethren. Yet neither at the beginning of that work could I believe that God gave the liberty they testified. But one and another who met with me in class, and in whom I saw the work of grace carried on, gave evidence by word and deed, so that I could not but see and acknowledge the superior work of the Spirit in the holy, humble love there was in some of them (for I could not receive the report of them all). Now was my soul distressed more than ever. Nor was I without some envy at those who were so blessed, and had hard thoughts of God because I had so long borne the burden of in-bred sin, and some of them were not a year before they received an entire deliverance from it.

Now the purity of God, and the unholiness of my soul were more evident than ever, and I felt unbelief and hardness of heart such as I had never done⁵ before. But I could not pray with faith in the

⁴Exod. 34:6–7.

⁵Orig., 'did'.

promises, and this was a great grief to me, for I thought if I could I should be soon set at liberty. Yet there were a few minutes wherein the promises seemed to me to be 'yea and amen in Christ Jesus',⁶ and that the Lord would fulfil them in my soul. Thus I continued hoping and desiring to love the Lord with all my heart, though at times I despaired that it ever would be. But on Whitsunday, May 30, 1762, the Lord did work in my soul in a manner I never before found. I was in some little expectation he would deliver me at this time, by taking possession of my heart in love, but that morning I found it hard to keep hope alive. Being at chapel in the beginning of the service, I found but little of his presence. Yet at the singing the first hymn the Spirit came with such power as to take away all my attention to outward things. I then pleaded with the Lord, and with many tears, that he would make me a partaker of his sanctifying love, by removing for ever the root of bitterness out of my heart—when it was suggested to me that I sought deliverance from inbred sin only for the pleasure resulting therefrom.

Then I strove to uncover the inmost recesses of my soul to the Lord, begging that he would look within me, that my heart being purified by faith, I might serve him with my whole soul, and have every thought brought into captivity to his obedience. While I was thus in earnest prayer, I felt such a sense of his presence and power as made my body greatly tremble, yet I kept my spirit still and continued crying, 'my heart Lord, my heart Lord, work within, work within'; for I trembled fearing lest this visitation of the Spirit should pass away before my heart was purged from sin.

The Lord heard my prayer and answered me indeed, not by word but by work—as it was literally taking away the heart of stone and giving me an heart of flesh. For I felt at that instant my heart (as it were) with violence taken out of me and love, such for its quality as I never felt before, taking possession of the empty place. I cried out in myself, 'Is it possible? Hast thou indeed purified my heart? Hast thou taken away the root of bitterness?' scarce desiring to give credit to the work of the Spirit. I found love, and nothing contrary thereto, all that day. But I had not the witness of the Spirit with the word of God, which I could not be satisfied without. However the next day the Lord brought these words with power to my heart: 'The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds, destroying, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.'⁷

I was hereby given to know that, the hindrance to this being removed, the Lord would accomplish it in his time. This day I saw the works of creation as I never did before, beholding God in all things. In the evening, seeing the setting sun, I could see by faith and with a clear inward evidence the purity of my soul in the Son of God, and this was accompanied with an inexpressible sweet love. Notwithstanding all this, the enemy got an advantage over me on the third day, by reasoning, 'What will such or such an one think of me, if I should say I believe the Lord hath purified my heart by faith.' I was greatly afraid also I should be constrained to speak the next Sunday, as there was to be a love feast. Therefore by these and such like thoughts I grieved the Spirit, and was brought into heaviness for three days, so that I was ready to give up all thoughts of any farther work of God within me, though I found no return of sinful nature. But Satan said it would not be long so, and I found it not easy to disbelieve him. But the next Sunday the Lord gave me a strong and clear evidence of the work of his grace, and I could not but declare it in the evening.

All the next week I found the witness and the love of the Spirit. Till Saturday, but that was a day of trial indeed, such as I have never found since. For from the time I rose till I went to bed I was tempted to a dislike of persons and things. I wept much, not believing it could be from the enemy but from mine own heart, and was determined to declare in the society I was deceived. However the Lord withstood that, by showing me the next day at the chapel that he had forever removed pride, self-will, and evil desire out of my heart. I found now no unbelief, but my soul seemed ready to embrace every promise. From that time I have had no doubt that the Lord hath purified my heart; neither to this day have I found any of those evils within me. Indeed I found myself more ignorant and weak than ever, having every thing to learn. But I had such a child-like dependence on Jesus Christ, and such sweet an union with him, that my soul rested on him as my wisdom and strength.

⁶Cf. 2 Cor. 1:20.

⁷2 Cor. 10:4–5.

I have now lived one year in this blessed liberty, daily increasing in faith, and established in the truth of this inward salvation, and a great one it is. Now I find my soul is entered into the very nature of holiness, and I can love the Lord with a pure and holy love. Now I can also love mine enemies, and pray for them as for mine own soul, and can bear injuries in that spirit which I never could before. I neither feel sin nor fear it now; and that not from self security, but from a sense of inward liberty and watchful prayer. Neither do I now ever find the least inclination to depart from the ways of God. Indeed he is become in such a manner the light and life of my soul that my body could as well subsist without the soul as my soul without Jesus. When I have a particular love-visit from him, he sets as it were my heart in a flame—and not now as heretofore the flame spreading about the heart, but entering into the very centre, the obstruction being now removed.

I have twice found eternity sweetly opened to my view, and once could see myself of that innumerable company, but with such astonishment as I cannot express, having at the same instance a glance of my past life. Yet I confess, great as this salvation is, it does not come up to the idea I had of it. For I not only thought I should see war no more, but that I should be, as soon as delivered from sin, filled with every grace of the Spirit and an uninterrupted enjoyment of God's pure love; having no conceptions that evil spirits, bodily infirmities, or any other power could possibly interrupt that love for one minute. I also expected to have had meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, and an intense love to Jesus Christ and the souls of men to become as it were the very nature of the soul. But with me it is not so, for though I actually find more of these than ever, yet it seems as if they but just begin to exist, and I believe must be kept and increased by faith, and watching unto prayer.

Indeed, I find myself so defective in every grace that I am ashamed before God and man. I also greatly feel the want of an humble mind, and beg it with all my heart. For however there be in reality a greater work of grace, yet I find myself more ignorant, empty, and helpless than ever, and my soul seems to want all things. But I may say in truth, I am possessed of all things in Christ Jesus. I might go on to speak of many wants and weaknesses, but I know you are not unacquainted with them.

G. C.

Source: published transcription; *Spiritual Letters* (1767), 55–65.

From the Rev. Jacob Chapman¹

Staplehurst, Kent
July 14, 1763

Reverend Sir,

I have had it on my heart to write to you. It is my prayer to God that he may bless and keep you.

I am a minister of the Presbyterian denomination, but my Master has enabled me to love real Christians of all denominations. I know I am passed from death into life, because I love the brethren.

I have reason to bless God for my acquaintance with the Methodists. They have been great blessings to me and my dear wife. The Lord has inclined our hearts to receive the preachers most freely and joyfully. These words, 'who loved me, and gave himself for me',² often comfort me. Particularly when I receive the preachers, so also do these, 'Verily verily I say unto you, he who receiveth *whomsoever* I send receiveth *me*, and he that receiveth *me* receiveth *him* that sent me.'³ Astonishing grace! They are the messengers of the Lord. I am sure the cause is the Lord's

I have a particular circumstance relating to the late Dr. Doddridge (whose memory is very dear to me, and who told me himself that he highly esteemed you). Having heard of a remarkable answer of prayer relating to his being chose pastor at Northampton, I wrote to a friend concerning it and received the following answer.

The account you desire concerning the good woman near Northampton is this. Several years before Dr. Doddridge's predecessor died, this woman represents herself as divinely admonished that the present minister should leave them and soon after die, but that God would send a young man who had not begun to preach—that he should come while they were vacant, and would be known to her by preaching the first time from these words, 'By whom shall Jacob arise? For he is small.'⁴ That by this young man God would revive his work amongst them. This was about 1716. In 1729 the minister left Northampton (and died the year after), which brought Mr. Doddridge to supply the vacancy. The very first time this woman heard him, he preached from those words.

To confirm this account, take the *Doctor's own words*, as I transcribed them from his private papers:

Just about the time my removal was talked of, I came to preach occasionally at Northampton, and had brought over sermons with me, but my mind was in an extraordinary manner impressed with these words, 'By whom shall Jacob arise? For he is small.' Accordingly I preached from two or three hints before a great congregation, neglecting others that I had wrote out at large. The other was a worthy man, who lived near this woman, told me there was a very pious young woman in that neighbourhood who told him she was confident I should come amongst them, and continued in a steadfast persuasion of it against all appearance of probability.

The above you may depend on is truth. May God strengthen you for the arduous undertaking; guide you in all things, and bless you more and more! I am reverend sir,

Your very affectionate fellow-labourer,

J. Chapman

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 550–51.

¹Jacob Chapman (d. 1795), a student of Philip Doddridge, and became pastor of the Presbyterian church in Staplehurst in 1740. He joined the Methodist Society there (while remaining pastor of the Presbyterian Church) in 1762, and regularly hosted JW and his assistants at his house thereafter.

²Gal. 2:20.

³John 13:20.

⁴Amos 7:2, 5.

From the Rev. Benjamin Colley

Newcastle
July 18, 1763

My Dear Sir,

It is with comfort I now write to you. The bar which Satan thrust in, God has burst asunder. You are near unto me. I can sympathize with you in your various afflictions. To reflect upon my former conduct, that added to the weight you endured, now pains me. Though you have forgiven me, I cannot forgive myself. I cannot bring into words how I loath and abhor myself. O that you and I may ever be in this spirit. I think if ever I had scriptural experience, it is *now*. Indeed, the Lord gave me such bitter physic that I thought it would have cost me my life. But it has wrought effectually. To his name be the glory.

I have continued to preach morning and evening, though often tempted to give over, through the cloudiness of my understanding and my various horrible conflicts within. I have for some days found little else but temptations to blasphemy, and have thought *now* the Lord will strike me dead upon the spot and send me to hell. But though I did not see it, he was with me in the fire. Though it was as much as I could endure, yet there was a way for me to escape. His hand sustained me, and I am now (O for gratitude!) brought into the wealthy place.

I hope the love which I have expressed toward you will neither hurt you nor be idolatry in me. Indeed there is need of watching and prayer, so various and subtle are the devices of Satan.

I meet with some precious souls in the north, yea in every place that I come to. But I think in general they are a happier people in Yorkshire. Opinions seem to take place with many, more than love. Satan has not yet lost his cunning. When he has stolen away life, then he infuses predestination. Durham seems to be renowned for that dangerous principle. I keep off from contention, as much as possible, both in preaching and conversation, and enforce repentance, faith, and holiness both of heart and practice. This is the only way that I can find to pull down the strong-holds of Satan. The Lord fill you with wisdom and spiritual understanding! This is the fervent prayer, of

Your brother in the gospel,

B. Colley

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 386–87.

From Lady Frances (Erskine) Gardiner¹

July 25, 1763

Reverend and Very Dear Sir,

I persuade myself that you will not be displeas'd at my taking the liberty to write to you. You have cause to bless God for his having directed you in sending preachers to this place. As to those of them I have heard, I have cause to thank God that they came hither. There has been a considerable reviving of late: some sinners are newly awakened, some formalists have got their eyes opened, some backsliders are recovered, and I believe many saints have been much edified. Mr. [Robert] Roberts' preaching has been *remarkably* blessed to many in Edinburgh; and so was Mr. [Thomas] Hanby's, the short time he stay'd. O that their sermons may be blessed wherever they preach! I verily believe God sent them.

I have never, I own, been at the preaching-house in a morning yet, as they preach so early. But I ventur'd to the high school yard the morning you left Edinburgh, and it pleas'd God, even after I had got home, to follow part of your sermon with a blessing to me.² And I think it my duty to mention that God has often of late dealt very bountifully with me. Well may I be astonish'd at it, when I consider my own unworthiness. But I dare venture to say that Christ and all with Christ is mine. I beg a share in your prayers; and am, very dear sir, with great affection and regard,

Your sister in Christ Jesus,

Frances Gardiner

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 443.

¹Lady Frances Gardiner (d. 1766), the widow of Col. James Gardiner and the daughter of David Erskine, fourth Lord of Candross and ninth Earl of Buchan.

²Wesley added a note at the end of this letter in *AM*: 'So she thought and wrote, till Dr. [John] Erskine convinc'd her I was a *dreadful heretic!*'

From Elizabeth (Patten) Bennis¹

Limerick
August 2, 1763

Reverend and Dear Sir,

After many struggles (from a sense of my inability), I have at last ventured to lay the state of my mind before you, requesting your opinion and advice.²

About four years ago I was given to see the *absolute necessity* of holiness of heart, ...³ was burdened under the weight of my corruption and could not be satisfied with less than a total deliverance Though Mr. [Thomas] Olivers (who was then stationed here) preached this doctrine, yet very few would receive it. So that I was partly reasoned and partly laughed out of my earnestness, and by degrees lost all hope and desire after it, and sunk into a dead formal state, till I became a back-slider in heart, having only the sad remembrance of what I lost. ... This made me completely miserable, because truly sensible of my state but utterly unable to struggle out of it, as to create a new world. In this state I was when you were last here. ... The doctrine of holiness which you revived, however desirable in itself, only tended to aggravate my guilt. ... The beauty of holiness stood continually before me, but I dared not reach after it. It seemed as the children's bread which I must not touch, till in one of your sermons you described my state more clearly than I could myself, and desired 'that such should not be dismayed, but seek after both pardon and holiness, that God was able to give the two blessings at once and you did not find it said in Scripture that he would not'. These words came with such power to my soul, and gave me such encouragement, that I was determined never to rest till God had made me a witness of this truth.

In a few weeks after, the Lord did heal my backslidings and greatly refresh my soul. But this did not suffice. I found still an evil heart of unbelief bent to backslide from God, a stubborn perverse will that would not be subject to the divine will, and an enmity in my heart against God. Neither could I give up all for him. ... I found many idols in my heart, which I had not power to give up, though I grieved to see them there. ... In this state I could not rest, and was determined I would not. But here the fear of deceiving myself made me put the blessing from me. I looked for it to come with observation, and was not content to receive it in the 'small still voice'.⁴ I had large manifestations of the love of God, and many comfortable tests of scripture occurred to me. And my soul at times emptied of all but God, yet could not receive this as the blessing I was seeking because the measure of joy I felt was not greater than what I had often before experienced, though my comforts were stronger. Thus I continued for some time, resisting the grace of God, and would not receive him in his own way, lest I should deceive myself. Till I fell back again into my former state, feeling the weight of my corruptions more than ever. Then I could clearly see

¹Eliza Patten (1725–1802), a native of Limerick, married Mitchell Bennis (1720–88) in 1745. Elizabeth was converted in 1749 when Robert Swindells came to Limerick. She was soon a leader in the Methodist work there. Her influence extended to Waterford in the 1770s as some of her children settled there. In the early 1790s, after the death of Mitchell, she accompanied her son Thomas in a move to Philadelphia, where she died in 1802. This letter begins an extended correspondence with JW.

²Bennis was not crafting this summary *de novo*. She had adopted the practice of keeping a spiritual journal at the time of her conversion. While her efforts were sporadic, in May 1763 she had returned to this practice, with a reflective entry that forms the base for what she sent to JW (and enlarges a bit what is given in this letter). See Rosemary Raughter, *The Journal of Elizabeth Bennis, 1749–79* (Dublin, Ireland: Columba Press, 2007), 151–56.

³These elision marks are scattered through the published text. It is unclear if they indicate elided material from the original manuscripts or were Bennis's way of marking longer pauses. Similarly, the letter is presented in the published form as a single extended paragraph and nearly one long run-on sentence—using semicolons rather than periods for major breaks. Paragraphs and modern punctuation have been introduced editorially.

⁴Cf. 1 Kings 19:12.

I had resisted the grace of God, ... but soon determined never to rest without it, and was now content to receive him in his own way, content to be *anything*, to die if only by death I might be delivered from my burden. ...

Thus I remained till the 22nd May last (being Whitsunday), when going to the Lord's table heavy laden with the burden of my corruptions, but particularly because of the enmity I found in my heart against God, I there found my burden much heavier and therefore cried the more earnestly when those words were applied to my heart, 'Believest thou that I am able to do this?'⁵ My soul immediately answered, 'Lord I believe thou art able.' The word came again, 'Be it unto thee according to thy faith.'⁶ Here unbelief came in and raised disturbance in my soul, and I could only cry, 'Lord give me faith.' I was not filled with large expectation and a firm persuasion that God would bless me.

Thus I continued till the second of June, when at prayer I found in a moment my idols taken away and my will wholly subjected to the will of God. ... Nothing remained in my heart to oppose his will or work, and such a measure of peace and love poured into my soul as left no room for doubt. ... I had not at this time such a measure of joy as I have often had before, but such a calm serenity of soul as I had never before experienced. I sought for my corruptions but could not find them. The enmity that was before in my heart was taken away and it was filled with love both to God and his people. And so far as I have stated it still continues, only with this difference, I often find heaviness of soul and then am apt to suspect my love to God. I know of no competitor he has in my soul at any time, but cannot at all times find my affection warm to him. ... My thoughts are not always on God or the things of God. Even when they are not necessarily employed, they are frequently taken away on I know not what and it is hard to stay them aright. I frequently find deadness in prayer and absence under the word. I do not always see God. In employment and conversation my eye is often taken off from him, and sometimes [I have] a thoughtless forgetful spirit. ... Indeed, hitherto the Lord has kept me from sin. I find no desire towards it. I love the law and purity of God, and find a jealousy over myself lest I should even in thought offend. I find no condemnation, but do always even in the most grievous temptations know that God for Christ's sake has forgiven my sins. ...

This evidence I have had clear, without intermission, since the second of June; which I could never say before, for in temptations it was often clouded. But now Satan seems to level his darts against this late work that God has wrought in me. And indeed I find his temptations sharp, strong, and continued, insomuch that it is sometimes hard to stand against them, and am often at a loss to know whether they be temptations or not, and am often tempted to think I keep a presumptuous hold. ... I almost continually have questionings in my mind concerning it, and often think the blessings I have received are only the effects of justifying faith. Though I find I would not be satisfied with this and do earnestly desire the witness of the Spirit to ascertain what God has wrought. But [I] find frequent reproofs for this, telling me that God has not cleansed my heart, therefore it is not right I should look for the witness; that when he *does* the one, he will *give* the other. ... Indeed I think the words 'sanctification', a 'clean heart', and 'loving God with all the heart' are great expressions, and such as I cannot appropriate to my state, because of the deficiencies I have already mentioned, therefore request your thoughts and advice. And am reverend and dear sir,

Your respectful and affectionate friend in Christ Jesus,

Eliza Bennis

Source: published transcription; Bennis, *Correspondence*, 5–11.

⁵Matt. 9:28.

⁶Matt. 9:29.

From an Unidentified Correspondent

c. October 1763

I was reading your *Notes* on Heb. 12 a while since; I was struck with your exposition of the ninth verse. 'Perhaps these expressions, "fathers of our flesh", and "Father of spirits", intimate that our earthly fathers are only the parents of our bodies, our souls not being derived from them, but rather created by the immediate power of God, and infused into the body from age to age.'¹ But meeting with a curious old book which asserts a contrary doctrine, I hope you will pardon my freedom in transcribing and begging your thoughts upon it.²

That souls are not immediately infused by God, but mediately propagated by the parent, is proved, (1) from the divine rest, Gen. 2:2, 'And he rested on the seventh day, from all the work which he had made'; (2) from the blessing mentioned, Gen. 1:28, 'And God blessed them, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply,' for this does not relate to a part, but to the whole of man; (3) from the generation of Seth, Gen. 5:3, 'And Adam ... begat a son in his own likeness, after his image', for this image principally consisted in the soul; (4) from the procession of the soul from the parent mentioned, Gen. 16:26, 'All the souls ... which came out of his loins'; (5) from the very consideration of sin; for they are infused (i) either pure, and then, 1) they will either be free from original sin, the primary seat of which is the soul, and so God will be cruel in condemning the soul for what it is not guilty of; or 2) we must suppose the impure body to pollute the soul, which is absurd. Or (ii) they are infused impure, and in that case God will be the cause of impurity, which is impossible. This is further proved from the doctrine of regeneration; for that which is regenerated was also generated or begotten, but the whole man is regenerated, therefore the whole man is generated. Compare John 3:6, 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit'; and Eph. 4:23, 'And be renewed in the spirit of your mind.'

That the human soul is propagated by the parents together with the body is further proved, (1) by the creation of Eve, whose soul is not said to have been breathed into her by God; (2) from the confession of David, Ps. 51:2, 'Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me,' which words cannot possibly relate to the body only; (3) from our redemption; what Christ did not assume, he did not redeem; if therefore he did not assume his soul together with his body from the Virgin Mary, our souls are not redeemed by Christ, which is evidently false; (4) from similar expressions (Job 10:8, 'Thine hands have made and fashioned me'; and Ps. 139:13, 'For thou hast possessed my reins, thou hast covered me in my mother's womb') where God is said to have formed us with his own hands, which yet is no otherwise done than mediately by generation; (5) from the nature of the begetter and the begotten; they are of one species, but the man who begets consisting of a soul and body, and a body without a soul, are not of one species.

Again, supposing the soul to be infused by the Deity, either (first) it will be free from sin, and so God himself will be accused as guilty of injustice in condemning a pure spirit, and in

¹This is the note on Heb. 12:9 as it appears in the first two editions of the *NT Notes*. But Wesley had already rethought the matter, sparked by reading Henry Woolnor's *The True Original of the Soul* (London, 1641) in Jan. 1762. He immediately revised the comment on Heb. 12:9 to suggest that God created our souls 'at the beginning of the world', such that it could be passed to us (like our bodies) through our parents. This revision appeared in the third edition (1762) and following editions. Wesley also published an abridgment of Woolnor as a series in *AM* 6 (1783).

²The specific book being summarized is unclear, but it rehearses the standard Lutheran arguments in favor of a 'traducian' model of the origin of the soul; cf. Heinrich Schmid, *The Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (3rd edn.; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1899), 249.

infusing it into an impure body; or (2) he will be accounted the author of the soul's pollution, by uniting it, a pure spirit, to an impure body, in order that it should be polluted; (3) a double absurdity will follow upon this supposition—viz., (1) the organical parts of man only will be slaves to sin; (2) the immortal spirit would be corrupted by the mortal body; (3) or, if the soul being thus infused, it be polluted by sin, it will follow that God is expressly assigned to be the cause of sin, which is the highest blasphemy.

Source: published transcription; JW, *Journal*, Oct. 25, 1763 (*Works*, 21:435–36).

From B. Richards¹

[London]
c. January 1764

[Richards's introduction to excerpt in his letter to CW:

I would observe with great satisfaction that since you left us your brother has preached in the general in the good old way, and rarely to insist upon instantaneous sanctification. One Sunday he leaned pretty much that way, which occasioned me to write to him. In answer whereto he wrote me 'That it is his settled judgment, and has been for many years, that every believer may expect to be sanctified in a moment, in an inexpressibly higher degree than he was when he was justified.' I think this is reducing the matter to a narrow compass, for here is no full or entire sanctification insisted on, but only a higher degree. And therefore I wrote to him that:]

If this great work of the Spirit be not understood to be confined to one particular operation, as if it was only at one particular time throughout his whole life that a believer is to expect to be so highly favoured, I can readily receive it. And I know of none but what are like-minded. For I believe that experience shows that every believer who continually watches unto prayer is favoured with many fresh manifestations of the love of God in a higher, and sometimes undoubtedly in an inexpressibly higher, degree than when he was justified. And that a further or higher degree of holiness is brought into the soul, proportionable to the degree of love shed abroad in the believer's heart. So that I am persuaded of the truth of what you said a 12-month ago in public, that where the love of God fills the heart, and so long as it fills the heart, there is no room for sin. And therefore if sin be only subdued, it answers the same end upon your plan as if it was expelled. Seeing your judgment is that it may be brought in again.

Endorsement: by CW, '[[Richards of brother]]' and 'Richards sense of sancti / fication Feb. 1764'.

Source: manuscript copy by Richards; MARC, MA 1977/501/121 (included in a letter to CW dated Feb. 28, 1764).

¹B. Richards and his wife were lay members of the society in London; attending particularly the West Street chapel. His first name was likely Bartholomew or Benjamin, but neither this or other details have been confirmed.

From Sarah Crosby¹

March 6, 1764

Honoured and Dear Sir,

I have often heard you do not take those persons to be real friends who reprove or tell you what they think, but cleave to those who always give praise and respect, though sometimes only from the teeth outward.

