

John Wesley's In-Correspondence (1766–70)

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From the Rev. F. William Pasche¹

Kensington
January 30, 1766

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I have read your sermon entitled *The Lord Our Righteousness*,² and make bold to offer a few observations on the same.

You seem to think you have represented this point in as clear a light as can be desired. I wish I could agree with you in this respect. I pass over what you say of Christ's *divine* righteousness. With regard to his *human* righteousness, of this, as he is the mediator between God and man, I readily grant that it is imputed to us. You consider it as *internal* and *external*, and the latter as a *negative* and *positive* righteousness. But what I find here on these particulars very naturally leads the thinking reader to the opinion that Christ's keeping the preceptive part of the moral law is that which is imputed to us, if we believe. Now whatever of Christ's performing is imputed to me, I shall never have need to perform in my own person. If then Christ's keeping the preceptive part of the moral law is imputed to me, I shall never have need to perform the preceptive part of the moral law in my own person—which is the open road to antinomianism.

As Christ is called the Lord *our* righteousness, it ought, in my opinion, to be taken no farther than as we stand in need of his being our righteousness at the divine bar, for absolution and acceptance, or for being declared righteous on account of the righteousness he fulfilled in our room. Here the question arises: what righteousness is this? And is he keeping the preceptive part of the moral law included in it, or not? To the latter I would reply that, with respect to the necessity of his being holy and righteous in his human nature, it is indeed included—that is to say, as a necessary, personal qualification for, and in the fulfilling the *penal* part of the law in our room, not only with a mere passive and resigning, but active, filial obedience to the will of his Father, to him as the atoning mediator and surety. The righteousness which he thus hath performed or fulfilled is imputed to believers. Now, I may ask any antinomian whether he could have the assurance to claim or expect the imputation of Christ's righteousness with a willful, disobedient heart to the preceptive part of the moral law, when Christ himself could not procure that righteousness without perfect obedience to the preceptive part of that law?

Please reverend sir to consider this, and let me have the favour of your judgment on these reflections, which shall be very thankfully received by, reverend and dear sir,

Your sincere friend and servant,

W. Pasche

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 552–53.

¹Rev. F[rederick] William Pasche (d. 1792), was Reader at His Majesty's German Chapel at St. James's, and a member of the SPCK.

²Sermon 20, *The Lord Our Righteousness* (1765), *Works*, 1:449–65.

From the Rev. John Fletcher

Madeley
February 17, 1766

Reverend and Dear Sir,

As this is the time that you generally plan your journeys, [and] as you did not make Shropshire in your way last year, I beg leave to put you in mind that Christ and you have some friends here who should be glad to hear the word from your mouth, and treasure it up in honest and simple hearts. Could you not so order matters as to let us have you at Madeley one Sunday? If this should be impracticable, call some week day. This would be better than to pass us by altogether.

The Lord in mercy gives me more love to these few sheep and to the brethren in general than I ever had, which makes my waiting upon them to be freedom. I hope it will be soon *perfect* freedom.

I think we must define exactly what we mean by the 'perfection' which is attainable here, and in so doing we may through mercy obviate the scoffs of the carnal and the misapprehension of the spiritual world, at least in part.

The light that I now see the thing in is this: As the body is not capable of perfection on this side the grave, all those powers of the soul whose exertion depends in part on the frame and well being of the body, or the happy flow of the animal spirit, will not, cannot be perfected here. Of this sort are, I apprehend, 1) the understanding, 2) the memory, and 3) the passionate affections—or the affections as they work by means of the animal spirits on the animal frame. These are no doubt susceptible of admirable impressions, and very high improvements; but still *corpus affiget humi divinae particulam aurae*,¹ more or less.

The one power then that I see can be perfected here, because it is altogether independent from the body, is *the will*, and of course *the affections so far* as they work in the will.

I have had it for some time a desire to execute the plan of a work which appears to me likely to be useful, if God gives me wisdom to go through with it, and my friend's help and directions. It should be by way of dialogues, not between fine gentlemen like Theron and Asp[asio],² but between a minister and one of his parishioners. Six dialogues upon these subjects: the doctrine of the fall, salvation by faith alone, the new birth, the inspiration of the Spirit, the necessity of feeling his operations, the assurance of salvation. Each point proved by Scripture, reason, experience, and the authority of the church; with the most common objections answered. The second part would contain another set of dialogues between the minister and other parishioners of different characters: 1) an infidel, 2) a formalist, 3) a moralist, 4) a worldling, 5) a railer at godly ministers and people; with proper answers to their respective objections.³ I bespeak your direction and corrections if I should execute this plan. And that you may be better able to judge whether I am to set about it in earnest or to lay it aside, I shall prepare a dialogue for your perusal by way of specimen.

The gentlewoman from West Bromwich, which was at my house when you was here, hath a hopeful son, seriously inclined, between 14 and 15, who waits to be bound prentice to some chemist or druggist, if one is to be found wanting an apprentice. Do you know of none among the circle of your acquaintance? Brother [Alexander] Mather is so kind as to strengthen my hand in the neighbourhood. I trust he will be an instrument of much good.

For want of room I recommend myself here to your prayers and direction, and wishing that the Lord may renew and increase your bodily and spiritual strength daily, I remain, dear sir,

Your unworthy servant,

¹Horace, *Satires*, II.ii.79 '*Atque affiget humo divinae particulam aurae*'; '[the body] fastens to earth a fragment of the divine spirit'.

²Referring to the book by James Hervey.

³This work appeared in 1772 as *Appeal to Matter of Fact and Common Sense*.

John Fletcher

Address: 'To the Rev. Mr. J. Wesley / at the Foundery / Moor-fields / London'.

Annotation: by JW; 'Mr. Fletcher Feb 17 1766 ; a'd 2 [March]'.

Source: holograph; MARC, MAW Fl. 36.1.⁴

⁴A close transcription of this letter, showing Fletcher's original spelling, cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 225–27.

From the Daughter of Henry Jackson

Newcastle
February 23, 1766

On Thursday, the 13th of this month, my honoured father looked so beautiful and comely that we all wondered. At night in his first sleep he was taken very ill. On Friday morning, I asked him what he could take. He answered, 'I am to eat no more.' His illness increased, but he was still calm and composed, and resigned to the will of God. Indeed, I always beheld in him such faith, love, and divine resignation as I never saw in any other. On Sunday he said, 'Now my soul is prepared, and made ready to meet the Lord.' From this time he was filled with longing desires to depart and to be with Christ, crying out, 'I cannot stay: I must go to my Beloved, to be with him for ever.' Monday, [Feb.] 17, he said, 'I have fought a good fight: I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of glory, which the righteous Judge shall give me at that day.' Tuesday, 18, after receiving the blessed Sacrament, he declared to the minister, 'My anchor is cast within the veil, both sure and immovable.' And as long as he had his speech, he preached Christ to everyone that came to see him. Indeed, his whole life for many years was but one dedication of his body and soul to God, praying continually and being lost in praise and thanksgiving to his adorable Saviour. In all the various dispensations of God's providence towards him and his family, he was still magnifying and praising his holy name, always thankful, humble, loving, and obedient. Nothing was able to move him one moment or put him out of temper, but he received everything from the hand of God with faith, patience, and resignation. Before his speech failed he blessed all his children, grand-children, and great-grand-children; and on Thursday morning, February 20, yielded up his soul to God, being ninety-nine years and five months old.

Source: published excerpt; JW, *Journal*, February 23, 1766 (*Works*, 22:31–32).

From Elizabeth (Patten) Bennis

[Limerick]
March 11, 1766

Reverend and Dear Sir,

It was not indeed want of love that hindered me from writing to you before now. But upon an impartial inquiry I think it appears to be in truth want of simplicity. But [I] hope it shall not be so for the future.

When you were last in Limerick, my state was a mixture of happiness and distress.¹ I found an entire deliverance from that natural propensity to evil which for many years before had made me miserable. I had the clear testimony of my heart's being cleansed from sin. But finding many things in myself which I did not expect in that state, I gave way to fearfulness and unbelief (not wilfully but ignorantly), till God withdrew this evidence from me. But [God] did not withdraw his grace. His work on my heart was still the same, and sometimes shone by its own light. But this could not satisfy. I was often under a painful uncertainty concerning my state, which was very grievous to me. This I say was my state when you were last here. I was indeed happy, yet the fear of sin being still lurking in my heart pained my very soul. I now saw and bemoaned my loss, and could not be satisfied till I had again received the testimony of God's Spirit that my heart was cleansed from sin. Yet my ignorance and my carnal understanding often blocked up the way.

At this time I became acquainted with the master of a Dutch vessel which then lay here waiting for a cargo.² He was a godly man, and had a deep work of grace wrought on his heart. The Lord did often bless us together, and gave me much light in speaking to him. After some time he requested I would give him my experience in writing, which I was backward in for two reasons: First, lest through ignorance I should only darken what I would attempt to explain. Secondly, if I wrote my experience I must do it honestly, and must confess that I had lost the witness of my sanctification, and this might appear to him (who was not clear concerning this work) as though I had only deceived myself in the matter, and lessen the work in his eyes. These considerations kept me back for some time, till he repeated his request, which I was afraid to refuse lest I should offend God, not knowing what he might intend by this. Yet [I was] not forward in doing it for the above reasons. Then making it a matter of prayer, I spoke to a Christian friend concerning it, who advised me to write, saying perhaps God may approve of your doing it by restoring the witness of his Spirit before you have done. I then determined to do it in such a manner as God should enable me, leaving the event to him. And [I] found myself more than ever simple in his hands, yet earnestly wrestling for the witness. When on the 30th of September last, whilst I was reading a letter I had received from brother [John] Dillon, I was struck with a sentence in the letter and enabled to believe, and found in that moment the testimony of God's Spirit that my heart was cleansed. Satan did strive to rob me of it, but the Lord did enable me to keep my hold. Indeed, it was oftentimes with strong grapplings and many fears, but blessed be my God, he does support my feebleness and causes me to rest in him. Since then God has enabled me more than ever to renounce my own wisdom, and attend more simply to the teachings of his Spirit, and in doing so I find my way wonderfully cleared, many difficulties cleared, and the nature of this work made more intelligible to me. So that I was enabled to go on more steadily and more comfortably. I now see, by looking back with pain and distress, my own ignorance and my own wisdom has cost me, and wonder at the *great condescension* of my God in delivering me in a great measure from both. I now see that I expected many things in a sanctified state which only belong to a glorified one. The servant would be above his Lord.³ And yet it is a blessed state, a glorious liberty, a

¹JW had been in Limerick in June 1765.

²For Bennis's account of meeting this man in Sept. 1765, and a copy of the account she sent him of her religious experience, see Bennis, *Journal*, 173–80.

³See John 15:20.

happy rest. And I find the more confident I am in what my God has done for me, the more happy I am.

Indeed, I do not see why the people of God should stumble at words which declare his work, and think it is more pleasing to God that we should (when called to it) declare what he has done for us to the full extent of it, than prudentially or discretely to hide any part of it. I look upon this as not doing God justice, but would choose your thoughts upon this, to which I shall submit. And [I] beg also to know whether you think there is as absolute a necessity for pressing sanctification on believers as for pressing justification on penitents? I think there is, but would willingly be informed.

Indeed, I want your judgments concerning other matters, which are at times made very clear to my mind, yet [I] am afraid to trust to these sudden illuminations (if I may call them so) lest there should be any degree of my own wisdom in them. I desire to be taught of God and you, and indeed by any whom God shall send. I would know:

Is sin (either more or less) some degree of rebellion in the will? And where there is no degree of rebellion in the will, can there be sin?

May there not be many imperfections where there is no sin? Nay must it not be unavoidably so as a consequence of the fall—our bodies and all their faculties having suffered greatly by it, and left in a shattered imperfect state, and so defective in every part as leaves us quite incapable of either acting, thinking, or judging perfectly right in ever thing? Now are these, by this means become our natural infirmities, taken up and laid down with the body, and therefore not inconsistent with an heart cleansed from sin?

So long as I find my will wholly given up to, and sweetly lost in the will of God (notwithstanding my many defects), do I sin? Or rather do not all these things which before appeared as inconsistencies vanish as such, and appear to be mere natural infirmities which we must carry about with us as a mark of our fallen state, as a badge of our poverty, and the consequence of our first parents' sin?

I know not whether I have stated this right or not, but am sure you will make allowance for my ignorance, and to set me right; and am dear sir,

Yours in our Lord Jesus,

Eliza Bennis

Source: holograph; Philadelphia, PA, Historic St. George's United Methodist Church, Archives.⁴

⁴This is one of the few cases where we have the holograph, to compare to the version published by Eliza's son. We give here a transcription of the holograph. Comparison to Bennis, *Correspondence*, 13–17, will show both elisions and some polishing of grammar in the published form.

From [William Norton¹]

Manchester
March 31, 1766

Good Sir,

I thought proper to send you a few lines concerning what you spoke of last night. How good it was that you put us all together as one family! That each might do his utmost to help all his brethren! Had you spoke of this sooner and opened your mind freely as you did yesterday, where I have given one shilling I would have given one pound. My heart was rejoiced at the good news, so as my tongue cannot express. I was ready to cry out with Zacchaeus, 'Lo, the half of my goods I give to the poor.' I have sent you two guineas towards carrying on the work of the Lord. And may the blessing of the Lord go with it, for I give it freely—I would rather it had been two score.

W. N.

Source: published transcription; JW, *Journal*, Mar. 31, 1766, *Works*, 22:35.

¹On the identity of the writer, see the note in *Works*, 22:35. William Norton (1741–73) married Margaret Kighley (c. 1740–79) in 1761. JW would perform the marriage of their daughter Rachel (b. 1762) to Cornelius Bayley in 1783; see *Journal*, *Works*, 23:270.

From Elizabeth (Patten) Bennis

Limerick
July 10, 1766

Dear Sir,

I received yours of 29th March,¹ wherein you mention that 'one of our preachers has lately advanced a new position; that there is no direct or immediate witness of the work of sanctification, but only a perception or consciousness that we are changed'.²

I believe there is no passing through such a change without being sensible that a change is wrought. But how can any know what the grace is which they have been made partaker of, without the *direct* testimony of God's Spirit? ... If Satan was bound, so that he should never have power to disturb such souls, then the work wrought on the heart might always be manifest. ... But are there not times when the powers of darkness show their strength? Do they not often raise a mist in the soul which clouds almost every grace, and then throws in a multitude of doubts and questionings into the mind? And in this case is there not need of a *direct* testimony from God? ... If this be not attainable, what shall comfort a soul under such circumstances? ...

For my part, a state of uncertainty was always painful to me, however happy my soul might be. ... The weight of my corruptions was so grievous, and my heart so torn on account of inbred sin, that my deliverance was quite clear to me, for I had got into a new world! I found an entire change. ... I had that *perception* or *consciousness* that I was changed. But I also found doubts, fears, and questionings continually cast into my mind whether sin was really cast out of my heart or not. This doubtful state was exceedingly painful to me. My heart was broken at the thoughts of sin still subsisting, or only subsiding for a time. I could not be satisfied with less than the total extirpation of it. This made me cry mightily to God for the witness of his Spirit, which he was graciously pleased to grant in such a manner as was very clear to me. And often since in time of grievous temptation I should be ready to give up my confidence were it not for this testimony, which frequently shines indisputably clear. Indeed, it is such a blessed privilege that I think it a pity all do not seek it. But I believe many are content with being happy without knowing their freedom. I sometimes think that these miss many distresses which I have, and do still labour under; yet they all miss the comforts proceeding from this testimony which I think more than equivalent. ... Indeed, I have been asked some questions which appeared to me very odd concerning these things, but I believe if all the children of God were more simple they would be more wise.

Dear sir, I have wrote freely according to that measure of light and understanding which I have, requesting you would show your love to my soul by setting me right wherein I err. My ignorance is so great, and my ideas of things so confused, that I dare not trust to my own judgment in matters of such importance. This sense of myself has often occasioned me much distress. ... When I have heard these things spoken against, I have been ready to admit the doubt and say, sure this person is more wise more holy than I, and therefore knows more of the mind of God. And if it be so, I am hitherto all wrong. ... And still in such cases, after all that the Lord has done for me, I am too apt to question, being in myself a poor, dark, unstable creature. ... But blessed be God for his free grace. Through this alone I am what I am, and find every moment the same need of the same grace. My indigence appears every day more and more, and this drives me to my Lord Jesus. And my multiplying necessities makes him still more precious to my soul. O what should I do without such a Saviour? I find I have need of all his merit, and would not be saved without it, O it is sweet to be a beggar at his feet, subsisting wholly on his bounty! ...

My dear sir, I request your prayers. I have much need of them. ... Mine, weak and imperfect as they are, are daily offered up for you by, reverend and dear sir,

Yours in the bonds of Christian affection,

Eliza Bennis

¹See *Works*, 28:8–9.

²This was apparently James Oddie. See JW to Bennis, July 24, 1769, *Works*, 28:234.

Source: published transcription; Bennis, *Correspondence*, 19–23.

From Sarah Crosby¹

July 18, 1766

O Sir,

It is a painful truth to repeat, that those who are desirous of living very near to Jesus cannot avoid the appearance of being above man's teaching in general. For where may we find the persons who teach to die to all that is not divine in themselves and others? Wherever I find such souls I praise God. My soul falls at their feet and loses itself in desire to learn, even though I know them surrounded by various infirmities.

But to learn of most is to unlearn what the Spirit of God teaches. How often when many by precept teach to rise above all things and rest *alone* in Jesus, does their practice say, 'Rest on *me*, or on some other creature, even as *I do*'?

And where God has given light to discern the most excellent way, those who endeavour to walk in it can't avoid the imputation of being proud. But what a little thing is this, compared with the blessing of being simple and acting in the presence of God. O this witness is quite sufficient for the happiness of those that have it.

Indeed I believe this implies a death to what many Christians call 'friendship'. Because in this friendship there is so much of *human*, not to say more. O how often does the 'friend' take the place that Jesus ought to have in the heart! Therefore those who are wholly on the Lord's side must often in this sense separate chief friends. And it is better to give up our friends wholly than to part with any degree of our Saviour's love.

Though many are not awake enough inwardly to comprehend this, it is an undoubted truth which the Spirit of truth will some time or other testify [to] their hearts. Indeed, God has taught me this by experience. For by friendship not at first distinguished from divine, my soul suffered the loss of much friendship with God. All my hurt came from this quarter. But now, blessed be my God and Father, my eyes are wide open. I was once ignorant of human nature, but now I discern between human and divine. And how shall I sufficiently praise my God, who draws all the powers of my soul after himself? I live only for him, but I want a fuller enjoyment of him.

You may rest assured that all of *us* desire the prosperity of your soul, and are often grieved because you are not filled with him who alone can satisfy your soul, and because there is so little real life and practical holiness among the people. O Lord, pour out the Spirit upon this thy chosen servant, and on the people who are called by thy name!

I am, dear sir, in bonds divine,
Your unworthy child and servant.

Source: JW's transcribed copy; MARC, MA 1977/157, JW III.7, item numbered '112'.

¹The identity of the author is confirmed in JW's reply on Sept. 12, 1766.

From Captain Jonathan Scott¹

Northampton
August 24, 1766

Reverend Sir,

The Lord has already begun to fulfill this promise here: viz., that his word shall accomplish that for which it is sent.² The consciences of several begin to be alarmed. The children of God that were getting lifeless, are roused to action. And the more lively believers seem to exert all their faith, grace, and prayer to God, that his salvation may be known to all. And in part we have already experienced that he is working wonderfully amongst us, for he has made our very enemies to be at peace with us. All denominations flock to hear the word. Their hearts seem united together in praising God, and all distinction and party seem forgot.

The desire of the people to hear the gospel from Mr. B.³ was so great, that they would not bear to part with him till after Sunday. And to the above I must add my poor tribute of praise to God for sending him here, as the Lord has blessed him exceedingly to my soul.

The zeal you have for the cause of God, and your tender love to poor, perishing souls, will induce you to contrive that Mr. B. may return here soon, and stay some time with us; or else come again as often as he can.

I must beg, dear sir, you will remember me always at the throne of grace. And as the Lord seems to be considerably at work in the regiment to which I belong, I must entreat you and your societies to make mention of us in your prayers, that the Lord would call many to serve as faithful soldiers, under the banner of the Captain of our salvation.

May God be with you, to bless you! So prays, reverend sir,

Your unworthy brother in Christ,

J. S.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 387–88.

¹Jonathan Scott (1735–1807), formerly a captain in the 7th Dragoons, had been converted earlier this year under the preaching of William Romaine. He soon left the army and began preaching from Staffordshire outwards, becoming the most successful evangelist among the Independents in the northwest of England.

²See Isa. 55:11.

³This was likely the itinerant Richard Blackwell (d. 1767), whom JW sent to Northampton again in November of this year; see JW, *Journal*, Nov. 10, 1766, *Works*, 22:67.

From Selina (Shirley) Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon

September 14, 1766

My Dear Sir,

I am most highly obliged by your kind offer of serving the chapel at Bath during your stay at Bristol. I mean on Sundays. It is the most important time, being the height of the latter season,¹ when the great of this world are only in the reach of the sound of the gospel from that quarter. The morning is *their time*; and the evening, the inhabitants chiefly. I do trust that this union which is commenced will be for the furtherance of our faith, and mutual love to each other. It is for the interest of the best cause, that we should all be found first faithful to the Lord and then to each other. I find something wanting, and that is a meeting now and then agreed upon—that [includes] you, your brother, Mr. [George] Whitefield, and I. We should at times regularly be glad to communicate our observations upon the general state of the work. Light might follow, and would be a kind of guide to me, as I am connected with many.

Universal and constant usefulness to all is the important lesson. And when we are fully and wholly given up to the Lord, I am sure the heart can long for nothing so much as that time, talents, life, soul, and spirit may become upon earth a constant and living sacrifice. How *I can be most that* is the one object of my poor heart. Therefore, to have all the light that is possible, to see my way in this matter, is my prayer day and night. For worthy is the Lamb to receive etc., etc., etc.²

Our dear friend Mr. Whitefield has this heart with us, and in every point. His wise, honest, and understanding heart we shall put an unspeakable blessing in.

What you say of reproach, I hope never to be without, so it is for well doing. I am honoured by every degree of contempt which my heart has. Its faithful testimony before him who can search it to the bottom, and knows that his glory and the good of souls is my *one* object upon earth. I shall turn coward and disgrace you all when I have any worse ground to stand upon. And I am sure my prayer will be answered, which was made for this seven and twenty years,³ that whenever his eye (which is as a flame of fire) sees any other end, view, or purpose of my heart, he will remove my poor wretched being from this earth. But so vile, and foolish, and helpless as *I am*, [he] keeps my heart ⟨full⁴⟩ of faith that he never will leave me ⟨nor forsake⟩ me, having neither help nor hope, but that ⟨he will⟩ each moment prove the Lord, the Lord, full of mercy and compassionate love to such a poor worm.⁵ Pray, when you have leisure let me hear from you, and believe me most faithfully,

Your ever affectionate friend and servant,

S. H.

Address: 'To / the Revd Mr Wesley / at the Great Room in / the Horse Fair / Bristol'.

Postmark: '17/SE'.

Endorsement: by JW, 'L.H. / Sept. 14. 1766 / ad 24'.

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/504/2/101.⁶

¹I.e., late summer.

²I.e., 'power and wealth, and wisdom and might, and honour and blessing'; Rev. 5:12.

³Lady Huntingdon's spiritual awakening had come in 1739.

⁴A small portion of the manuscript is torn away, but can be confidently reconstructed.

⁵See Exod. 34:6.

⁶A somewhat polished transcription was published in *AM* 20 (1797): 304–05.

From Captain Jonathan Scott

Leicester
October 15, 1766

Reverend Sir,

Mr. B¹. came to Northampton on Friday the third instant, and was affectionately received. Each time he preached he had many to hear him. On Sunday evening he changed with Mr. G[lasbrook],² who had near two thousand hearers. There was each time the greatest decency and respect shown—everybody listening as if they came with a view to benefit their souls.

On Monday I was ordered to this place with part of the regiment. As soon as it was known at Northampton, some persons came to me under great concern, fearing it would cause the preacher to go away, for want of a place to preach in. They added, rather than that should be the case, they were willing to contribute something towards getting one.

But as long as our regiment stays at Northampton this will be unnecessary, as we can contrive to let them have our riding-house. The persons that came to me hope you will continue to send them a preacher. Indeed, from the great eagerness of the people to hear, and their earnestness to have a preacher come amongst them, there seems to be a prospect of much good being done. The harvest seems to be truly plenteous, and many souls are praying for labourers to be sent amongst them.

I therefore trust you will take this affair into serious consideration, and send another preacher into the Bedford circuit, who can take Northampton and two or three other villages in that I know would receive you.

I feel a very earnest desire that you may contrive to do this. The Lord has opened you a door in Northampton at last, and will perhaps condescend to make us, unworthy creatures, instruments of assisting you. I therefore wish you were well-established there before we leave the place.

As persons of all ranks go to hear, I hope you will send a preacher that will be acceptable to them. As the work is in its infancy, were they to have one they did not like, perhaps it might cool that ardent desire that seems to be amongst them. Mr. B. has found great favour with all. But I humbly submit this to your better judgment, and pray that the Lord may direct you, both in this and all other things, to act as is most consistent with his own glory and the good of immortal souls.

May grace and peace be multiplied unto you! So prays, reverend sir,
Your affectionate, though unworthy brother,

J. S.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 441–42.

¹Again, likely the itinerant Richard Blackwell.

²James Glasbrook (c. 1733–93) became a Methodist lay preacher about 1757 and continued to serve through 1774. At Conference in Aug. 1766 he was assigned to the Bedfordshire circuit, which included Northampton (see *Works*, 10:317).

From T. J.¹

London
October 26, 1766

Reverend Sir,

I hope you will have patience with me while I relate my sense of the immense treasures of God's love to his unworthy creature. I am at a loss how to begin, my soul being so big with matter. O his goodness is unsearchable! I call aloud on heaven and earth, things animate and inanimate, to praise him. And with the psalmist I stir up all 'within me' to 'bless his holy name'.²

He has lately raised me from a bed of sickness. He corrected in judgment. But the grace that kept me in prosperity was sufficient in adversity. I found the promise true, 'As thy day is, so shall thy strength be.'³ My heavenly Father gave me entire patience—so that, though I was conscious 'It was better to depart and be with Christ',⁴ yet I was content to live as long as he pleased. After God had brought me even to the portals of eternity, it was his good pleasure to lead me back to health again. Was it not trying, dear sir, to be in view of supreme felicity; to get a glimpse of glory; to find myself prepared to go to the bosom of Jesus, and not be able to enjoy? Was not this trying to ardent love? But my soul can only breathe, 'Thy will be done, O God my Saviour.'

My soul at present, amidst noise and tumult, sweetly rests in Jesus. All my delight is in God. Christ *within me* is my glory, and of this I will make my boast all the day long. The view of Christ as my *all in all* makes me desirous of the strictest devotion to him, and that his free grace may be more abundantly magnified in me. O may God establish in my soul the sweet reign of divine love! I want to be all love, even *as God is love*. This is the pure fire that burns, melts, and reduces the natural man to *nothing*. I thank you for teaching me that faith is the *golden mean* which communicates the life of God to the soul of man. O Lord, increase my faith!

That God may bless you, reverend sir, is the earnest prayer of,

T. J.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 443–44.

¹This letter is likely from Thomas Judson (1740–1822), a Methodist who became an attorney. In 1774 Judson married Thomas Marriot's daughter Elizabeth (b.1751). See JW to Judson, May 6, 1774.

²Ps. 103:1.

³Deut. 33:25.

⁴Cf. Phil. 1:23.

From the Rev. Richard Hart¹

[Bristol]
c. December 1766

Dear Sir,

I am not insensible of the happy consequences it might produce if 'those who agree in preaching that capital doctrine, "By grace ye are saved through faith,"² would maintain a free intercourse with each other'. And if it could by any means be accomplished, it is doubtless an event most devoutly to be wished. It is what I always have shown the greatest readiness to, and what I have laboured at, for these several years past within my little sphere. And though my success hitherto, through causes which I will not pretend to assign, has by no means equalled my hopes, yet I shall heartily rejoice if at length it may please God to make you the instrument of effecting so important a design. For my own part, I despise no man for his opinion. However, I may be most closely attached (as everyone is) to those whose judgment most nearly harmonizes with my own. And if I can bear anything, it is contradiction; so long as I am allowed the common liberty of answering for myself, without being treated with reproach or scorn for any heterodox notions I may be supposed to maintain.

I shall very gladly go halfway to London at any time to give a meeting to a number of ministers of any denomination that may be brought together with this pious intention; and I think I may answer for Mr. Johnson's concurrence. Will you forgive me if for once I presume to suggest what (I apprehend) may be most conducive on such an occasion to our general profit and edification?

1) Let one of the books of the New Testament be made choice of previous to our interview, for the subject of our conference when we meet; not with a view of displaying our critical talents on every word or verse that occurs, but of pointing out those things which necessarily enter into the plan of apostolical preaching. 2) Let everyone settle this in his heart beforehand, to expect contradiction, at the same time resolving to bear it calmly for the Lord's sake. And seeing we naturally carry about us an accursed spirit of selfishness, pride, and impatience, that is ready to take fire at the most trivial offence, let us make it a point beforehand daily to lament this our wretchedness of disposition at the throne of grace, earnestly beseeching the Lord to prepare us all for our intended conference, by enduing us with the spirit of meekness, forbearance, humility, and love. 3) Let everyone consent to renounce any favourite phrase, term, or mode of speech that is not scriptural, if required so to do by those who dissent from him. Because whatever doctrine cannot maintain its ground without the aid of humanly-invented words is not of God.

I have unbosomed myself to you in the frankest manner, with a view to promote that happy intercourse which you wish to establish. And if you imagine it will answer any good purpose, you are welcome to show this letter to any of the ministers you have had in your eye, and to disclose to them largely all you know of, dear sir,

Your affectionate friend and brother,

R[ichard] H[art]

Source: published transcription; JW, *Journal*, Apr. 19, 1764, *Works*, 21:458–60.

¹Richard Hart (c. 1727–1808) studied at Oxford (Christ Church) and was ordained priest in 1752 by Edward Willes, Bishop of Bath and Wells. He was curate at Freshford, Somserset, then vicar of St. George's, Bristol, in the vicinity of Kingswood, from 1759. Hart was replying to JW's circular letter appealing for greater union among the revival preachers, Oct. 15, 1766, *Works*, 28:45–49.

²Eph. 2:8.

From the Rev. Walter Sellon

[Smisby, Leicestershire]
c. December 1766

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I received your printed letter,¹ and should rejoice to see the union proposed therein to take place. But I must own I am an infidel concerning it. Daily experience convinces me more and more that the zeal for opinions and charity *non bene conveniunt, nec in una sede morantur*.² It has well-nigh destroyed all Christian love, zeal, and holiness among us. I have met with greater trials from these bigots within this twelvemonth than I have met with from all other opposers for fifteen years. Many that once would almost have plucked out their own eyes and given them to me, they are now ready to pluck out my eyes.

I really am tired of preaching to an ungrateful, gainsaying people. Pray for me, dear sir, for my hands hang down exceedingly. I am

Your unworthy brother,

W. S.

Source: published transcription; JW, *Journal*, Apr. 19, 1764, *Works*, 21:460.

¹Sellon was replying to JW's circular letter appealing for greater union among the revival preachers, Oct. 15, 1766, *Works*, 28:45–49.

²'Do not well agree, and never remain together in the same place.'

From the Rev. Vincent Perronet

[Shoreham]
c. December 1766

My Reverend and Dear Brother,

Yours of the 15th instant gave me both pain and pleasure.¹

I was highly delighted with your ardent wishes and endeavours for promoting the *spirit* of the *gospel* among the *preachers* and other *professors* of it, ... but deeply concerned at the disappointment and opposition you have met with!

It has been always a *leading principle* with me (and I pray God confirm and strengthen it more and more) to *love* all those *labourers of Christ* who give proof by their *diligence*, their *holy* and *heavenly behaviour*, that they *love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity*; even though *their sentiments*, in many things, should differ from *mine*.

And therefore, though it be *absurd* to expect an entire *union* of sentiments in all things, ... yet the endeavouring, by every Christian method, to 'keep the union of the Spirit in the bond of peace'² ... is the indispensable duty of all Christians. Where this spiritual peace and union are not, ... there 'faith working by love'³ ... is not; and where this *divine faith* is wanting, ... there *Christ* is *wanting*; there his *Spirit* is *wanting*; and then, 'neither circumcision nor uncircumcision will avail us anything'⁴

In this melancholy situation, whilst we are strangers to the *divine fruits* of the *Holy Spirit*, ... let our *gifts* and *talents* be what they may; ... let us 'speak with the tongues of men and of angels';⁵ we are yet *nothing* in the sight of God! Nay, though his *Spirit* should spread the *gospel* by our ministry in the hearts of thousands, yet our own souls will remain but a *barren wilderness*! And Christ may say ... , 'I never knew you.'⁶

How ought we therefore always to pray ... that 'the peace of God may ever rule in our hearts';⁷ ... that we may be 'rooted and grounded in love';⁸ and that we may constantly 'follow after the things which make for peace; and things wherewith one may edify another'⁹

This is the *gospel of Jesus Christ*! And may God impress it thoroughly upon the *minds and hearts* of all! ... And may the poor *despised flock* grow in *grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*! I am, dear sir,

Yours most affectionately,

Vin. Perronet

Source: published transcription; JW, *Journal*, Apr. 19, 1764, *Works*, 21:460–61.

¹Perronet was replying to JW's circular letter appealing for greater union among the revival preachers, Oct. 15, 1766, *Works*, 28:45–49.

²Eph. 4:3.

³Gal. 5:6.

⁴Cf. Gal. 6:15.

⁵1 Cor. 13:1.

⁶Matt. 7:23.

⁷Col. 3:15.

⁸Eph. 3:17.

⁹Rom. 14:19.

From the Rev. George Whitefield

London
December 15, 1766

Dear Sir,

Not want of love, but leisure, has prevented me answering your last.¹ I have been itinerating at Bristol, Bath, Gloucestershire, and Oxford, and humbly hope my feeble labours were not altogether in vain in the Lord. Pray how goes on your society? I hope you continue in your first love, and are daily provoking all you meet with to love and good works. 'To him that hath shall be given, but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he seemed to have.'² Be zealous, therefore, for your God. And then though you should, through mistake and over-hastiness, now and then cut an ear off, yet the all-powerful, all-compassionate Jesus will heal it again.³ May this find you sitting humbly at his feet, hearing his word, and waiting to know his will. Your last to Mr. Sparks⁴ seemed a little too towering. But Jesus knows how to pull us down. His loving correction will make us truly great.

That you may, in his strength, go on from conquering to conquering, is the hearty prayer of, dear sir,

Yours, etc., in our common Lord,

George Whitefield

Source: published transcription; *Christian Witness* 18 (1861): 323.

¹This letter is not known to survive.

²Mark 4:25.

³See Luke 22:51.

⁴This letter is not known to survive. The recipient may be the John Sparkes who wrote Whitefield from Highgate, Middlesex, in 1760.

From Cornelius Bastable

[Bristol]

February 10, 1767

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I still grow worse and worse in body.¹ But glory be to God, I feel it is all in love! Therefore my soul delights in him all the day long. I use all means I can, finding it of use to retain the little strength I have. I read the Scriptures as constantly, and as long at a time, as my voice and spirits will permit. If I could desire life, it should be that I might the residue thereof live and preach more to the glory of God than I have done. For though I have aimed at his glory and the good of souls, yet I still long to be more perfect therein. I now live by faith, but I want to live more so.

I feel a pleasing fear lest I should offend either God or man; and I lie at the feet of all the saints, as the least of them all.

I am, reverend sir,

Your son in the gospel,

C. Bastable

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 500.

¹It is unclear how much Bastable's health recovered, but he did not die until 1775.

From Frances Hatton¹

Salop
February 16, 1767

During the whole of my sister's illness (which continued near ten months) she never doubted of her salvation, though she was not favoured with any bright manifestations of her heavenly Father's love. But when she was conflicting with her last enemy, she declared she could sing the believer's song, 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.'² When she saw her mother and me weeping by her she modestly reproved us, and taking us each by the hand said, 'This is the hour I have long waited for. Would you grieve for my happiness? I have not the least fear of death. I have nothing but a prospect of happiness before me! I have not power to utter half what I feel. Mercy! Mercy! A sinner saved! I rejoice that I am saved by grace alone! This will heighten my felicity above.'