O my God, save thy servant and keep his soul at the utmost distance from any thing of this nature, and from whatever else would hurt it. And do thou give him to be inwardly devoted to thee, to die to every creature, till thy Spirit speaks in his heart: 'Thou are dead, and thy life is hid with Christ in God!'²

You have here the language of my heart, without any disguise or reserve. I am nearly concerned for your prosperity because I have received more good through *you* than any other person in the world, and likewise on account of our Lord's glory in the world and among his people, whom my soul loveth.

To the bowels of divine love I commend you, and to the tenderest mercies of the almighty Jesus, believing he will be with you in your journey and make you a blessing to many souls. And in the right time I believe also he will bring you back to his people here in safety.³

I have yet to tell you how our Lord deals with my own soul. I see him all love indeed, not only to myself but every creature, would they but come to him. It is not the *greatness* of any one's sins, but the want of *wrestling, praying earnestly* for deliverance *now*, that hinders his being saved, with whatever degree of salvation he *now* wants. I feel, glory be to God, grace reigning through righteousness. All the faculties, powers, and passions of my soul are governed by sacred love. For this alone I desire to think, speak, and act; nothing else invites me. I read *emptiness* and *death* on all created good. May Jesus help me, by what means he pleaseth, to pursue more earnestly the *one good*.

I can't tell if it is right to ask you to write to me, so I leave it to the Lord to incline you as he pleases.

Source: JW's transcribed copy; MARC, MA 1977/157, JW III.7, item numbered '113'.

¹This is the first letter in a set of exchanges with a correspondent that JW transcribed into a notebook during his preaching tour in 1764. The woman is not identified in the transcript of either incoming or outgoing letters. Telford assumed it was Sarah Ryan, and listed JW's letters of Mar. 25 and Apr. 23 as directed to Ryan (*Letters*, 4:233, 240). But JW's letter of Mar. 25 refers to Ryan as a third party (and one somewhat estranged at that), not the letter writer. Moreover, the tone of this set of letters does not fit the 'reprimand' letter that JW sends Sarah Ryan in June 28, 1766. Most importantly, JW alluded to the criticism in this letter in his to Crosby on Sept. 12, 1766. See in this regard JW's comment in his letter to Crosby of May 11, 1780: 'Before you mentioned it, that was my purpose not to let anyone know of your writing. Therefore I do transcribe what I choose to keep and burn the originals.'

²Col. 3:3.

³JW was just preparing to leave London for his annual northern preaching trip. He departed on Mar. 12.

From B. Richards

[London]
c. March 10, 1764

Reasons humbly offered against Dr. [John] Jones's officiating as a Clergyman¹

First, because there were great suspicions last summer touching the character of the person who ordained him. It was questioned whether he was a real bishop, and if he was, whether he had not left his own country upon account of some issues or misbehaviours. Till these things are fully cleared up to the satisfaction of the society (many of whom have entertained the above suspicions and were determined not to receive Mr. [Lawrence] Coughlan as an ordained minister), the validity of his orders may justly be suspected.

Secondly, but supposing him to be a real bishop of a Greek Church, and that he stands clear of suspicions of any kind, it is clearly apprehended that he has not according to our laws and the constitution of our national Church (of which we profess ourselves members) any right or power to exercise his episcopal character here. And that no person ordained by him can be acknowledged a minister of the Church of England or (lawfully) use the office of the church. And that if any one would do so, he would be liable to a prosecution in the ecclesiastical court, where his (supposed) ordination by a foreign bishop would not be regarded. Besides, this would be a means—and the most effectual means—of raising up the bishops and clergy against the Methodists, for such a proceeding must needs force them in a tender point and they would undoubtedly use all their power to put a stop thereto. It behoves everyone therefore to take care how they become instrumental in doing anything that may be a means of stirring up our enemies against us, lest they become answerable both to God and man for the consequences.

Thirdly, it is humbly apprehended that the concurrence of Mr. Charles Wesley should be had in an affair of so great consequence. Is he consenting thereto? We look upon the two brothers to be our joint ministers, and humbly conceive that nothing of importance (especially of so great importance) should be undertaken without their joint consent. If it be, may it not be productive of divisions among ourselves? It is therefore humbly hoped and desired that brother John Jones may forbear to exercise of an ordained minister till the two brothers have had a personal conference upon it; and until also full satisfaction be given, both on the validity of the ordination itself and also as to the legality of it according to our laws and constitution.

¹The events that provoked this letter can be pieced together by comparing it and a letter to the editor that JW published in *St. James's Chronicle* (Feb. 12–14, 1765), p. 4. In the summer of 1763 JW encountered Gerasimos Avlonites (Erasmus Aulonita), who described himself as Bishop of Arcadia, in a destitute state. JW offered financial support to Avlonites, and also requested that Avlonites ordain John Jones, one of JW's long time assistants. Jones held both an M.A. (1742) and a B.Med. (1745) from Oxford, so he had all educational requirements for ordination. But when he sought ordination from Church of England bishops they declined, due at least in part to his connections with the Methodists. This refusal exacerbated JW's concern to provide sacraments to the growing community of Methodists in London, because so few in his connection were ordained. Thus the request for Avlonites to ordain one assistant that JW felt was fully qualified. This ordination took place perhaps as early as July–Aug. 1763, though the exact date is not recorded. A letter of JW to his brother Charles dated Mar. 1, 1764 makes clear that the ordination had taken place some time before, but JW had not yet begun to allow Jones to officiate in Methodist settings. Shortly after the ordination of John Jones, while JW was out of London (as he was much of Aug. to Oct.), another of his assistants, Lawrence Coughlan, sought and obtained ordination from Avlonites, without JW's knowledge or support. The present letter reflects the concern among some London Methodists about recognizing these two initial ordinations. A deeper wave of concern would be sparked by further ordinations (again without JW's support) in Nov. 1764.

Especially as, fourthly, by the Act of Uniformity, 14th [Car.] ch. 2,² it is directed that no person whatever shall presume to consecrate and administer the holy sacrament of the Lord's Supper before he be ordained priest according to the form and manner prescribed by the Book of Common Prayer, upon pain to forfeit for every offence the sum of £100. It is granted that by the Act of Toleration dissenters are exempted from this penalty. But as our above named brother is intended to act as a minister of the Church of England, it will remain in full force against him.

It is hoped that these things will be seriously weighed and considered, that we may act consistently with our profession of members of the Church of England—which, it is apprehended, the introduction of foreign ordinations among us is no sign or badge of. These are the sentiments of others, besides that of an unworthy brother,

B. Richards

Address: 'To the Rev Mr John Wesley'.

Endorsement: by CW, 'March 13, 1764 / Richards – of Greek Ordination'.

Source: manuscript copy by Richards; MARC, MA 1977/502 (included in a letter to CW dated Mar. 13, 1764).

²I.e., the Act of Uniformity 1662.

From Sarah Crosby¹

April 5, 1764

Your questions are very weighty, and such as are not to be answered without deep consideration. And because we have lately seen bad effects produced by speaking great swelling words,² I shall endeavour so to speak as to convey ideas to your mind of less than I feel, rather than more. God forbid that I should glory save in the cross. But I am not yet enough conformed thereto to glory in it as I desire to do.

What I call 'communion with God' is conversing with him as a man with his friend, and feeling the soul sink into the arms of his love, where every care, fear, desire, though ever so innocent, and whatever is of a trying nature, is buried in the abyss of love divine. This I constantly desire above all things. But oh, this I have not always!

I am not always thus happy; though, glory be to his name, I am often so. And the returns of this happiness are more frequent and more lasting. Do you think a person may be this happy *always*? And free from *every exercise* of the mind?

I think he is in all my thoughts. But I am at times variously exercised. He then shows me my very great poverty, weakness, and folly—and the need of being more dead to all things created. So should I find no degree of increased pain. And I praise him, I find less than ever.

I can't answer your next question without being affected, even to tears. For I don't pray always, not in the sense I would. Indeed in one sense I do (as the desire of the soul is prayer) for I desire nothing but him and what may bring me nearer to him. I have covenanted with my Lord to be his for ever. And I do love him with all the strength and fervency of my affection, and no creature but for his sake and according to his will.

It is certain that since the Lord first filled my soul with his pure love I have *inwardly*, in some measure, been diverted from this point—by Satan's deceiving my understanding, but the judgment of others, and my own ignorance of human nature. But now I praise God for the knowledge I have thereof, which I desire to use only for the profit of my soul and others. My ambition is now to be saved from all that is merely *human*, however innocent, and to have no connection with anything but what makes me more *divine*.

I believe I do give thanks in every thing. And as far as I am tried, I feel my will wholly subjected to the will of my heavenly father. I feel no kind or degree of repugnance to any of his present dispensations, and hope I shall not to the future. I trust his word, 'As thy day, so shall thy strength be.'

While I am writing I feel my desire for your *inward acquaintance* with Jesus increased. But I take the liberty to say I do not know your soul, what is your state Godward. This has caused me to shed thousands of tears before God. This has becaused³ my being shut up, because I know not how to speak, for fear of offending or hurting you. But I have not lost that child-like holy affection which I have ever felt for you. God knoweth I regard you more like a natural parent, even to such a degree that, in time I could part with half my grace to you, and half my glory in eternity. Yea, the searcher of hearts knows I have sometimes prayed with tears to be accursed from Christ to my last moments, so you might be truly blessed. This is the genuine dictate of my heart. May it sink as deep into *your* heart as it does into mine. And if so, you will not read it without tears. I don't remember that I was ever in my life before so affected by the power and love of God in writing a letter.

I think it my duty (and do it more than ever) to excuse and vindicate you to every person that is at anytime tempted to think you have done wrong. Yet I am sometimes tried about you myself. But I carry it all to Jesus. O may he incline you to pray much in secret, and to deny yourself. *Outwardly* you do, but

¹Replying to JW's letter of Mar. 25, 1764. On identity of the writer, see the note on the letter of Mar. 6, 1764.

²Referring to the 'London blessing controversy'.

³An archaic verb for 'caused'.

may you *inwardly* deny yourself every *pleasing thought* which is not profitable, and all the wanderings of your affections. Labour to mortify and crucify yourself in all things, so shall your peace flow as a river.

On reading over my letter, I am filled with shame before God to think I should write thus to *you*. Yet I dare not do otherwise. O cover my weakness with love! May Jesus bless you!

Source: JW's transcribed copy; MARC, MA 1977/157, JW III.7, item numbered '113'.

Letter from John Johnson¹

York
[late] April 1764

This evening, about a quarter before seven, it pleased God to take to himself our dear brother, John Manners, after a time of remarkable affliction and as remarkable patience. He was clearly sensible to the last, as well as solidly happy, saying, 'The way is quite clear; my heart is at liberty.'

Source: published transcription; JW, *Journal*, Apr. 28, 1764 (*Works*, 21:462–63).

From an Unidentified Correspondent

Cornwall
[late] April 1764

Yesterday I preached to a large congregation at St. John's.² The occasion was this: One of our friends came into Mr. Thomas's a few days since. After speaking a little upon business, he said, 'What need have we to watch!' Presently sitting down, he added, 'There is but one step between me and death', and died.

Source: published transcription; JW, *Journal*, Apr. 30, 1764 (*Works*, 21:463).

¹John Johnson (1725–1803) was a native of Somerset who became a Methodist itinerant in 1753 (see *Works*, 10:260) and spent most of his career preaching in Ireland.

²Part of Helston, in Cornwall.

From Sarah Crosby¹

May 4, 1764

May the sinner's friend, who knows all you feel or fear, send you the help that your spirit needs, and consume with the Spirit of judgment and burning all that offends the eyes of his glorious majesty! The sight he is now pleased to give me of himself I know not how to explain. My soul seems taken up into Jesus, and entirely one with him.

From the day I wrote last to you my time has been a time of love indeed. The verse that follows will best express the language of my heart:

An hidden life in Christ I live
And exercised in things divine
My senses all his love receive.
I see the King in beauty shine,
Fairer than all the sons of men,
Thrice happy in his love I reign.²

I find an uninterrupted power to cast the whole weight of my soul on the atonement Jesus has made for *me*. I know it is the merit of this which causes the light, even that light which enlivens angels, to shine clear and constant on the heart of a poor worm not worth a name. And this merit is likewise necessary for me on account of many deviations from the perfect law. But I praise my beloved Saviour, he has saved me from every evil temper and desire. I do love God with all my heart. My will and affections never wander from him. And he does give me a *direct witness* that he has saved me *thus*. I first received this near eight years ago. But through my inexperience of human nature it has not always remained unclouded, though it is so now.

Blessed be our Father, who had hid these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them unto babes. He gives me the heart of a little child. Therefore I can answer your next question with the strongest confidence. I have as clear and strong an evidence of *eternal* as of *temporal* things. I think I need not explain this. May God give *you* the same!

Lowness of spirits may, I think, proceed from two causes. When the soul is much tempted and distressed, this will occasion a sinking of the animal spirits. And so will the body's being much fatigued, or in strong pain. I sometimes find a sinking of spirits from the latter cause, though not often, because I have better health than formerly.

I have not light to answer your next question as clearly as I would. I do find sometimes a kind of *wandering thoughts*, namely such thoughts about persons or things as increase knowledge but, I fear, do not increase holiness of heart or life. But what I most dislike is the having too many thoughts about any one thing. I shall be thankful for any instruction or rules on this head in particular. For it is my one desire to *be as he was, in this world*.

Thus far I can write with great ease and freedom. But when I come to speak of yourself, I am filled with holy shame. Yet I dare not keep back anything which our Lord gives me to say. But believe me, I don't forget the childlike love and reverence that is due to you from me. Perhaps one reason you [were] cut off from those you thought profited you was you did not profit by them as you might have done. You are apt to worship God in his children. I mean you *cleave* too much to those whom you believe to be dear to God. You do not let the help you receive from them raise your heart to God himself, that, while you love for his sake, you may be *free* from them, finding Jesus *nearest* to your heart. O that this

¹Responding to JW's letter of Apr. 23, 1764. On identity of the writer, see the note on the letter of Mar. 6, 1764.

²CW, 'The Christian', st. 4, *Collection of Moral and Sacred Poems* (1744), 3:272.

may be the constant aim of your soul! For all other props will fail. ⟨We³⟩ should use creatures as we do stairs—not to *rest on* them but to *walk up* them, till we get to the rooms a⟨bove⟩ and rest there.

I think you should not speak of yourself but to *real friends* and such as know the temptations you are exposed to. But the more simple you speak to them, the more profitable it will be to you. You have indeed ‘a thousand ⟨things⟩ to hurt, and hardly any to help’. Living souls about you might be a great blessing. But Jesus can supply that want. And I cannot but advise you to spend as much of your time as possible alone with Jesus, supposing it be in lamenting his absence and humbling your soul before him. Surely, if you endure this irksome task you will soon find that these are your sweetest hours.

It is the desire of my soul that the power of constantly practising this may be given you. If ⟨I⟩ could feel for you all the pain that can attend the mortifying yourself, the being crucified with Christ, and denying the inward motions of your soul. O how should I rejoice to do it? But seeing this cannot be, I had rather you should feel the pain than not obtain the grace to devote yourself entirely to Jesus.

I am willing to help many little, if they will not receive more help. But I may be too stiff, too formal. But I am not near grave enough. I am far, far too light. What then are you? ‘A sinner born to die’?

Bear with [me] a little longer and I have done. I fear your greatest failing is yet behind. Neither you nor I have put away all guile, all insincerity (πάσας ὑποκρίσεις).⁴ The mortal Moravian plague is upon us—often, I fear, even to a degree of falsehood and lying. I have frequently heard you say things that were not true. Perhaps you have heard me, though I do not remember it. Now, certainly nothing can be more wrong than this? A word should be the constant picture of our thoughts. The window should be always open in our breast, and all we think and speak be clear as the sun. Of all men living, we are never to carry two faces. But whatever we lose thereby in simplicity (which is far more than sincerity) to have our conversation in the word.

Search us O Lord, and prove us. Try out and reinstate our heart!

Correct us when we go astray,
And lead us in thy perfect way!⁵

Source: JW's transcribed copy; MARC, MA 1977/157, JW III.7, item numbered ‘113’.

³In this and following instances A small edge of the page is covered by binding, but the missing words are fairly obvious.

⁴1 Pet. 2:1.

⁵Cf. ‘Psalm 139’, st. 14, in JW, *CPH* (1738), 15 (an adaption of Tate and Brady).

From Samuel Wells Jr.¹

Evesham
May 23, 1764

Reverend Sir,

My father desires me to send you a copy of the following letter.

I read the *Plain Account of the [People called] Methodists* twice; the last time to Mrs. C. who was much pleased with it, and mourns the great declension amongst the Dissenters. My prejudice is entirely removed against Mr. Wesley's economy, and I hope providence will point out my way to be a member of such a society. I find a mind open to conviction, and a desire to live the remainder of my days more devoted to the Lord. My school wants reformation, and I can see no way for it but by the assistance of one of Mr. Wesley's preaching-schoolmasters. I would part with any worldly interest for such a partner; and when Mr. Wesley is well informed of my present disposition, I think he will see a call of providence to encourage some one to help me to settle a society in this place. I am now reading the *Serious Call*.² The grand truth inculcated therein is nothing less than this, 'Whether we eat or drink, . . .'³ This is Christianity! Lord restore to me the joys of thy salvation! My business is so much increased that I am under the necessity of an able assistant. Twenty-five boarders and fifty other scholars is more than work enough for one man, and will bring in more money than is sufficient for my own family; and I am convinced that the overplus ought not to be used according to *fancy*, but as our *Lord* directs. And I find a resolution to use it so.

God has done great things for nurse S. She is past any fear that hath torment. She desires nothing but the will of God. She has the full assurance of hope. She feels no sin. Her bodily weakness is great. But she is strong in faith. Her heart is full of love. What hath God wrought!

Last Monday was twelvemonth [since] the Lord was pleased to reveal his pardoning love to my soul. But alas, I forgot it! I found anger, desire, etc., return and overpower me. I neglected to watch and be sober, and soon fell from God. But I now feel God loves me, yet I am not satisfied. Indeed how can I for I see my hidden parts are very wickedness. My soul thirsteth for God, even for the living God. I am ready to say,

No cross no suffering I decline,
Only let all my heart be thine.⁴

I find God begins to try me, and it is hard work. My self-will so opposes that to withstand it is as hard as to move a mountain. I have need to cry for strength, and to make the best use I can of what is given. May God grant me the power I want. I believe God continues to bless your labours of love in the gospel. I pray God your latter fruits may exceed your former. May thy dear kingdom come! I blush for what I have written, forgive my folly. The Lord bless you!

I remain, with much respect,
Your humble servant,

Samuel Wells, Junior

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 603–05.

¹This is the first letter from Samuel Wells (c. 1745–80), who was admitted into the Methodist ministry on trial in 1769 (see *Works*, 10:366), and would serve vigorously until his death in 1780.

²Likely JW's abridgement of William Law's *Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*.

³1 Cor. 10:31.

⁴Cf. JW (translated from Maria Böhmer), 'Looking unto Jesus', st. 4, *HSP* (1740), 22.

From an Unidentified Correspondent¹

May 28, 1764

I think to be able to answer all your questions in the affirmative I must be perfect indeed. I cannot but think I am far from that. With regard to your first question, if I feel any pain when I am slighted or disregarded, is not this 'a tendency to *pride*'? Indeed I only feel pain from persons I love. And this I have sometimes felt, though not lately. But I do not desire any should think highly of me. Nor am I conscious that I have high thoughts of myself.

A temptation to *anger* I sometimes find, but very seldom. It is as though something came with violence and *would* enter into my heart, but by looking up I immediately find it has not entered. Yet I generally feel a pain remain for some minutes—and thus far my mind is *ruffled*, or *out of tune*.

I think I do not feel any useless *desire*. And yet I always desire pleasure. But I do not find any thing pleases that does not bring me nearer to God. I do not know that I desire any *pleasure of sense*, unless so far as I am persuaded it will help me to enjoy him more, who is my Life and my All. Neither do I know that I desire *ease*. Yet I often desire freedom from labour, that I may converse alone with my Beloved. And in this, above all things, I have the greatest need to watch, that I may not go farther than my own judgment allows.

Perhaps the not finding a freedom to converse about myself with those I think are prejudiced against me may be thought to imply the desiring *approbation*. And it is certain, I do not feel the same freedom of conversation with those as I do with them that can receive what I say.

Increase of fortune, I may truly say, I do not desire. I have now food and raiment, without having any thing to do with the world. This I esteem a mercy indeed. For my mind is wholly drawn heaven-ward. I remember daily that I am living for eternity. And I thank my God daily that I need have but little commerce with those that know not God. I enjoy my present mercies, as coming from his hand, and trust him for the future—being well satisfied that he who has thus saved my soul will provide for my body, till his arms receive me home. All my care is how I may be holy both in body and soul.

I cannot say that I find any *stubbornness*, *sloth*, or *self-will*. Yet I fear to say absolutely there is *none* in me. O Lord, let my sentence come forth from thy presence! Certainly I do not know myself as God knows me; and perhaps in some prospects, I do not know myself so well as you know me. Therefore if you discern any thing of these in me, I shall receive it as a favour if you tell me.

I do not feel any *unbelief* with regard to my own soul. I believe my Saviour hath saved, doth save, and will save it everlastingly. Nevertheless I need to increase in faith daily, as well as in every grace. All I live for is to know myself and God more, and I feel a constant thirst so to do.

Last Sunday sennight, Mr. — preached such a sermon as I never heard him preach before. A solemn, weighty power rested on the whole congregation. My soul and body were so penetrated with God that if I had felt more, I believe I must have died. I could only pray that you and he may be living witnesses of all he spake. O that your soul did feel always what my soul felt then! Surely I should say, 'Now, Lord lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for I have no request unanswered.'²

I believe your danger is from *persons* rather than *things*. And so has mine been. Therefore I know the power of God to save, even in this respect. Jesus, who has saved me, only knows what I have suffered from affection to the creatures. But I feel the fullest confidence in my Deliverer that all my deaths of this sort are past. And now the burden laid upon my heart is that *you* may be thus saved. O what would I give that your soul might cleave to him, in all and above all creatures. This would be my highest happiness

¹The answer given below, which was likely a letter, is presented in *AM* as a response to a series of questions dated May 22, 1764: 'Do you never find any tendency to *pride*? Do you find nothing like *anger*? Is your mind never *ruffled*, put *out of tune*? Do you never feel any useless *desire*? Any desire of pleasure? Of ease? Of approbation? Of increase of fortune? Do you find no *stubbornness*, *sloth*, or *self-will*? No *unbelief*?' The identity of the person answering is not given.

²Cf. Luke 2:29.

(next to the enjoyment of my God) in time and in eternity. O that you may breathe your soul to him, who knoweth whereof you are made and is able to change your heart that it may be always true to him!

How often have I wished to tell you all my thoughts! And now God has strangely given the opportunity. And I believe, while it answers the end he designs, neither men nor devils can interrupt it. I find all reserve banished from me, and were I now going into eternity, I should be glad to feel all the affection to you I do and to speak to you in the same manner.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 434–37.

From William Penington¹

Cork
June 17, 1764

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Since my last, the face of things here is in a great measure changed. The people of the society in general, and the leaders in particular, are much stirred up in their own souls. Our congregations are much larger than usual, many strangers and backsliders attending the preaching constantly. I believe one reason of this revival is the meetings for singing, prayer, reading, and exhortation that have within this month, been established in five or six different parts of the city, and among those who seemed to know nothing that there were such a people as the Methodists in being. Many of these attend both at the meetings and at the [preaching] room, who are in general very serious and seem to be in a measure awakened.

Another reason for this is street-preaching. I found a desire to stand up in the street and to attack the devil in his own quarters. I first preached near the barracks. But since Mr. B. came home I have left that place to him, and have been enabled to stand up in the open street, in the very heart of Black-Pool, four or five times, and preached with great freedom to a very large and attentive congregation. Mr. B. has also preached twice there with very great satisfaction, while I was out at Bandon last week. So that I think there is an effectual door opened there and, I may add, there are many adversaries. Having such a prospect before me, it is with regret that I think of quitting this place *now*. For my own part, I only desire to follow providence, and to suffer so far as I know all the will of God. But I am quite at a loss how to act here, being pulled different ways. But I am blind, may God direct me!

I beg you will pray for me, and believe me to be, reverend sir,

Your son and servant in the gospel,

W. Penington

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 161–62.

¹William Penington (c. 1734–67) of Yorkshire entered the itinerant ministry around 1760 (records are spotty for this period). He is well documented from 1765 to his death in 1767. See Atmore, *Memorial*, 314–17 (who spells the last name ‘Pennington’, as it was spelled in *AM*).