To the person who sat up with her she said, 'Strive to make your calling and election sure. What is the world to me now? If I had not an interest in Christ, I should be miserable indeed.' The evening before she died, being told on her enquiry that it was Saturday, she said, with a sweet and composed countenance, 'I believe I shall begin to spend an eternal Sabbath in glory on the morrow.' A little before her death she asked my brother, 'Do you think departed spirits know what is done on earth?' He asked her why she enquired. 'Because', said she, 'it would give me pleasure to know that my friends go on in the ways of God.'

She has left a sweet savour behind her, and is much lamented, especially by those who have experienced her friendly care and love—whom she had watched over, and who had sweet communion with her spirit. We have sustained a great loss in her. But I am assured, beyond a doubt, our loss is her unspeakable gain. My mother and I have been wonderfully supported, and made willing to resign so dear a relation into the hands of that God, who had long engaged all her affections.

F. Hatton

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 525–26.

¹Frances Hatton (bap. 1742), the daughter of Rev. Alexander and Mary (Gregory) Hatton of Shrewsbury, was the sister of Rev. Thomas Hatton, a Methodist sympathizer in Waters Upton, Salop.

²1 Cor. 15:55, 57.

From Andrew Maiben¹

Sligo
April 14, 1767

Reverend Sir,

I am glad to hear that the gospel is attended with so great success, particularly in the north, where they have been Scripture-proof for a considerable time. Brother Levick² has been in this circuit for half a year, and the blessing of God seems to attend his labours. Several of the army here and a few of the town's people are awakened; some of whom are lately come to the experimental knowledge of the truth. As for my part, 'I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for I know it is the power of God to salvation, to everyone that believeth.'³ Yet I labour under some inward difficulties with respect to my conduct. In a conflict some time ago, those words 'There is none pleadeth for the truth'⁴ laid hold on me as I was reading them, as if they had been applied to Sligo. Notwithstanding providence smiles on me, with regard to the world. Yet God determines my choice. 'Rather to be a door-keeper in his house, than to dwell in the tents of sin.'⁵ For I dare not once think of turning his benefits into weapons of rebellion against himself. The hearts of my wife, little Nelly, and myself are open for you, as well as our house,⁶ and I believe that the hearts of the whole society are glad to hear of your coming. It is near a twelvemonth since I joined it.

I am, reverend sir,

Your unworthy, but affectionate brother,

A. M.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 444.

¹Andrew Maiben, of Scotch descent, became a linen merchant in Sligo. He was drawn into Methodism in 1766, and became for a while a friend of JW. Eventually Maiben's Calvinist views led him to side with Lady Huntingdon; cf. JW, *Journal*, May 22, 1775, *Works*, 22:452.

²Samuel Levick (d. 1771) was admitted as a travelling preacher in 1752 (see *Works*, 10:253). He had been assigned the Limerick circuit at the 1766 Conference (ibid., 10:318).

³Cf. Rom. 1:16.

⁴Isa. 59:4.

⁵Cf. Ps. 84:10.

⁶JW stayed at their home when he came through Sligo on a preaching tour in early May; see *Journal*, May 1–3, 1767, *Works*, 22:79.

From 'I. E.'

Isleworth
May 8, 1767

To the Printer of the *Gazetteer*¹

The rapid increase of Methodism, with all its baneful effects, are too visible in many parts of this kingdom. These sectaries have practised every insidious art, every secret scheme that could tend to the propagation of the tenets or the establishment of an innovated society. They, by an unremitting assiduity, a pretended zeal for religion, an affected severity of manners, have now almost established a modern heresiarchy. Already they have renounced the discipline and rejected the liturgy of the Church [of England], introduced a mock priesthood, neither tinctured with learning nor ordained by prelates. The mechanic too idle for business, too illiterate for office, flies to the covers of Methodism for support. He there commences preacher. His boisterous exclamations suffice instead of pious instructions, his impious assertions for undoubted inspiration, and the wretch who is consummately ignorant of the letter dares undertake to explain the spirit of the sacred books. From these inadequate and dogmatical dispensers of religion have flowed a perversion of the Scriptures from the sense of its writers, a seduction of the ignorant from the ties of society, an incitement to the labourer to quit the callings of industry. By these the weak mind is driven into doubt, from doubt to despair—to madness! To prevent the augmentation of the number, and the diffusion of the documents of these dangerous people is indubitably the duty, and should be the study, of the clergy in particular and every member of the Church of England in general.

These pestilential seminaries have principally been founded in populous neighbourhoods, or in extensive parishes, where either the church has not been sufficiently capacious to contain the congregation, or situated at such a distance that rendered the attendance on divine service difficult to many. These have been the two fields in which the tares of Methodism have been sowed, in which they have borne too great a crop. To remove these impediments to the assembling at, and to render more agreeable the discharge of the religious duties, the erecting of public chapels in large hamlets and villages are highly necessary; that by the proximity of a place of devotion the indolent shall not say, 'The house of prayer is too far from us', nor the aged and infirm become a prey to enthusiasm.

How truly laudable are those who patronize, how very commendable those who assist in the completion of so good, so useful a work? They will not build for themselves only, but for their sons, for ages yet unborn, who will bless their memory and honour the cold turf of those who 'dedicated a house to God'.

And permit me here to congratulate the very populous and publicly frequented town of Old Brentford, which has never yet been accommodated with an established place of worship, though so long wanted (being near two miles from the parish church at Ealing) on the approaching completion of its wishes, by the munificent subscriptions of the principal inhabitants.

With these donations will, in a short time, be constructed a neat and roomy chapel, supplied with a learned and able divine, whose instructive discourses will, it is hoped, be the means to preserve numberless families from the illusions and crafts of Methodism, which predominates there, much to the ruin of the peace and the property of many individuals.

I. E.

Source: published transcription; *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser* (June 11, 1767), p. 4.

¹While not addressed to JW, this letter is cited as the occasion for the letter of 'Methodomastix' in the *Gazetteer* in August, which JW engages.

From Cornelius Bastable

[Bristol]
June 20, 1767

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Alas! To what a poor end have I lived to this day? I am ashamed both before God and man. And yet, with astonishment I live and wonder before him, who does not suffer me to live one moment without a ravishing and increasing sense of his glorious presence. By this I live; by this I am supported. O pray for me that I may be ever before him, as one in whom he delighteth.

I am,

Yours, etc.,

C. B.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 501.

From 'Peter Traffick'¹

To Jeoffry Wagstaffe, Esq.; at the *Mercury*, in Parliament Street

[June 27, 1767²]

Sir,

I am a man who carries on a considerable share of trade in this city. I was for many years blessed with one of the best women upon earth for a wife, and we were remarkably a happy, industrious couple, although we had no children. We might have been still blest, were it not for a cursed gospel gossip, a neighbour of ours, who seduced my wife, as the serpent did Eve, to go with her one evening to a swaddling³ meeting-house. When she came home she did nothing but rave of the sanctity of those good people (as she called them), and of the heavenly man who preached. Her neighbour, when once she found that she had drawn her in, did not fail to call upon her every evening to go to the preaching. In short, sir, in a little time she became as great a swaddler as any of them. She entirely neglected her house and family, and gave me very little company, for she was gadding most part of the day after the preachers' heels, and spent many nights among them at their love feasts. Oh, Mr. Wagstaffe, these swaddling teachers are sad fellows. For would you believe it, my wife, who was always loving, virtuous, discreet, and honest, they wanted to seduce, debauch, and lead astray.

She told me one day that the Lord had promised her a child, as he did to Sarah. I asked her, in some confusion, how did she know that. She bad[e] me be calm and she would tell me. She said that Mr. Williams,⁴ the teacher, had assured her of it at the last love feast; and that at midnight she fell into a trance, in which it was confirmed to her; and that the holy man renewed his assurances to her. I began to smoke something, and to suspect that those sanctified devils had given her some drugs to throw her into a deep sleep, and so to fulfil their promises in good earnest. From that time I never suffered her to go near them, nor one of the scoundrels to enter my doors—for before that they used to come to my house with as much freedom as if it was their own, and nothing in it was too good for them. Many a bottle of my best wine have Mr. W[esle]y and Mr. Williams swallowed. And not only that, but every penny my wife could lay hands on she gave to these saints. By this means I found my substance going, my house in disorder, and my honour at stake.

I flatter myself that they did not accomplish their wicked ends with my wife, but I thought it the best way to put it out of their power, by giving them no opportunity. Ever since I have laid this embargo on her I have had very little comfort of her, for she is peevish, fretful, and discontented. Nothing can please her. She says she is sure of being damned. And all I can say or do will not prevail on her to go with me to church. I brought the curate of our parish to her and he began to reason with her, but all to no purpose. She poured out such a torrent of jargon of grace, peace, faith, elect, and so forth, and quoted so much Scripture in a quite mistaken sense, that she would not let the good man say a word. He told me it was in vain to talk to her, for that her head was turned, and advised me to lodge her for a while with Mr. Jennings on the Broadstone. This I am unwilling to do, as I still love her tenderly. I will therefore try every gentle method, and if all fails I must at length have recourse to that.

Now sir, is not this dreadful, that these wolves in sheep's clothing should be thus suffered to prowl after the wives of honest men, not only to turn their heads but also to furnish those of the husbands with horns, and all this under the cloak of righteous sanctity? I think, therefore, you will do a public

¹This satirical (and pseudonymous) letter was not addressed to JW, but it clearly concerned him, and he answered it in a letter to the *Freeman's Journal* on July 9.

²This is the date that the letter appeared in the *Dublin Mercury*, and the date given as the heading in *The Bachelor*.

³A derogatory term used for Methodists in Ireland.

⁴This may refer to Thomas Williams, who served in Ireland in the early 1750s.

service by giving this letter a place in your speculations. It may be a warning to other men to put a stop to their wives swaddling betimes, and prevent those fatal effects which my too great indulgence to mine have produced to me. It is amazing to think what mischiefs these canting, hypocritical villains have done in this city withing these few years. Every idle tradesman who is too lazy to work gets a few texts of Scripture by heart, which he throws out in quite a contrary sense from their true meaning, and so commences a blind guide to lead the blind. This they find an easier and more lucrative way of working than at their trades, for all the women who dance after their nonsense will rob, plunder, and steal to supply them with money.

I could write a whole volume on this subject, but I fear I have already trespassed too far upon your patience. I shall, therefore, conclude by assuring you that I am

Your constant reader and most humble servant,

Peter Traffick

Source: published transcription; [Robert Jephson,] *The Bachelor; or Speculations of Jeoffry Wagstaffe, Esq.* (Dublin: James Hoey, 1769), 2:112–15.⁵

⁵This letter appeared initially in the *Dublin Mercury* (to which the satirist Robert Jephson was a frequent contributor). We cite it from his subsequent collection of such material, *The Batchelor*, because it is much more easily accessed, and it confirms his authorship.

From Jane Catherine March

[London]
July 9, 1767

Reverend Sir,

I thank you for this fresh instance of fatherly care, which proved a word in season.¹ Your caution was not unnecessary, for I do indeed need the defence of watchful prayer when I am providentially thrown among those who still favour of earth, though their faces are in some measure set Zionward. But thanks be to God that from these I have been called to come out and to be separate, and my lot has mercifully been thrown among those the end of whose conversation is, 'Jesus, the same yesterday, today, and for ever'.² And the more I feel *his* name as ointment poured forth, the more insupportable is the converse of the former. When I am with them, my soul mourns and seems to cry out, 'O that I had the wings of a dove, that I might fly away, and be at rest'.³ But I want more salt in myself, that I may season those around me. But in general when I am among these kind of persons, I seem to have nothing given me to say. And the exercise of spirit I am led to is to complain inwardly to the Lord of all I see wrong among them, and then to be willing to appear as a fool before them (for I often wonder they can bear with my stupidity). And⁴ I seem to be content they should judge me to have no life in my soul, and to remain unknown as long as the Lord pleases, so I may but be well known of him. But sometimes I reason upon it and think the fault is all my own, and that if I had more of the fire of love burning in my heart it would break out more in my conversation.

Glory be to God, I feel I have but one business on earth, and that is to do the will of God. And indeed obedience is my delight. His yoke is easy, and his burden is light. I find an increasing deadness to everything below, and my affections and desires are more fixed on Jesus; so that the one point I have continually in view is to retain and increase my knowledge of, and communion with, him. My soul gaspeth for his grace, as the thirsty land for showers. And it is my fervent desire and constant prayer that I may be all like him before I hence remove. And I believe he is able and willing thus to save unto the uttermost, from which arises the hope that it shall be done. I have no painful desires, for they have so much of the earnest of the desired blessing in them as yields present delight. The greatest hindrance I feel is a want of knowing more fully the grace wherein I stand. This want is a hindrance to the actings of my faith, and prevents my paying my increasing tribute of praise. I have suffered much on this account these last twelve months. Though I constantly feel the *power* of faith overcoming, not only the world but myself also.

Indeed nothing but a deep conviction of the duty of believing, and the fear of sinning, in casting away my confidence, could have helped me to stand in this evil day, as I never could draw much comfort from the power of grace, thinking that arguments might go a great way towards the subduing and overcoming one's passions. But at present the storm has ceased, and I walk not only in the fear of the Lord, but in the comforts of the Holy Ghost.

You enquire if my family are breathing after the spirit of perfect love? It is I trust the purpose of all to go forward, and their one desire is to escape safe to land. And they are using a degree of diligence to make their calling and election sure.

Sister T—, Mrs. C—,⁵ and I are quite of one heart and mind, and I find Jesus all the world to us.

¹She is replying to JW's letter of June 29, 1767, *Works*, 28:84–85.

²Cf. Heb. 13:8.

³Ps. 55:6.

⁴Orig., 'as'; corrected in errata (at end of vol. 9).

⁵This is likely Sarah Crosby, who was closely connected to Jane March; see Jane Catherine March to JW, Sept. 26, 1765.

And to approve ourselves to him in all things is our constant employment, though we do not so fully do his will on earth as angels do above.

I hear we may expect the favour of your presence in about a month, and I trust the angel of the Lord will encamp round about you, and bring you in safety to this place, in the fullness of the gospel of the blessing of peace.

I remain, dear sir,

Your dutiful daughter in Christ,

J. C. M.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 554–56.

From Elizabeth (Patten) Bennis

Limerick
July 15, 1767

Dear Sir,

I have made many attempts to write you, since you left this [place].¹ But my state has appeared so confused that, when I have taken up the pen, I knew not where or how to begin. Nor indeed do I now know what to say, though love and gratitude constrains me to write.

Your late visit to this city, proved a great blessing to my soul. Your word was accompanied with power, and enabled me more clearly to see the work of God on my heart. Yet I cannot say I am satisfied.

The Lord does give me at times the testimony of his Spirit that sin is cast out of my heart. But I feel so much slackness, thoughtlessness, unstayedness of mind, forgetfulness, wanderings, and listlessness of soul, that I am ready to question this evidence, even whilst I have it. And from this view of myself, am ready to cry out, 'How can these things be?' Indeed it appears sometimes as a perfect inconsistency, so that I know not what to conclude. I do not find that measure of life or love which I once enjoyed, nor that clearness of sight or strength of faith. Though at all times I feel my heart wholly given up to God, yet [I] find also a continual questioning in my mind about it. Indeed I think my experience such a jumble, and feel myself such a poor, dark, blind, ignorant creature that I am at times as one bewildered, and can only cast myself as I am on the Lord Jesus, taking him alone as my way, and not suffer my ignorance to err. Blessed be my God, I do not find any propensity to sin. But [I] do not find that constant breathing after him which I think should belong to the state, and which I have felt in times past. I am often fearful and distressed on this account, weary of my unprofitableness, and filled with grief and dejection of spirit. And though I find no condemnation from God, yet feel a continual dissatisfaction at myself. ... Indeed I find the Lord Jesus precious, *very* precious to my soul, and am distressed because I *do not, cannot* render him that obedience which I should, and which he knows I desire to do.

Dear sir, I have endeavoured to lay my heart uncovered before you, as the Lord knows I would not appear anything to you but such as I am in *his* sight, who knows all things, and shall hope for an answer as soon as your business will permit.

I am dear sir,

Your unworthy but truly affectionate,

Eliza Bennis

Source: published transcription; Bennis, *Correspondence*, 25–27.

¹JW was in Limerick May 10–20, 1767.

From Mr. J. Burley¹

Copenhagen
July 28, 1767

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I received your favour in answer to my first letter.² I give you many thanks for your advice. Such friends as you recommend are hard to be found. I can find enough to sit at table, but not to talk of the goodness and love of God.

I have sent you a twenty pound note for the use of the poor. Since I wrote you my last, I have lost my only son, a boy between seven and eight years of age. He could talk Danish, German, and Latin. As he had a turn for it, I intended to give him a liberal education. But God's thoughts are not as our thoughts. He was a very healthful boy, till God laid his hand upon him. He breakfasted with me in the morning, after which he went up into his chamber. Before noon he was taken ill, as he was writing these lines in German,

*Mein Gott ich bitt, durch Christi blut
Machs nur mit meinem ende gut.*³

His mother put him to bed, and sent for an able physician; but the next day he died. A little before his death, I bade him pray to our Saviour—on which he put his hands together, and went off like a lamb.

O sir, pray for me! For I am very weak in faith, and have a deceitful heart to encounter with. I am much afraid I shall sleep in a lukewarm state. Pray that the Lord may quicken my soul, and renew a right spirit within me; and that he may give me the faith once delivered to the saints.

I am, reverend and dear sir,
Yours, etc.

J. Burley

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 667–68.

¹It is unclear how this correspondent may (or may not) be related to the James Burley who became a travelling Methodist preacher in 1796.

²Neither Burley's first letter, nor JW's answer, are known to survive.

³Ämilie Juliane, 'Wer weiß, wie nahe mir mein Ende', st. 1.

From the Rev. Jacob Chapman

Staplehurst
August 11, 1767

Reverend Sir,

Blessed be God that ever I was acquainted with you and your writings, and the preachers in connection with you. Whatever preachers you send I shall receive, not only with gladness but with thankfulness, for they are sent, I make no doubt, by our most gracious Master.

Blessed be God for raising you up, who are most sacredly determined to *cease from man*, from all the inventions and traditions of men, and to make God's word *your only rule*; to trust in God with your whole heart, and not to lean to your own understanding; to spread *pure and undefiled* religion before all men. A glorious determination!

I should rejoice to do the meanest office for you. I believe I can most truly say, you are much dearer to me than my life.

May the Lord guide you by his counsel, and abundantly bless you, and in his own good time receive you to glory.

My dear wife joins with me in the kindest respects to you. We shall joyfully, and thankfully receive you, whenever it suits you to come to Staplehurst.

I am,

Your sincere friend,

J. Chapman

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 556.

From 'Methodomastix'

[London]
August 14, 1767

A letter was published in your paper almost two months ago, signed 'I. E.',¹ in which that writer arraigned the itinerant preachers of the Methodists as altogether uninstructed in the learning indispensably required in a minister of the gospel. This charge, I believe, remains unanswered—as it is irrefutable [*sic*]², being founded on truth.

But as I. E. has passed over many arguments which might have very well been brought against these roving illiterati, so do I entirely agree with him in sincerely detesting the dangerous principles of this new sect, and the strides they have made to introduce fanaticism [*sic*] instead of religion, ignorance in subversion of knowledge, and madness to supply the place of morality. These malignant tenets must surely shock every serious mind, and should excite every tongue to speak, and every pen to write, against such prevailing errors, big with horror and ruin. To the unhappy who have already imbibed their delusions very little can be said. But to prevent those who are not yet initiated in the mystic orgies of their wretched hands from being seduced by the beguiling persuasions of their preachers, this letter is written to point out who *these men* are who arrogate to themselves a gospel dispensation. And I flatter myself that I shall convince the unprejudiced that they are not the persons proper to be consulted in matters of faith, or in regulating the manners of life.

The following lines are expressly relative to the *men* who are called 'Methodist preachers'. I shall state some few plain questions concerning the abilities and qualifications which are generally conceived to be absolutely necessary in everyone who assumes a ministerial character, and in which it is too well known these desultory orators are altogether deficient.

Have these men by education been instructed in the *elements* of the language of the Scriptures, without which no one can attain such a competent knowledge of the inspired writings as is essential to the expounding of them? No; their education has been quite the reverse. For so far from boasting any acquaintance with a *dead*, they know not how to express themselves in a *living* dialect.

Have they by close application to study, or by diligent researches in the writings of eminent divines, obtained a *decent notion* of the pastoral duties? Or by assiduously consulting the commentaries, gained a moderate information of the holy pandects?³ No; they reject all the writings of the fathers of the church, and give them the epithets of 'scholastic wisdom', 'vain dreams', and 'crutches fit only for lame souls'.

In this present age, when infidelity presents her creed to the libertine, and popery expands her *arms* to the ignorant, are these men capable to vindicate the truth and able to repel the attacks made by the *free thinkers* on the Christian, or capacitated to explode the superstition and to counteract the subtleties aimed by the papists at the Protestant religion? Alas! Their little reading must disqualify them from controversy and, of course, render them unknowing how to assail a weak, or to defend a good, cause. What wretched pastors! Do these teachers pretend to inspiration, or lay claim to supernatural gifts? They cannot do that, for surely it is blasphemy to say that through the Spirit of God they utter those intolerant, unintelligible rants.

How then can those miserables, who are ignorant of the language of Holy Writ, unskilled in the prophecies, and unread in the expositors, ever venture to undertake the discharge of the sacred function of a minister of Christ? Can they trace the mystery of creation down to the scheme of redemption; investigate the moral and divine mission of the Saviour? Can they draw a line between the precepts which

¹See above the letter dated May 8, 1767, which was published on June 11.

²JW will draw attention to this and the next marked misspelling in his response.

³A 'pandect' is a code of law.

are obligatory forever and the temporary instructions which were addressed to particular persons? Or can they concatenate the reasoning of the Holy Writings, without which the sense cannot be known? No; these are studies in which the Methodist never is, I should say never can be, employed. They are the searches in which the sensible Christian exercises himself, and finds his belief in reason. Not so those preachers; they never perplex themselves with arguments to convince, or seek for a dispassionate discussion of truth, but skulk behind the perverted meaning of a few *distorted texts*, and deal out damnation to those who do not believe them, and desperation to those who do. As they begin to rave, I will leave them and address those few of their followers whose heads may be sufficiently cool to comprehend the scope of a few questions which I think appose to the cause in hand.

Would they entrust the constitution, or hazard the life of a parent, husband, or child, to the care of an empiric of known ignorance and avowed incapacity? Would they swallow the drugs and draughts of a pestiferous mountebank, who is unacquainted with the dissimilar properties of rhubarb and rats-bane? Certainly they would not follow the prescriptions, nor drink the potions of the corporal quack. Why then do these deluded zealots commit the charge of their souls to the direction (I had almost said the disposal) of them to the spiritual one? Why they do is above reason to account for—and as such, Mr. Printer, you and I cannot know anything about it.

Methodomastix⁴

Source: published transcription; *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser* (Aug. 18, 1767), p. 1.

⁴Apparently this pseudonym is adapting the Greek word ‘μάστιξ’ (a scourge or whip) to mean something like ‘scourge of the Methodists’; cf. his letter of Sept. 8, 1767.

From Mary James

Bristol
August 20, 1767

Mrs. Doyle was delivered of a daughter the 28th of July,¹ and continued (to appearance) as well as any woman could be till the tenth of this month, when she was seized with a bilious cholic which carried her off on Wednesday the twelfth.² For some time before her delivery she had an impression upon her mind that she should die soon. To a friend that was conversing with her a few days before, she said, 'I have been asking for wisdom to act in my family, and he tells me the time of my departure is at hand.' At the time of her travail she bore her pain with remarkable patience. To one that remarked it, she said, 'I bless the Lord, I am not afraid of the strongest pain.' When I went to see her on the night she was delivered, she said, 'My dear, I was so supported, and my soul was kept so joyous, that I could have sung in the midst of my pain.' The day before she was taken for death, we conversed freely on Christian experience. She said, 'When the Lord first set my soul at liberty, I thought there was nothing to do. Since then he has showed me every grace is to be called forth to exercise. I long', said she, 'to be that Christian spoken of in the thirteenth of the Corinthians.' Her pain was violent, but she bore it with great composure; frequently saying, 'Lord, I know that in one moment thou canst remove it if it is for thy glory. But I ask neither ease nor pain, neither life nor death, thy will be done, and thy name be glorified.' About an hour before her death I was by her bedside, when she showed marks of grief. She said, 'Molly, the Lord cannot err in his dispensations; though they may be painful.' Soon after this she sweetly fell asleep.

Mary James

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 642–43.

¹Deborah Doyle, the daughter of Nicholas and Betty Doyle, was baptized in Bristol on Aug. 16, 1767, two days after her mother was buried.

²Betty Doyle was buried in Bristol on Aug. 14, 1767.

From John Valton¹

Purfleet
August 20, 1767

Reverend Sir,

The recollection of God's goodness to me, in bringing me to the knowledge and love of himself through the remission of my sins, excites my continued thankfulness; but more especially in that he has given me to hear and receive the *whole* truth.

Soon after I was justified the war between grace and nature became so violent that I saw, if there was no farther deliverance, I must grow faint in my mind. All within me cried aloud for what you taught to be attainable. I sought it with strong cries and tears.

In the meanwhile I received draughts of the brook by the way. And though they did not remove my pain, they strengthened me to bear it. And it was not long before I found him whom my soul loved. On Friday, August 29, 1766, the Holy Ghost separated sin from my heart.² In an ecstasy I cried out, 'Lord, thou hast given me my desire over mine enemies. I trust I shall see them no more forever.' I then fell upon my face and cried, 'O Jesus, all this is the purchase of thy death. I glory in thee. O my gracious Lord, how wonderful has been thy love to me!'

But, dear sir, in a few days I began to reason. And being in much distress, I cried unto the Lord. He was pleased to answer me by a sweet promise, Isaiah 6, 'Lo this hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sins are purged.'³ I was truly happy. But ah, I soon again began to doubt. The Lord remarkably answered me, 'If thou wilt not believe, thou shalt not be established.' I stood reproved, but again had doubts for a short season. After this, till about the 20th of November, I could say, 'The blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanseth from all unrighteousness.'⁴

Source: secondary transcription; Drew, Methodist Archives.⁵

¹John Francis Valton (1740–94), the son of French Roman Catholics, was born in London while his father was serving as a page in the Court of George II. Valton converted to Protestantism in 1753, trained as an accountant, and served for several years in various ordnance posts. While at Purfleet he was drawn into the Methodist society and converted in 1764.

²Valton is testifying to an experience of entire sanctification.

³Isa. 6:7.

⁴Cf. 1 John 1:7.

⁵The transcriber (J. S.) was invited by Valton's widow to look through Valton's papers, and transcribes this as a distinct and complete letter. He apparently sent it to the editor, who published it in *Wesley Banner* 1 (1849): 77–78.

From John Valton

[Purfleet]
c. August 27, 1767

[...¹] When I was taken ill, and expected to die, my joy was unspeakable. I saw the blessed Jesus ready to receive me, and cried out, 'The love of God will kill me. The vessel must break, it is too much. I cannot contain myself.' A short time after, whilst I was in prayer, the Lord said, 'Gad, a troop shall overcome him; but he shall overcome at the last.'² That very day it began to be fulfilled, I entered into temptation. None but the Almighty knows what I went through for near six months. Indeed it was a troop that attacked me. I felt temptations to the sins of my natural state. O how did the hellish hounds gnaw me! Horrid visions on my bed, and a kind of despair all the day long. Yet in all my misery, I saw God was love and that I loved him. Let it suffice that I say, I would scarce for the kingdom of heaven undergo the same again. Yet if it is the Lord's will, I am content.

Whenever I opened the Scripture it shook me to pieces, till I hardly durst read it or any other book. And though I continued visiting the sick, making opportunities to speak to souls, sparing none that I met or overtook on the road, yet I was tormented with, 'Cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness.'³ I was also tormented with the fear of losing my senses, and wrote to a friend to know whether there had been ever such an instance.

On the 4th of May I was seized with a fever. My temptations ceased, and as my fever increased, so did my comforts. On the 16th and 17th I expected to die, and had great assurances of salvation. Yet I had continued assaults of the enemy. The next morning, whilst I was in meditation, this text was applied, 'I will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed upon me.'⁴ On this I was filled with peace. No fears now troubled me. My fever was extreme, but I had a glorious view of paradise. Never did I imagine it possible for a soul to be so divested of fear at the seeming approach of death. What I asked, I was fully satisfied the Lord granted. Indeed, he gave me to overcome at the last. And I believe I shall finally overcome and finish my course with joy. I find the ways of God to be ways of pleasantness. I go upon my knees, believing what I ask, and find my eyes water when I say, 'O God, thou art *my* God! O God, thou art love! My God and my all!' I speak to him in great simplicity. I am conscious I walk upon holy ground. I am overpowered with shame when in prayer. I feel more and more the need I have of Christ, and live in momentary dependence on him. I see that if Christ leaves me but one moment, I shall be a devil. Without him I can do nothing; and after I have done all, I am an unprofitable servant.

I am, dear sir,

Your affectionate and obliged servant,

J. V.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 7 (1784): 50–52.

¹JW apparently combined a series of letters into one for this version published in *AM*. It opens with a lightly edited version of the letter of Aug. 20 given above, and continues as appears here.

²Gen. 49:19.

³Matt. 25:30.

⁴Cf. Isa. 26:3.

From Mary (Walsh) Leadbetter

[Chester]

[August–September 1767¹]

Reverend Sir,

I have often felt a grateful sense of the divine goodness in instructing the children of men in that pleasing art which so alleviates the pain of absence, and compensates for the loss of the agreeable and profitable converse of those we particularly esteem and regard by enabling us to maintain an intercourse, while at the greatest distance, which though imperfect is productive of much satisfaction, and frequently answers many valuable purposes. And as I highly prize this privilege, especially in your correspondence, I could not but be sensibly concerned at the loss of your last favour. And the more so, as I flattered myself that, as a father to his child, you would have spoke your sentiments freely upon the important step I have been influenced (I trust by the divine guidance) to take—which, if approved of, would have afforded me great pleasure.² But as that failed in coming to hand, I could wish to intrude upon your golden moments for that indulgence to be repeated; and am more abundantly anxious, Mr. [Francis] G[ilbert] having been informed by Mr. F— of your indisposition,³ from which we so truly desire to hear you are perfectly recovered. O that your days may be prolonged! That the pleasure of the Lord may prosper in your hands, and that though late, you may obtain a full reward.

And that among the many children which you may present to him who gave them to you, I may be numbered, is the ardent prayer of, reverend sir,

Your affectionate daughter in the gospel,

M[ary] L[eadbetter]

Source: published transcription; *Spiritual Letters* (1767), 122–23.

¹The published transcription has no date. This date is suggested by the almost certain reference to Leadbetter's pending marriage to Francis Gilbert.

²Mary (Walsh) Leadbetter was considering marriage to Francis Gilbert, a union that took place on Nov. 17, 1767.

³This may be a reference to a serious cold that JW was suffering in late July 1767, when he arrived in Scotland, from Ireland. See JW, *Journal*, July 24–31, 1767, *Works*, 22:95–96.

From 'Methodist Defendant'¹

To the Printer of the Gazetteer

[London]
c. September 1, 1767

It is but a poor compliment that 'Methodomastix' lately paid to the gospel of Christ by representing it so very difficult and hard to be understood that none but your learned priests, that have passed through a college can understand it, or explain it to others. Its divine author gives a very different character of it, as easy to be understood and particularly calculated for the poor and the unlearned. And the contrary notion is taken up only by the priesthood, that want to hoodwink all the world and lead them blindfold[ed], as may best serve their own ambitious and avaricious views.

He is no less mistaken in throwing out suspicions against the Methodist teacher as labourers of popery.

The Rev. Mr. Whitefield, in a vein of fine raillery, in his letter from Lisbon has painted the infinitely ridiculous and idolatrous superstitions of the Church of Rome.²

And in the days never to be forgotten in the year 1746, when we were under just apprehensions of seeing and feeling the Smithfield fires lighted up again, when the bigot usurper from Rome³ was in the heart of the land, there stood forth the Rev. Mr. Wesley in his public exhortations to encourage his hearers to defend their religion to their last breath; and also boldly and faithfully warned the nation, in point of the true favourers of popery, in many valuable tracts. And particularly in one, *A Word to a Protestant*, from which tract, in vindication of him and his people from the present injurious attack upon them I beg you will print the following passage:

Among the errors of popery may be numbered their doctrine of seven sacraments, of transubstantiation, of communion in one kind only, of purgatory and praying for the dead there in, of veneration of relics, and of indulgences—or pardons granted by the Pope and to be bought for money. But there are besides other errors that strike at the root of all true religion:

1. The doctrine of merit, which the papists hold, that a man may by his works merit or deserve eternal life.

2. The doctrine of praying to saints, or worshipping of images. To the Virgin Mary they pray in these words: 'O Mother of God, O Queen of heaven, command thy Son to have mercy upon us.' 'The right use of images' (says the Council of Trent) 'is to honour them by *bowing down* before them.' This doctrine strikes at the root of the first and great commandment of all.

3. The doctrine of persecution. This has been for many ages a favourite doctrine of the Church of Rome. And the papists in general still maintain that all heretics (that is, all who differ from them) ought to be compelled to receive what they call the 'true faith', to be forced into the Church, or out of the world.

To close the subject, sir, I must assert that I have known lately many perverted from the Church of England to the Church of Rome, but never have observed one Methodist turned papist.

Yours, etc.,

A Methodist Defendant

Source: published transcription; *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser* (Sept. 5, 1767), p. 4.

¹While not addressed to JW, this is part of the response of JW and followers to 'Methodomastix'.

²George Whitefield, *A Brief Account of Some Lent and Other Extraordinary Processions ... at Lisbon, in four letters* (London: Strahan, 1755).

³Charles Edward Stuart.

From 'Methodomastix'

[London]

September 8, 1767

To Mr. J—n W—y

*Insanum magnum molior negotium,
Metuoque ut hodie possiem emolirier.
Sed nunc truculento mihi atquae saevo usus sene est
[...]
Vorsabo ego illum hodie, si vivo, probe.
Tam strictam ego illum reddam, quam frictum est cicer.*
Plautus¹

To receive an answer from you is what I never expected,² having considered my letter as not of sufficient importance to merit the honour of your animadversions. But since you have deigned publicly to deliver your sentiments, and have vouchsafed to criticise on my epistle, I should be wanting in every point of politeness to you, and in every principle of justice to myself, if I did not acknowledge the obligations I owe you, and endeavour to return the compliments you have paid me.

*Dulce est desipere in loco*³

Or, as the Greek poet says, Ου πανταχου το φρονιμον αρμοττει παρον.⁴

Well then, Mr. Wesley,⁵ as you love joking, so do I. And as such, my waggish correspondent, we will have a little banter together. For though, Cherokee like, you have so barbarously scalped my arguments, and savagely tomahawked my meaning as would almost excuse retorting the same heathenish treatment on you; but as that will not show the calmness of the *man*, or become the *character* of a Christian, I will not use the arms of an Indian but the weapons of a scholar. For as much as, brother Wesley, you have condescended to enter into the demerits of my publication, I can do no less that repeat that I am very much obliged to you, and desire you, kind sir, to draw a chair, to sit down, and let us have a little sober chat concerning this same epistle—this what not which has so much angered you and your allies.

First of all, dear sir, I wrote a letter in the *Gazetteer* relative to a set of men who assume, who arrog[ate].⁶ Lud!⁷ What a hot man you are, Doctor Wesley. Pray don't be in a passion! Recollect yourself! Why so warm? Well then, as I was saying, it was concerning preachers who, being ignor[ant], incap[able]. Bless me, friend Wesley, what a violent being! Pray do not be in such a rage! Why you'll not hear a body tell one's story! Phaw! Sit down man, and I'll talk no more on that odious subject, but will

¹Plautus, *Bacchidum*, Act 4, Scene 5 (Methodomastix spells the first word of second line 'Metueque'). Henry Thomas Riley translation: 'A tremendously great business am I undertaking, and I have my fears how in this one day I may accomplish it. But now I have occasion for the old blade to be fierce and savage at me. For it suits not this plan of mine that the old fellow should be calm when he has beheld me in his presence. I'll turn him about this day, finely, if I live. I'll have him parched as well as ever pea was parched.'