From Elizabeth Jackson

June 18, 1764

Reverend Sir,

I desire your opinion. I am not understood, for want of knowing how to explain myself. This causes some to say my experience is not scriptural, because I have no complaints. But I know I am approved of God every moment. I find my nature is changed. My heart is sprinkled from an evil conscience, and cleansed from all unrighteousness. God has washed me with pure water, and I find all I do or say is sanctified. But when I say I am perfectly happy, lacking nothing, many are offended. They ask me if I want no more faith, and I know not how to answer them. But I feel the atoning blood of Christ applied to me every moment. This causes my joys to flow as a river, and makes me rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in every thing give thanks. I find my soul in one continual flame. I have liberty of spirit. Christ has freed me from every entanglement below. Christ sits on my heart, and feeds my soul, and consumes all my enemies. I find nothing within but a sweet serenity and harmony of love. My rest is in God. My heart is stayed, and my life is one continual looking up to him. The Spirit is quick and powerful, and testifies that the work is finished. My evidence of it is as clear as the sun in the firmament. I see myself and my performances less than nothing, but God looks upon me in Christ. I find

My every act, word, thought, is love.¹

My every breath ascends to the throne of grace, and returns pure to my heart. My soul is watered every moment. The Spirit ascendeth and descendeth, and ceaseth not. My heart is as wax before the fire, ready to be dissolved and be no more. The glorious weight of the power of God shakes this earthly tabernacle. Every sinew is as unstrung, every cord unloosed, my body stands as in a totter. A little more of the fire of God's love and it will drive the spirit hence. I thirst for nothing but to see God. Yet my joys increase and abound, and are maintained every moment. I know not how, only it is by faith in the Son of God. He is ever with me, therefore nothing discomposes my mind. But should he withdraw, I should faint, for I have no strength. And I rely on nothing but the promises of God—who, I believe, *has* saved my soul, and *will* save me for ever.

I am,

Your affectionate sister in Christ,

Elizabeth Jackson

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 669–70.

¹Cf. JW (translated from Paul Gerhardt), 'Living by Christ', st. 2, *HSP* (1739), 156.

From Cornelius Bastable

August 3, 1764

I think the oftener I speak, the more bodily strength I have. I preach six days in the week, and mostly twice a day, and yet I have strength enough: so I find we want nothing but God, and having him we have all things. I adore his majesty, who does not leave me, no not for a moment. I can say, I have him all my own. It is impossible to tell how my soul delighteth in him. I do not find any weariness in anything I suffer: and as to his commandments, they are the delight of my soul.

C. B.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 378.

From Nathaniel Gilbert¹

Antigua
September 18, 1764

Reverend and Dear Sir,

On the 7th and 8th of May I was brought to the brink of the grave by a discharge of blood from my lungs. I was seized with it four times in those two days, and including what was taken from my arm, lost between forty and fifty ounces. You could hear the blood rattle in my throat, and the last time the spitting continued so severe after trying several different remedies that I despaired of its being stopped, otherwise than by death. My breath began to grow short and I did not expect to live a quarter of an hour. In this condition, my peace with God was not made. One would imagine that I should have found great distress. But on the contrary, the Lord was gracious to me. For though I had my wife standing by me frightened, one of my children crying before me, and several of my house-Negroes running bawling into my room, yet I do not remember that I found any fear or distraction of mind, but rather a calm waiting on God, with a measure of trust and resignation. This in an unjustified person is very particular. I have been very ungrateful since for so great mercies, but I hope to taste his pardoning love, and that the day of liberty is not far off. At present, both my wife and myself go on heavily, and now that our friends have left us we are like a pelican in the wilderness.

When my brother [Francis Gilbert] left this island, I determined to meet the people twice or thrice a week. But after meeting them a few times, I was hindered by sickness. Before I had entirely recovered, I went twice to St. John's, where I stayed several days each time and endeavoured to get a house, and designed to continue meeting the society three times a week. But I was not able to get such a house as I wanted. However, whilst I was in town I met them frequently, but was so extremely shut up that I could not speak above two or three times, and was obliged to read at the other meetings. This, and my not succeeding in procuring a house, rendered it probable that I was not called to meet the society. For this reason I should not have thought of meeting them if there had been any other person. But a recollection that our Lord sent out his disciples, before they received the Holy Ghost, with a charge not to go in the way of the Gentiles (they being not qualified to preach to heathens), I was doubtful whether, as there was a small congregation gathered by my brother, I might not be called to speak to them. In this state I determined to go to town a third time and to stay there two days—and if I could not within that time fix upon a house, to give up all thoughts of it. I accordingly went, and had no better success than before. I also opened the Bible, with prayer, on those words, Eccles. 3:1, 'To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose, under the heaven.' The sense of this (considered with regard to the matter for which I opened) being ambiguous, I prayed the Lord that if he had directed me thereto, he would also direct me to some other scripture which would enable me to understand this rightly, and then opened upon the same chap. ver. 6, 'A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away.' This rendered it plain that my business at present was to seek grace for myself instead of preaching to others; that I was first to cast the beam out of my own eye. For these reasons I have declined meeting the society for several weeks past, but they meet among themselves thrice a week. And as far as I can understand, they are going on much in the same manner as when my brother left them. Those who were in earnest still continue to be so. But the happiest person in this island is a gentlewoman who has been ill several years of the black scurvy. She seems to be always as healthy and strong in spirit as she is sick and weak in body. But she has had so many severe attacks lately that she will not I imagine live long. She waits for her dissolution with patience, though her desire is to die if it were the will of God.

May the Lord still continue to strengthen you! And grant that, having turned many to righteousness, you may shine as the sun in his kingdom! I beg your prayers for myself and family, and

¹Nathaniel Gilbert (c. 1721–74) was the elder son of a prosperous planter in Antigua. While in England he and his brother Francis came under the influence of JW and Perronet and were converted. In 1759 the pair returned to Antigua as evangelists to pioneer Methodist work in the West Indies. See Vickers, *Dictionary*, 145; and *WHS* 55 (2005): 16–18.

am, reverend and dear sir,

Your most affectionate, humble servant,

Nathaniel Gilbert

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 605–07.

From the Rev. George Whitefield

Philadelphia
September 25, 1764

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Your kind letter dated in January last,¹ through the negligence of those that received the parcel, did not reach me till within these few days. It found me at Philadelphia, just returned from my northern circuit, and waiting only for cooler weather to set forwards for Georgia. Perhaps that may be my *ne plus ultra*.² But the gospel range is of such large extent that I have, as it were, scarce begun to begin. Surely nothing but a very loud call of providence could make me so much as think of returning to England as yet. I have been mercifully carried through the summer's heat, and had strength permitted, I might have preached to thousands and thousands thrice every day. Zealous ministers are not so rare in the new world as in other parts. Here is room for a hundred itinerants. Lord Jesus send by whom thou wilt send. Fain would I end my life in rambling after those that have rambled away from Jesus Christ.

For this let men despise my name,
I'd shun no cross, I'd fear no shame:
All hail reproach! ...³

I am persuaded you are like minded. I wish you and all your dear fellow-labourers much prosperity. O to be kept from turning to the right hand or the left! Methinks for many years we have heard a voice behind us saying, 'This is the way, walk in it.'⁴ I do not repent being a poor, despised, cast out, and now almost worn-out itinerant. I would do it again if I had my choice. Having loved his own, the altogether lovely Jesus loves them to the end. Even the last glimmerings of an expiring taper, he blessed to guide some wandering souls to himself. At New England, New York, and Pennsylvania the word hath run and been glorified. Scarce one dry meeting since my arrival. All this is of grace. In various places there hath been a very great stirring among the dry bones. If you and all yours would join in praying over a poor worthless, but willing pilgrim, it would be a very great act of charity, he being, though less than the least of all, reverend and very dear sir, ever

Yours, etc., etc., in Jesus,

G. Whitefield

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 439–40.

¹This letter does not appear to survive.

²'That which cannot be exceeded'; or ultimate/final achievement.

³Cf. JW (translated from Johann Joseph Winckler), 'Boldness in the Gospel', st. 8, *HSP* (1739), 201.

⁴Isa. 30:21.

From 'A Presbyterian'¹

Gravesend
October 13, 1764

Reverend Sir,

A pamphlet published in your name and addressed to your brethren the Methodists (so called), containing your reasons against separating from the Church of England,² having accidentally fallen into my hands, as there are some things in it which appear contradictory and entirely inconsistent with the high character you have for many years sustained amongst your people, I shall take the liberty in this public manner to make a few candid remarks upon it, in hopes that you will, with true Christian love and charity, answer the objections not only I but many serious and sensible Christians have made and still make to it, supposing you the author.

By your introduction and eighth reason it appears you are in some doubts as to your present situation in the Church of England, though you have been so many years a public minister and a professed member of that church. You seem, indeed, clearly enough persuaded that it would not be expedient to separate yourselves from it. But you do not know but it may be lawful that the church may possibly stand in need of some reformation, only you are apprehensive you have not wisdom and depth of thought sufficient for such an undertaking.

Now sir, is not this a contradiction to the solemn and repeated declarations which you have made in all manners of ways, in preaching, in print, and in conversation? You have unquestionably subscribed the Articles of the Church of England, and earnestly pressed for many years conformity to the discipline and doctrine of that church. An yet, in this public manner, you now tell us you do not know whether it is lawful or not to be a member of it. I would gladly know what you mean by this fluctuating and unsettled conduct, and whether or not the world may not with justice say that your views in continuing in the Church [of England] are worldly, selfish, and designing. For I think it appears pretty plain from the whole of your conduct that it is only for political ends you would be thought a Churchman, and not from a rational, solid conviction that its doctrine and discipline is agreeable to the word of God; all your reasons being entirely prudential, tending only to strengthen and increase your own party, and thereby better to answer the ends of your supposed mission, which you seem confident was primarily designed for the Church of England. That is to say, you would have us to understand that God had raised you up as a great reformer, in order to set you at the head of the Church; for, say you, we look upon ourselves not as the authors or ringleaders of a particular sect or party, but as ministers of God to those who are Christians in name but heathens in heart and in life, to call them back to that from which they have fallen to real genuine Christianity. So that, should you succeed in this grand work of reformation, as you are now head of the Methodists and the Methodists, as you say, only reformed Churchmen, you must then unquestionably be head of the Church. But what appears most extraordinary in this your pretended mission is that, though you seem fully persuaded *that the Dissenters in general are in a more damnable state than those who live without God in the world, and do lie in darkness and the shadows of death*, yet you think the time of their conversion *is not as yet come, or at least that you are not their apostle*. For, say you, *our first mission to all our preachers is to the lost sheep of the Church of England*. It seems then if you and your preachers alone have the word of truth to dispense to the people (and if we take your word for it you certainly have), the poor Dissenters must either conform or wait until your mission is fully accomplished to the Church of England before a door of mercy can be opened to them. I am apt to believe the Dissenters (in general) will not look upon this as orthodox doctrine, whatever may be your pretensions to inspiration.

¹Based on his letter of Nov. 5, 'a Presbyterian' may be Mr. Eglesham, schoolmaster in Gravesend.

²JW, *Reasons Against a Separation from the Church of England* (London: Strahan, 1760), *Works*, 9:334–49.

I cannot see with what propriety you apply *στοργή* to religious opinions.³ That all good men have a strong natural affection for their country I am persuaded is true, and it is certainly most praiseworthy. But that this *storgé* reaches so far as to influence the practices of men of reason and religion in their behaviour towards their Christian brethren who differ from them in religious sentiments, I absolutely deny. Ask you a conscientious Churchman who had long lived in friendship with his Dissenting neighbour if he would not rather choose to go to heaven in his company than along with a profligate Churchman, or even with one he was little acquainted with, you will find he will give the Dissenter the preference, as I may venture so affirm the Dissenter will to him in similar circumstances. It is the rectitude of the heart and the uprightness of men's moral dealings that will determine (at least with rational men) their degrees of affection one to another. If I mistake not, what you mean by *storgé* here is something like that blind, stupid fondness the zealous, bigoted Papists express for a member of their church, whom they look upon as in a state of salvation however sinful and odious their practices may be.

That it may have been objected to you by some of your own followers that it was mere cowardice and fear of persecution which made you desire to remain united with the Church, I believe is true. But I can with great truth assure you no minister of the Church of England ever laid this to your charge. Nor indeed can any one with justice do it. For the Methodists in general seem fond of persecution, and are afraid when they do not meet with it or something like it that they are not in a state of grace, because our Saviour told his disciples that it would be their lot, therefore it must be the lot of the Methodists. Besides, sir, your separation would have been the only thing that would have secured you from persecution, as you see all sects live in perfect security under the present, mild government.

Yours, etc.,

'A Presbyterian'

Source: published transcription; *St. James's Chronicle* (Oct. 25, 1764), p. 3.

³See *Reasons*, III.1, *Works*, 9:337.

From the Rev. Joseph Townsend¹

[Pewsey]

October 16, 1764

Dear Sir,

I thank you for your token of love to my soul. Oh that all men would deal thus faithfully by one another! With regard to the contents of your letter, they are on a subject I do not love to write about. Some of the wisest and best men in all ages were of one opinion, and some of the other. And therefore I had better steer as clear as I can of all needless disputes, that I may be able to love all the children of God—which I am sorry to see they do not who run into either extreme. Oh that I may be able to obey that admonition, ‘What is that to thee? Follow thou me!’²

The Lord orders all things well: Oh may we follow wherever he leads!

I shall be always very happy when you can contrive to visit me and my people.

I am, dear sir,

Yours in the best bonds,

J. Townsend

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 274.

¹Joseph Townsend (1739–1813) a graduate of Clare College, Cambridge (BA, 1762; MA, 1765) had become rector of Pewsey in 1763, and was a close associate with Lady Huntingdon. He had opened his pulpit to JW on Oct. 2, 1764 (see *Works*, 21:491). He would in coming years align more strongly with the Calvinist Methodists, drawing JW’s rebuke in a letter of Aug. 1–3, 1767, *Works*, 28:88–91.

²John 21:22.

From 'A Presbyterian'

Gravesend
October 17, [1764]

Second Letter to Mr. John Wesley

Sir,

What persecution the Methodists have met with from the Church [of England] has entirely been owing to themselves. They would be thought conscientious Churchmen (nay, the only true Churchmen) though they had fallen into practices directly opposite to the Church, and were perpetually in their extempore harangues to the people arraigning the clergy as deserters of the Church—calling them dumb dogs, wolves in sheep's clothing, mere moralists, with such like opprobrious and indecent language. This you must allow on the other side could not fail of producing a retaliation such as incendiaries, enemies of the Church, enthusiasts, fanatics, hypocrites, and the like, which the clergy in their turn very liberally bestowed upon you. Where persons of such contrary and jarring principles and practices are joined together in any church or society it is impossible but some sort of persecution must ensue, and the weakest generally come off worst. But had you quietly separated yourselves from the Church, you would soon have been confounded with the other sectaries. And it is probable in a few years you would have made not greater figure in Britain than the Quakers do at this time; who you know are much on the decline, though on their first setting out they had as great appearances of sanctity and made as high claims to inspirations and the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost as any Methodist amongst you.

It is certainly most requisite that there should be a form of religion established in every body politic, seeing without it it would be impossible to keep up order and regularity amongst a people. It seems likewise reasonable that this establishment should be made agreeable to the sentiments of the bulk of the people, as the lesser should always submit to the greater.

It appears likewise very expedient that the lesser (or dissenting party) should cheerfully bear a part in supporting this establishment, as it was evidently intended for the good of the whole. But on the other hand, it is certainly as reasonable that this establishment should not lord it over their brethren and turn the power entrusted to them for the good of the whole against their fellow-subjects who may differ from them in points of speculations, but cheerfully allow them every liberty that is consistent with the civil rights of mankind and the internal peace of the state, as there can be nothing more just than that we should do unto all men as we would they should do unto us. If these rational and salutary maxims were universally established amongst all nations as they are at this time in Great Britain, it would be of little consequence to any one what form of religion is established in his country, since he had the liberty to assent or dissent just as it suited his inclinations, and the silly notion of compassing sea and land to gain proselytes to this or that party of religion (except endeavouring to win men over to the practice of virtue by our own example and the motives of the gospel) would entirely subside.

The caution you give your preachers against frequenting Dissenting meetings may be prudent enough, as their example you know may influence others and so tend to diminish your flock. For persons who are wavering and unsettled in their principles frequently resemble weathercocks, who, veering about with every blast, rust to a point and fix at last. But I am persuaded you will allow that there is no great charity in this prudential caution, and very little resemblance between your behaviour in this respect and the behaviour of the primitive Christians. They constantly maintained brotherly communion and fellowship with each other, however they might differ in the order and management they kept up in different churches as touching the ceremonial part of the service, which never was nor indeed could be alike in all places, nor was it at all necessary it should be so. And this, you know, is the opinion of the church you profess yourself a member of.

But you seem to think the Dissenters are not Christians, or at least very bad ones. For their teachers (you say) either deny the Lord who bought them, or so overturn the gospel from the very foundations, or are predestinarians and so preach predestination and final perseverance more or less, which by repeated experience shows it not wholesome food but rather deadly poison. This is a dreadful

charge, very ill becoming a minister of the gospel without showing some good foundation for it. I have heard, sir, preachers of every considerable sect amongst the Dissenters, and I never found one who presumed to deny his Redeemer, whatever his private notions might be as to the doctrine of the Trinity—a doctrine, you know, which has been the source of endless disputes amongst hot-headed bigots of all denominations and in all ages has dreadfully wounded the peace of the church, proved deadly poison to all who pretended to unfold that great mystery of godliness, made them grow fond of opinion and strife of words, despise self-denial, and (to complete all), wholly separate themselves from their brethren.

Yours, etc.,

A Presbyterian

Source: published transcription; *St. James's Chronicle* (Oct. 30–Nov. 1, 1764), p. 2.

'Solicitus' to the Printer of *St. James's Chronicle*

October 24, 1764

Sir,

Through the channel of your very useful paper, suffer me to call upon the Rev. Mr. John Wesley, who is at the head of the Methodists, publicly to *prove*, either from Scripture or reason, that the following assertion he lately made to his congregation is justifiable: 'If any of you have any money in the public funds, it would be less sin to take it out and cast it into the depth of the sea than to let it continue there.'¹

Your humble servant,

Solicitus

Source: published transcription; *St. James's Chronicle* (Oct. 25–27, 1764), p. 3.

¹JW categorically denied making this statement in his response, dated Oct. 29, 1764.

From 'A Presbyterian'

Gravesend
October 24, 1764

'Third Letter for the Rev. Mr. J. Wesley'

Sir,

It behoves you, as a Christian and a gentleman, candidly to name those dissenting teachers who publicly deny the great founder of their religion, [so] that all Christians of every denomination may shun and detest them, as I am persuaded they would were they convinced of the truth of this scandalous assertion.

But pray sir, how came predestination amongst the Dissenters to be such a deadly poisonous doctrine, when it is so fully established in the Church of England by the 17th Article of that church, solemnly subscribed to by the Rev. Mr. John Wesley and his conscientious brother Charles? How you can reconcile this shameful prevarication and Jesuitical inconsistency is at present a mystery to me. And I may venture to challenge you to name any one dissenting teacher that ever acted in so double and unchristian a manner.

I agree with you that all affected tones in preaching should be carefully avoided, as well as dark and abstrusive language. But I must beg leave to inform you (for it seems you are in the dark as to that particular) that, in general, the dissenting teachers are as free from formal tones as the Church [of England] ministers, and their manner of preaching entirely the same. But sir, the same cannot be said of your Methodist preachers. Whining, dull and melancholy tones, dark and dreadful phrases, accompanied with deep and doleful sighs, generally make up the most affecting and alluring parts of their sermons; which have such an influence upon the outward deportment of their hearers as not only to change the very features of their faces, so as to distinguish them from every other Christian, but likewise to alter the very frame and disposition of their minds, even with regard to moral duties, to sour their tempers, to render them unfit for society, and to make them despisers of all who cannot think and act as they do. Every minister who is honest enough to instruct his hearers in plain practical religion, in social and moral duties, and who insists on the necessity of men making use of their reason in matters of religion is immediately looked upon by them as enemies to the cross of Christ, as tearing up the very foundations of Christianity, is branded with the odious names of Deist and Arian, and consequently is said to be in a state of dreadful error and damnation, being alienated from God, and utterly unacquainted with a crucified Redeemer. This is the constant language of the Methodists in public and private. And it is by means of these dark and declamatory sermons (which your people emphatically call 'evangelical') most of those miraculous conversions so elegantly described in your *Journals* and in your missionaries' instructive letters have been so wonderfully brought about.

But I presume, sir, you will allow that it is far more easy to work up the passions than to inform the understanding and convince the judgment. You cannot but have observed in the course of your ministry that you could with great ease, by a sermon (suitably applied) on the dreadful consequences of sin and the terrors of the law, send the Felixes away trembling; as you could, with the same ease, melt down into floods of tears the tender and compassionate part of your auditory by means of a well-adapted discourse on the love of Christ to sinful and hell-deserving creatures, and his painful and ignominious death on the cross for their salvation—without ever mending the hearts, instructing the understandings, or rectifying the morals of the one or the other. Conversion merely effected by a sudden gust of passion frequently ends in returning with the dog to his vomit, and with the sow to her wallowing in the mire; or if it chances to drive out one vice, it seldom fails to bring in another as destructive to the soul. It is an easy matter to believe well, but a most difficult task to practise so. To prove this, I need only appeal to the universal experience of all mankind.

I once heard an artful monk preach on Christ's crucifixion to a very numerous congregation, on which he expatiated so fully, set off the pains and sufferings of our Saviour in so lively and striking a manner, and painted the malice, hatred, and cruelty of the Jews in such black and horrid colours as not

only to set them all a howling but even to raise their passions up to such a pitch of enthusiastic madness as to have made them with pleasure sacrifice every Jew in the world (if they had them then in their power), as an atonement for their sins and to revenge the death of the Son of God. At convenient periods also of his sermon he pulled out of his bosom a curious crucifix, artfully displayed it to the people, which produced a hollow doleful groan—not unlike that melancholy deep sigh which runs through your assemblies when the preacher, with an affected solemn tone and gesture, artfully cries out ‘God be merciful to me a sinner!’

I do not mention this with any design to draw a parallel between your manner of preaching and the Roman Catholics, but only to convince you of the impropriety of judging the real frame and disposition of the mind by the outward deportment of the body, which (as St. Paul assures us) profiteth little. And before you find fault with other people, you should carefully reform what is amiss at home, or (as our Saviour recommends) ‘first pluck the beam out of your own eye, before you pretend to discover the mote in your neighbor’s.’¹

Short prayers for those who make use of that most excellent form of public worship appointed by the Church of England, I am persuaded, are very proper. But whether four or five minutes be sufficient time fully to offer up the various petitions and desires of a congregation to God by a person who either conscientiously sets aside that form or is not qualified to use it in public, is what I presume will not be so easily determined or agreed to by serious devout persons who are convinced of the importance of that principal part of public worship.² I could not have thought that a Church minister would have upbraided the Dissenters with their slow and drawling manner of singing,³ as I think it is allowed by all that the Church music is in general very indifferent where they have no organ, and I never heard of any sensible person who did not give Watts’s paraphrase the preference to Hopkins and Sternhold’s wretched metre. But, say you, we (the Methodists) sing swift both because it saves time and because it tends to awake and enliven the soul. It seems then that the Methodists and Churchmen are not one and the same in every thing, any more than Churchmen and Dissenters. With what propriety then can you caution your people against separating from the Church, seeing you thus avowedly countenance the performance of some of the principal parts of worship in a different manner than what the Church enjoins. Swift and merry tunes may be very entertaining over a bowl, but I should think grave and solemn music most suitable to the praising God in a church. But, say you, we (the Methodists) make short prayers and sing swift to save time that may be better employed. Alas! Sir, can our time be better employed than in prayers and praise? You cannot but know that sermons are no part of divine worship, and that the modern way of haranguing the people in set and studied discourses was utterly unknown to the primitive Christians. Prayer and praise, reading the Scriptures, and a few suitable exhortations composed the whole of their public worship. I shall beg leave to transcribe a paragraph or two in my next from a sensible French writer,⁴ much to our present purpose.

Yours, etc.,

‘A Presbyterian’

Source: published transcription; *St. James’s Chronicle* (Nov. 17–20, 1764), p. 2.

¹Matt. 7:5; Luke 6:42.

²In *Reasons against a Separation from the Church of England*, III.3 (*Works*, 9:340), JW instructed his preachers to limit extemporaneous prayers to four or five minutes.

³Cf. *ibid.*: ‘neither should we sing, like them, in a slow, drawling manner’.

⁴He does not actually transcribe such a piece in his next letter, but merely refers to the high value French Protestants place on the sermon.

From 'A Presbyterian'

Gravesend
October 25, 1764

'Fourth Letter to John Wesley'

Sir,

It is certain that the French people called Protestants (and we may say the English Methodists) have for what they call '*le preche*' (the sermon) a respect very like what the Roman Catholics have for what they call '*la messe*' [the mass]. The prayers, the reading, the singing psalms, and all the true service or liturgy do not appear to the people (the Methodists) but as things deserving little attention in comparison to *le preche* (the sermon), which is delivered with great ceremonies and is truly the word of God, as the common preachers (or we may say, with justice, your missionaries) do not blush to say. They ought to consider that sermons make no part of divine worship. All that is employed in the churches (as being part of the liturgy) is and must be chosen, and allowed to be certainly good and holy in itself, without any equivocation, by an unanimous consent of all sects. But what thing in the world [is] more equivocal than those discourses that are called sermons, especially before they have been spoken and published? How do those people know what the preachers will say when they mount the pulpit? If it happens they reason ill, if they fall into contradictions and gross mistakes, if they give false and dangerous interpretations of the sacred text, if they utter even calumnious or seditious words (things which everyone knows are too frequent), shall we look upon such discourses as making a part of divine worship? I would I had no cause to say that many sermons are made by the devil, said one of the wisest and most pious ministers of the last age—viz., Mr. Richard Baxter.¹

I should be glad to know who they are you call friends and enemies who have hopes and fear concerning your separation. If you mean the Church [of England] and Dissenters, I may venture to say you are greatly mistaken, for neither the one or the other are in the least interested in the matter. With regard to the Church, the only Christian brotherly service you can do it is to depart entirely from it and leave it in peace. And as to the Dissenters, their principles and practices are so widely different from yours that they can have nothing to hope from your separation from the Church but that you (the Methodists in general I mean) will carefully avoid frequenting their assemblies.

Lastly, you tell us that ye (the Methodists) are surrounded on all sides by those who are equally enemies to you and the Church (for now you frankly own you are not one), who have been long practised in polemical war, and consequently are too hard-mouthed for your raw undisciplined troops. You therefore recommend them to the use of such weapons as may better enable them to defend themselves against such dangerous assailants. It is hard to tell what you mean by this dark aspersion. If you intended to insinuate that the Church was in danger from the secret machinations of the Dissenters, and thereby to throw the odium of your own irregular separation on them, I must be so free as to tell you that you have greatly mistaken the matter. And I challenge you to name any one minister amongst them who has made it his practice to alienate the members of the established Church from that communion, or ever attempted it, either by open or indirect means. The art of making proselytes to a set of opinions seems to belong in a particular manner to you and your inspired missionaries, and is no way natural to Dissenters. Where you can produce one (for thirty years past) who has cordially embraced Dissenting principles, I can name you ten within the circle of my acquaintances who have entirely conformed to the established Church, not to mention numbers who have followed the Methodists and are in effect now nothing at all, being tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine and unsettled in mind and judgment.

There is no Dissenting minister but has this salutary charge given him at his ordination: 'You will endeavour to the utmost of your power to preserve Christian charity and brotherly love towards the clergy and all the member of the established Church.' Moderate Dissenters of all denominations make no scruple

¹Apparently a reference to Baxter's warning 'thus does pride make many a man's sermons; and what pride makes the devil makes'; in *Gildas Salvianus*, chap. 4, section II.1.

of conforming occasionally with the Church, as all moderate Churchmen do with them—and this, instead of adding to the number of Dissenters has rather diminished it and more firmly established the Church. The doctrine of the Church of England is allowed by all Protestant Dissenters to be agreeable to the word of God. And its government, discipline, and ceremonial part is the best human establishment now on earth. They cheerfully contribute towards its support, as they expect support and protection from it themselves. They pray for the success of its ministers in the great work of men's salvation, and they are heartily sorry for the deep wound it has lately received from its pretended friends.

It would have been well for the Church of England if, upon your entrance on the ministry, you had not only carefully read over some such books as *The Preservative against Unsettled Notions in Religion*² but determined also, through the assistance of the grace of God, not to be tossed to and fro by the wind of every doctrine (as you know you have been), and without troubling yourself or your hearers with abstruse and dark notions of the Trinity, predestination, and their opposite doctrines (doctrines I presume far beyond the reach of human learning and utterly incomprehensible by the generality of mankind), that you had preached alone Christ Jesus, and him crucified. This would have enabled you with greater propriety to have personated the apostle Paul (which you seem extremely desirous of doing) and have given you a better title to the character of an apostle than all you have ever done by preaching or writing in your life. And in the manner and way you have thought proper to bestow your labours, you would have had a glorious opportunity of propagating that spirit of love and charity which is so conspicuous through all St. Paul's writings, but which seems a virtue utterly unknown to the Methodists—for with them all are in a state of damnation who think or act otherwise than they do.

To conclude, let us beseech Almighty God that he would abundantly shed abroad his love in our hearts, that we may thereby be enabled to love one another as Christ loved us, though we should not be brought to think and act just alike with regard to the outward forms and ceremonies of religion. And for this purpose, let us earnestly pray the Lord of the harvest that he would, in compassion to his church, be mercifully pleased to raise up such labourers in his vineyard as shall endeavour, in the primitive spirit of love and charity, to unite all Christians of every denomination in the sincere practice of true piety and virtue, and make conformity of practice (not of opinion) the sole mark of brotherhood and badge of orthodoxy—which, I assure you, is the sincere prayer of,

A Presbyterian

Source: published transcription; *St. James's Chronicle* (Dec. 6–8), p. 2.

²JW publication in 1758, which included the first appearance of 'Reasons Against a Separation from the Church of England'.

From 'Philosphaster'

[November 1764]

Reverend Sir,

Having ever been desirous of true, useful knowledge, I hope you will excuse the freedom used in the subsequent remarks, and that you will give a solution to my queries consequent thereupon.

1. In your *Compendium of Natural Philosophy*,³ Vol. II, p. 140, you say that 'the sun revolves upon his axis once in 27 hours'. *Qu[ery]*: If this should have been once in 27 days nearly?

2. Lower, in the same page, you inform us that 'he is supposed to be abundantly larger than the earth'. *Qu[ery]*: Why you cautiously say 'supposed' when it is demonstrable that he is really so?

3. Page 142, you tell us that 'the moon *always* turns the same side to the earth'. *Qu[ery]*: If you should not have said nearly the same side? I have a map or representation of *nativa luna plena facies, nec non ejusdem libratio, juxta observationes Cl. Hevelli.*⁴

4. And a little lower you acquaint us that 'it does not appear that she moves at all around her own axis'. *Qu[ery]*: How then do you account for her turning always the same (or nearly the same) side to the earth, if she does not revolve upon her axis in the same time in which she revolves around the earth?

5. Page 143, you write that 'the moon is supposed to be 45 times smaller than the earth'. *Qu[ery]*: Why you again use the word 'suppose' when the ratio of the moon's bulk to that of the earth is nicely known?

6. At the bottom of page 145 you say that 'Jupiter is supposed to be 25 times larger than the earth'; and, in the next page, that 'his diameter is supposed to be 130655 miles, and the earth's 7967 miles'. *Qu[ery]*: If so, whether Jove⁵ must not be (instead of 25, the cube of 16 at least, that is) 4096 times larger than the earth?

7. You inform us that 'even a good eye seldom sees more than an hundred stars at a time'. *Qu[ery]*: Whether by 'a time' you mean one look, or that field of view which the human eye is capable of taking in at one look or view? If not, you contradict what you say in page 133, where you tell us 'that the number of fixed stars visible to the naked eye is 2200'.

8. Page 148,⁶ you say 'even with respect to the distance of the sun (which some demonstrate to be ninety millions of miles; others, to be not three millions of miles from the earth) that it is wisest to confess our ignorance, and to acknowledge we have nothing to rest on here but *mere uncertain conjecture*'. In page 198 you tell us Dr. Rogers makes the sun's distance 2,910,164 miles.⁷ But that no credit is due to his assertion shall be shown before I conclude, and then his opinion will no more bring an opprobrium upon true astronomy than heresy upon true religion. The knowledge of the sun's distance from the earth depends upon finding its parallax, that is, the angle that the semidiameter of the earth appears under at the sun—which (angle) is so very minute that an error of but a single second only will give the distance considerably greater or less than the true distance. To obtain this angle many nice observations must be made, with most exquisite instruments, by observators equal to the task. As very considerable improvements have been made in science and astronomical instruments, the astronomer is thereby enabled to approximate nearer and nearer to truth; just as, by improvements in time-pieces, we are enabled to determine the time of the day more and more exactly. By various methods, explained by Keill

³I.e., *A Survey of the Wisdom of God in the Creation, or A Compendium of Natural Philosophy*, 2 vols. (Bristol: William Pine, 1763).

⁴I.e., a map in Johannes Hevelli (1611–87), *Selenographia* (1647–54), see Epistle IV, section II: *De Motu Lunae Libratorio*.

⁵Another name for Jupiter.

⁶This is actually on p. 146 of the second volume, as JW corrects the reference in his reply.

⁷Citing John Rogers, M.D., *Dissertation on the Knowledge of the Ancients in Astronomy and Optical Instruments, on the Earth's Diurnal and Annual Motions, on the distance of the planets from the sun, and its magnitude* (London: Charles Rivington, 1755).

in his 21st astronomic lecture,⁸ made use of to obtain the sun's parallax, we are assured, he says, that his distance from us is more than 7000 semidiameters of the earth; that is, about twenty-eight millions of miles. But this not being sufficiently satisfactory, the parallax of Mars (he says) has been most accurately observed by two of the most eminent astronomers of our age, who have determined thereby the sun's parallax to be scarce eleven seconds, and his distance to be about nineteen thousand semidiameters of the earth; that is, about seventy-six millions of miles. Now, sir, if these things be true, if the least distance possible is (as has been observed) absolutely determined, and approximations are making toward getting the true distance, how can it be wisest to confess our ignorance and to acknowledge we have nothing to rest on here but mere uncertain conjecture? I, from certain data, may determine that the distance of two places (London and Canton, for example) must be more than a certain number of miles; but till the latitude and difference of longitude are very nicely known, I can't be certain as to the absolute distance. But yet the former knowledge cannot be called mere uncertain conjecture.

9. Page 244, you ask, 'To what end do they (the fixed stars) serve? To illumine worlds? To impart light and heat to their several choirs of planets? Or (as the ingenious Mr. [John] Hutchinson, so you call him, supposes) to gild the extremities of the solar sphere, which according to him is the only inhabited part of the universe?' That gentleman is so ingenious as to hide his meaning, at least from me, for I confess I do not understand him. And, in page 143, you tell us 'you doubt we shall never prove that the primary (planets) are (inhabited) and so (you say) the whole ingenious hypothesis of innumerable suns and worlds moving around them vanishes into air'. Not so indeed. The hypothesis, having much more to be said in its favour than against it, is more likely to be permanent than evanescent. That each of the stars called fixed stars are of the same kind, nature, and magnitude with our own sun, and serves for much the same purposes, is to me evident when we consider: (1) That it is found by observations made for getting the parallax of the earth's orbit that a fixed star cannot be less than ten thousand times farther from the sun than we are. And so (2) they appear so small and subtend such unperceivable angles at the eye that, except they were fiery bodies, they could not be seen by us. Thus the flame of the candle may be perceived in the night at two miles distance, whereas in the daytime an opaque object though strongly illustrated by the sun and six times bigger than the flame of a candle is not to be perceived by the naked eye at that distance. (3) It is demonstrable that the fixed star called Sirius is about the bigness of our own sun. Hence (4) seeing the fixed stars are not, cannot be illustrated by, nor shine with the borrowed light of the sun, but that each is a fiery body shining (like the sun) with its own native light, and not much bigger nor less than the sun is, they therefore are to be esteemed as so many suns. By their different apparent diameters they, it is probable, are fixed everywhere through the vast indefinite space of the universe; so that there may be as great distance between any two next to one another as there is between our sun and the nearest fixed star. A spectator who is near one of them (even yourself) would look upon that to which he is nearest as a real sun, and all the rest, our own sun included, as so many small shining stars fixed in his own heaven or firmament. You see, sir, that the hypothesis of innumerable suns is so far from vanishing into air that it is almost altogether founded on demonstration, deduced from observation.

But the hypothesis of the ingenious Hutchinson is founded only on supposition, and highly improbable. For whether by the extremities of the solar sphere he means the periphery of the orbit of the earth, or of Saturn, yet either of these orbits, viewed at the distance of the nearest fixed star, is so small that it cannot be reasonably supposed to have had that star created to gild its extremity. And much less can we reasonably suppose the far greater number of fixed stars made for that purpose (I mean the telescopic), since very little gilding can be had from bodies which, except they are magnified very many times, cannot be seen—nor, without the assistance of a telescope, could by us have been known to exist. Whether the primary planets are inhabited or not, let the impartial reader judge, when he shall have considered the mutual relation and likeness there is between our earth and them:

- (1) The earth is a sphere, or nearly so. – So is each planet.
- (2) It is opaque. – So is each planet.

⁸John Keill, *An Introduction to the True Astronomy* (London: B. Lintot, 1721).

- (3) It casts a shadow opposite to the sun. – So does each planet.
- (4) It is illustrated by the light of the sun. – So is each planet.
- (5) It constantly is revolving upon its own axis. – So is Jupiter, Mars, and probably the rest.
- (6) It has a regular succession of day and night. – So have Jove, Mars, and probably the rest.
- (7) And of summer and winter. – So has each planet the axes of whose orb and equinoctial do not coincide.
- (8) It is always revolving around the sun. – So is each primary planet.
- (9) The square of the time of its revolving round the sun is to the cube of its distance from him, as the square of the time of any other primary planet's revolution round the sun is to the cube of that planet's distance from him. – The same proportion holds with respect to any two of the primary planets.
- (10) It is of prodigious magnitude. – Jove and Saturn are each much greater.
- (11) It has one moon, or concomitant, of signal service to her in causing tides, reflecting light, fixing the longitude of places, etc. – Jupiter has four moons, and Saturn five, each of which is larger than the earth's attendant, and no doubt as useful.
- (12) It is eclipsed by its moon. – So is Jove and Saturn by each of their moons.
- (13) It eclipses its moon. – So do Jove and Saturn each of their moons.

Add to all this that Saturn hangs within a ring, a stupendous arch of many thousand miles in diameter, which constantly reflects the light of the sun down upon Saturn himself, and so in some measure supplies the loss of light to Saturn occasioned by the sun's great distance from him. Now sir, is it probable that God Almighty (who always acts with infinite wisdom and does nothing in vain) should have created planets so much like our own, and furnished them with such amazing apparatus so very necessary to make the life of an intelligent being happy, and yet not to have placed inhabitants in those planets to partake of the benefit of such ample provision? To suppose the wisest of all being to have created Saturn's ring only to reflect the sun's light strongly down upon the body of Saturn, and at the same time no inhabitants there to enjoy the benefit of that light, is to suppose his power, wisdom, and goodness exerted to little or no purpose.

They who affirm, says Mr. Keill, that God created those great bodies (the fixed stars) only to give us a small, dim light must have a very mean opinion of the divine wisdom.⁹ It is more reasonable to suppose that in the indefinitely great space of the universe are placed innumerable suns, which (though they appear to us like so many small stars, yet) are bodies not behind our own sun either in bigness, light, or glory; and each of them constantly attended with a number of planets, which dance round him and constitute so many particular systems—every sun doing the same office to his proper planet, in illustrating and cherishing them, which our sun performs in the system to which we belong. Hence we are to consider the whole universe as a glorious palace for an infinitely great and everywhere present God; and that all the worlds, or systems of worlds, are as so many theatres in which he displays his divine power, wisdom, and goodness. How mean are the Hutchinsonians' idea of creation, when compared to this!

10. Let us suppose the earth viewed from one of the planets (not from Saturn, for at that planet our mighty globe cannot be seen but as a very small spot transiting the sun's disk now and then). Some intelligent beings there, who were

Slave to no sect, who sought no private road,
But look'd through nature up to nature's God,¹⁰

would argue that our earth must be inhabited in much the same manner that we argue that the other planets are inhabited. But the superstitious would oppose this doctrine and call it 'mere uncertain

⁹Keill, *True Astronomy*, 40.

¹⁰Alexander Pope, *An Essay on Man*, Epistle IV, l. 334.

conjecture?.

11. In page 189 you quote Dr. [John] Rogers, who says 'the diameter of the sun is 23373 miles'. I admire, sir, how you could give place in your book to such an assertion, except to explode it. If this be true, the earth would appear at the sun under an angle of above ten minutes ($\frac{1}{3}$ of what the sun himself appears under at the earth) and half as big again as the sun appears at above Jupiter! Amazing! That the parallax of the sun, which Messrs. [Giovanni] Cassini, [John] Flamstead, [Christiaan] Huygens, [Edmund] Halley, and all our best and most assiduous observators could never find to be above 10 or 11 seconds, should now be half as many minutes! Why doctor, if this be true, our earth has approximated thirty times nearer the sun, though his apparent diameter has not increased at all! Wonderful indeed! To conclude, since there is no arguing against facts, and since it is true that the sun's parallax is found not to exceed 11 seconds, and Dr. Rogers's non-ingenious hypothesis makes it above 5 minutes: *Qu[ery]*: Whether you ought not to give up that hypothesis as absurd and ridiculous?

Lord! not to earth's contracted span
Thy goodness let me bound:
Or think thee Lord alone of man,
When thousand worlds are round.¹¹

Philosophaster¹²

Source: published transcription; *London Magazine* 34 (1764), pp. 570–73.

¹¹Alexander Pope, 'The Universal Prayer', st. 6.

¹²The name means 'the little philosopher'. It was the title of a satirical play by Robert Burton (performed at Christ Church, Oxford in 1618) about a group of pseudo-philosophers or scholars setting up a college.

'A Presbyterian' to the Printer of the *St. James's Chronicle*

Gravesend
November 5, 1764

*Qui alterum incusat probri, ipsum se intueri oportet*¹
Plautus

Crimen habet, quanto major, qui peccat habetur.
Juvenal²

Sir,

By your paper of the 3rd instant I find Mr. Wesley has taken notice of my first letter, but not in the manner I expected, as he only charges me with mistaking his meaning as to the word *στοργή* and putting a false construction on what he has wrote concerning the Dissenters. Now, Mr. Baldwin,³ the shortest and plainest answer to all this is—I appeal to the pamphlet itself.⁴ And the Rev. Mr. John Wesley shall himself be judge whether or no I have advanced any thing that may not fairly be deduced from his own words, without putting any unnatural force upon them. His appeals to former opinions, and his present assertions of persevering in the same sentiments, are foreign to the dispute at hand. What he ought to prove is that he never swerved from his sentiments as a true Churchman, and that no writings of his can be produced which contain any thing like inconsistency, or his harbouring such uncharitable thoughts of his Dissenting brethren.

However, if he shall rationally, and in the spirit of love and charity as becometh the gospel, convince me that I have mistaken his meaning (I appeal to the great searcher of hearts that I have not done it wilfully), I stand open to conviction and shall freely own it, having nothing in view but truth and liberty, which, through the grace of God, I am determined to defend. As it is highly probable Mr. Wesley may have forgot the content of the treatise in question, there is one of these pamphlets now in possession of Mr. Eglesham, schoolmaster in Gravesend, where he or any one else may see it—and be fully convinced that the author of the letters upon it now publishing in the *St. James's Chronicle* is no doctor,⁵ but a conscientious Christian under the denomination of a Presbyterian.

Source: published transcription; *St. James's Chronicle* (Nov. 29–Dec. 1), p. 1.

¹Cf. Plautus, *Truculentus*, I.ii.159; 'He who damns another's vaults had best be paragon himself' (Loeb).

²Juvenal, *Satires*, viii.140; 'guilt is more conspicuous in proportion to the rank of the offender'.

³The printer of the *St. James's Chronicle*.

⁴I.e., to Wesley's *Reasons Against a Separation from the Church of England*.

⁵Compare the next letter, from John Cook, M.D.

From Mary Bosanquet

Leytonstone¹
November 8, 1764

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I have never yet had an opportunity of fully laying before you the reasons of my coming to reside at this place and the nature of my employment here, which I will now take the liberty to do.

During my former abode among this people they were often laid on my mind in prayer, and I was often greatly comforted by an hope that they would one day hear and receive the gospel.

Removing from these parts in February 1761, those thoughts were taken from me for a season. But after a year and a half, being providentially called to return hither, the same thoughts returned into my mind. Yet I could not easily consent to leave London till I had, with my friend,² laid it before the Lord; being fully persuaded that if it was of God, he would make plain paths for our feet.

Soon after many outward providences confirmed us in our belief that it was God's appointment. His Spirit also shone clearer upon our souls, and convinced us it was a cross which he called us to take up. One day in particular, when my friend and I were laying it before him in prayer, he condescended to assure her that he would 'not send us a warfare at our own charges'.³ I thought, 'Let not my Lord be angry, and I will ask yet one sign more'.⁴ This was the settling of an affair which seemed to man impossible. And it was settled within a few days. O God, who can stay thy hand?

But no sooner was my design mentioned to others than it was vehemently opposed. One in particular charged me not to go, saying, 'It was all a scheme of the devil.' Either that night or the next, I dreamed I was at Leytonstone, and a great number of all sorts of people about me. I was pressed in spirit to speak to them; but being pained at the appearance of many gay ones among them, I said, in the anguish of my soul, 'Lord, what do I here among this people?' Immediately I thought Jesus came down and stood just before me. The brightness of his presence so overcame me that there was no strength left in me. He said, 'I will send you to a people that are not a people; and I will go with you. Bring them unto me. I will lay my hand upon them, and heal them. Fear not; only believe.' He then disappeared, leaving me quite penetrated with his presence and his words. After having wept some time, I thought I told the people what the Lord had said. About half seemed serious and attentive, and desirous of being separated from the rest. I thought I was to find them a place to meet in. In order to which, I was obliged to walk over a floor no thicker than a wafer. However, I went over, and not a splinter gave way under my feet. Soon after I awoke with these words, 'The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.'⁵

Our fears were now removed, and on March 24, 1763, we came to this house, in obedience to what we believed the will of our heavenly Father. We came, trusting in him; and, blessed be God, we have not trusted him in vain.

From the first hour we found his presence with us, but did not see for what end we were come. We therefore 'stood still to see *his* salvation'.⁶ Meantime we determined to live by rule in everything. And in order to supply the want of the public means [of grace], from which we were in great measure cut off, we agreed to spend an hour every evening, part in reading to the family and part in private prayer. The first book we read was *The Rebuke to Backsliders, and Spur to Loiterers*.⁷ And glory be to God, our

¹Orig. spelling, here and in body of letter: 'Layton-Stone'.

²Sarah Ryan.

³Cf. 1 Cor. 9:7.

⁴Gen. 18:32.

⁵Isa. 40:5.

⁶Cf. Exod. 14:13.

⁷Richard Alleine, *A Rebuke to Backsliders, and a Spur for Loiterers* (London: John Hancock, 1677); they were likely reading JW's abridgment in *Chr. Library*, 39:277–453.

meeting has hitherto never been in vain.

In about a week a poor woman whom I had formerly talked with, coming to ask charity, desired to know if she might not come when we went to prayers? I told her she might at seven in the evening. She did so, as did two or three more soon after. We then appointed them to come on Thursday nights. In a little time they were increased to above twenty. We now thought it best to talk with them, and that as closely as we could. Some were quickly offended and came no more. These we desired to come to us on Tuesday nights; and the second time we met, two of them found peace with God.

A little before this, we judged the time was come to have public preaching here. This was a close trial to *me*, such as few can conceive, unless they have been in the same situation. But I knew, whosoever would not *forsake all*,⁸ could not be Christ's disciple—seeing he had said, 'If any man love father or mother more than me, he is not worthy of me.'⁹

We then applied to you, and the next Sunday, May the 25th, Mr. Murlin preached the first sermon. This continued every other Sunday, though not without considerable opposition. In November, Mr. Morgan received twenty-five into the society, and divided them into two classes. Ah Lord! How many of these shall I meet in the resurrection of the just!

But a new scene now opened. The reasons on which I proceeded I will lay before you as plainly as I can.

From a child I have ever believed God had appointed me for some work, in which I should be much blest if I was faithful; but that if I took up with anything less than I was called to, I should only be saved as by *fire*.¹⁰ Often have I panted after an outward, as well as inward, conformity to the will of God, greatly desiring to live as the first Christians did, when 'all that believed were of one soul' and counted not 'any of the things they possessed' their own.¹¹ But I saw the time was not yet come. Yet I could not but believe, in your day something of this kind would be.