²JW had replied on Aug. 28, 1767 to the first letter of 'Methodomastix'; see *Works*, 28:96–97.

³Horace, *Odes*, IV.xii.28; 'It is delightful to play the fool on occasion.'

⁴Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, Bk 6, Ch. 2; 'The presence of wisdom is not always suitable.'

⁵This is printed throughout as 'W—y' or 'W—'.

⁶The author cut off the ending of several characterizations, to imply that JW was cutting him off.

⁷Used for 'Lord', or as an exclamation of surprise, or dismay in everyday discourse.

just touch on some few particulars in your answer. Here Betty, bring the Doctor a glass of water, for I think you drink no wine, sir? Well, now we are quite right, quite ourselves again, as cool as ice cream.

Imprimis,⁸ you criticise on my subscribing myself 'Methodomastix', and perhaps that appellative may not be *omnibus numeris absolutum*.⁹ But whether I meant to scourge¹⁰ the doctrine or the persons that now go under the stigmatic names of 'Methodism' and 'Methodists' (not improperly, as the *μεθοδεια*¹¹ in Scripture signifies to cheat and beguile), it is manifest you well understood my meaning, by such a display of your resentment.

Your next round assertion is that I am ignorant of Greek. A word, master John, in your ear. I know, it is true, but little of that language. But that *little* I humbly advance to be equal to what you and all the fellows of your Moorfield's College can lay claim to.¹²

In the same breath you say I am innocent of logic. But as logic is defined to be the 'rule of right reason', which you always disclaimed the knowledge of, we will not dispute on a subject of which you are entirely ignorant.

You conceive me (by possessing the apostolical gift of discerning of spirits) to be a school boy. Cry mercy sir; if you are soiled by the finger of a *scholar*, what a *figure* will you make in the *hand* of the *master*?

Thus, after having recapitulated my expressions, you say, 'These are his *flowers*.' Why, good man, you are mistaken in the term; you meant 'nettles', for they have so stung the fingers of you and your disciples that the *Gazetteer* has daily manifested an eruption of fanatical pustules.¹³

Methodomastix
Διγαμμα¹⁴

Source: published transcription; *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser* (Sept. 15, 1767), p. 4.

⁸'In the first place.'

⁹'In all things absolute' (i.e., fully adequate).

¹⁰The meaning of the Greek word 'μάστιξ'.

¹¹Cf. Eph. 4:14, 6:11.

¹²The Foundery preaching house was in Moorfields. The author seems unaware that JW was a tutor in Greek at Lincoln College, Oxford.

¹³Orig., 'pistules'.

¹⁴This is the name of the original sixth letter in the Greek alphabet, the 'double gamma'. It was the equivalent of the 'vav' in Hebrew, and became the letter 'F' in English. Its purpose in this location is unclear, unless the author is hinting at the name of his location.

From the Rev. David Edwards¹

Ipswich
October 30, 1767

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I doubt not but you will excuse the intrusion of a man that is almost an entire stranger to you in person, especially when you hear my errand. Last Friday Dr. Wood² of Norwich told me that he met you accidentally at Colchester.³ On the Saturday I was to go to Halstead to preach on the Lord's Day. Hearing the above mentioned account, I went to Colchester and called at the Tabernacle house about 11 o'clock. But you was gone for London. My design was to set before you the following affair.

There is at Harwich in Essex a meeting house which will hold about 300 people. Formerly there was, it seems, a very respectable body of serious godly persons who worshipped there, and were acquainted with religion in its power. But after a long run the people became well satisfied with the form, and of late years the meeting house was shut up. There were no people to hear; no one to preach. The last trustee for the place made a will and gave the meeting house to the dissenting ministers, to be sold and the money was to be distributed partly among the ministers and partly among the relations of the above mentioned trustee. But when the writings were examined by an able lawyer it was found that the sellers could not make the title good. Nor can the house be alienated for any other use whatsoever but worship of God. And it seems after a couple of years if there is no worship kept up, it falls in the hand of the bishop, much the same as a piece of land which has no owner falls unto the lord of a manor.

However there was a gentleman that offered 40 pounds for it without a title (as some suppose) to convert it to a play house or an assembly room. I happened to be present at an association of ministers when the point was debated whether it should be given up for 40 pounds. Several were willing to give it up. But I took the liberty to interpose and desired them to agree amongst themselves to go and preach a lecture once every fortnight. Some objected the distance of the place, that there was no one in the whole town to take a minister under his roof, and besides the house was so much out of repair that it was not safe to meet in it.

I proposed to give it up to the Methodists; that their ministry had been blessed to multitudes in this land; [and] that no spot upon earth wanted the gospel more than poor Harwich, though the inhabitants desired it not. Some good men form prejudice against the godly Methodists without foundation, and speak against them because they know them not. So it was here. In short, they did not seem to be hearty in complying with this proposal. One or two seemed willing to go to Harwich in the summer season, if the house could be repaired, and bear their own charges. Upon this I sent to a carpenter and desired him to take an estimate of the charges of repairs. [He] set about the work and brought in his bills, 14 pounds and some shillings. It was not in my power to defray this expense myself, but our good God raised up friends and the money was paid. This gave us great encouragement to hope that the gospel news, when spread, would catch many souls.

I engaged to preach there once every fortnight in the evening for a long while. Two persons seemingly were under conviction—but alas, in a little while it wore off, like the morning clouds. No person received me to his house. [I] was obliged to be at a public house and call for things (wine, etc.) which I could not use; the expense of passage by water, which exposed me to very disagreeable company; and what was most heart-breaking of all, the Lord was not pleased to succeed my feeble attempts, so that

¹Rev. David Edwards (c. 1730–95) was a Dissenting minister, originally serving in St. Neot's, near Everton, when he became a friend and correspondent of John Berridge and Henry Venn. He moved to Ipswich to serve the Tacket St. Congregational Church in 1765, serving there until 1791.

²Rev. Dr. Samuel Wood (c. 1710–67) was pastor of The Old Meeting House congregational church in Norwich. He died on Nov. 2, 1767.

³JW was in Colchester Oct. 20–23, 1767. He returned to London on Saturday, Oct. 24.

I cannot see at present I have any call there.

Being informed that some of the preachers in connexion with you frequently labour at a place called Langham, which I suppose is about 10 miles from Harwich, I have had it much upon my heart to propose whether you could give a turn there when you go to Colchester, and whether the ministers who preach in connexion with you could bestow a part of their time upon Harwich. Give the matter a turn or two in your thoughts. I doubt not but you will spread it before the throne of grace, and may you be directed in the affair. You may learn from what I have already mentioned the many disadvantages which attend that wicked place. It is indeed a stronghold of the devil. But if the Spirit of God attends the word with his life-giving power, flints shall be changed into flesh, and the strongholds of the devil must come down.

If you see your way clear, the Sabbath day evening will best suit the inhabitants at first. The sway of the meeting house is in the custody of one Tomson, a labouring man near the town. If any ministers can fix a time to be there, let a time be directed to me at Ipswich, and I'll send a person down to Harwich to meet him. I am sorry to hear that good Mr. Lee⁴ of Lakenheath has been so ill treated by the bishop of this diocese and some of his clergy.⁵ The bishop, it seems, has forbid him to preach in his see. Poor man! No notice is taken of those in orders who get drunk, swear, and hate the pulpit; but Mr. Lee, who was faithful, laborious, and diligent, must be worried. I think his lordship has verified what the old poet said:

*Dat veniam corvis, vexat censura columbus*⁶

If you see Mr. Lee in your travels, pray give my love to him. [I] should be glad to hear from [him], and know where I shall send the books I borrowed of him. And I shall take care to send them without any expense to him to any part of London.

Let me have a share in your addresses at the throne. Excuse the hurry in which this was scribbled by, reverend and dear sir,

Yours affectionately, though unknown,

D. Edwards

Address: 'To the Rev. Mr. John Wesley / at the Foundery / London'.

Postmark: '31/OC'.

Endorsement: by JW, 'Rev. Mr. Edwards, Ipswich / Oct. 30 1767 / a'd Nov'.

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/610/56.

⁴This does not appear to be the itinerant Thomas Lee, as he was currently serving in Yorkshire.

⁵Lakenheath, Suffolk, was in the diocese of Norwich; the current bishop was Philip Yonge (1709–83).

⁶Juvenal, *Satires*, ii.63; 'The censor acquits the ravens, and vexes the doves.'

From an Unidentified Correspondent

c. November 1767

Reverend Sir,

Lately I was requested to read Mr. Marshall's *Gospel Mystery of Sanctification*.¹ It was represented to me as the most excellent piece ever published on that subject. I have read it and, lest I should be mistaken, submit to you the following short remarks.

It must be acknowledged he is, on the one hand, copious in showing the impracticability of real, genuine holiness or of doing any works acceptable to God, till we 'repent and believe the gospel'.² On the other hand, he shows the deadly consequences of that faith which sets aside our obligations to observe God's holy law.

I rejoice likewise to find him showing how well able a believer is to keep this law and proving that this faith implies a divine assurance of our belonging to Christ. But most of all, to observe him speaking so excellently of the growth of a believer in holiness. 'We are *always*', says he, 'to resist the devil,' to quench 'all his fiery darts', and to 'perfect holiness in the fear of God'.³ We are to be built up in Christ 'until we come to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ'.

But how does this agree with his asserting our natural state doth remain in a measure with *all its corrupt principles and practices* as long as we live in the present world? You may as well wash a Blackamoor white as purge the flesh from its evil lusts. It will lust against the Spirit in the best saints upon earth. How then am I to come 'to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ'?⁴ Is there a reconciliation between 'the fullness of Christ' in a believer, and 'all his corrupt principles and practices'? Is it thus that the strong man armed is to be 'cast out, with the spoiling of his goods'? Does he tell me I am to quench 'all the fiery darts of the devil' and in the same breath that 'I may as well wash a Blackamoor white'? That I 'can do all things' through Christ strengthening me, and yet that the flesh shall never be purged from its evil lusts—no, not in the best saints on earth, so long as they live in the present world? What a wonderful communion is here between light and darkness! What strange fellowship between Christ and Belial!

What can we infer from hence, but that Mr. Marshall's book, containing so much poison mixed with food, is an exceeding dangerous one and not fit to be recommended to any but experienced Christians?

Source: published transcription; JW, *Journal*, Nov. 20, 1767, *Works*, 22:110–11.

¹Walter Marshall, *The Gospel Mystery of Sanctification opened in Sundry Practical Directions* (London: Thomas Parkhurst, 1692).

²Mark 1:15.

³Marshall, *Gospel Mystery*, 226.

⁴Eph. 4:13.

From an Unidentified Correspondent

c. November 1767

Sir,

I was yesterday led to hear what God would say to me by your mouth. You exhorted us, 'Strive to enter in at the strait gate.'¹ I am willing so to do. But I find, one chief part of my striving must be to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to instruct the ignorant, to visit the sick and such as are in prison, bound in misery and iron.

But if you purge out all who scorn such practices, or at least are not found in them, how many will remain in your society? I fear, scarce enough to carry your body to the grave! Alas, how many even among those who are called believers have plenty of all the necessaries of life and yet complain of poverty! How many have houses and lands, or bags of money, and yet cannot find in their hearts to spare now and then to God's poor a little piece of gold! How many have linen in plenty, with three or four suits of clothes, and can see the poor go naked! They will change them away for painted clay or let the moths devour them before they will give them to cover the nakedness of their poor brethren, many of whose souls are clothed with glorious robes, though their bodies are covered with rags. Pray, sir, tell these you cannot believe they are Christians unless they imitate Christ in doing good to all men and hate covetousness, which is idolatry.

Source: published transcription; JW, *Journal*, Nov. 20, 1767, *Works*, 22:111.

¹Luke 13:24.

From an Unidentified Correspondent

c. November 1767

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Some time ago I acquainted you how graciously the Lord had dealt with me in delivering me out of all my troubles. For some time past, I have been amazed at my speech, memory, and understanding, in all which I was remarkably defective. I have had power to explain the Scriptures to my friends that meet here, in a manner that astonished me. But I immediately saw from whence these blessings came and, with an overflow of love and joy, worshipped the great fountain of all goodness. I never was so sensible of my unprofitableness, never so abhorred myself, as I do now. And yet I feel no condemnation nor any withdrawing of my Redeemer's love. He is my shield and buckler, my God and my all. Glory be to God and the Lamb for ever! Praise him for me, and praise him forever. Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord.

Since the Lord has not only been gracious to my soul but has entrusted me with a share of this world's good, I am under an equal obligation to be faithful in this as in the other gifts of God. Now especially, when help is so much wanted, I ought to be the more careful. Suffer me, sir, to speak freely of myself. I have about forty-seven pounds a year. As to my disbursements, for apparel I buy the most lasting and, in general, the plainest I can. I buy no furniture but what is necessary and cheap. I make my own fire and get my own breakfast and supper. I pay sixpence to one of our friends for my dinner. I drink herb-tea and thereby save at least a shilling a week. I seldom drink tea in an afternoon, but sup at six, on bread and cheese, with milk and water. So I save at least eightpence by dropping tea in the afternoon. I fasted much till my health was greatly impaired. Then I used abstinence on Wednesdays, Fridays, and other fast-days, till I was obliged to leave this off too—but not till I was quite indifferent as to what I eat. So I determined if I can't retrench a meal, I can retrench the expense of a meal twice a week and on other fast-days using potatoes, milk, or some other cheap thing. Thus I save fourpence per dinner twice a week, which with the one shilling and eightpence makes two shillings and fourpence per week, without retrenching one necessary meal. Now this two shillings and fourpence would buy as much meat as, made into broth, would nearly suffice for a small family. To be short, the expense for myself, meat, drink, clothes, and washing, is not twenty-eight pounds per annum, so that I have near twenty pounds to return to God in the poor. Now if every Christian family, while in health, would thus far deny themselves, would twice a week dine on the cheapest food, drink in general herb-tea, faithfully calculate the money saved thereby and give it to the poor over and above their usual donations, we should then hear no complaining in our streets, but the poor would eat and be satisfied. He that gathered much would have nothing over, and he that gathered little would have no lack. O how happy should we all be if this was the case with us! I mentioned this some time ago in a meeting at London, when a brother said, 'These are but little things.' As I went home I thought of his words, 'Little things!' Is the want of fire in frost and snow a little thing? Or the want of food in a distressed, helpless family? Gracious God! 'Feed me with food convenient for me! Give me not poverty, lest I steal and take the name of my God in vain!'¹

Dear sir, I know what you feel for the poor, and I also sympathize with you. Here is a hard season coming on, and everything very dear. Thousands of poor souls, yea, Christians, dread the approaching calamities. O that God would stir up the hearts of all that believe themselves his children, to evidence it by showing mercy to the poor, as God has shown them mercy! Surely the real children of God will do it of themselves, for it is the natural fruit of a branch in Christ. I would not desire them to lose one meal in a week, but to use as cheap food, clothes, etc., as possible. And I think the poor themselves ought to be questioned with regard to drinking tea and beer. For I cannot think it right for them to indulge themselves in those things which I refrain from to help them. My earnest prayers shall accompany yours, that God would give us all, in this our day, to know the things which belong unto our peace and to acknowledge

¹Prov. 30:8–9.

the blessings which are freely given to us of God!

Source: published transcription; JW, *Journal*, Nov. 20, 1767, *Works*, 22:112–13.

From Damaris Perronet

Shoreham
November 6, 1767

I am just returned from Margate, where I went to attend my dear brother John,¹ who was taken ill of the smallpox. Our vast desire that he should live made us hope against all appearances. I found it so hard to give him up that I was obliged to call mightily upon God to help me, lest I should sin against him. I asked that he would make me as clay before him, so that I might feel concerning him just what was best in his sight. I found an immediate power from him to acquiesce in all he did. And when we looked to have sunk under the loss of so dear a friend, we were not only supported, but made even to rejoice in his joy. And on Monday (the day after he was buried), we were amazingly refreshed at church, by the lessons and epistle and gospel for All Saints Day. If the whole Common Prayer book had been searched, none could have celebrated his memory and removal like it. He longed for God, and was almost impatient to be gone. But afterwards he was resigned to live, if God saw good, and said, 'Pray that he may do all his will concerning me.' Whenever he had his senses, he was full of prayer, and said he felt the love of God shed abroad in his heart.² At another time he said, 'I have cast my care on God, and I *know* that he careth for me.'³ And added, 'Lord thou knowest that I am thine.' Sometime before he departed he said, 'O that I could go this moment to him!' And often blessed him in a very striking manner. Upon the whole, he lived much in a short time, and in an uncommon manner bought up every opportunity of speaking for God to all he came near.

D. P[erronet]

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 189–90.

¹John Perronet (1732–67) was the youngest child of Rev. Vincent and Charity (Goodhew) Perronet. He died on Oct. 29.

²Cf. Rom. 5:5.

³Cf. 1 Pet. 5:7.

From Emma Moon

Potto
November 8, 1767

Reverend and Dear Sir,

The desire I feel to be profited by your letters leads me to long for the happy time when I may be so highly favoured as to hear from you. The benefit I have received causes great thankfulness to the Giver of all my mercies, who hath given me an heart ever open to himself, and also to you for his sake. I should dislike myself if I found a desire to be reserved to you. And if I could relieve the least of your wants, or remove any difficulty out of your way, I should be exceeding glad. But the Lord knoweth I can only offer up my feeble prayers for your happiness and success in the gospel.

I found my heart much enlarged with thankfulness for Mr. [George] Whitefield's coming among us. His conversation was so open, and his spirit so full of universal love, that his word was attended with exceeding great power, which caused the rocks to rend, and the humble hearts to weep tears of joy. He defended your doctrine and discipline, and the people under your care, both in public and private, with such love and boldness as I never saw before. May the Lord reward his labours with everlasting joy. I hope that we shall be greatly profited by the preachers you have sent us. And I believe that our late trials will all work together for our eternal good.