When I was about seventeen, the Lord was pleased to show me that I was not to build tabernacles here. For none of those ways I had cut out for myself were such as he had appointed for me. I can't better describe what I felt then, than by transcribing part of a letter to a friend.

The Lord has been merciful above all I can ask or think. I found a greater blessing the last time I was in town than ever. ... And within this day or two, I see much more clearly the way in which I ought to walk. The Lord seems to call me to much more activeness, so that I am sometimes ready to cry out, 'Lord, what would'st thou have me to do?' Then I considered, Can I do more for the souls or bodies of those about me? But this does not seem to be the thing. What I am now led to wish for is to serve those that are in Christ, both with soul and body. And as soon as the Lord has prepared me for his work, and set me at liberty, my firm resolution is, by the grace of God, to be wholly given up to the church. I plainly see I have no more to do with the world than to allow myself the bare necessaries of life. And though it has pleased God I should not have my living to work for, that is no reason my hands should be idle. I would be as those described by St. Paul, 'to bring up children, to lodge strangers', to be ready for the meanest offices, to 'relieve the afflicted', to 'visit the fatherless and widows, and diligently follow after every good work'.¹²

Epping Forest, May 23, 1757

I have ever since found the same impressions on my soul; and when we came to this house I felt a kind of rest I did not before, as if I was where God would have me to be. But one day, reflecting that we

⁸See Luke 14:33.

⁹Matt. 10:37.

¹⁰See 1 Cor. 3:15.

¹¹Acts 4:32.

¹²Cf. 1 Tim. 5:10; and James 1:27.

had more room than we wanted, and thinking whom I should take in to fill it, it was strongly impressed upon my mind, 'He that believeth shall not make haste'.¹³ Not long after the thought of 'bringing up children' returned. But I was afraid of making haste, till it appeared from many reasons to be the will of God that we should take in one that offered. Soon after we were induced to receive another, and presently two more. I now saw our family would be an increasing one, as we could not bring up even these children properly without a person whose constant business it should be to teach them during the school-hours. For it was impossible *we* should do it long, while we were necessarily employed in so many other things. I knew this, and the other expenses which must attend the keeping six or seven children, would require an hundred [pounds] a year more than I had. But I remembered again, 'The Lord liveth',¹⁴ and truly 'hitherto he hath helped us'.¹⁵

Our method of educating our children is this. As our design is to fit them for good servants, we endeavour as early as possible to inure them to labour, early-rising and cleanliness. We have now eleven. Three of these (two of whom are eleven years old, the other between nine and ten) rise at four. One lights the nursery fire; one mine; the other, that below. At five the rest of the family are called. And when the children are dressed and have prayed, they go (in summer) in the garden from six till half an hour after, while the bigger ones make the beds and clean the rooms. At half hour after six we all join in family prayer. At seven [we] breakfast in the same room; two or three upon herb tea, the rest upon milk-porridge. At eight the bell rings for school, where they continue till twelve; and then after a few minutes spent in prayer, come to us. In winter, this is their hour for exercise, instead of the morning and evening. In hot weather we read to them something they are pleased with, or converse familiarly, so as (without seeming to aim at it) to instill into them principles of religion, at the same time giving them some kind of employ, which is rather amusement than business—yet it just takes off the appearance of idleness. For from the very beginning they have been carefully taught never to do anything but what they could give God a reason for. On this account we never use the term 'play', nor suffer any to give them those toys or playthings which children are usually brought up to spend half their time in. And when some of these were privately given, they threw them aside without any bidding. Their recreation consists in diversifying their business, which is varied even during their school-hours. Only the very little ones now and then run in the garden for a quarter of an hour; but still with a degree of seriousness, and they know it is for their health. At one we dine. At two school begins again, except on Saturdays. At five they return to us. About six they sup. At half after six they begin to be washed, and at seven go to bed. Indeed in summer their supper is sooner, so that they have an hour with us in the garden. During this time they are all employed, some in watering, others in fetching the water, the rest in pumping. And work of this kind they are all very fond of.

But O! what a want of wisdom do I find! I see in them what I cannot put in practice. I want the children not to be a moment from under the *eye* and the *attention* of some judicious person. So that if the eleven children were at work in so many different parts of garden, one might observe that each works *diligently*. For sloth in temporals always produces sloth in spirituals. Yet at the same time their work must not be made a *task*; for then it would not answer the end. Again, their thoughts all the day long will naturally tend to evil. And their words will be trifling. To *bid* them to do otherwise avails no more than to bid the Blackamoor be white. And to reprove them continually would be a burden greater than they could bear. But if by little stories and hints their minds could be insensibly drawn to better subjects, they would be at length brought to remember that God is present, and is looking upon them every moment. When I consider this, and many more things which I see afar off but cannot bring to effect, I am constrained to say, 'O Lord! I am not yet "thoroughly furnished to every good work"'.¹⁶

¹³Isa. 28:16.

¹⁴Ps. 18:46.

¹⁵1 Sam. 7:12.

¹⁶2 Tim. 3:17.

Some may say, 'This is worldly wisdom, not gospel simplicity. And after all you cannot change their hearts.' Most certain. But hath not God said, 'Train up a child in the way it should go'?¹⁷ Now I think true simplicity is to obey God, and leave the consequence to him.

And we have already reason to believe our labour has not been in vain. There are dawns of grace in most of the children. Some of them God was pleased to bless in a particular manner on the 7th of June last. In the evening, Betty L—, about ten years old, was much concerned for one of the little ones, who had stole something. When they went to bed, not knowing they were overhead, they began to converse freely; and Betty L— said, 'Let us go to prayer for H—s' soul.' She then prayed in a very affecting manner. Afterwards one about eight prayed, pleading much for H—, and added, 'Lord, don't let us so think of her sin as to forget our own. Lord, don't let us laugh and trifle, and talk of foolish things when we come off our knees, but make us Christians.' One of them thanked God for their 'good corrections and teachings', and said, 'Lord, if we are not Christians, we shall be more punished than others'. When they had done, Nancy Tripp went in to undress them. She first went to prayer with them as usual, and the spirit of conviction fell on Betty L— in a very uncommon manner. We came up and found her in an exceeding great agony. She was the very picture of terror. The veins of her neck were as if they would burst. She wrung her hands, and cried with a bitter cry, 'O my sins!' I believe more than an hundred times. She then broke out into such a confession of her original sin, and heart sins, as was quite astonishing, adding, 'O! I have never done anything for *thee* in my whole life. I have broke all thy laws. I have kept the devil's commandments. I have kept none of thy commandments. May such a wretch come to the Lord? Wilt thou receive me? Wilt thou pardon me? Wilt thou make me a Christian? Tell me, Lord, shall I go to heaven or hell? Wilt thou make me a Christian? Wilt thou forgive me?' She paused a little, and added, 'But wilt thou Lord?' Yes, he will, he will. 'But wilt thou Lord? Yes, thou wilt, thou wilt.' Mr. [Josiah] Dornford then gave out an hymn. She now seemed quite calm. The horror which before appeared in her countenance was gone, and had left a sweet smile. Her attention seemed quite fixed. And after remaining some time with her eyes upward, she said, 'Jesus is smiling upon me.' She had at the same time a sight of him as upon the cross, saying, 'I have pardoned all your sins; and if you pray, I will give you abundant love.' After she had sat silent a while, she broke out, 'O what a sweet Saviour he is! He has forgiven me all my sins—all, all. Lord, thou wilt, thou hast forgiven me. O let them be perfectly forgiven! But shall I ever sin again, Lord? O don't let me sin again.' Sometime after, she said, 'O what a sweet *Saviour* thou art! What sweet love is thine! But don't let me sin again! Fill me with love that I may never sin again!'

This scene was striking. But it was nothing to the change that followed. She was of a far worse natural temper than any of the children. But now it might indeed be said, 'Love made her willing heart in swift obedience move.'¹⁸ So great was the change both in will and understanding, as plainly declared the hand that wrought it.

We sometimes hope several of them will choose to be entirely devoted to God. If so, they may continue together when they grow up, each following such an employment as she is fit for, and all throwing the produce of their labour into a common stock. And may not God be pleased to call some young women, not brought up with us, who have a desire to devote themselves wholly to God, to cast in their lot with us? Perhaps some who do not want, may be glad to get out of the hurry of the world, at least for a season, that the tender flame may not be put out, nor any unhallowed fires mix with it. How much is something of this kind wanted? A place of refuge for the weak and unexperienced? How often do we see those who are just setting out in the good way either wholly turned aside, or at least persuaded to take up with a lower way than the Spirit of God at first pointed out?

But if ever this design be brought to perfection, it is God only that must choose the persons, and bring us together, as it is he only that 'maketh men to be of one mind in an house'.¹⁹ And whosoever

¹⁷Prov. 22:6.

¹⁸Cf. Isaac Watts, *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* (1709), 'Love to God', st. 3: 'Tis love that makes our cheerful feet / In swift obedience move.' JW included in *CPH* (1738), 40.

¹⁹Ps. 68:6 (BCP).

comes to us must desire to be conformed to their crucified head. We can promise them only *poverty*, *labour*, and *sorrow*, the inward and outward cross. But when they embrace this with their whole hearts, they assuredly experience that in poverty is riches; in labour, ease; and in sorrow, constant rejoicing.

All this is in the hand of my God, as also another thought I had concerning aged widows. But so exceeding great is his faithfulness that I know not how to despair of anything. A few of the many instances hereof, which we have received, you must give me leave to mention.

I have been always led, since I had any work of God upon my soul, to walk by faith in outward things as well as inward. Hence I have frequently, when an object of distress presented, gone beyond my income, believing God would make it up in the time of need. In this confidence I received four or five more children, though I had nothing in hand, and more bedding and clothes were to be bought immediately. For this we wanted two guineas directly. Some friends sending us word they would call on such a day, my friend prayed that God would put it into their hearts to help us. They came, and one of them put two guineas into my hand. We praised the Lord, and received it as a token for good.

Soon after we were advised to put up a poor box. I found great reluctance to it, which convinced me it requires less grace in some cases to *give* than to *receive*. However, laying it before the Lord in prayer, I saw it was his will and consented. So on Tuesday, February 1, it was put up in the passage-room, with this inscription: 'For the maintenance of a few poor orphans, that they may be brought up in the fear of the Lord.' A few days after we took out 2s. 7d. but no more for a great while. During this time we were much straitened, not having the nursery furnished, nor half the necessaries for the children. It was now strongly suggested, 'You see you have done wrong, and God will not help you any more.' But having recourse to prayer, our faith was strengthened.

Soon after, the following thought was much impressed on my mind. If Christ was now upon earth, and in want of food and raiment, should I be afraid to give him mine, lest I should want it myself? Should I not rather say, 'Let *all* I have be offered, for the necessities of my Lord. He is well able to repay it, and if he is not, then let us want together.' I saw the case with the children was the same, and that 'what was done to one of these', was 'done to him'.²⁰ A light broke in upon my mind which quite satisfied me, and constrained me to say, 'Lord, thy word is enough. Thou hast said, "Love one another, as I have loved you".²¹ Let their *wants* be mine, my substance theirs.'

We were now not only in want of the things above-mentioned, but of money to keep the house. Just then a guinea was put into the box; and soon after, another. In a few days one brought us thirty shillings, saying, 'Fear not, only believe.' About the same time were received four guineas from another hand, which helped us through that quarter. To avoid tediousness, I pass over many other helps which we received from time to time, confining myself to those wherein the hand of the Lord is more eminently to be observed.

Sometime since, being obliged to pay a sum of money in a day's time, and having none in the house, nor any due, I attempted to borrow it of a friend, but could not. I tried another, and was disappointed there also. Not knowing what to do, I went up stairs and waited before the Lord, telling him I would yet *trust* him and *praise* him. Opening the last volume of *Sermons*, I cast my eye on this sentence, 'Christ charges himself with all our temporal affairs, when we charge ourselves with those that relate to his glory.'²² It was applied to my heart with such a power as I had very seldom felt. And such a sense as almost overwhelmed it. O what a freedom of spirit did I feel! I could truly say, 'All my care on thee is cast.' In the evening, a person desired to speak with me, and brought me a little above the sum.

In spring we were again reduced to about one penny, and expected a bill of two or three pounds to be brought in every hour. We looked to the Lord, and found him again to be a present help. For while we were consulting what to do a basket came, which one had sent us from London, with some provisions

²⁰Cf. Matt. 25:40.

²¹John 15:12.

²²JW had published a fourth volume of *Sermons on Several Occasions* in 1760, which included both sermons and tracts. Bosanquet is quoting from the tract (translated from Saint Cyran) titled *Christian Instructions*, §73, found on p. 282.

and a little parcel, in which were four pounds, three shillings and nine pence.

In August we had an hour of trial again. The children being increased to ten, we were in great want of linen; but how to procure it for them we could not tell. I was unwilling to run farther in debt, having already spent the two next quarters before they came in, nor was that enough to pay what was owing. And I had nothing in the house. So we agreed to lay it before the Lord together. While I was alone, it was violently suggested, 'There is so much of *self* in all you do that God is rather dishonoured than glorified thereby.' I said, 'Lord, I am the purchase of thy blood. I plead that only. And I believe thou wilt not leave me, nor forsake me.' Afterwards I felt much peace. Rising from my knees, I opened the Bible on the following words. 'Acquaint thyself now with him, and be at peace; thereby shalt good come unto thee. Then ... the Almighty shall be the defence, and thou shalt have plenty of silver. ... Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established, and the light shall shine on thy ways.'²³

I felt my soul instantly strengthened. And every word was so opened and applied that, to this day, it seems new whenever I read it. Particularly that promise, 'Thou shalt decree a thing, and it shall be established, and the light shall shine on thy ways.' Indeed the whole appeared more full and strong than I have words to express.

Two or three days after we received five guineas; the same day, three more; and two from another hand. In a little while we received four more, with a promise of the same yearly. O my God, who would not trust thee? Who would not take thee at thy word?

Perhaps some will wonder how one who has so great an income as I can ever experience want. But *you* know what I have. You know likewise that before I took any children, I every year spent more than my income, trusting that God would supply what was lacking. Others may wonder at my present *imprudent* way of proceeding; but I 'know in whom I have believed'.²⁴ Indeed had I sought the praise of men, I should have taken care of myself rather than of others. For I know, 'so long as thou dost well unto thyself, men will speak well of thee'.²⁵ But we have chose the cross for our portion, and we cannot give it up.

A few days since having paid the week's bill, my friend said, 'We have but a few shillings left.' The Tuesday following I received two letters. Opening one of them I was a little surprised to find a guinea inclosed, with the following lines from one I had never conversed with.

Nov. 5, 1764

My Dear Child,

With much pleasure I heard of your charitable design, which I pray God to bless and succeed. Be never discouraged, though divine wisdom should exercise you at times, even with many, great, and alarming difficulties. For this is frequently the way in which God leads his children, in order to improve their faith and patience. But even supposing he should not succeed this affair, according to your present plan, yet he will never fail to bless those who sincerely endeavour to promote his honour, the kingdom of the Lord Jesus, and the good of souls.

I desire that you would accept of the inclosed, and that you would set me down as an annual contributor of the same sum. May the Lord Jesus Christ be with all of us. Forget us not in your prayers.

I am, with much respect and regard,
Your very affectionate friend.

These lines were greatly blest to me, and I found much thankfulness. In the other letter was another guinea inclosed, with these few words: 'I have felt your burden, and should be thankful you had more help. But perhaps it is rather the will of God concerning you to give you day by day your daily bread. I pray him to be with you.' The same night one brought half a guinea from a person unknown, who

²³Job 22:21–28.

²⁴2 Tim. 1:12.

²⁵Cf. Ps. 49:18 (BCP).

desired to be set down as an annual contributor of two guineas.

When a yearly subscription was first proposed, I was averse to it, fearing it might give offence; till a very particular friend mentioned it to a few of her acquaintance, unknown to us. Afterwards I was convinced it was of God. It now amounts to about fourteen pounds a year.

Our family at present consists of sixteen: eleven children, one teacher for them, one servant, ourselves, and one lame with the palsy.

When I look back to last Christmas, I am astonished at the loving-kindness of my God! What he hath done for us, and what he hath brought us through, I can easier bless him for than repeat! One thing more I ask of him—and in this also he will hear me—that he would restore sevenfold into the bosom of those he has made helpful to us, either by prayer, by word or by deed. And if a cup of cold water is not forgotten before him, surely not one of these shall lose their reward.

O sir, we have so many mercies I know not how to leave off recounting them. *Now* I see that design of God, in joining sister R[yan] and me together. It would have been impossible for me to have gone through my present undertaking alone. I know I have neither grace for the spiritual, nor capacity for the temporal part. It is therefore in the greatest tenderness that our Lord has given her to us as a mother. And I trust both this and every blessing shall have the effect which God designed in it.

I am,

M. B.

Source: published transcription; *A Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley, by a Gentlewoman* (London: the Foundery, 1764).

John Cook, M.D. To the Printer of the *St. James's Chronicle*¹

Leigh, Essex
November 12, 1764

Sir,

Last week I was visited by a neighbouring clergyman. He told me he fancied that Rev. Mr. Wesley had a fling at me in your paper of the 3rd of November last, and promised to send it [to] me, to see and judge for myself.

His first paragraph, in answer to a letter sent him by I know not whom, begins according to custom, satirical enough, thus:

One may know Hercules by his foot.² In a letter of October 13 I easily take knowledge of my old friend, though dating from Gravesend, who is no Presbyterian but a kind of Churchman. The doctor has much time, and I have much work. ...³

Now in answer to so much as I take to myself, I say one of us is most certainly mistaken if this was not meant of me.

As to Hercules and his foot, no ways concerns me; but Proteus's head, who was no fool though sometimes mistaken. To be plain and honest with you, sir, your old friend John Cook of Leigh never dated anything to you from Gravesend or knows anything of the matter. You say true he is no Presbyterian. But how come you to alter your opinion of him, since two years ago you gave out in print that he was either a Presbyterian or a Papist?⁴ I own I am no Presbyterian, nor am I an enemy to such. I am a Churchman. And as to your sly stigma 'but a *kind* of Churchman', how can you blame one for being so like yourself? The doctor, it is true, has much time. But I hope he does not idle it away any more than Mr. Wesley. Let him then conscientiously take care of the souls, while the other does cordially of the bodies, of their people—and so be each serviceable in their different stations and duty, which will be far better than disputing and quarrelling.

I am, sir,

Yours, etc.

[John Cook]

Source: published transcription; *St. James's Chronicle* (Nov. 22–24), p. 1.

¹For details on John Cook, see his earlier letter of Nov. 3, 1760, under the pseudonym 'Stephen Church'.

²A proverb assuming that Hercules' foot would be much larger than that of other men, given his proportionate larger size in general.

³Citing JW's letter dated Oct. 27, 1764.

⁴See JW's letter 'To Mr. T. H., alias Philodemus, alias Somebody, alias Stephen Church, alias R. W.', Dec. 12, 1760, par. 4.

From Richard Blackwell¹

Brandon
November 20, 1764

Reverend Sir,

Knowing your love for souls, I send you these lines to acquaint you of the prosperity of Zion in this part of the vineyard. When I came to this place I found the society in a very dead state. Mr. Taylor² was almost determined to come here no more, for he seemed to despair of any good being done. This was somewhat discouraging. But God is faithful to his promise, 'As is thy day, so shall thy strength be.'³ My being sent to this place seemed to be a peculiar providence, that the glory of God might appear and that I might be satisfied of his will concerning me. The day after I came here, being Sunday, I preached abroad at the market-house to a large, serious congregation. God gave testimony to his word. One poor sinner, a soldier, was deeply convinced. He has since found the Lord. I should have continued to preach abroad, but my health would not permit. For in a few days I was confined to my bed by a fever, and have been but poorly ever since. At present I am much better, praised be God. His work is going on in the midst of us. Many have been convinced. Eighteen have joined the society, and many have found the Lord. But more backsliders have been healed. Most of the believers are truly alive to God, and see the great promise of sanctification is not afar off.

Mr. Morgan⁴ comes to see me frequently. We are of one heart and one mind, and love each other with a pure heart fervently. I find him very profitable. I see my own ignorance more than ever, and find I have need of all the help I can get. So dear sir, I hope you will let me be with Mr. Morgan as much as possible. I praise God, I feel my soul happy, and have no doubt of his great salvation. But I have need to watch every moment, lest I enter into temptation. O may I be faithful unto death! I beg your advice, directions and prayers. May the Lord bless you with every blessing in Christ Jesus! So prays

Your unworthy son in the gospel,

R. Blackwell

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 671–72.

¹Richard Blackwell (d. 1767) is listed as an itinerant preacher in the 1765 *Minutes (Works, 10:304)*, assigned to Ireland. He would have been active at least a year or two earlier, on trial. He died in late Dec. 1767. See Atmore, *Memorial*, 53–54; and the letter of W. Smith to JW of Dec. 22, 1767.

²Likely Thomas Taylor, itinerant.

³Deut. 33:25.

⁴Almost certainly James Morgan.

From Miss P. T.

Dublin
November 28, 1764

Reverend Sir,

The most miserable and guilty of all the human race, who knew you when she thought herself one of the happiest, may be ashamed to write or speak to you in her present condition. But the desperate misery of my state makes me attempt anything that may be a means of removing it. And though unreasonable as the request may seem, yet knowing your and your people's love for the bodies and souls of all, I hope you will pity my misery and comply with it—which, if it has the desired effect, will give great satisfaction to you and them. The request is that you, dear sir, and such of your happy people who meet in band and ever heard the name of that miserable wretch P. T. would join in fasting and prayer on a Tuesday, the day on which I was born. That the Lord would have mercy on me, and deliver me from the power of the devil, from the most uncommon blasphemies and the expectation of hell which I labour under, without power to pray or hope for mercy. Maybe the Lord may change my state, and have mercy on me, for the sake of his people's prayer. Indeed I cannot pray for myself. And if I could, I have no hopes of being heard. Nevertheless he, seeing his people afflicted for me, may on that account deliver me from the power of the devil, and give me life, and grace to resist all evil. O what a hell have I upon earth! I would not by any means charge God foolishly, for he has been very merciful to me. But I brought all of this evil on myself by sin, and by not making a right use of his mercy. Pray continually for me, for the prayer of faith will shut and open heaven. It may be a means of my deliverance, which will be one of the greatest miracles of mercy ever known, and will lay under the greatest obligations,

Your unworthy servant,

P. T.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 216–17.

From 'A Presbyterian'

Gravesend
November 29, 1764

'To the People Called Methodists'

Gentlemen,

I have now finished my remarks on the pamphlet called *Reasons against a Separation from the Church of England* addressed to you by your great leader and apostle, the Rev. Mr. John Wesley. I have dealt freely with him, but preserved decency, candour, and good breeding. And I think I may with justice say I have clearly convicted him of inconsistency, want of charity, and of openly renouncing the principles of that Church in whose communion he so warmly recommends you to remain. What effect this may have upon his conscience I know not. But on that great day when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, and he and I shall stand before the awful tribunal of him who shall finally judge us, his real motives for writing this pamphlet, and mine for thus publicly animadverting upon it, will then be clearly discovered. And to that all-righteous and impartial judgment I freely refer the dispute, and shall conclude the whole with offering a few things to you well worth your most serious consideration.

You have, gentlemen, visibly (whatever you may pretend to the contrary) separated yourselves from the Church of England. Your licences, principles, and practices—nay, your very faces—are undeniable proofs of the truth of this. Let me therefore advise you for the future to act consistent with yourselves. Leave the Church in peace, and the Church will not disturb your peace. When you occasionally attend the service of the Church, come with hearts well-disposed, divested of all prejudices. Judge and pass censure on what the minister says with charity and candour, freely allowing others to do the same by you. What you may imagine is poisonous deadly food to you may prove to others wholesome nourishment. Treat the clergy with that decency and respect which is due to their characters as ministers of the ever blessed gospel of Christ, our common Redeemer. If you load them with abuse and calumny, you must expect they will make reprisals—and they bid fairer for overbearing you than you them.

'Tis ridiculous in you to throw stumbling blocks in the way and then blame the blind and unwary for falling over them. What I mean by this is: [1.] hold not your assemblies at unseasonable hours but follow the example of the Dissenters, under whose wings you have (though unwillingly) taken shelter, in assembling yourselves for public worship at such stated times as other churches assemble. You will then be able to preserve order and decency. But at your hours you must expect a rabble, who flock to your meetings as they do to public shows, for no other ends than for amusement. You cannot therefore expect any other thing than the roarings of the devil (as you phrase it). But if you do not invite the devil to come amongst you, he will avoid your public meetings as you see he does the churches and Dissenting meeting-houses.