As to myself, I am as one just entering afresh, daily to run in the narrow way to eternal life, in order to attain a greater degree of holy love. I see much of my own ignorance and unworthiness, and am astonished at the greatness of his mercy. How open and free and lavish of his love to me! The consideration of this causes me to sink into nothing, and at the same time excites me to struggle to rise into all the heights of that grace he hath procured for me. Many are the oppositions I meet with from the world and the devil, in setting useless objects before me to cause my soul to wander. But the Lord always gives me power to resist, so that they never fix upon me. For at those times, I think I hear my Lord say, 'What is that to thee? Follow thou me.'¹ And he constantly fixes a fear in my heart of grieving his Holy Spirit. Yet at times I feel some degree of dullness and uneasiness upon my mind, on account of which I struggle, being burdened, and wait for the return of his Spirit, to fill me afresh with the power of love. I sometimes reason whether this heaviness springs from myself, or from the unwearied assaults of the enemy. I want your instruction in this, whether I may be free from trials of this sort? For I abhor myself on this account. And yet at the same time I rejoice, in confidence of the power and goodness of God. I feel the witness of his Spirit, and cannot doubt for a moment but I shalt sink into all the depths of holy humble love. O that I may attain all that I desire for myself, for you, and the whole church of God!

I am deeply sensible of the obligations I am under to so dear a friend. May the Lord God Omnipotent carry on in you, and by you, all the work of faith with power. So prays

Your affectionate sister,

E. Moon

Source: published transcription; *Methodist Magazine* 21 (1798): 45–46.

¹John 21:22.

From A. H.

[c. November 17] 1767

Reverend Sir,

In the *Minutes* of the Conference held at Leeds last year the whole debt of the Methodists, considered as one body, appeared to be eleven thousand, three hundred, thirty-eight pounds.

I suppose it is much the same now, perhaps a little more or less. The yearly Subscription was designed to pay off this. And it has helped a little toward it. (As well as answered many other excellent purposes, for which also it was intended from the beginning.) But it must be long before it can answer that design, as it has hitherto been so small that it has very little more than supplied the yearly wants. Meantime this debt remains as a constant load on your shoulders and a constant reproach on all the societies.

If this debt could be discharged, it would be an ease to your mind, an honour to the whole body, and a glorious proof of our care to provide things honest in the sight of all men.

But how is it possible to raise so large a sum as eleven thousand pounds?

I believe it is not only possible but easy, far easier than many may conceive, to do it in two years' time by the following simple method, without burdening either the rich or poor.

First, as it is for the glory of God and the promoting of his cause, let us beg his blessing upon our honest endeavours. Then let us willingly and earnestly set our shoulders to the work, and by his grace it shall be accomplished.

I suppose the societies in Great Britain and Ireland contain 24,000 members. One fourth part of these, if they subscribe according to the following scheme, will discharge the whole debt in two years:

Subscribers	Guineas	In two years.
1,000	at two	[£]4,200
1,000	one and [a] half	[£]3,150
1,000	one	[£]2,100
1,000	three quarters	[£]1,575
1,000	half	[£]1,050
1,000	a quarter	[£]525
	In all	[£]12,600

This may be paid either yearly, quarterly, or in any such manner as the subscribers please.

The grand objection is: there are not so many persons in our societies who are able and willing to contribute so much.

Perhaps so. But are there not some who are both able and willing to contribute more? Are there none who clear several hundred pounds a year? Or who are two or three thousand pounds beforehand? And will none of these give ten, twenty, perhaps fifty guineas in such a case as this? A case of so general concern, and that can occur but once in their lives?

By this method the poor will be quite excused, unless any of them choose to throw in their mite.

Praying God to give good success to this and to all your undertakings for his glory, I remain,

Your affectionate friend and servant,

A. H.

Source: published transcription; Wesley's printed circular on debt, dated Nov. 24, 1767 (*Bibliography*, No. 306).

From Richard Cawley¹

[Alraham, Cheshire]
c. December 1767

Reverend Sir,

Notwithstanding the innumerable discouragements you have met with for such a long time, yet your unremitting zeal, your indefatigable industry, and your readiness to spend and be spent to save the souls of men gives me no room to doubt of the purity of your intention to promote the honour and interest of Christ. But the debt contracted by the Methodists must be an enormous load indeed laid upon your shoulders—enough to crush a greater man to atoms. And how the contracting such a debt (without any clearer prospect how to repay it) can be consistent with Christian prudence and moral honesty, I must confess I do not understand.

I am sorry that your endeavours to promote the honour of God are, by the impudence of well-meaning men, become a scandal to reproach upon the cause of Christ and he is wounded in the house of his friends. But that I may not add to the ponderous load you bear, I hereby give you leave to draw upon Mr. [Francis] Gilbert in Chester at Lady Day next² the sum of two guineas. And may the Lord support you under this weight, and ease you speedily of the load, and make your last days the best—is the earnest prayer of, reverend sir,

Your very obliged servant but unworthy brother,

R. C.

I hope you will excuse me for using this freedom. It is some of the thoughts that have occurred to my mind on this occasion.

Source: holograph; MARC, MAM JW 2/27 (response written on copy of Nov. 30 circular on debt addressed to him).

¹Richard Cawley (b. 1716), a Baptist of Alraham in the parish of Bunbury, Cheshire, invited JW to visit a religious society which he had founded there in 1749, and was from that point a friendly supporter of the Methodist work.

²Mar. 25; the Feast of the Annunciation.

From Thomas Dancer¹

December 20, 1767

Dear Sir,

Sister Smith has had a return of the convulsions, and for this last week has been every day expected to die. I saw her last night. Her soul is happy. She is astonished at what God has enabled her to bear, and rejoices in her greatest extremity. She desired I would inform you that she is 'A sinner saved'. Her soul seems swallowed up in God. She says she has comparatively forgotten her friends. Her trials, since you left Bristol, have been very great. But the Lord has abundantly rewarded her patience and faithfulness. This morning I resolve, in the strength of God, never to rest till I feel the Lord has made my nature clean. I feel sin working in my members, and the flesh lusting against the Spirit in such a manner that I can hardly resist. But yet I long to love the Lord Jesus with all my might, and solely to glorify him.

I am, reverend sir,

Your affectionate and dutiful son,

T.² Dancer

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 47–48.

¹Thomas Dancer was admitted on trial as a travelling preacher in 1766 (see *Works*, 10:317) and accompanied JW on a tour of Ireland (*Journal*, Mar. 16, 1767, *Works*, 22:73). Dancer was received into full standing in 1747 (*Works*, 10:343), and apparently assigned as a master at Kingswood School. Here he soon incurred JW's disapproval, for sending a critical note about another master without consulting Joseph Benson, the head master (see JW to Joseph Benson, Jan. 31, 1768, *Works*, 28:129–30). This ended Dancer's time as an itinerant preacher, though he appears to have retained some connection to the Methodists (see JW, *Journal*, Nov. 23, 1774, *Works*, 20:438). Cf. Pawson, *Letters*, 3:141.

²Orig., 'J'; corrected in errata (at end of vol. 9).

From John Fenwick¹

[Newcastle upon Tyne]
c. December 22, 1767

We are all here of opinion that what is done should be done *at once*; and we think the debt may be paid off in one year. Only let us set about it in faith. I will give £25; Mr. Robert Davison will give £25; John Morrison £25; Miss [Margaret and Mary] Dales £50.

Source: excerpt quoted by JW in holograph to George Merryweather, Dec. 28, 1767; Wesley's Chapel (London), LDWMM 1998/6892. Cf. holograph to Samuel Levick, Jan. 2, 1768, MARC, MAM JW 3/89.

¹John Fenwick, a merchant in Newcastle, was a supporter of the Wesleys and would be made a trustee of the Orphan house in 1770; see William W. Stamp, *The Orphan House of Mr. Wesley* (London: Mason, 1863), 129. Fenwick was replying for himself and others to copies of the Nov. 30 printed circular on the debt that had been personally addressed to them by JW; see JW to James Oddie, Dec. 15, 1767, *Works*, 28:114–15.

From William Smith¹

Aberdeen
December 22, 1767

Mr. Richard Blackwell went to the joy of his Lord yesterday morning about half an hour after ten. He was only confined one week to his room. On Sunday the 13th he preached at 5:00 in the evening, to a crowded audience, from the words of David to his son Solomon, 'Arise and be doing, and the Lord be with you.'² And indeed it was a farewell sermon, and I trust it will be remembered by many for their good. He was not able to meet the society. But as he had complained of a cold for some days, we thought little of it. On Monday we sent for Dr. Memis³ to bleed him, who sent a civil excuse. Then a surgeon was called, who finding his pulse low, thought it improper to bleed him. On Tuesday Mr. Blackwell sent for him again, and was bled. On Wednesday he kept his bed, and complained much of pain all over his body; and was uneasy that the physician, who then visited him twice a day, prescribed nothing but a simple diet-drink. At his desire I read over Mr. Wesley's [*Collection of*] *Receipts*, and he thought fit to continue the apple-water, which he had used from the beginning, which the doctor also approved of. On Thursday he had great distress both in body and mind, occasioned by the buffetings of Satan. On Friday he was afraid he should lose the use of his reason; and early on Saturday morning was seized with a delirium, which continued till three o'clock on Monday morning, during which time he never shut his eyes till a little before his death. At intervals he spoke of the glory and majesty of Jehovah, and of the things of God in general, with great complacency, and retained the lovely smile on his countenance to the last.

He is to be buried on Thursday next, in the burial-place of Principal Blackwell, one of the ministers of this town, where he will lie in the midst of many of our late ministers. Lord enable us to lay to heart thy will in this severe and unexpected chastisement!

W. Smith

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 641–42.

¹William Smith (c. 1722–93) was a lawyer in Aberdeen who was supportive of the Methodists; see Margaret Batty, *Scotland's Methodists* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2010), 20–21.

²Cf. 1 Chron. 22:16.

³John Memis, MD (1720–86) was a physician at the Aberdeen Royal Infirmary.

From Emma Moon

Potto
December 26, 1767

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Great was the consolation I found in reading your letter.¹ And indeed it could not be otherwise, while you were explaining the very language of my heart. But, O how unworthy am I of such a blessing! I trust the Lord will keep me from falling, and preserve me undefiled to the day of his glory. While life remains in my body, and grace descends into my soul, my spirit shall continue a daily pilgrim before him. And if it is but given me to triumph over my last enemy, it will make amends for all I suffer.

I have lately been accused by those I love for corresponding with you. Grievous things were laid to my charge; in particular, that I am become a tattler. I must say it is a sin I abhor, and I hope you will reprove every appearance of it in me. If I know my heart, I only want to open it to you for instruction, correction, and comfort. Therefore, while you feel a liberty to write, I am unconcerned at the hard sentences of any creature. But is not the enemy provoked at this and every other blessing we enjoy? Yet I see so many stumbling-blocks laid in the way of the faithful that I often wonder that more are not turned out of it. All that believe are thankful to reign, yet I fear all are not willing to suffer.

My heart bleeds for the misery of souls, and for the dishonour done to God. While I am conscious of surrounding dangers, yet I cannot but rejoice in the midst of all I am exposed to. And when I look back and see how wonderfully the Lord hath preserved and delivered me to this moment, I am astonished at his power, and adore his praise. O help me by your prayers and instructions to live more to his glory, that at last we may meet all-glorious before him, and there shout victory, honour, adoration, and praise to God and the Lamb for ever and ever.

I am reverend and dear sir,
Yours, etc.,

E. M—n

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 614–15.

¹See JW to Emma Moon, Dec. 6, 1767, *Works*, 28:110–11.

From the Rev. Vincent Perronet

Shoreham
December 31 [1767]

My Reverend and Dear Brother,

We were this day most agreeably surprised to hear of your *recovery*, before we had as much as heard of your *illness*.¹

It appears plain that the Lord has more for his *labourer* both to *do* and to *suffer*. For though a *glorious* share of both has fallen to thy lot, yet thy gracious Master seems resolved to qualify his faithful servant, even for a far more and 'exceeding and eternal weight of glory'²

Our respects and best wishes are with you and yours. The Lord Jesus Christ be with all of us!

I need not tell my brother that if Shoreham can in any way contribute to his health, all at Shoreham will rejoice to see him. I am,

Yours most affectionately,

Vin. Perronet

Endorsement: by JW, 'Dec. 31, 1767 / a[nswere]d Jan. 5'.

Source: holograph; Wesley's Chapel (London), LDWMM 2014/14068.³

¹Perronet had apparently heard of the infection JW had developed in his mouth; see JW, *Journal*, Dec. 13, 1767, *Works*, 22:116.

²2 Cor. 4:17.

³Transcription published in *WHS* 8 (1911): 40–41.

From the Rev. John Berridge

Everton
January 1, 1768

Reverend Sir,

I see no reason why we should keep at a distance, whilst we continue servants of the same Master; and especially when Lot's herdsmen are so ready to lay their staves on our shoulders. Though my hand has been mute, my heart is kindly affected towards you. I trust we agree in essentials, and therefore should leave each other at rest with his circumstantialia. I am weary of all disputes, and desire to know nothing but Jesus; to love him, trust in him, and serve him; to choose and find him my only portion. I would have him my meat, my drink, my clothing, my sun, my shield, my Lord, my God, my all. Amen.

When I saw you in town,¹ I gave you an invitation to Everton; and I now repeat it, offering you very kindly the use of my house and church. The Lord accompany you in all your journeys. Kind love to your brother.

Adieu.

J. B—ge

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 616.

¹I.e., in London.

From John Smith¹

Newry
January 3, 1768

Reverend Sir,

I received a letter some days ago from Mrs. [Dorothea] King, giving an account of the prosperity of the gospel in Dublin, which gave me secret joy; and some account from you, which made my heart rejoice. The account you demand of me, I can give you with singleness of heart. I can say with joy that from the day I left you to this day I have not had a cloudy hour. The Lord knowing what an ignorant creature I am, as an indulgent father supports me. My soul enjoys peace in Christ.

With regard to this circuit, we have had an increase of grace and love. Since I came to it the work of God is carrying on. I bless God and thank you for my fellow-labourer in Christ, Thomas Halliday.² For no man is of use to this round but such as neither fear men nor devils, and has no thought about what he shall eat or what he shall drink, and is willing both to spend and be spent for the glory of God and the increase of the church of Christ. My son I keep at school yet. And as for Newry, I always find power to preach amongst them. We had one young woman joined this day six-weeks, and I have hopes of the prosperity of the gospel in Newry and through all the societies. My heart's desire is for your welfare and prosperity in the church. I cannot number the new members, but I have seen forty-two who have received the forgiveness of sins, which keeps my heart still in joy.

I am, reverend sir,

Your affectionate son in the gospel,

John Smith³

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 48–49.

¹John Smith (d. 1774) was a native of Cootehill, County Cavan, Ireland. Converted in 1758, he was active as a class leader and local preacher until JW encouraged him to begin preaching more broadly in 1766. Smith was accepted 'on trial' as a travelling preacher in 1767 and to full status the next year (see *Works*, 10:343, 352). His service was restricted to Ireland and he received no appointments after 1771, though he continued an itinerant ministry until his death from an attack in 1774. See Crookshank, *Ireland*, 125–282 passim. Cf. Atmore, *Memorial*, 399.

²Thomas Halliday was admitted 'on trial' as a travelling preacher in 1766 (see *Works*, 10:317) and to full membership in 1768 (10:352). He spent his career in Ireland, retiring from travelling in 1782 (10:527). He was removed from the connexion in 1786 (10:597, 978).

³Orig, 'Smyth'; but spelled 'Smith' in the Minutes.

From John Collinson, et al.¹

London
February 5, 1768

Reverend and Dear Sir,

As we are not conscious of having merited your displeasure, we think it necessary in justice to ourselves to beg your patient attention to what we now offer in vindication of ourselves.

When, in consequence of the difficulties of the temporal embarrassments of the society's affairs, you were pleased to appoint us to *superintend* them, we supposed it was our duty and province to inspect their management according to the best of our judgment and ability; to rectify what was amiss; and to point out whatever new regulations might be thought requisite to carry them into effect. We imagined you had made choice of us as persons in whom you could confide, having been some time in the society and given proof of our esteem for you and the brethren in fellowship with us.

Therefore, in consequence of these sentiments, we apprehended it to be our prerogative and duty to speak our minds freely *on any subject that offered*. And therefore, when a private member of the society had laid before you a plan of great importance with regard to its future welfare, we did not imagine that you would have taken amiss the exercise of our duty in consequence of its being carried into execution—and especially that the first intimation we had of it was but the evening before the quarterly meeting. If therefore in this point we have exceeded the power delegated to the committee, we own ourselves at a loss to conceive for what end it was instituted!

Having said thus much in vindication of our interference in this affair, we beg leave to mention the reasons for our so doing, as a memorial of our sentiments on that head. We are therefore entirely of opinion:

1. That the uniting of the society (the whole connexion) into one body is a thing very desirable, and even necessary after your demise to its existence.
2. Your effecting such a union would be one of the greatest actions of your life, as it would not only be the most lasting benefit to the society, but the only sure and effective means to influence the people to pay off this debt cheerfully and speedily.
3. That if this union is not accomplished in your life, it can never afterwards be done; and that the present opportunity is the most favourable that can occur.
4. That the preaching houses ought to be the property of the society, considered as one body, and secured to it previously to the payment of the above debt.
5. That it is not possible to do this any other way than by vesting them in the hands of a general or united trust, consisting of persons selected from various parts of the kingdom.
6. That, while things remain upon their present foundation, much of this debt may be considered as a deposit for securing the houses to the use for which they were built; and in this view would be a benefit to the creditors, by securing them more interest than they could acquire in other funds.
7. That if an exact state of every house, chosen at your discretion from different parts of the kingdom, [were given,] an easy way would be found of relieving those distressed for their money, or uneasiness about their securities.

¹In 1766 JW established a committee to deal with retiring the debt on several preaching houses. In late 1767 he called a meeting of the committee to get a report on what was being done, and to report some new debts. The committee members raised several questions about the status of the preaching houses (to whom they would fall on JW's death, what role the committee would have over them at that point, etc.). JW apparently took exception to his leadership in these matters being questioned, which led to this response from the committee. The union they propose proved impossible to effect because of the complicated titles of many of the preaching houses.

8. That if this union were effected the most pressing debts might eventually be cancelled, by borrowing monies on life annuities.

We are, reverend sir, etc.