[2.] Many of you, no doubt (in your unconverted state) have acquired wealth by unjustifiable means. You should make a thorough refund, no compounding with God and mammon. Before this is done it is papistical to pretend to make peace with heaven by any other method.

[3.] As you have declared before God and the world that you are a chosen and select people, convince the world by your actions that you are really so. Let none of you suffer persecution as evil-doers. You pretend to a greater degree of perfection than we apprehend human nature is capable of, much more is expected of you.

[4.] Beware of idolizing sermons! There are other duties incumbent on a Christian of equal importance with hearing. Your preachers are but men and can have no higher claims to inspiration than our own. The extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost have long since ceased in the Christian church for this reason, which I take to be a good one—namely that we have the word of truth clearly revealed us, which is alone able to make us wise unto salvation. Have not therefore the persons of men in admiration. Peruse your Bibles. The Word of God is the best creed that ever was made and it will stand the test when all other creed shall be buried in eternal oblivion. It shows a wavering and unsettled disposition of mind, utterly unbecoming a Christian, to wander about from Church to meeting and from meeting to Church

hunting after sermons! I am for Wesley! I am for [George] Whitefield! I am for Elliot! I am for [William] Romaine! For this and the other preacher is your common cant—pinning your faith on the sleeves of fallible men, which is downright popery. It is a heresy which began early in the church of Christ, and we find St. Paul severely reprimands it.¹

[5.] 'But above all put on charity.'² Without this most necessary qualification it is in vain for you to call yourselves Christians. Speak sparingly and with candour of everyone. Look upon all who walk as becometh the gospel as brethren, and that the blood of Christ was shed for them as well as for you, though they do not exactly square their creeds with yours. If it be possible, as much as in you lies, live in peace with all men.³ This will enable you to drive from your assemblies the roarings of Satan, the idle, ridiculous, and deluding dreams of enthusiasm, secure to you the esteem and approbation of all who sincerely love our Lord Jesus Christ, and give you a just title to the name of Methodist.

I am, sir,

Yours,

A Presbyterian

Source: published transcription; *St. James's Chronicle* (Jan. 19–21, 1765), p. 2.

¹Cf. 1 Cor. 1:12.

²Col. 3:14.

³Cf. Rom. 12:18.

From Mary (Walsh) Leadbetter¹

[Chester]
[December 1764]

Reverend Sir,

I received with great pleasure the favour of your kind permission to write to you—a liberty I should have taken before, had not a consideration of your many engagements, and the fear of intruding upon your valuable time, prevented me. I was the more desirous of this privilege that I might have an opportunity of removing from your mind the doubt that seemed to be conceived of my not retaining the affectionate respect for you that I once professed, and which I now beg leave to assure my honoured minister is not, nor ever has been in the least diminished. It is true, I have experienced many vicissitudes, have sympathized in the perplexities of the church, and known the plague of my own heart; yet by a miracle of supporting grace, [I] have never lost my shield or varied from the truths you preach, and which I may without boasting say I received in the love thereof, and not as the word of man, but as it really is, the word of God, which I experienced to be productive of spiritual life to my soul. In whatever part of the world I have been cast, I can with truth aver that I have expressed myself to others, esteemed you, and offered up my prayers for you, as my pastor and spiritual father. Such, reverend sir, have been invariably my sentiments regarding myself in this relation to you.

I have been induced to acquiesce (by Mr. Gilbert's² appointment) in endeavouring to be as useful as possible among the flock in this place, of which I have the happiness to acquaint you there is an increase, and among whom at present subsist much life and simplicity. The great shepherd exemplifies his love by many encouragements. He unites his children's hearts to me, so that some who were greatly averse to meeting with me at first seem to love me exceedingly, having experienced the divine presence in the midst when we assemble in his name. I trust, reverend sir, to be assisted by your prayers. I shall always pay the utmost deference to your orders and rules, and esteem a line from you in some leisure moments among some of my highest satisfactions and temporal indulgences.

That many years of uninterrupted health may be added to you, reverend sir, and that all the present and eternal blessings of the new covenant may crown and reward your successful labours, is the sincere prayer of, reverend sir,

Your affectionate though unworthy daughter in the gospel,

M. L.

Source: published transcription; *Spiritual Letters* (1767), 34–35.

¹John Walsh's sister Mary married a Mr. Leadbetter. She was widowed in Oct. 1758, and became the governess of the children of Nathaniel Gilbert, who had recently arrived in England from Antigua. She accompanied the family on their return to Antigua in Apr. 1759, then returned with the children a few years later, along with their uncle Francis Gilbert, to settle in Chester. Soon after she married Francis Gilbert. Cf. *WHS* 55 (2005): 16–18.

²I.e., Francis Gilbert.

From the Rev. Jacob Chapman

Staplehurst
December 10, 1764

Reverend Sir,

You shall be always most heartily welcome to the best part of my house, for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose you are and whom you serve.

Whatever preachers you send we shall joyfully receive, be their *opinions* what they will. I would like those best who are most like Christ. I very greatly approve of the rules of the society, and particularly what you mention towards the close, 'All which we are taught of God to observe, even in his *written word*, the ONLY Rule, and the SUFFICIENT Rule, BOTH of our FAITH and PRACTICE.'¹ Most excellently said! May we always most closely keep to it. We are going a most important journey. When we deviate from the written Word, there is no sure footing; all is quagmire.

I very fervently love you, and I trust never to let a day pass without praying for you. I have been lately considering the case of the lay-preachers. They are, I make no doubt, sent by our Lord as extraordinary messengers. It appears to me very clearly that it is the design of our Lord that they should *go about* calling poor sinners to repent and believe the gospel; consequently they are *not to settle* anywhere. This is a very difficult office indeed. The Lord strengthen them for the arduous undertaking!

I am,

Yours, etc.,

J. Chapman

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 666–67.

¹*General Rules of the United Societies*, §7, *Works*, 9:73.

‘A. P.’ to the Printer of *The St James's Chronicle*

Newington
December 10, [1764]

Sir,

You tell us strange news: a cheesemonger, a tailor, and an apothecary, ordained by a Greek bishop!¹ You might have added a baker also. But did these men understand Greek? Or were they ordained by means of an interpreter—a thing unheard of in a Christian church? Or did the Greek bishop (a thing unlikely) understand English? Or did he ordain in Greek those who have no knowledge of that language? If so, what kind of consciences must those men have, who pretend to reform mankind? And how ignorant must those be who acknowledge such as teachers, and receive the Eucharist at their hands? *O tempora, O mores!*²

In return for your extraordinary piece of news, I can assure you this is not the first instance of the kind. For some time ago the same or another Greek bishop ordained an ignorant Irishman,³ using the Greek language and the Greek liturgy, although the candidate did not understand one sentence of Greek. It is true, Mr. Wesley and those in connection with him would not acknowledge his sacerdotal character, nor suffer him to officiate among them. But this does not prevent him from acting as a clergyman; and what is most to be wondered at, some are so profoundly ignorant as to take him for their pastor. *Populus vult decipi.*⁴

I have lately conversed with a superior in the Church [of England] on this head, and I am ready to believe he has hit on the right method of dealing with the ordainer and the ordained. But of this I must say no more. Those that are concerned with be acquainted with it in due time.

I am, sir,

Yours, etc.,

A. P.

Source: published transcription; *St. James's Chronicle* (Dec. 11–13, 1764), p. 4.

¹The *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser* included a news item in its Dec. 1, 1764 issue: ‘We hear that three tradesmen of this metropolis, a cheesemonger, a tailor, and an apothecary, were last week ordained priests at two chapels, one in the west and the other in the southeast [of London], by a Greek bishop sent from Amsterdam for this purpose. Query: whether such an ordination is valid?’

The *Lloyd's Evening Post* added in its Dec. 7–10, 1764 issue (p. 553): ‘To the article in the papers relative to three tradesmen being ordained by a Greek bishop, another may be added, a master baker. And two celebrated Methodist preachers made also an application to the Greek bishop to consecrate one or both of them bishops; but the Greek bishop told them it was contrary to the rules of his church for one bishop to make another. Yet notwithstanding all the Greek bishop said, they very unwillingly took a denial.’ This account was repeated in *St. James's Chronicle* (Dec. 6–8, 1764), p. 3.

For more discussion of this episode, see A. B. Sackett, ‘John Wesley and the Greek Orthodox Bishop’, *WHS* 38 (1971): 81–87, 97–102. While not addressed to JW, the letter is included for the background it provides to debate over the ordinations in following letters.

²Cicero, *First Oration against Catiline*, 2; ‘O the times! O the customs!’

³I.e., Lawrence Coughlan; see JW's letter dated Feb. 10, 1765.

⁴‘The people wish to be deceived.’

From Miss T. H.

Salop [i.e, Shropshire]
December 22, 1764

Reverend Sir,

I thank you kindly for your last favour. I believe God intends me a blessing by this means, or he would not incline your heart to answer my worthless scrawls.

You ask me, sir, what it is I still want? I now have love, joy, and peace. I have power over sin. And I believe Christ dwells in my heart by faith. But notwithstanding this, I feel the stirrings of pride, anger, self-will, and many other diabolical tempers, as contrary to the mind of Christ as light to darkness. And though by the grace of God these dispositions are so far suppressed as not to gain advantage over me, yet while they remain my peace cannot flow as a river. I am far from rejoicing evermore.

I know many would tell me, 'You must not expect a deliverance from inbred sin; this keeps you humble, and teaches you to rely on Christ alone for righteousness,' etc. But sir, I learn from my own experience that pride, remaining in my heart, does not make or keep me humble. Indeed it makes me detest myself, and convinces me of the necessity there is of my nature being entirely renewed, that I may perfectly love God and worthily magnify his holy name. I see this to be my privilege, and believe Christ has apprehended me for this purpose. His blood cleanseth from all sin, and makes us more than conqueror over the remains of our fallen nature.

Indeed sir, I should dishonour God if I thought he could not restore to me the divine image; and I should give him the lie too, if I did not believe in his ability to save to the utmost. Was there not a single witness of this in the world it would matter nothing, seeing there is not a book in the New nor a prophesy in the Old Testament but what implies this truth.

I have been some days at B. I was obliged to vindicate the doctrine of the Methodists, so called. I bless God I do not find the least backwardness in this respect. I should be ungrateful to the last degree if I did, since the gospel, by their means, has been the power of God to the salvation of my soul. I remain

Your obliged friend,

T. H.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 218–19.

From Emma Moon

Potto
December 23, 1764

Reverend Sir,

It is the daily desire of my heart to praise God for his great favours to me. And as love is the most excellent way, may our souls abound therein, that our joy may be full. I often find my cup runs over, and want words to express my gratitude.

I find my soul athirst to go forward. But what is all I can do? I account it nothing. I am ashamed of my performances when I consider my pattern. My shortcomings are so great that I often think I do nothing. But this blessing the Lord grants me, to lay as clay at his gracious feet, that he may every moment mould me as seems good in his sight. I can say with David, 'My heart is fixed.'¹ And yet various are the thoughts that are sometimes presented to my mind, both on account of things spiritual and temporal. Yet I feel such watchfulness as to catch them in their first approach, and to examine them by the word of God, whether they tend to the profit or danger of my soul. And accordingly I find a power to abhor and bid them depart.

I find that the change wrought on my sleeping moments is more than I can express. Sometimes my spirit is exercised in instructing the ignorant, or strengthening the weak; at others, in resisting the world and the devil in various ways, in which I always find a full victory through him that loved me. But my chief employment in sleep is either hearing the word preached or meeting and conversing with the followers of Jesus. In this sweet rest he is pleased sometimes to reveal himself in a most unspeakable manner, giving me to enjoy such measures of his love as no tongue can declare. O that I could praise him as I desire, who so often gives me to sleep in his bosom, and to awake in the arms of his mercy!

Dear sir, I hope you will daily bear me to the throne of grace, that every motion of my heart and life, both sleeping and waking, may be moulded by the Lord to his glory.

I am, dear sir,

Your affectionate sister,

E. M.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 44–45.

¹Ps. 57:7, etc.

From James Morgan

Cork
December 23, 1764

Reverend Sir,

I mentioned to you in a letter some time since the melancholy case of Miss T—, who had entered, I may say, into the very dominion of despair. Advice was lost upon her. For prayer she had not the least relish. Her groans and sighs were enough to affect the most unfeeling breast. The case of her mother, who was a nightly as well as a daily witness of it all, was deeply distressing. At length she removed her to Dublin, and by the advice of friends sent her to Swift's hospital, where she remained equally wretched.

At length a gleam of hope sprang up in her soul. She sent her mother a note to request of me to appoint a day of fasting and prayer, in her behalf. Her mother wrote to me immediately. I appointed the day, and desired our brethren at Limerick to meet us at the throne of grace. Accordingly we met on Tuesday the 11th, and again on Tuesday the 18th instant; both of which times were, I believe, singularly profitable to all who attended. And surely our God heareth prayer! I received a letter this morning concerning her, as follows:

Dear brother, I have just time to inform you of the mercy of God to Miss T—. She was brought from Swift's hospital on Sunday evening, and on Tuesday night, the 18th instant, about ten o'clock, she was in the utmost distress. She thought she saw Christ and Satan fighting for her, and that she heard Christ say, 'I will have her.' In a moment hope sprang up in her heart. The promises of God flowed in upon her. She cried out, 'I am taken from hell to heaven!' She now declares she could not tell whether she was in the body or out of it. She is much tempted, but in her right mind, enjoying a sense of the mercy of God. She remembers all that is past, and knows it was a punishment for her sins.

Surely this hath God wrought! Such mercies ought to be had in remembrance. They loudly declare the goodness of the Lord, and his wonderful works to the children of men.

I am,

Yours, etc.,

J. Morgan

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 217–18.

‘A. P.’ to the Printer of *The St. James’s Chronicle*

Oxford
c. January 8, 1765

Dear Sir,

Before I left Newington I enquired a little farther concerning the late famous (I had well nigh said infamous) ordination.¹ I find the candidates are not remarkable for anything but ignorance. So that it is now beyond a doubt the Greek, as well as the Hebrew of old (neither of them having very tender consciences), has not hesitated to make priests of the meanest of the people.

Whether an ordination performed by a Greek bishop in this country is valid or not, I will not undertake to determine at present. I am sure it is not canonical, and I should think not valid, especially if the candidates did not understand the language they were ordained in. Nay, I do not see how they themselves can be sure whether they were ordained or not. Perhaps, as the friend at my elbow suggests, the bishop did only confirm them.

I cannot help smiling when one and another gravely asks what can be done. What can be done? Why let a proper person write to the Patriarch of Constantinople and relate the whole affair, without delay. Then we shall know whether this man is a real bishop. If he is, there is no doubt but his superiors will soon clip his wings, divest him of his power to ordain, and depose those ordained by him. If this be not speedily done, take my word he will repeat his visits (if he departed at all) as often as any of these gentry shall have occasion to send for him. And that will be as often as any tailor shall grow weary of making clothes, or any baker of making bread, any cheesemonger of buying and selling cheese, or any apothecary of compounding medicines. One thing they must not forget—viz., to have a little cash in readiness. As to insufficiency, that will be no bar, for no one can be rejected on account of not being properly qualified when the bishop and he do not understand one another.

I pity the poor people who will have such for their guides! But there is no helping them. Everyone is their enemy who tells them the truth.

I am, sir,

Your constant reader,

A. P.

Source: published transcription; *St. James’s Chronicle* (Jan. 10–12, 1765), p. 2.

¹See his earlier letter dated Dec. 10, 1764; while not addressed to Wesley, this and the prior letter set the context for the queries of ‘J. T.’ which follow, and which Wesley does answer.

‘J. T.’ to the Printer of *The St. James's Chronicle*

c. January 27, 1765

Sir,

In your paper of Jan. 12,¹ you inform us that another ordination was held by the Greek bishop, that two of the candidates were travelling preachers of Mr. Wesley, and two (what they call) local preachers. You also tell us that neither of them understood Greek.

Permit me, sir, by the channel of your very useful paper, to call on the Rev. Mr. John Wesley publicly to declare:

1. Whether the preachers in connexion with him were ordained by his knowledge and consent?
2. Whether he will now own and receive them as clergymen?
3. Whether he thinks an ordination performed in a language not understood by the persons ordained is valid?
4. Whether it be lawful for any one to give money to the bishop, or to any one for him, for ordaining them?

Suffer me also to call upon the Rev. Mr. T[homas] M[axfield] publicly to justify his conduct in employing as his assistant a cheese-monger, who cannot certainly know whether he is ordained or not.

I am, sir,

Your humble servant,

J. T.

Source: published transcription; *St. James's Chronicle* (Jan. 29–31, 1765), p. 4.

¹Actually, this news account was from *Lloyd's Evening Post* (Jan. 7–9, 1765), p. 28; which was reproduced in the Jan. 8–10, 1765 issue of *St. James's Chronicle*, p. 1: ‘We are credibly informed that the Greek Bishop has repeated his visit, and held another ordination. The candidates, as nearly as we can learn, were a weaver, a staymaker, and two brokers, a silversmith, and one that was lately a sailmaker. The two former were travelling preachers with Mr. Wesley; the two last (what they call) local preachers. We are told that neither of them understands a sentence in Greek! Happy days when priests are made of the meanest of the people!’

[‘The Southwark Hatmaker’¹] to the Printer of *The St. James’s Chronicle*

February 6, 1765

Sir,

The letter in your paper of the 12th, dated from Oxford, signed A. P., and another from the same gentleman before, dated I think from Newington, likewise those queries signed J. T. in your paper of the 31st last, with all those hints in the public papers relative to the ordination of the Greek bishop,² I believe to be the produce of Mr. Wesley³ or his dependent pens, because no other could know the state of the affair concerning the Greek bishop and those ordained. But what is all this for? If by any means to stir up the minds of the people and clergy against them [i.e., those ordained], because these people will not submit to his tyranny any longer. Oh this Smithfield work!⁴ Real Christians would have no hand in it, but let each man answer to his own master. Blessed by God we have upright men in the courts at Westminster.

Those queries are so drawn up as to fall directly into his fallacious net; on which, to clear himself he doubtless will fix a negative. But in order to guard the unwary from being led away by any fallacy, knowing the truth, I will answer it as far as I can from matters of fact. ‘Were Mr. John Wesley’s preachers ordained by his knowledge?’ Mr. John Jones was, for he himself [i.e., Wesley] was at the head of his ordination, from which all the others sprung. ‘Will he receive them as clergymen?’ He doth Mr. John Jones, who has acted in that function some time under him, and consequently thinks the ordination valid, or he would not have desired consecration himself from the bishop—who told me himself that Mr. John Wesley had desired of Mr. Jones to know of him if he would consecrate him [i.e., Wesley] as bishop, and received for answer that in the Greek church no priest could be consecrated bishop unless in the presence of three bishops of that church. But the bishop refused it, which showed him honest. With this agreed the testimony of Mr. Jones with Mr. S—n of Deptford, who was inquiring what Mr. Wesley thought of the validity of the Greek bishop’s ordination. Answered he [i.e., Jones], Mr. Wesley thought it valid, for he would have been consecrated bishop himself by him if he could.

But this huge cry of poor unlearned men being ordained put me on the enquiry who were the objects [of ordination] according to the written Word. And I found none were chosen because they understood logic, rhetoric, or philosophy, but those who had received that wisdom from above to teach them what they were by nature and actual transgression, that there was sufficient strength laid on one mighty to save, who lay hold on him by faith and through it find peace with God and bring forth the fruits of the Spirit in their lives and conversation. What have logic, philosophy, or the Eastern languages to do with this? Hath not God chose the foolish things of this world to confound the wise? He took Elisha from the plow, and the apostles from their fishing nets to make them fishers of men. And will men call these the ‘dregs of the people’, whom God hath thus sent forth?

A few of those meet a bishop, successor of that very church St. Paul ordained Titus into—Crete. He, looking on them as objects [for] the ministry, laid hands on them, ordaining them to that ministry which the Holy Ghost before had established them in. ‘But he was from Turkey, therefore can have no power in England.’ St. Paul, who ordained his predecessor, I suppose did not mind whether he was in Asia or Europe; but where he found proper objects, he administered the ordinance. ‘But he read the ceremony in Greek, and they did not understand it.’ What then? Suppose there had not been a word spoken more than there was to Elisha on the same occasion of old. They came there to ordain and be

¹The article is unsigned. JW refers to it as by a ‘Southwark hatmaker’ in his response dated Feb. 10, and the author adopts this pseudonym in his followup below dated Feb. 15.

²See the letters from ‘A. P.’ dated Dec. 10, 1764 and Jan. 8, 1765; and the letter from ‘J. T.’ dated Jan. 27, 1765—along with the footnotes.

³Throughout the article only initials are given for names, but they are expanded here where the identity is certain.

⁴Smithfield was an area of London infamous for brawling.

ordained, this they knew and appeared before God. The bishop laid his hand on them for that purpose. Yet there was an interpreter. 'But money should not be given.' Yes, what he had, for his exigencies only. He had no more. 'But ought not clergymen be men of learning, to answer the gainsaying of infidels?' God has never failed to raise up a Paul in every age, when he saw it requisite.

Oh when will this bitterness of spirit be banished from those who profess Christianity!

Source: published transcription; *St. James's Chronicle* (Feb. 7–9, 1765), p. 4.

‘The Southwark Hatmaker’ to the Printer of *The St. James’s Chronicle*

February 15 [1765]

Sir,

In your paper of last night I saw a letter from Mr. [John] Wesley in which he treats of an innocent thing (as he terms it) wrote by a hatmaker in Southwark in your *Chronicle* of Saturday last.¹ I could wish what he there advances were as innocent, but I have reason to believe otherwise. Whether Mr. S—² is as much inspired as the apostles were, I leave. But this I believe, he is as much inspired to preach the gospel as Mr. John Wesley, and no disparagements to him neither.

As to the tale, I tell the same again, the Greek bishop did tell me himself that Mr. John Wesley had desired consecration of him by Mr. John Jones. *But how? He understood not English, and you no Greek.* But why must the bishop be able to speak no language to me but Greek, when Mr. Wesley acknowledges that he conversed with him in Latin? (Oh those fallacious reasonings! I know the unwary are deceived by them.) I did understand enough of that tongue to know that to be true which is asserted above.

All that Mr. Wesley insinuates in his letter concerning human learning as part of gospel divinity, ordination in an unknown tongue, or bold assertions touching money given for ordination, are fully answered in the letter referred to by Mr. Wesley. Therefore we need no better defender of our cause at present, seeing no reasonable man will receive contemptuous language for sound reasonings, or bold and false assertions for matters of fact.

The Southwark Hatmaker

Source: published transcription; *St. James Chronicle* (Feb. 16–18, 1765), p. 4.

¹JW’s letter dated Feb. 10, 1765.

²I.e., Sampson Staniforth, the ‘master baker’ ordained by Erasmus of Arcadia; see JW, to the Printer of the *St. James’s Chronicle*, c. Feb. 10, 1765, *Works*, 27:417.

From 'Philosphaster'

March 1765

Reverend Sir,

You perhaps may see the necessity of your advice to me, 'not to be too positive' (see p. 28¹). I do not. Those things only where the evidence is infallible would I be positive in, and all others my judgment should only *incline* to where it appears to be in the greater probability.

When an author publishes opinions contrary to those already received, he ought to give his readers his reasons for his different sentiments. This you have neglected to do, in various particulars, in the astronomic part of your *Compendium of Natural Philosophy*.²

I therefore took the liberty of desiring your solution of several queries inserted in the *London Magazine* for November last, concerning several things asserted by you—some of which you grant were wrong, others you doubt of, and others you defend.

1. You say you do not know whether it is (demonstrable that the sun is greater than the earth) or not. Be pleased then to advert to the following demonstration.

If the earth and the sun were of equal bigness, because the earth is a sphere, its shadow would be cylindrical. Or, if the earth were bigger than the sun, its shadow would have the figure of a cone, which had lost a piece at its vertex; and the farther it were extended, the broader would the shadow be. And in both these cases the shadow would run out into indefinite space, and so would eclipse Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn when they come to be opposite the sun and enter within that space. But this is never observed, therefore the sun is greater than the earth, whose shadow must consequently be of a conical figure, and end in a point.

2. In answer to my query, How do you account for the moon's always turning the same side to the earth, if she does not move round her own axis? You reply, 'I think full as well without the supposition as with it. But I do not undertake to account for anything.' I wish, sir, I could prevail with you to account for this phenomenon otherwise; *et eris mihi magnus Apollo*.³

3. You tell us, 'The moon's bulk is not nicely known by you, nor you doubt by any man else.'

You *must* grant sir (because it is demonstrable) that if we know the relative magnitudes of the diameters of two spheres, we may know the relative magnitudes of their bulks (which is as the cube of their diameters). But the angular diameter of the moon is nicely known, and so is the angular diameter of the earth seen from the moon (or the moon's horizontal parallax doubled). And it is just as far from the earth to the moon as from the moon to the earth. Therefore the relation of the diameter of the earth to that of the moon is nicely known, and consequently the proportion of the magnitudes of those spheres themselves.

If you doubt whether the moon's parallax is nicely known, let me remind you that it is a very considerable angle, sometimes above a degree (for it varies with the moon's distance from the earth) and nearly as big again as the whole angular diameter of the moon. Remember also that an accurate calculation of a lunar eclipse *fundamentally* depends upon an exact knowledge of this angle, and more especially as to the time of the duration of the eclipse. But the time of the duration, by our best astronomical tables, may be nicely determined. Therefore the moon's parallax is nicely known. And here I desire you and all those who think Dr. Roger's hypothesis 'extremely ingenious' particularly to note that the sum of the horizontal parallaxes of the sun and moon, *minus* the semidiameter of the sun, is equal to the semidiameter of the earth's shadow at that part thereof where the moon is at the time of her eclipse. And when the eclipse is, or nearly is, central, if we, with Rogers, suppose the sun's parallax above five minutes (instead of ten or eleven seconds), its duration will thereby in the calculation be increased about twenty minutes of an hour—which, by about all that additional time, will be found more than the true

¹I.e., JW's published letter dated Jan. 1, 1765.

²I.e., *A Survey of the Wisdom of God in the Creation, or A Compendium of Natural Philosophy*, 2 vols. (Bristol: William Pine, 1763).

³Virgil, *Eclogues*, iii.104; 'and to me be great Apollo'.

time of its continuance. Rogers's hypothesis is therefore wrong, and (to use your own words) vanishes into air. You will not hereafter, I hope, look upon that hypothesis as 'probable as any other', but give it up as absurd and ridiculous.

Here also I remind you that the earth's shadow being conical, the diameter of that part thereof where the moon is at the time of her eclipse must needs be less than the diameter of the earth. But the diameter of the shadow contains the diameter of the moon about three times. The moon is therefore considerably less than the earth. Hereafter, therefore, you safely may affirm that the moon is *really* smaller than the earth.

Because Mr. [Christiaan] Huygens was of [the] opinion that our moon is uninhabited, therefore you conclude that all the other planets, both primary and secondary, are uninhabited too. I think if you had argued thus the consequence would have been more natural and conclusive: The earth's satellite I believe not to be inhabited, but the earth herself is; therefore though no one of Jove's or Saturn's satellites is inhabited, yet Jove and Saturn may be.

You do not know, you say, that Saturn's ring reflects the sun's light upon the body of that planet. This is contrary to what may be found in the 153rd page of vol. 2 of your *Compendium*, where you inform us that Saturn has a stupendous ring to 'supply the decrease of' (the sun's) 'light and heat'. As you tell us 'you do not undertake to account for any thing', I will endeavour to demonstrate the truth of the latter part of your assertion. If the superficies of body is uneven and rough, it reflects *every* way the light incident on it, because the parts receiving and remitting the light are not in one and the same regular superficies but are placed in numberless (and those different) planes. Whence the light, falling on those various planes, must be reflected *every way*. If the surface of Saturn's ring were smooth and polished like a looking glass, it would not then reflect the sun's light *on all sides and every way*, but it would show us *in some positions* the image of the sun. But it reflects his light to us in all positions, after we are somewhat elevated above the plane of the illuminated side (which is necessary, that the ellipsis which the ring presents many not have the likeness of a small line only, and consequently afford a smaller light than what can move the eye). Saturn's ring is therefore *rough and uneven*, and so reflects the sun's light *every way*, and consequently upon the body of Saturn himself.⁴

That Sirius is about as big as our sun, and that a fixed star is ten thousand times as far from us as the sun is, you may find demonstrated in Whiston's and Keill's 4th astronomic lectures;⁵ to which, to avoid prolixity, I refer you.

I, from the mutual relation and likeness between the earth and the primary planets, showed the *probability* of their being inhabited—about which (after several needless queries on your part) you say you will not contend. Can then that hypothesis be 'probable' which 'vanishes into air'?

As you have given me a 'piece of advice' I will endeavour to make the favour reciprocal. When you publish another impression of your *Compendium*, feign nothing without solid and sufficient reasons. Take nature for your guide and rule. Lay your foundation on observations, and raise your system upon physical causes and invincible geometrical demonstrations.

To my former queries permit me to add:

1. In p. 133, vol. 2, you say the moon moves round the earth in something more than twenty-eight days. *Qu[ery]*: If this should be something more than twenty-seven days?

2. You tell us, p. 133, that the number of stars visible to the naked eye is 2200. *Qu[ery]*: If this number is not considerably exaggerated?

3. You write that the number of stars is almost infinite, p. 148. Now then all above 2200 must either be telescopic stars or not seen by us at all. *Qu[ery]*: How does this agree with p. 159, where you

⁴Note added in *London Magazine*: 'It may be proper to inform the reader that Saturn's ring at this time exhibits a noble phenomenon, laying so open that the sky may be seen between it and the body of that planet.'

⁵William Whiston, *Astronomical Lectures* (London: R. Senex and W. Taylor, 1715); and John Keill, *An Introduction to the True Astronomy* (London: B. Lintot, 1721).

inform us that they are not placed at such an infinite remove as to *lie beyond our sight*?

4. [On] p. 133, I read that the fixed stars always appear with the same face toward us. *Qu[ery]*: How can this be known? Is it not more probable that, as our sun revolves upon his axis, each of the stars revolves upon its axis also?

5. You say some of them (the fixed stars) never set; namely, those near the north and south pole. *Qu[ery]*: If this can be true, since they all set where the poles are in the horizon? And would not your proposition be better expressed thus: When the distance of a phenomenon from the elevated pole is greater than the latitude of the place, that phenomenon will set; otherwise, not?

6. You write, 'As the diurnal, so the annual motion of the heavenly bodies is a clear manifestation of the Creator's wisdom, especially when we consider the paths of their diurnal and annual motions. These lie not in a very different plane, nor in the same, but a little crossing one another, at an inclination of 23 degrees and an half.' *[Query]*: This is true of the earth, but how do you prove it true of the rest? And how do you prove those planets have a diurnal motion upon whose superficies no macula, or spot, can be seen?

7. You go on, 'A glorious contrivance this, for the good of our globe and for all the rest that have the *same* annual motion!' *Qu[ery]*: How can this glorious contrivance be for the good of a globe which has no inhabitants to benefit thereby? And,

8. What do you mean by the same annual motion? Might not this be better expressed?

9. You add, 'Were the earth's annual motion to be always in the same plane with the diurnal we might *indeed* be sometimes *nearer* to the sun than we now are.' *Qu[ery]*: How is this proved? While the species of the elliptic orbit is the same, how would a different direction cause one and the same point in the periphery of the ellipse to be nearer to, or farther from, either focus thereof?

10. Are we to doubt of demonstrable truths *for the kingdom of heaven its sake*?

Philosophaster

Source: published transcription; *London Magazine* (Mar. 1765), 128–30.

From Henry Brooke¹

Dublin
April 1765

Reverend Sir,

Although I have not the pleasure of being known to you, yet having lately entered among your flock, I am extremely desirous of seeing you, in order to communicate to you the manner in which I have been taught of God, and led unwillingly to the feeling of his love and the power of his salvation, that I might receive your kind instructions how to proceed.

Both my father and mother were children of the clergy, and intended me for the church. They bred me up very religiously, and brought me to the sacrament when about fourteen. I remember I had at that time deep convictions and repentance for some actual sins. But whether I was convinced of the depravity of my nature, I do not recollect. However, I remember to have the accusation and guilt of those sins entirely taken away, and peace and joy succeeded. I became a pattern and example to all young persons around me, for the decency of my behaviour, and still remember the pleasure and pride I took on that account. But being shortly after left in Dublin by myself, vicious company soon overturned the labourious system of morality, and I became a wretched sinner. However, the fear of offending or grieving my parents brought me by degrees back into a course of outward morality, which at length rose into a faint desire of finding rest and happiness in the reality of religion. Mr. Law's *Serious Call*,² which had long been a favourite book of my father's, now and then affected me. I considered myself in the state he describes as having enough of religion to embitter the pleasures of sin, and yet not enough to take any pleasure in serving God, and thus I remained for some time.

In the year 1761 the conviction of sin, which I had at times all my life, became violent and extreme. I sought relief from the week's preparation, self-examination, solemn vows, and the Holy Communion; but all in vain. I spent the day in sin, in spite of all my morning prayers and resolutions, and at night had a new repentance to begin; till at length my distress grew so extreme that I have spent nights prostrate on the ground in agonies of grief, and yet could not abstain from indulging my corrupt nature the very next day.

Worldly business, entering into life, a variety of company, and a jaunt to England quite extinguished this kindling fire, and suppressed every emotion of my wounded spirit. But when awhile in London my heart was softened by the grief of parting with parents, brothers, and friends that I loved as my own existence. All my sanguine expectations of fortune failed. And it pleased providence to blast every hope even of subsistence in the bud. So that, finding all human support and reliance on my own genius and industry for bread fail me, I might be constrained to seek relief for *him* who feedeth the young ravens when they cry unto him.³

My convictions renewed, my repentance deepened and despair shook me with inexpressible horrors. I sought in the Bible—it was a sealed book to me. I read again the *Serious Call*, and followed as strictly as possible all his prescribed methods of self denial, charity, and prayer. But here I was most at a loss; I could not pray myself, and found no form that suited me. I bought Mr. Law's *Spirit of Prayer*,⁴ in

¹Henry Brooke (1738–1806), originally of co. Cavan, Ireland, was an artist like his father Robert. As this letter records, he became active in Methodism in Dublin in 1764–65, and thereafter a frequent correspondent with JW. In 1780 JW published an abridged version of a novel titled *The Fool of Quality* that was written by Henry Brooke (c. 1703–83; see *Bibliography*, No. 414), the uncle of this younger Henry. See *ODNB*.

²William Law, *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life; adapted to the State and Condition of all Orders of Christians* (London: William Innys, 1729).

³See Job 38:41.

⁴William Law, *The Spirit of Prayer; or, The Soul Rising Out of the Vanity of Time into the Riches of Eternity*, 2 vols. (London: William Innys, 1749–50).

hope of getting some instruction, and a fine manual of devotion.

The light began to dawn. I saw something I knew not what, but was delighted beyond measure at the promise of day. Some persons began to ridicule me on my growing so serious and reading the fanatic Mr. Law, saying they supposed I should presently be deep in Behmen.⁵ They excited my curiosity to obtain some of his works, but [I] was for some time lost in the labyrinth.

One day, reading Mr. Law's *Spirit of Love*,⁶ my heart expanded, my eyes were opened—I saw and felt that God is love. Need I attempt to describe unutterable things? I now understood the meaning of the internal supper, the seal-ring, the wedding garment, and the marriage of the Lamb, which were all the terms I knew for justification and the forgiveness of sins.

I now dwelt alone, and solitary as in a desert, though in the populous city of London. I had no one to speak to; all regarded me as a monster. My heart yearned, and I often wept over the busy throngs that crowded the streets, hurrying up and down the broad way. I wished for a thousand tongues and powers, to tell them of the love of God and compel them to come in.⁷

As I passed by the Tabernacle⁸ in Moorfields, I heard them singing. I stepped in, my heart melted, my tears flowed, and I joined them sincerely. But when the preaching began I was disgusted. I left the house, my heart was heavy. 'Oh!' said I, 'the multitude perish for lack of knowledge. They follow the cry of "Lo! Christ is here; and there is Christ",⁹ and know not the kingdom of heaven is within them.' I went two or three times to hear the hymns, but never stayed for the preaching. I continued thus a new creature for about nine months, when family affairs obliged me to return to Ireland.

I now found that providence had sent me to London, not to gain temporal riches as I had vainly proposed, but to enrich me with the true treasures.

Some extraordinary returns of prayer, with many temptations, began to lay the foundation of spiritual pride. The enemy of souls took advantage of my hurry and dissipation in preparing for my journey from London to Dublin. I found I had lost ground when I came back to my friends. But instead of being humbled, I was only ashamed and vexed at my understanding being darkened, and that I was not the same lively Christian as when I used to write such lively and pressing letters to them, as I had done from London—which, under God, had proved instrumental to the conversion of one of my brothers and been a blessing to my father and most of the family.

I now gave way to levity and fell in love, entered by little and little into the gaiety and amusements of fashionable people. I fell into sin, and grew deeper in love. It became so great a burden and cross to me, I prayed earnestly to have it removed. And on my birthday, in the year 1763, I dedicated my soul and body to Jesus Christ, and wrote the covenant with my blood. I renewed it at Christmas, and on New Year's day obtained power over sin.

In February 1764 the object of my affections was hurried off by death, and I found myself not only resigned but thankful. My backslidings were healed, and the peace that passeth all understanding was shed abroad in my heart.¹⁰ Yet my grief was such that my body suffered much, and grew weak and faint. I separated myself again from the world, and forsook all my gaiety and airy acquaintances.

I became intimate at this time with a family that knew the Methodists, but kept aloof from them. They described to me the character of one of them. I went to see him. We misunderstood each other, and disputed many days about terms. I could not allow his opinions respecting forgiveness of sins. Yet, when we compared experiences together, they answered as face to face in a glass. I grew fond of him, bought some Methodist books, and went to hear for myself. I loved the people, went to see their classes and liked

⁵I.e., Jakob Böhme (1575–1624).

⁶William Law, *The Spirit of Love* (London: W. Innys & J. Richardson, 1752–54).

⁷See Luke 14:23.

⁸George Whitefield's preaching house.

⁹Cf. Mark 13:21 and parallels.

¹⁰See Jer. 3:22 and Phil. 4:7.

them very much, was admitted into their band meetings and was still better pleased.

I now found that God had heard my prayers and brought me at length to the thousands that were not bowing the knee to Baal.¹¹ Yet still I determined never to join them, especially as I had earnest desires and hopes of getting in the Church.¹²

At length I became assured that in my present situation this scheme was impracticable, not having leisure amidst the multiplicity of my business to study the languages. My eager desires, however, became every day more pressing to proclaim the love of Jesus. I communicated my desires and my difficulties to my father, and begged his advice. He had hitherto opposed these thoughts as impracticable, and was still more adverse to my joining the Methodists. But now he not only advised, but desired, me to join the society, and said perhaps God might then open a door for me to be useful in some measure in a private way. For as my constitution is weakly, both he and my mother have insisted on it as a preliminary article that I shall never attempt to speak in public. I received his advice as from heaven, and thanked God for opening the door to fulfil my desires. I went immediately to Mr. Morgan,¹³ opened my heart to him, and received a note of admission.

I hinted to him my wish of being listed among the young men who stand up in private rooms appointed for that purpose as witnesses of their Master's power and redeeming love. But having got the formidable name of 'mystic' among the society, I find they have suspected that I was some sort of schismatic, an assertor of vain whims and philosophy. I am sorry to find that they have had cause for this suspicion from the deviations of one or two of that name who were admitted among them in England. But as I know that neither sect, nor party, nor mere opinion is available for our salvation, I have determined ever to avoid these subjects and to show forth nothing but: the fall, the depravity, the sinfulness of man; the glory, the love, the redemption of Christ; that *he* alone is all, and does all, for man; and our faith or belief of this, and casting ourselves wholly upon him as utterly unable to have act or part as a *meritorious cause* of this salvation, is the alone way of obtaining it.

The mystic writers have been a great blessing to me, but I know there are many to whom they would be a stumbling block. The way to Christ is now as simple, plain, and free from mystery as it was when he lived on the earth; and is no more or less than having faith in his power and confidence in his love, yielding up ourselves to the operations of his divine Spirit. Therefore, if ever I shall be admitted to declare in the society what God hath done for my sinful soul, and is willing to do for every sinner breathing, I am resolved to cast aside the manner and expressions of the mystics as such, and conform myself entirely to scriptural phrases and the simplicity of language made use of by your preachers.

Oh sir! Surely it is not pride, it is not self that would desire to take up the cross, to be despised and rejected of friends, kinsfolk, and acquaintance, in order to throw a mite into your treasury. I have not the ambition of being a master builder in the spiritual temple. Yet could I bring (as a labourer) a few bricks, or hew out some stony heart to join in raising that glorious pile, I would rejoice with exceeding joy; for a grateful heart would willingly strive to show the sensibility of its gratitude, and I have no other way that I know of to express mine.

Mr. Morgan gave me liberty to communicate to you my sentiments and desires for your opinion and advice, by which I am determined to abide. May God give me grace to receive it as from himself, for I well know the hearts of men are in his hands, and howsoever *we will*, the event is *his*.

I am with regard to temporal matters exceedingly happy, only much immersed in business, by which providence has enabled me to earn what is affluence to a single young man as I am. Yet I trust I shall resign this and much more at my Master's call.

¹¹See Rom. 11:4.

¹²I.e., becoming a clergyman in the established Church.

¹³This was likely John Morgan (d. 1782), an itinerant preacher assigned to Dublin in the Minutes for 1765 (see *Works*, 10:306). Unfortunately, the 1764 Minutes do not survive, to assure that this assignment was the same prior to Conference in August 1765. The other possibility is James Morgan (1736–74), who is listed as one of Wesley's supervising Assistants in the 1765 Minutes.

Source: published transcription; Isaac D'Olier, *Memoirs of the Life of the Late Excellent and Pious Mr. Henry Brooke* (Dublin: R. Napper, 1816), 32–41.

From the Rev. John Newton¹

Olney
April 18, 1765

Dear Sir,

I thank you heartily for the opportunity of reviving a correspondence which always was, and I am persuaded will be, both pleasing and profitable to me.² I can assure you the interruption was not owing to any abatement of my regard to you, neither was it simply negligence, but some things that happened after I saw you last embarrassed me. I knew not how to write without either baulking the freedom of my own spirit or assuming a part from *me* to *you* which I thought would appear unbecoming and forward. I thank you for giving our past acquaintance the tender name of friendship—so I was desirous it should be on my part; so I always found it on yours. May this friendship flourish. I hope I shall do nothing to forfeit it. I trust I still do, and shall account it both a pleasure and an honour to be considered in the number of your friends.

As you doubtless expect an ingenuous answer, I shall make no apology for writing freely, though if you had not put the occasion in my hand I should have thought that, your years, character, and services considered, it would (as I have hinted above) seem impertinent in one of my standing to address you with any other view than that of receiving your advice and instructions. And this is still (those things excepted in which we must unavoidably differ) my chief motive for wishing our correspondence may continue.

I believe I may assure you that Mr. Hervey's *Letters*³ (I see no necessity for supposing Mr. Cudworth had any hand in them) have not *wounded* me at all. In my personal regard for you they have made no abatement, in my sentiments in other respects, no alteration. Any harsh or tart expressions I could wish had been forborne on both sides, but so far as the *stress of the controversy* is concerned, I believe there are few material observations in his book, the substance of which had not occurred to me before I saw it. When I first had the pleasure of seeing you, I had embraced the Calvinist principles (so-called), and I have seen no sufficient reason since to discard them, thus far I am the same. Yet I hope the interval of seven years has not been wholly lost. I think my judgment is something more enlarged and established by experience and observation. Indeed I find by looking back that I *have* altered my sentiments upon several points of secondary importance. Your letter reminds me of *one*. I have seen the inconvenience of being too lax and sceptical with regard to *any* truths revealed in Scripture, and reducing them to matters of mere uncertainty and indifference by the term 'opinion'. Indeed, if our *opinions* are false, it matters not how little they are regarded—but it does not then follow that the truths themselves about which our opinions are conversant are of little signification.

Give me leave further to observe that however a sense of the great foundation and bond of Christian union may dispose us in our cooler hours to judge candidly of those who differ from us, and to wish them good success in their own ways, yet in fact and practice we are ever prone to forget the distinction we sometimes talk of between essentials and opinions and to enforce *all* our sentiments with equal warmth; or rather, what is still more to be lamented, to be most frequent and strenuous upon those points in which numbers of our fellow Christians dissent from us. And will you bear with me dear sir, if I say that you yourself, who at sometimes plead the cause of candour and catholicism⁴ with so much warmth (and I believe sincerity), appear to me a remarkable instance of this—as well in your own writings and sermons as in the spirit of those preachers and people who are most immediately under your

¹John Newton (1725–1807) had been ordained in 1764 and was now vicar at Olney.

²Replying to JW's letter of Apr. 9.

³James Hervey, *Aspasio Vindicated, and the Scripture-Doctrine of Imputed Righteous Defended against the Objections and Animadversions of the Rev. John Wesley, in Eleven Letters* ([Leeds: Griffith Wright,] 1764). Hervey left these letters unpublished at his death, entrusted to his brother William. This first publication was done without William Hervey's permission, most likely by William Cudworth.

⁴I.e., a 'catholic' or irenic spirit.

influence and have the largest share of your esteem.

Do not the points of particular election and final perseverance stand in your own class of *opinions*? From your kindness to me, it is plain that you suppose they are at least compatible with a love to Christ and a work of grace. Yet what fundamental error have you opposed with half that frequency and vehemence as you have these? What dreadful consequences have you enforced from them, and tacitly (at least) charged upon all who hold them? How often has it been suggested in your societies that to admit these tenets is to open the door to final apostasy? How many of your best preachers have been thrust out and branded because their consciences have compelled them to dissent with you in these particulars? I could enlarge ...

Again, may not we on our side suppose that the tenet of sinless perfection, perfect love, the second blessing, or whatever other name it is known by, is but an *opinion*? An opinion too so much your own peculiar that I believe even your knowledge of antiquity can hardly enable you to assign the age or place in the Christian church when it was received or thought of by any number of people who were sound in the fundamentals of the faith. That many who have embraced the stake and the flames for the love of Jesus knew nothing of it, I need only refer you to [John] Foxe's *Monuments*. You must either take the whole of this discovery, or be content to share it with papists, and mystics, and Quakers, etc. Yet I ask again, has not this suspicious novelty in a great measure superseded the doctrine of repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus in your societies of late years? When I first heard you in Liverpool you were very useful and acceptable to me, but every successive year I found you more and more engrossed to this topic. Often have I been disappointed. I attended you in hopes of being edified and even comforted—but the event was like that [in] Jeremiah 14:3.⁵ And as to your preachers, I found in general that those who were longest and loudest upon *this*, though greatly deficient in comparison with others in every thing else, were the most cried up by the sticklers for the party.

Once more, you say your main enquiries are: Is he a believer in Jesus Christ; and, Is his life suitable to his profession? But do you not likewise suggest this very different question: Is he a Churchman or a Dissenter? Yes I myself, to my grief and amazement have heard you warn the people against hearing the gospel of Christ if in a meeting house, and very earnestly press them to give the preference to blind guides—whom you knew or might know as to their doctrines had no understanding of the truth, and as to their lives were worldly, sensual, and vicious. How can I reconcile these things to your printed sermons on 2 Kings 10:15 [or] Matthew 7:15?⁶

My principal design in what I have wrote is to prepare an apology for myself. I hope I shall remember your caution: Beware of bigotry! I do not willingly allow it. I wish to guard against it. I think I love all who love the Lord Jesus Christ. But if while I endeavour to act and teach according to the light which God has given me, I should seem to *you* to fail in candour, let us be content to *exchange forgiveness*. You will perhaps think me too warm one way. I may think you so in another. Our comfort is that we have a gracious Master, who knows how to pity and to bear with us both. The day is at hand when all our discordances shall be fully reconciled.

When I meet with a serious and spiritual person in your dispensation I have no desire to make a Calvinist of him. I do not attempt it. I leave that to the Lord and his own experience, and indeed no other way can it be effected to any good purpose. I dislike a man no more for not having my views of this points than I would for wearing a different coloured coat.

But with respect to the tenet of perfection, I confess I am not so indifferent. I should think it my duty to oppose it (if I had any prevalence in these parts) with my whole strength, not as an opinion but as a dangerous mistake, which appears to me subversive of the very foundation of Christian experience—and which has in fact given occasion to the most grievous offenses and the wildest sallies of enthusiasm.

As to the rest, I make the most cordial return to your kind intentions. I beg the continuance of your prayers and advice. If you are kind enough to answer my letters, you shall hear of me from time [to] time. And I hope no more in the strain of this. I will not promise to imitate your exact punctuality in

⁵'They go to the cisterns and find no water.'