John Collinson,² William Briggs, Thomas Marriott, John Cheesment,³ Richard Kemp,⁴ Charles Greenwood,⁵ Samuel Petty,⁶ William Evans,⁷ Josiah Dornford,⁸ Thomas Day,⁹ M. S. Teulon,¹⁰ Thomas Bell, James Hand, John Butcher,¹¹ W[illiam] Ellis,¹² John Reddall,¹³ John Duplex,¹⁴ John Norton.

Source: contemporary manuscript copy; MARC, MA 1977/514 (Joseph Sutcliffe, MS History of Methodism), 2:677–79.

²John Collinson, a hatmaker in Southwark, was named a trustee of City Road Chapel in 1792. See Stevenson, *City Road*, 250.

³Capt. John Cheesment (1732–83), a merchant of St. George Parish, was one of the original trustees of City Road Chapel (see Stevenson, *City Road*, 250) and is buried there.

⁴Richard Kemp (1721–87) was a prosperous framework-knitter in Moorfields, a member of the Foundery society, and an original trustee of City Road chapel. See Stevenson, *City Road*, 530.

⁵Charles Greenwood (1725–83) was the son of an early member of the Foundery society. He was an upholsterer and one of the first trustees of City Road chapel. See Stevenson, *City Road*, 361–62.

⁶Samuel Petty, a silk broker on Billiter Lane, was one of the original trustees of City Road Chapel. See Stevenson, *City Road*, 250.

⁷William Evans, a jeweler, lived at Woodsclose, Clerkenwell. See JW's *Journal* comments for Feb. 25, 1776: 'I buried the remains of William Evans, one of the first members of our society. He was an Israelite indeed, open (if it could be) to a fault; always speaking the truth from his heart.'

⁸Josiah Dornford (1734–1810) was a wine merchant and JP for the county of Kent. He was born at Deptford, and after his conversion joined the local Methodist society. When he married Eleanor Leyton in 1759, William Romaine performed the ceremony and JW gave the bride away. Eleanor died in 1790 and was buried by JW in Bunhill Fields. When Josiah died in 1810 he was buried in the same grave.

⁹Thomas Day, a master carman, is identified as the secretary of this council, and was one of the original trustees of City Road chapel. See Stevenson, *City Road*, 250.

¹⁰Melchior Seymour Teulon (1734–1806) became active in Methodism in 1762, was currently a steward of the society, and attended City Road chapel until his death. See *MM* 31 (1808), 241–48.

¹¹John Butcher, a currier in Bermondsay, was one of the original trustees of City Road chapel. See Stevenson, *City Road*, 250.

¹²William Ellis is listed as a goldsmith or founder, on Tower Street, in 1768 London tax-records.

¹³John Reddall (d. 1790) appears in the Foundery Band Lists (1742–46) as the leader of a band for single men; in 1755 he married Mary Lloyd. He was one of JW's assistants with medical electricity. The couple remained active at the Foundery and at the later City Road chapel.

¹⁴John Duplex (d. 1800) was one of the original trustees of City Road chapel. On the deed he is recorded as being a weaver of the parish of Christ Church. See Stevenson, *City Road*, 250.

From John Dillon

Augher
February 14, 1768

Reverend Sir,

When I came first into this circuit, the want of health, the exceeding bad beds, damp rooms, and hardly food to support my body, was a trial to me. But O, how can the Lord make hard things easy! For I had not been there long before I was quite willing to spend and be spent for the sake of the people. Indeed I have long thought that poverty, with real simplicity and the love of God, is much safer than the greatest affluence without it. I am, through mercy, given to see clearly that the business of a preacher of the gospel is not to mind (though he cannot do without them) what he shall eat or drink, or how he shall lie, etc., but how he shall save souls, and for that end become all things to all men, so he may gain some.

I have often preached three times a day, yet I have several invitations to fresh places, and believe there might be much good done if they could have constant preaching. I have been at S—¹ in my way to Derry, and had many hearers, who desired to hear us again. Why may not good be done here, though they are in general Arians? If they were devils, with a possibility of being saved by Christ, surely the gospel should be preached to them. I find a great desire to go to new places, where the gospel has not yet been preached; but am almost constantly afraid of having my brains beat out, so that I frequently labour in much heaviness.

O that God would deliver me from needless fears, and help me to add to my faith, courage! What a shame is it that I who have been preserved amidst showers of cannon balls and bombshells, should now fear!

Some time ago I was brought before the Provost of Inniskillen, by a clergyman, for preaching. I was near three hours with him and one or two clergymen more, and a whole room full of ladies, etc. The clergyman took me by the hand, wished me good luck, bid me God speed, and desired me to preach hell and damnation every where, and said, 'If you are the real servants of God, send forth to convert the world, I wish myself, with all my brethren who oppose you, seven feet under ground.'

I am, reverend sir,
Yours, etc.,

John Dillon

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 616–17.

¹Possibly Strabane.

From Thomas Taylor¹

New York
April 11, 1768

Reverend and Very Dear Sir,

I intended writing to you for several weeks past, but a few of us had a very material transaction in view. I therefore postponed writing until I could give you a particular account thereof. This was the purchasing of ground for building a preaching house upon, which by the blessing of God we have now concluded.

But before I proceed I shall give you a short account of the state of religion in this city. By the best intelligence I can collect there was little either of the form or power of it till Mr. [George] Whitefield came over thirty years ago. And even after his first and second visit there appeared but little fruit of his labours. But during his visit fourteen or fifteen years ago there was a considerable shaking among the dry bones. Diverse [persons] were savingly converted. And this work was much increased in his last journey, about four years since, when his words were really as a hammer and as a fire. Most part of the adults were stirred up, great numbers pricked to the heart, and by a judgment of charity several found peace and joy in believing. The consequence of this work was the churches were crowded and subscriptions raised for building new ones. Mr. Whitefield's example provoked most of the ministers to a much greater degree of earnestness. And by the multitudes of people, young and old, rich and poor, flocking to the churches, religion became an honourable profession. There was no outward cross to be taken up therein. Nay, a person who could not speak about the grace of God and the new birth was esteemed unfit for genteel company. But in a while, instead of pressing forward and growing in grace (as he exhorted them), the generality were pleading for the remains of sin, and the necessity of being in darkness. They esteemed their opinions as the very essentials of Christianity, and regarded not holiness either of heart or life.

The above appears to me to be a genuine account of the state of religion in New York eighteen months ago, when it pleased God to rouse up Mr. Embury² to employ his talent (which for several years had been as it were hid in a napkin) by calling sinners to repentance, and exhorting believers to let their light shine before men. He spoke at first only in his own house.³ A few were soon collected together and joined in a little society—chiefly his own countrymen, Irish Germans. In about three months after brother White and brother Sause from Dublin joined them.⁴ They then rented an empty room in their neighbourhood, which was in the most infamous street in the city, adjoining the barracks. For some time few thought it worth their while to hear. But God so ordered it by his providence that about fourteen

¹This is not Thomas Taylor, the itinerant British Methodist preacher, who was currently stationed in Cheshire. Rather this Thomas Taylor had immigrated from England to North America, arriving in Oct. 1767 from Plymouth.

²Philip Embury (1728–73), of German descent but born in Ireland, heard JW preach in Limerick in 1752 and was converted that year. He was a master carpenter by trade and became a local preacher. Though accepted for the itinerancy at the Limerick Conference of 1758, he was never stationed. Instead he married and joined a group of emigrants to North America in 1760. He and his wife worshipped first at Trinity Lutheran church, New York and then at St. Paul's Anglican chapel. In Sept. 1766 he was persuaded by his cousin, Barbara Heck, to resume his preaching, to counteract a growing worldliness among the immigrants. He became a leading figure in the Methodist society that was formed and designed and built the first church on John Street. In 1770 he led a group of Palatine families who settled at a place they named Ashgrove, north-east of Albany in up-state New York. He died there in 1773 after an accident while mowing.

³Located on what is now Park Place, near Tweed Courthouse.

⁴Charles White and Richard Sause were among the first trustees for the John Street church.

months ago Captain Webb,⁵ barrack master at Albany (who was converted about three years since at Bristol), found them out and preached in his regimentals. The novelty of a man preaching in a scarlet coat soon brought greater numbers to hear than the room could contain. But his doctrines were quite new to the hearers, for he told them point blank that ‘all their knowledge and religion were not worth a rush, unless their sins were forgiven and they had the “witness of God’s Spirit with theirs that they were the children of God”’.⁶ This strange doctrine, with some peculiarities in his person, made him soon be taken notice of, and obliged the little society to look out for a larger house to preach in. They soon found a place that had been built for a rigging house, sixty feet in length and eighteen in breadth.⁷

About this period Mr. Webb, whose wife’s relations lived at Jamaica on Long Island, took a house in that neighbourhood, and began to preach in his own house and several other places on Long Island. Within six months about twenty-four persons received justifying grace, nearly half of them whites, the rest negroes. While Mr. Webb (to borrow his own phrase) was ‘felling the trees on Long Island’, brother Embury was exhorting all who attended on Thursday evenings and Sunday mornings and evenings at the rigging house to flee from the wrath to come. His hearers began to increase, and some gave heed to his report, about the time the gracious providence of God brought me safe to New York, after a very favourable passage of six weeks from Plymouth [England].

It was the 26th day of October last when I arrived. Recommended to a person for lodging, I inquired of my host (who was a very religious man) if any Methodists were in New York. He informed me there was one Captain Webb, a strange sort of man, who lived on Long Island and sometimes preached at one Embury’s at the rigging-house. In a few days I found out Embury. I soon found what spirit he was of, and that he was personally acquainted with you and your doctrines, and had been a helper in Ireland. He had formed two classes, one of the men and another of the women, but had never met the society apart from the congregation, although there were six or seven men and about the same number of women who had a clear sense of their acceptance in the Beloved.

You will not wonder at my being agreeably surprised in meeting with a few here who have been and desire again to be in connexion with you. God only knows the weight of the affliction I felt in leaving my native country. But I have reason now to conclude God intended all for my good. Ever since I left London my load has been removed, and I have found a cheerfulness in being banished from all near and dear to me. And I made a new covenant with my God that I would go to the utmost parts of the earth, provided he would raise up a people with whom I might join in his praise. On the great deep I found a more earnest desire to be united with the people of God than ever before. I made a resolution that God’s people should be my people, and their God my God. And I bless his holy name I have since experienced more heartfelt happiness than ever I thought it possible to know on this side [of] eternity. All anxious care even about my dear wife and children is taken away. I cannot assist them, but I daily and hourly commend them to God in prayer, and I know he hears my prayers by an answer of love in my heart. I find power daily to devote myself unto him, and I find power also to overcome sin. If any uneasiness at all affects me, it is because I can speak so little of so good a God.

⁵‘Captain’ Thomas Webb (1725–96) enlisted in the 48th Regiment of Foot c. 1745 and was sent to serve in North America. He was married in 1760 and chose to stay in America in 1764, as civilian Barrack Master at Albany, NY. During a visit to England after his wife’s death, he was converted in Bristol, where James Rouquet introduced him to the Methodists and JW accepted him as a local preacher. He continued to preach back in Albany and as a ‘travelling apostle’ as far south as Pennsylvania. He played a crucial role in the building of the first John Street church in New York and in acquiring St. George’s church in Philadelphia. During the Revolutionary War his loyalist leanings led to his return to England, and he spent the remainder of his life in Bristol.

⁶Cf. Rom. 8:16.

⁷This house was on William Street.

Mr. Embury has lately been more zealous than formerly, the consequence of which is that he is more lively in preaching, and his gifts as well as graces are much increased. Great numbers of serious persons come to hear God's word as for their lives. And their numbers increased so fast that our house for this six weeks past would not contain the half of the people.

We had some consultations how to remedy this inconvenience, and Embury proposed renting a small lot of ground for twenty-one years, and to exert our utmost endeavours to collect as much money as to build a wooden tabernacle. A piece of ground was proposed, the ground rent was agreed for, and the lease was to be executed in a few days. We however, in the meantime, had two several days for fasting and prayer for the direction of God and his blessing on our proceedings—and providence opened such a door as we had no expectation of. A young man, a sincere Christian and constant hearer, though not joined in society, would not give anything towards this house, but offered ten pounds to buy a lot of ground, [and] went of his own accord to a lady who had two lots to sell, on one of which there is a house that rents for eighteen pounds per annum.⁸ He found the purchase money of the two lots was six hundred pounds, which she was willing should remain in the purchaser's hands on good security. We called once more upon God for his direction, and resolved to purchase the whole. There are eight of us who are joint purchasers, among whom Mr. Webb and Mr. Lupton are men of property.⁹ I was determined the house should be on the same footing as the orphan house at Newcastle and others in England, but as we were ignorant how to draw the deeds, we purchased for us and our heirs until a copy of the writing is sent us from England, which we desire may be sent by the first opportunity.

Before we began to talk of building, the devil and his children were very peaceable. But since this affair took place many ministers have cursed us in the name of the Lord, and laboured with all their might to shut up their congregations from assisting us. But he that sitteth in heaven laughed them to scorn. Many have broke through and given their friendly assistance. We have collected above one hundred pounds more than our own contributions, and have reason to hope in the whole we shall have two hundred pounds. But the house will cost us four hundred pounds more. So that unless God is pleased to raise up friends, we shall yet be at a loss. I believe Mr. Webb and [Mr.] Lupton will borrow or advance two hundred pounds, rather than the building should not go forward. But the interest of money here is a great burden—being seven percent. Some of our brethren proposed writing to you for a collection in England. But I was averse to this, as I well knew our friends there are over burdened already. Yet so far I would earnestly beg: if you would intimate our circumstances to particular persons of ability, perhaps God would open their hearts to assist this infant society and contribute to the first preaching house on the original Methodist plan in all America (excepting Mr. Whitefield's orphan house in Georgia). But I shall write no more on this head.¹⁰

There is another point far more material, and in which I must importune your assistance not only in my own name but in the name of the whole society. We want an able, experienced preacher—one who has both gifts and grace necessary for the work.¹¹ God has not despised the day of small things. There is a real work in many hearts by the preaching of Mr. Webb and Mr. Embury. But although they are both useful, and their hearts in the work, they want many qualifications for such an undertaking, where they have none to direct them. And the progress of the gospel here depends much upon the qualifications of the preachers.

⁸The property was owned by Mary Barclay, widow of Rev. Henry Barclay, the second Rector of Trinity Church, New York. The 'young man' to whom the property was initially sold was Joseph Forbes, who in turn sold it to the trustees.

⁹The lease was made from the first board of trustees, Philip Embury, William Lupton, Charles White, Richard Souse, Henry Newton, Paul Hick, Thomas Taylor, and Captain Thomas Webb.

¹⁰JW's response was to publish this letter as a pamphlet, to circulate to persons who might be able to help.

¹¹This appeal led JW to send over Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmore the following year.

I have also often thought of Mr. Helton.¹² If possible we must have a man of wisdom, of sound faith, and a good disciplinarian; one whose heart and soul are in the work. And I doubt not but by the goodness of God such a flame would be soon kindled as would never stop until it reached the great South Sea. We may make many shifts to evade temporal inconveniences, but we cannot *purchase* such a preacher as I have described. Dear sir, I entreat you for the good of thousands to use your utmost endeavours to send one over. I would advise him to take shipping at Bristol, or Liverpool, or Dublin, in the month of July or early in August. By embarking at this season he will have fine weather in his passage, and probably arrive here in the month of September. He will see with his own eyes before winter what progress the gospel has made. With respect to money for the payment of the preacher's passage over, if they could not procure it we would sell our coats and shirts and pay it.

I most earnestly beg an interest in your prayers, and trust you and many of our brethren will not forget the church in this wilderness.

I remain, with sincere esteem, reverend and dear sir,
Your very affectionate brother and servant,

T. T.

Source: published transcription; Oxford University, Regents Park College, Angus Library 42.a.6(e).¹³

¹²Orig., 'Hilton'. John Helton (c. 1731–1817) first appears in the *Minutes* as an 'assistant' in 1765 (see *Works*, 10:304); he had likely been travelling since 1763. A person of some financial means, Helton was a popular preacher, and taken into JW's trust. From 1770–75 he was stationed in London to assist JW.

¹³This is the one known surviving copy of the pamphlet-form of the letter JW had published as a means of advertising the work and raising support. The holograph sent to JW is not known to survive. Two nineteenth century sources give the text, with some variants; see Frank Baker's reconstruction from these sources, which varies in only a couple of places for the text given above: Baker, 'Early American Methodism: a Key Document', *Methodist History* 3.2 (1965): 3–15.

From James Hindmarsh¹

[Kingswood]
April 27, 1768

Reverend and Dear Sir,

On Wednesday the 20th, God broke in upon our boys in a surprising manner. A serious concern has been observable in some of them for some time past. But that night, while they were in their private apartments, the power of God came upon them, even like a mighty, rushing wind, which made them cry aloud for mercy. Last night, I hope, will never be forgotten, when about twenty were in the utmost distress. But God quickly spoke peace to two of them, John Glascot and Thomas Maurice.² A greater display of his love I never saw. They indeed rejoice with joy unspeakable. For my own part, I have not often felt the like power. We have no need to exhort them to pray, for that spirit runs through the whole school, so that this house may well be called an house of prayer. While I am writing, the cries of the boys from their several apartments are sounding in my ears. There are many still lying at the pool, who wait every moment to be put in. They are come to this, 'Lord, I will not, I cannot rest without thy love.' Since I began to write, eight more are set at liberty and now rejoice in God their Saviour. The names of these are John Coward, John Lyon, John Maddern,³ John Boddily, John Thurgar,⁴ Charles Brown, William Higham, and Robert Hindmarsh.⁵ Their age is from eight to fourteen. There are but few who withstand the work, nor is it likely they should do it long. For the prayers of those that believe in Christ seem to carry all before them. Among the colliers, likewise, the work of God increases greatly. Two of the colliers boys were justified this week. The number added to the society since the Conference is an hundred and thirty.

I had sealed my letter but have opened it to inform you that two more of our children have found peace. Several others are under deep conviction. Some of our friends from Bristol are here, who are thunderstruck. This is the day we have wished for so long, the day you have had in view, which has made you go through so much opposition for the good of these poor children.

James Hindmarsh

Source: published transcription; *JW, Journal*, May 5, 1768, *Works*, 22:129–30.