⁶Sermon 39, 'Catholic Spirit'; and Sermon 32, 'Upon our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, XII'.

sending a speedy answer, lest it should be inconvenient to you. But I think the correspondence shall no more drop on my side. If your routes and leisure should at any time give you opportunity to call at Olney, my *heart* and *house* will be always open to receive you gladly. Mrs. Newton joins me in this invitation and in a tender of our sincere respects. That the grace and blessing of our Lord and Saviour may accompany you in all places, that your soul may be continually watered, and your labours abundantly prospered, will be the frequent prayer of, dear sir,

Your respectful, affectionate, and obliged servant,

John Newton

I hope I am honest in the preference I have openly given to the *form* of the established Church, yet I confess I see not much in it if detached from a connection with the gospel of Christ. I have [been] therefore wounded and grieved to hear you warn, etc.

Add after *reconciled*.⁷

I believe sir (with you) that there is no probability that we shall at any time quarrel. I have neither talent nor inclination to dispute with you. I rather desire to learn than to cavil. Had you been always in the same pacific frame, Mr. James Hervey's letters could not have appeared. Did not you think he was a believer? Was not his life agreeable to his profession? Many of your hearty friends, as well as myself, were grieved that you should break in such a manner with such a man. It could hardly be expected but that he must answer you. And now his answer is abroad, the public will judge for themselves of the merits of the cause. Your reply is not yet come to my hands.⁸

I believe Mr. Hervey was far from thinking you a papist. But whether in some things relative to your doctrine of justification, you have not receded further than we could wish from the current doctrine of Protestant divines is a point which does not depend upon his representation. Your own writings are in everybody's hand. As to [Thomas à] Kempis and [Gaston Jean Baptiste] de Renty,⁹ I suppose no one questions their state, yet it must be allowed there was a great mixture of darkness and superstition in their experience. And therefore, though I believe they were safe, I see no harm in saying they were mistaken. And though I make no doubt you have as just an abhorrence for the system of popery as myself, yet I believe a difference of apprehension with regard to what Luther calls *articulus standis vel cadentis ecclesiae*¹⁰ is at the bottom of our other differences.

Address: 'The Rev. Mr. John Wesley, at Newcastle upon Tyne, Northumberland'

Source: holograph; Bridwell Library (SMU), filed with JW's response of May 14, 1765.¹¹

⁷I.e., at the end of paragraph 8 above, which ends with the word 'reconciled'.

⁸I.e., JW, *Answer to Hervey* (Bristol: Pine, 1765).

⁹Two catholic writers whom Wesley valued and republished, as guides to the holy life.

¹⁰The 'article by which the church stands or falls'; for Luther, justification by faith.

¹¹This original Newton manuscript was given by Cyril Greaves to the Royal Museum and Public Library in Canterbury in 1912. In 1931 the librarian, H. T. Mead, made a transcription for John Telford. At some point after this transcript was made, and before the manuscript came into the collection at the Bridwell, it was damaged on the edges by fire, obscuring some text. The transcription given here has filled in the missing text by consulting the 1931 transcription (from a copy in the Frank Baker papers).

From Elizabeth Jackson

April 19, 1765

Reverend and Dear Sir,

The goodness of God constrains me to let you know that he continues his favour. But I have been greatly exercised in the world, and hedged in as with thorns on every side. O what is it to be prepared? For some months past, I have not had opportunity, no not from morning to night, to go to my knees. Yet unwearied I my way pursue.

Careful without care I am,
Nor feel my happy toil.¹

While my hands are employed in the world, the power of God works effectually in my soul. When I meet with opposition, it heightens my joys. My soul is lost and swallowed up in God. I never find darkness for one moment, but walk in the light as he is in the light. This still is the day, I look not for another. My heart is *now* filled with praise and thanksgiving. He has satisfied me with his loving kindness, and my heart now stands open to receive all that God will give. In every breath I draw I find my grace renewed, the grace of God employed and improved. Every moment is to me as it were my last. I find nothing left undone. I am ready. This has been the language of my soul almost these six years. It is unto me even as I will. God multiplies his blessings upon me, and carries on his work with power. But what he has already given me makes me perfectly happy. God has granted me my heart's desire, and filled me with all his fullness of love. My soul is always on the wing for glory. I only wait a summons. I could die with more joy than lay me down to sleep. For my song is now, 'The victory is won!' I have full redemption in the blood of Christ. My soul is now all of a piece, steadfast and immovable. To know that we are made holy in all manner of conversation, that all we speak and do is holiness unto the Lord, brings a peace no tongue can express. But when I speak thus, few can comprehend me. They say, 'Then you want no more?' Yes, I want a supply of faith from moment to moment. I want Christ as much as ever. Should he withdraw his power from me, I should cease to praise him. For I have no works whereof to boast. I am the weakest of all saints. Yet glory be to God 'I live not, but Christ liveth in me.'² O may the Lord destroy all unbelief in every heart. Then will there be no occasion of stumbling. If there be any thing in this you disapprove, I am open to conviction.

I am

Your affectionate sister in Christ,

Elizabeth Jackson

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 46–47.

¹CW, Hymn 6, st. 2, *Redemption Hymns* (1747), 7.

²Gal. 2:20.

From John Dillon¹

Dublin
June 13, 1765

Reverend Sir,

Being one day invited to dine with Mr. F., he asked if I had heard anything concerning his maid. Mrs. F. said her maid was exceeding happy, and added that she had been crying to God for some time for deliverance from an evil heart. I was desired to go and speak to her. When I went, I found her praising God for his mercies. I have seen her several times since. I told her to be much in prayer, and simply (when called to it) to declare the goodness of God. I have just parted with her and got the following words from her own mouth, which is a short detail of her experience.

From the age of seven or eight years I was much afraid of death, being convinced that I was not in a state of salvation. About fourteen months ago my father sent me to Dublin. I made it my business, at all opportunities, to hear the Methodists. At last, I was deeply cut to the heart; and could get no rest. I cried to God for mercy, sometimes thinking I was given over to the hardness of my heart. At others, I found a sweet persuasion that God would have mercy on me. I continued in this way till about four months ago, when, as Mr. J— was preaching one Sunday evening, I found my soul set at liberty. The guilt of my sins being removed, my heart flowed with love to and confidence in God. After this, I got into doubts and fears. But the Lord soon shone upon his work again, and gave me a full confidence in him, that through Christ he was reconciled to me. I continued happy in his ways, and found his commands were my delight. About a month ago I had a deep and clear sight of the remaining evils of my heart, and it was followed with a conviction that God had showed me this for no other intent but that I might be delivered from them. A cry was set up in my heart for deliverance. But I was often hindered by the following thoughts: 'What! Thee that art but so lately justified, expect such a blessing! Thou hast not yet been long enough in the ways of God. Neither hast thou mourned, prayed, or grieved enough. Stay a little longer, it is time enough for thee, etc.' But I believed that with God all things are possible, and saw it to be the privilege of his children, and that he was able to make me a partaker thereof. My heart longed for it. When I came into my class one evening I was seized with a trembling, and could hardly get off my knees. When you asked me if I had any thing that I *desired* to give up, but wanted the *power*? and when you said, 'If you can now only believe, you shall see the glory of God'; the words came with such power to my soul that I was instantly delivered from the remains of unbelief and filled with love.

Lord, give her that wisdom from above, that she may not be led into evil reasoning. But discover to her the wiles of the devil, and give her grace to oppose and overcome!

I am, reverend sir,
Yours, etc.,

John Dillon

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 220–21.

¹John Dillon (d. 1769) was the son of a soldier and entered the army himself at the age of fourteen. He was taken prisoner at Fontenoy (1745), which began a spiritual awakening that was capped by his conversion under Methodist preaching years later. He became a member of the society at Cork, and in 1765 was taken into the itinerancy.

From Margaret Dale¹

[Kibblesworth]
June 18, 1765

Reverend Sir,

How reviving is the thought that I need not sin nor doubt any more! O that I may be faithful to his all-sufficient grace. At present all my desires are unto him, and to the remembrance of his name. And I can trust for the future. Christ is mine and I am satisfied with my portion. I want nothing beside, but more of what he delights to bestow—to drink deeper into his spirit, who was meek and lowly of heart. My thoughts indeed wander after things insignificant and trifling, and interrupt thoughts that would be profitable. I want power to check them immediately. O that every thought was brought into obedience to Christ! Surely he who spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, shall with him freely give us all things. I cannot doubt his willingness. O who would not love such a Saviour as thee!

I find continually free access to the throne of grace. O God, how good art thou to me who am so unworthy of the least of thy mercies! I often wonder why he bestows his love on me! I am always happy in him, but not equally so. Yet for this month or six weeks I have experienced more equality, excepting for a day or two.

May our good God bless you, dear sir, which is the prayer of
Your affectionate daughter,

Margaret Dale

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 327.

¹Margaret ('Peggy') Dale (c. 1744–77) and her two sisters (Mary and Ann) were raised in Kibblesworth, Durham (just outside Newcastle) by their aunt and uncle, Thomas and Sarah Lewen, after their father died in 1755 (and their mother Eleanor, sister of Sarah [Lawrence] Lewen sometime before that). The Lewens were active in Methodism. Their daughter Margaret Lewen took Margaret Dale along on Apr. 22, 1765, when she provided JW a ride in her chaise to Newcastle (*Journal, Works*, 21:504). This may have been JW's first meeting with Miss Dale. He at least came to know her better and they struck up an extended correspondence.

From the Rev. Benjamin Colley

London
July 20, 1765

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I have had the opportunity of hearing of your welfare time after time, particularly by a letter to Mr. [Samuel] Franks, wherein you declare, 'Your eye grows not dim, nor is your natural force abated.' I praise God for this, and hope he will strengthen you to continue with us for years. Though indeed death might be more desirable for your own sake, yet for the church's we must desire your life. I wish you good luck in the name of the Lord, that he may give you abundance of peace in your own soul, and to see your labour still successful and your children walking in the truth.

It is a time of release at present for me. For these eighteen months it has been a season of the bitterest inward trials, with very little intermission. What will be the event, God knows. Only this I know, 'he does not willingly afflict.'¹ And therefore when the end is answered, he will remove them. However it is not a little thing for a man to feel himself, and to know that he has a *desperately wicked heart*. I have been various times upon the very borders of leaping into hell, through the enmity I have felt against God. But I am yet in the land of the living, and at present, my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.

I think we have no great reason to complain in London. Our congregations, both at Spitalfields and West Street, are increasing. Many backsliders are healed. Those who have been at a low ebb are much quickened, and in general all is very peaceable. Only two or three are disturbed in their minds about the imputation of Christ's righteousness, having strenuously insisted upon it (though not in public) in the bad sense. Messrs. Jones, [Thomas] Olivers, and others have been with them, but nothing was done; only they prevailed upon them to read John Goodwin's treatise on that subject.²

I should like to see all preachers connected with us have their hearts so in the work as to preach frequently, to meet societies, bands, etc., and to do all other occasional things which come in the way. In this very thing I myself must plead guilty. But the chief case has been depression of spirit through manifold temptations. I hope the Lord will, ere long, pluck my feet out of the net, that I may *run* the way of his commandments. In the meantime, I beg leave to subscribe myself,

Your son and servant in the gospel,

B. Colley

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 328–29.

¹Lam. 3:33.

²John Goodwin, *Imputatio Fidei; or, A Treatise on Justification* (London: Andrew Crooke, 1642).

From Nathaniel Gilbert

Antigua
July 22, 1765

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Although not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called; yet there are some. In this number I may reckon Rear Admiral Tyrell,¹ who at present commands on this station. His call is the more wonderful, not only on account of his rank, but also as he is a great mathematician, and has spent a good part of his life on board ships of war—which I look upon to be emblems of hell, if there be any emblems of it upon earth. How gracious hath the Lord been to me, in raising me up a friend in this place! He had formerly lived a dissolute life. But the Lord, some years ago, made use of Barclay's *Apology* as the means of awakening him.² He commanded his Majesty's ship *Buckingham*, of seventy guns, in 1758, when he had an engagement with the *Florissant*, of seventy-four guns, and a frigate; in which he lost three fingers of his right hand. But he says that though his pain was as violent as if his hand had been held in boiling oil, yet he could not help praising God in the midst of it. He will not allow that he received remission of sins till very lately. Yet he says he has often felt such joys that, if they had continued, nature must have sunk under them without extraordinary supports. I would enclose you his notes and letter to me, but that they will swell the postage too high. Therefore I content myself with sending you some extracts from them. What surprises me is that when he was in England, he mentioned his state to Mr. [William] Law, who told him it was all delusion. He expects to receive orders some time next year to return to England the spring following, and if he should arrive there in your life time, he will desire to be acquainted with you. As he had but little assistance from men or books, and I have too little experience myself to be of much service to him, he will probably have many questions to propose which may take up more of your time than you usually give to one person at once. We are usually together once in two or three weeks, and always join in prayer before we part. He has entirely laid aside mathematics, and devotes all the time he can spare from business to religion.

I might well take shame to myself that, with the superior advantages I have enjoyed, he should outstrip me so greatly. But this is verified in regard to us, as well as to many others: the first shall be last, and the last first. God only knows when I shall be able to inform you that my wife and myself have found peace. But it is a great mercy that we have been kept from falling off wholly. I still hope that the Lord has good things in store for us. I usually meet the little society twice a week, and speak to them as I am able. A free Negro-woman found peace lately. A Mulatto-woman, who received the blessing before my brother went away,³ appears to me to be a person of great grace. My Negro-woman Bessy, whom you baptized at Wandsworth, has been kept ever since and is still able to rejoice in God. I flatter myself that you sometimes remember me and mine in your addresses to the throne of grace. May the Lord preserve and keep you as he hath hitherto done, and may he grant that the afflictions you meet with may work out for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory! I am, reverend and dear sir,

Your affectionate son in the gospel,

Nathaniel Gilbert

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 329–31.

¹Richard Tyrell (1716?–66) resigned command of the Antigua station the following year and died of fever en route back to England.

²Robert Barclay's *An Apology for the True Christian Divinity* (1678) — a prominent Quaker writer.

³His brother Francis Gilbert had returned to England from Antigua.

From Jane Catherine March¹

[London]
September 26, 1765

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I cannot be displeas'd at your labouring to do me good. We have as much need to attend to our Shepherd's warning as to his comfortable voice, the one prepares us to receive the other. When the Lord lovingly reproveth me for turning to the right hand or the left, I thankfully receive his kind admonitions, and I esteem it as a proof of his love, and a fresh assurance that he rejoices in my prosperity. You may see my dangers more clearly than I do myself. But if self-love and partiality do not blind my eyes, I think I am very free from enthusiasm. I am sensible of the blessing of possessing the Spirit of faith, of love, and of a sound mind, and it is my desire to be sober minded, and to hope to the end, living as one that loves and waits for the appearing of the great God our Saviour.

You quite misunderstand me if you think I am seeking after any higher or different perfection 'than love filling the heart, and governing the life'.² This I esteem my calling's hope, and this I am persuaded you wish me to possess. O that the Lord would come suddenly to his temple, and give me to feel, 'The King of Israel, the Lord of hosts is in the midst of thee, and thou shalt see evil no more.'³

I find comfortable seasons. God is present with me, and I rejoice in hope of being filled with the fullness of love. I hope the time is at hand. The Lord knoweth the mind of the spirit, and I believe he will fulfill the secret and unutterable breathings of my soul.

Mrs. [Sarah] C[rosby] has received no witness that she should never *fall*. She only so lives in Jesus as to be filled with love, prayer, and thanksgiving. It is true that for some years she has enjoyed a great deliverance from evil, but yet has often felt things which she knew were not quite right. And though she still cries 'Not as though I had already attained, or were already *perfected*',⁴ yet she enjoys the approbation of him in whose favour is life. Now I really believe, though Mrs. C[rosby], Miss B[osanquet], I, and most of the people in London (who received the 'blessing', as it was called) were brought into a sweet liberty, yet we were not in a scriptural sense perfected in love. We did *not* rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in every thing give thanks. And if we weigh ourselves in the balance of your *Farther Thoughts on Perfection*,⁵ which I believe are according to the Scriptures, we must acknowledge we were among the number of those who had received a greater degree of grace, but were not saved from sin. Yet I do not believe we were in a delusion. Names alter not the nature of things. I believe our being unskilful in the word of righteousness was a hindrance to us, as it prevented our asking that we might receive, that our joy might be full. Another thing was [that] our experience falling short of the Scripture-evidences threw us into endless perplexities, which were a means of weakening our faith. Whereas, had we known determinately the thoughts God had of us, we should have gone on our way rejoicing, praising him for what he had done, and praying him to supply all that was lacking. I believe this was the case of not only many in London, but in many other parts, and I judge is Miss M___ D___'s.⁶ I think she has been thus blest; but I believe she will go through many refining fires before she will do the will of God on earth as it is done in heaven.

¹Responding to JW's letter of Aug. 31, 1765. The 'J.' is left off in *AM*, but the letter is clearly by Jane Catherine March.

²JW, *Advice to the People Called Methodists*, §2, *Works*, 9:124.

³Zeph. 3:15.

⁴Phil. 3:12.

⁵Wesley published *Farther Thoughts upon Christian Perfection* in 1763, in response to the London 'blessing' controversy.

⁶This is likely a reference to Margaret Dale, but possibly to her sister Mary.

Thus sir, I have wrote freely the sentiments of my mind. If I judge wrong, I hope the Lord will reveal it to me. I desire to be open to conviction.

I think sometimes that I take up too much of your precious time in reading and answering my letters. Yet I thought if I was silent to your last, it would look as if I had not such a sense of my obligation to you, for your kind cautions, as I really have. I am, dear sir, with repeated thanks for all favours,

Your affectionate and obliged servant,

[J.] C. M.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 384–86.

From an Unidentified Correspondent
[possibly Christopher Hopper]

Newcastle
October, 7, 1765

I had an opportunity the last evening of seeing our dear aged brother [Alexander] Coats. A few days before he was sore tempted by the enemy, but near the close he had perfect peace. His faith was clear, and he found Christ precious, his portion and his eternal all. I asked him a little before he died if he had 'followed cunningly-devised fables'?¹ He answered, 'No, no, no.' I then asked him whether he saw land. He said, 'Yes, I do.' And after waiting a few moments at anchor, he put into the quiet harbour.

Source: published transcription; JW, *Journal*, Oct. 7, 1765 (*Works*, 22:23).

¹Cf. 2 Pet. 1:16.

From Damaris Perronet

Shoreham
October 19, 1765

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I bless God who has returned you back to us again! May our love to him constrain us to profit more abundantly by your labours. I am so dull a disciple that at times I am almost discouraged, because I cannot profit more. I greatly long to come forward. I want to feel my heart purified by faith. I want him to make my nature pure, and to feel his love constraining all the powers of my soul to love him again; and in consequence of that, to love all his commandments. Indeed they are, more than ever, exceeding precious to my soul. Yet I sometimes find something contrary to love, and to the lowly mind that was in Jesus, arise in my heart, which exceedingly pains me, together with the remains of unbelief which often thrusts sore at me. And yet at times I hope my soul has entered in, but I am not established or preserved in Jesus. I find it so hard to keep a sense of the freeness of grace on my mind that it makes me grieve—but chiefly when I am speaking of it to others. I give him all my heart and life, and my soul is greatly athirst for him. But I have not the power to abide in his presence. I want to be always with him. He gives me much power and plainness of speech in speaking to others. Yet at times I let go an opportunity of speaking, thinking they may soon fall in my way again; awhile afterwards I see this is not the way, and fear lest God should not grant me such a gracious opportunity with them again. Upon the whole, I am thoroughly dissatisfied with myself, for want of faithfulness to God and for want of simple faith. I should have been glad to have refreshed your soul with writing better things. But I hope you will continue to bear with me, and that you will tell me what is the word of the Lord concerning me. In so doing you will greatly oblige

Your friend and servant.

D.¹ Perronet

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 386–87.

¹Orig., 'A'; corrected by JW in his personal copy of *AM*.

From Alexander Mather

Manchester
October 31, 1765

William Stafford had the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins twenty-five years since, and on his dying bed declared he had not for an hour together been without the presence of God, and a feeling sense of his love to him in all that time. And no wonder, seeing he was so remarkably zealous in reproofing sin in all he came near, and in pressing those with whom he conversed to go forward in the ways of God. But above all, he was constant in meeting his class; insomuch that he had not once missed it in all those years (unless when visiting some neighbouring society, in order to provoke them to love and to good works), notwithstanding he lived four miles from the place where it met, and also considerably advanced in years and infirm in body. His wife often urged him to stay at home, but he replied, 'So long as I can go in one day and come back in another, I will be with the children of God.' And as he loved them, so they did him. For when he was confined to his bed, they went constantly to meet with him.

It is about five years since he was deeply convinced of the necessity and possibility of being delivered from inbred sin. And as he sought it diligently, God soon graciously conferred it upon him. Since that time, he declared (when dying), he had not found any temper contrary to love, so much as move in him, though he was not without many close trials. Being asked whether he had not a desire to die, he said, 'I neither desire life nor death. But whensoever God shall call for me, either at class, or on my way home, or wherever I am, it is the same, as Christ is always with me.' It seems about half a year before his death he had a still farther enlargement of soul, which he called being wholly sanctified. And he observed that ever since he had had the glory of God shining with a continuance upon his soul. This also, he said, he received in a moment. Being visited in his last illness by some who differed in sentiment, they spread a report that he was now convinced of the errors he had so long maintained—viz., the possibility of falling away, of obtaining deliverance from all sin here, and that Christ died for all. This report gave some uneasiness to his brethren. But as it broke out before he died, and while he had the use of speech and understanding, they had an opportunity of being satisfied. And on their asking him whether these things were so or not, he replied, 'I never said so'; adding if he had, he must have lied against his own conscience, being more and more sensible that God was willing *then* to justify or sanctify all that really felt their need of either, and that if they could believe they might then enjoy the blessing. He also added that he saw the danger of drawing back, with the need of holiness as much as ever. 'The time has been', he said, 'that this report would have tried me much. But now it cannot trouble me'. He continued exhorting all to love and pity their worst enemies; and urged his wife much to seek the Lord, and died while he held her by the hand saying, 'Must I leave you unconverted?'

A. Mather

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 249–50.

From Mary (Walsh) Leadbetter

Chester
November 15, 1765

Reverend Sir,

The extensive usefulness of your valuable life renders its continuance with the addition of health a circumstance of such importance to the church that it must be the continual prayer and earnest wish of all that are so happy as to have been brought under the joyful sound of your ministry.

Permit me, reverend sir, who am the least and perhaps the most unfaithful that ever enjoyed so high a privilege, to assure you that my heart is truly interested herein, that my prayers are daily offered to the throne of mercy on this behalf, and that with great solicitude and sincerity. And because I believe there subsists a mutual, though inexplicable, sympathy and affection between a spiritual father and the children that are given him by the Lord, I take the liberty of intruding myself upon your memory to give you some account of my state and to entreat a continuance of your prayers. I hope I may with humility, and just abasement of myself before God, inform you that his work has for some months been reviving in my soul, and that my heart is indeed athirst for that holiness without which I am convinced I cannot either fully enjoy God in this life or dwell in his beatific presence in eternity. Sometimes I have been permitted to such sweet communion and near access, and so enabled to plead the promises, that I have well nigh imagined that I was just entering into the good land. But to my grief and surprise, I have also found my corruption more lively and powerful than ordinary. The grand adversary has thrust sore at me, and my soul has endured severe conflicts. Yet I still believe it is for good, and am willing to conclude the rage of Satan is a token that his power is of short duration, and that ere long the Captain of my salvation will bruise him under my feet. Though he would often persuade me that he shall prevail, and that I shall never wholly be delivered from his yoke. At such seasons I go on heavily. But soon the Lord breaks the force of this suggestion, by lifting up the light of his countenance, and then I urge my way with strength renewed. O how sweet will the rest of perfect love appear to my weary longing soul! Help me, dear sir, by your prayers, to seize the inestimable prize.

The Lord is graciously pleased to bless me in the little labour of love which his providence has engaged me in. The souls of these seem to prosper. One among them has received a clear manifestation of pardoning love and some are seeking this goodly pearl with great earnestness, and those that have believed through grace are in a measure pressing forward. May this and every part of the vineyard which has been blessed with your ministry, and nourished by your care, be your comfort and crown of rejoicing in that happy day when labour shall be exchanged for uninterrupted repose, the cross for the victorious palm, and an admittance into the joy of our Lord reward all your toil, and end the dubious strife of, reverend sir,

Your affectionate daughter in the gospel

M. L.

Source: published transcription; *Spiritual Letters* (1767), 76–78.