¹James Hindmarsh (1732–1812), originally an innkeeper in Alnwick, was appointed as writing tutor, and his wife Phillis (Laing) Hindmarsh (1731–97) as housekeeper, at Kingswood school by the 1766 Conference. James served there until 1771, when he was admitted 'on trial' as a preacher. He was granted full connection in 1773, and travelled until 1783. In 1785 he left the Methodists to join his son with the Swedenborgians. See *Works*, 10:319, 415, 531; and *WHS* 7 (1909): 66–67.

²Thomas Maurice (1754–1824), who became an oriental scholar and librarian, was appointed assistant keeper of manuscripts at the British Museum in 1799.

³Apparently the son of John Maddern (d.1770), the itinerant preacher.

⁴John Thurgar (1758–1840) was the son of John and Elizabeth (Dorrell) Thurgar of Norwich.

⁵Robert Hindmarsh (1759–1835) was the son of James and Phillis (Laing) Hindmarsh. While schooled at Kingswood, he was never a member of the Methodist society. He became a printer and in 1783 formed the Theosophical Society for studying the works of Emmanuel Swedenborg. See *ODNB*.

From an Unidentified Correspondent

[Kingswood]
[c. April 30] 1768

I cannot help congratulating you on the happy situation of your family here. The power of God continues to work with almost irresistible force. And there is good reason to hope it will not be withdrawn till every soul is converted to God. ... I have had frequent opportunities of conversing alone with the boys and find the work has taken deep root in many hearts. The house rings with praise and prayer, and the whole behaviour of the children strongly speaks for God. The number of the new-born is increased since you received your last information. I have been a witness of part, but the whole exceeds all that language can paint.

Source: published transcription; JW, *Journal*, May 5, 1768, *Works*, 22:131.

From [James Hindmarsh?]

[Kingswood]
May 18, 1768

The work of God still goes on at Kingswood. Of the hundred and thirty members who have been added to the society since the last Conference, the greater part have received justifying faith and are still rejoicing in God their Saviour, and (what is the most remarkable) I do not know of one backslider in the place. The outpouring of the Spirit on the children in the school has been exceeding great. I believe there is not one among them who has not been affected, more or less. Twelve of them have found peace with God, and some in a very remarkable manner. These have no more doubt of the favour of God than of their own existence. And the Lord is still with them, though not so powerfully as he was two or three weeks since.

Source: published transcription; JW, *Journal*, May 5, 1768, *Works*, 22:131.

From Jane Hilton¹

Beverley
June 26, 1768

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I have reason above *all* creatures to praise God. I have been *much* given up to him since you left us. I have a deeper manifestation of his love, so that I am enabled to rejoice in all things! I cannot express the joy I felt in hearing you set forth the glorious privileges of the children of God. I trust I shall be enabled *always* to rejoice. I have trials, but what are they? My confidence in God is beyond *all* that can come against me. O that I may ever lose *my* hold, but that I may look simply unto God at *all* times, that my heart may be more and more filled with the fullness of God! O how is my heart enlarged towards God: I feel what my pen cannot express!

I remain

Yours affectionately,

J. H.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 683.

¹Jane Hilton (1747–1825) was born in Beverley, Yorkshire. She joined the Methodist society there in 1764, and was corresponding with JW from 1766. This is her first known surviving letter to JW. In Mar. 1769 Jane married William Barton, of Beverley. She continued to correspond with JW until near his death.

From Jane Hilton

Beverley
June 28, 1768

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I have lately received a larger measure of the grace of God. O, how can I explain it! I cannot! I am lost! On reading your letter over again,¹ I became more desirous of a still closer union and communion with God. O, never had I such a depth of divine enjoyment before! I am full to the brim! I have at present, as it were, lost my body! I am loaded with love. O could I not die for Christ! Yes I could! I long to suffer something for his sake. When, when will my happy change come! But if for me to continue in the flesh is the Lord's will, I gladly submit. What fuller heaven could I desire than this? O that I could but persuade my poor brethren to wrestle more strongly for this! How would it rejoice my heart! O sir, I doubt not but you will help me to praise God.

I am, reverend sir,

Yours affectionately,

J. H.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 683–84.

¹Hilton is replying to JW's letter of June 25, 1768, *Works*, 28:153–54.

From an Unidentified Correspondent

Sunderland
July 6, 1768

I wrote you word before that Elizabeth Hobson¹ was put into possession of the house. The same night her old visitant, who had not troubled her for some time, came again and said, 'You must meet me at Boyldon Hill on Thursday night a little before twelve. You will see many appearances, who will call you to come to them. But do not stir, neither give them any answer. A quarter after twelve, I shall come and call you, but still do not answer nor stir.' She said, 'It is an hardship upon me for you to desire me to meet you there. Why cannot you take your leave now?' He answered, 'It is for your good that I desire it. I can take my leave of you now. But if I do, I must take something from you, which you would not like to part with.' She said, 'May not a few friends come with me?' He said, 'They may, but they must not be present when I come.'

That night twelve of us met at Mr. Davison's² and spent some time in prayer. God was with us of a truth. Then six of us went with her to the place, leaving the rest to pray for us. We came thither a little before twelve and then stood at a small distance from her. It being a fine night, we kept her in our sight and spent the time in prayer. She stood there till a few minutes after one. When we saw her move, we went to meet her. She said, 'Thank God, it is all over and done. I found everything as he told me. I saw many appearances, who called me to them, but I did not answer or stir. Then he came and called me at a distance, but I took no notice. Soon after he came up to me and said, 'You are come well fortified.' He then gave her the reasons why he required her to meet him at that place and why he could take his leave there and not in the house without taking something from her. But withal, he charged her to tell this to no one, adding, 'If you disclose this to any creature, I shall be under a necessity of troubling you as long as you live. If you do not, I shall never trouble you, nor see you any more, either in time or eternity.' He then bid her farewell, waved his hand, and disappeared.

Source: published transcription; JW, *Journal*, July 10, 1768, *Works*, 22:145–46.

¹See the biographical account of Elizabeth Hobson (b. 1744) and her visions that JW prefaced to this letter in his *Journal* on May 27, 1768 (*Works*, 22:137–45). See also his letter to Lady Maxwell, Sept. 9, 1768, *Works*, 28:172–74.

²JW noted in his *Journal* that Mr. Davison's house was about a quarter of a mile from the hill.

From Captain R. M.

Thornhill
August 6, 1768

Reverend Sir,

Your letter was very acceptable to me. I thank you, dear sir, for the caution that I should not be almost, but altogether a Christian. This I am enabled to see a most necessary piece of advice; and in his strength, who is the glory of his people Israel, I mean to pursue the brightest crown he has to bestow on such a worm as *me*.

It is true, I am weak. But the Lord manifests strength in weakness. It is the desire of my soul to be emptied of self, as I see that in me dwelleth no good thing. I see that my heart is deceitful and desperately wicked. I am enabled (but how little yet) to give glory to free grace.

I have had many calls of late to go and publish glad tidings to sinners. I have hitherto obeyed as many as I well could. As to some of my friends in holy orders, who have showed their disapprobation, I am convinced they are totally unacquainted with my motive—which is not to see my own, but the glory of God. This is, through grace, my constant, earnest prayer; and I believe it is accepted, and the work owned to be *his own*. I am sorry that, along with some outward discouragements, I likewise meet with some from within, of a more sinful and dangerous nature—such as a desire after more ease and retirement. And I have been tempted to be afraid of its coming to the ears of some of my relations that I am commenced ‘Methodist preacher’. But I think in these instances the old serpent exposed his cloven foot, for I find a desire that ‘Thy will, not mine, may be done, O Lord’.³

Mrs. M. is, I trust, in the narrow way, and joins in Christian love to you. I shall rejoice to hear from you.

I am, reverend sir,

Your affectionate and obedient servant,

R. M.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 7 (1784): 52–53.

³Cf. Luke 22:42.

From Thomas Hill, Esq.¹

Hawkestone
October 24, 1768

Reverend Sir,

Since you did me the honour to give me an invitation to write to you, I now embrace the opportunity of sending you a few lines. If you remember, sir, I had the pleasure of seeing you at Mrs. Glynne's at Shrewsbury,² early in the morning, having travelled part of the night before expecting to have had the satisfaction of hearing you preach. But as your time was short, I was disappointed of that pleasure. Your Christian advice, to persevere in the ways of godliness, gave me great encouragement. And I have found, by blessed experience, what the word of God says of true religion, that her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace. Blessed be God, I have two brothers and two sisters who experience the truth of what I have been saying.

I have great reason to hope that much good has been done in and about this neighbourhood of late, by the preaching of the everlasting gospel. O may the Lord grant that all real Christians who have felt the love and peace of God shed abroad in their hearts, by the Holy Ghost given unto them, may be blessed instruments in the Lord's hands of turning many from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.

When I saw you at Shrewsbury, I asked you whether we could hope to see you in this neighbourhood? For many of our people would be glad to hear you at our society-room. If you think of coming to Shrewsbury next spring, I hope you will favour us with your good company, and take our society in your way. If you will come amongst us, I do assure you, sir, you will meet with a most hearty reception. And if you can conveniently, let me know the time of your coming, and I will take care to provide for your reception. I hope, sir, you will not refuse us this favour. If you cannot come yourself, beg of your good brother, if he comes into these parts with you, to come in your stead. I wish we could have the pleasure of seeing you both. But if we cannot, at least let us have the satisfaction of seeing one of you. Pardon sir, the liberty I have taken, and when you favour me with a letter, please to let me know if we are to have the pleasure of seeing you. Meanwhile I remain sincerely, dear sir,

Your humble servant,

T. H—ll

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 552–53.

¹Thomas Hill (1693–1782) was born Thomas *Harwood* in 1693, to Thomas and Margaret (Hill) Harwood. His uncle was Richard Hill (1625–1727) who owned Hawkstone Hall, an estate near Hodnet, Shropshire. Richard Hill never married, and on his death left a substantial portion of his estate to Thomas Harwood, who took Hill's family name at that point. Another nephew of Richard Hill was Roland Hill (1705–83), whose sons Richard (1732–1808) and Rowland (1744–1833) would soon issue strong Calvinist critiques of JW's theology.

²Bridget (Lloyd) Glynne (1708–99) was the widow of Edward Glynne (d. 1757), of Glynne, Monmouthshire. She now lived in Shrewsbury and was a close supporter of John Fletcher.

From Elizabeth and Lydia Vandome¹

[London]
[c. November] 1768

Dear and Reverend Sir,

When I first heard the gospel from you, I was convinced of sin, and nothing could satisfy me but a sense of pardoning love. For a month, the garment of weeping was put upon me night and day till one day, as I was repeating those words,

I trust in him that stands between
The Father's wrath and me;
Jesus, thou great, eternal mean,
I look for all from thee:²

I was struck down to the ground and felt the arm of the Lord revealed in me. I knew that God was reconciled; I felt sanctification begun. The fight of faith ensued, and for three-quarters of a year I was struggling with my own will. Sometimes I was in an agony. I was ready to weep my life away, fearing the sins I felt in my heart would never be done away. Yet I believed there was a rest for the people of God, a rest from all sin. One day, conversing with one about the things of God, he said, 'You would have all things become new before you believe. But that is not the way. You must believe first.' When he went away, the spirit of prayer and supplication rested upon me. Yet I felt

Bound down with twice ten thousand ties.³

However, I wrestled on till the Lord broke in upon my soul like the sun in his glory. He loosed me at once from all my bonds, and I knew I loved him with all my heart. Jesus appeared with hair as white as wool and garments down to his feet and gave me to sit with him in heavenly places. And from that time (which is seven or eight and twenty years ago), I have felt no temper contrary to love. I have no desire contrary to the will of God. On this bed of sickness, I have communion with the church triumphant. I know that

Jesus is my brother now,
And God is all my own.⁴

When the tempter comes, my soul cleaves to Jesus, and I am kept in perfect peace.

I thought it my duty to leave this short account of the gracious dealings of God with my soul, as you was the instrument he was pleased to make use of for the beginning and furthering of his work. O may the Lord strengthen you and your brother and increase in you every fruit of his Spirit. And when you fail on earth, may we meet in heaven and praise the great Three-One to all eternity!

¹Elizabeth (d. 1768) and Lydia (d. 1806) Vandome were sisters, and both had been leaders of bands for single women at the Foundery from at least 1742 (see Foundery Band Lists).

²CW, 'The Means of Grace', st. 20, *HSP* (1740), 39.

³CW, 'A Prayer against the Power of Sin', st. 15, *HSP* (1740), 81.

⁴Cf. CW, 'Hymn IV', *Nativity Hymns* (1745), 6.

[The remainder is added by her sister Lydia]

This account was written some time past when she was sick in bed. But since then, God raised her up and enabled her still to be useful to others, though in great weakness of body. When she took to her bed again about three weeks ago, she had a remarkable dream. She thought she saw Mr. W[esley] labouring with his might to keep the people from falling into a deep pit, which very few of them perceived. The concern she was in awaked her in great emotion. On Tuesday evening last, she desired us to set her up in bed to meet her class. Her voice faltered much. She earnestly exhorted them all to live near to God and to keep close together, adding, 'I shall soon join the church above.' She spoke no more. All was silent rapture till on Friday morning, without sigh or groan, she resigned her spirit to God.

Lydia Vandome

Source: published transcription; JW, *Journal*, Jan. 27, 1769, *Works*, 22:168–70.

From an Unidentified Correspondent

c. November 1768

About the middle of September last he [W. F. Esq.¹] was seized with such a violent suffocation of breath, judged to be the effect of the gout in his lungs, and attended with such other symptoms of an approaching dissolution, that his physicians thought he could not survive many days. After finding himself given up, he said, 'Well Doctor, you have now done making experiments for my recovery. Give me leave, in my turn, to tell you a truth which I have never yet told you. That small spark of faith which I feel kindled in my soul is now such a comfort to me that you may believe me, I would not for anything in this world exchange my condition.'

Though he could not doubt but the Lord, who had bestowed so much grace on him, would receive him; yet his soul wanted a fuller assurance of the work of regeneration being completed in him. Therefore he prayed that whatever he might suffer in the flesh, his Lord would not remove him hence till he had finished his work in him, and perfected all his holy will.

About this time he said, 'I have experienced much grace. But the "blood of sprinkling",² that is what I want. Nothing can now help me but the real application of the blood of Jesus. This is more to me than heaven! This I want as my one thing needful.'³

At another time, after having been in some distress of mind, he said, 'Thy blood, O Lord has prevailed!' And again, 'To be saved by blood, an amazing doctrine! The foolishness of man, but the wisdom of God!⁴ Sure as Jehovah is thy name, so sure is thy blood the chiefest good of sinners.' And this was accompanied with such a poverty of spirit that he would often express himself to this effect, 'O what sweetness lies in poverty of spirit! Can anything be so sweet as forgiveness? He who will always be in the right is an unhappy man. We are very often least in the right when we think ourselves most so.'

His constant prayer was, 'O let me not offend thee by any impatience! But give me resignation to thy will, ...!'

As a further demonstration of what grace had effected, in detaching him from objects the most ensnaring to him, and which he now lamented as obstacles that had hindered him in running the race set before him, it is to be observed that he had had a doting fondness for his children, which he now found had resisted his full resignation of them to God.

But this bondage (said he) I am now freed from, thanks be to God! I am now an altered man. Who would have thought it! All I now desire is that they may fall into our Saviour's hands and be his property. Grace alone is able to do this. Children of God I know they cannot be by education. I have no scheme to insist on about their future disposal; but what the Lord's will concerning them may be, that is mine also. In comparison of this, it is now become a matter of indifference to me whether they are rich or poor, in health or in sickness. All I pray for is that they may be his.

During his sickness, he would often beg of those who were about him to pray that the Lord would come soon and take him.

¹The published transcription was titled: 'An Account of the Conversion and last Illness of W. F. Esq; who departed this Life the 31st of October 1768.' This may be William Foster Esq. (1722–68), who did die on this date.

²Heb. 12:24.

³Cf. Luke 10:42.

⁴Cf. 1 Cor. 3:19.

At any time when the presence of his Beloved seemed to be withdrawn, he would say, 'To believe, only to believe, is easily said. But believe me, it is not so easy as some may think it, before they come into my circumstances. This is indeed putting the heart to the truest test. I am afraid my faith will fail me. Do you think I shall be able to hold it to the last?' And then immediately answering himself, said,

O yes, he will never forsake his poor creature. But he wants only to try my faith to the utmost. O Jesus, I have no hope but in thee, and I hang only on thee! O that sweet name! May he take me by the hand, and lead me to the cold grave wherein he has been laid himself! I think I am hanging on the cross with him! The same nails supporting us both! I care not what sufferings I am to go through, if his dear will be fulfilled in me, and I am resigned to it. I want only to have his full salvation and conquest completed in me. No former experience of grace is of any avail to me now. The question is only how do I stand with the Lord at this present time? Neither is anyone able from past experience to tell how it will be with him in his last hours. O it is the right way to be saved first and last by our Saviour, with a rope about our neck as poor criminals! This I will be.

O it is indeed a 'faithful saying, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners'.⁵ The true application of this is heaven! I feel it! Jesus the friend of lost sinners takes delight in things worthless and poor—and what is more strange, in *me*, indeed in *me*! I am a miracle of unshaken mercy, a monument of redeeming love. I am the unworthiest of all. But one thing I can say, he is mine and I am his!

The pains he suffered were so great that his departure was often expected by those about him, as well as by himself. This was especially the case on the 24th of October, when he again took a tender farewell of those present, and prayed fervently to God, though with difficulty from his want of breath, thanking him with a melting heart for the grace bestowed on him, and begging him to receive his spirit. Then turning to his brother he said, with tears in his eyes, 'You may believe me, I shall soon see him as he is. Death has lost his sting. I have had sore conflicts, but I am conqueror, yea more than conqueror through his deliverance! Farewell deceitful world! Farewell deceitful heart! I have escaped thy snares!' Then pausing awhile he added, 'O that there may be true love and union among the children of God!'

The same afternoon he desired that we might all pray the Lord's Prayer together, in which he joined most ardently, repeating with great fervency, after we had concluded it, 'Thy will be done!' And then broke out, 'Abba, Father! that dear name! Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! Jesus Christ the Saviour of the world!'

At another time, on the following day, he said, 'Last night I thought I was going, and in that moment there came such a serenity over my mind, and such a sweetness as I cannot express; so that I see, departure out of the body is no hard matter.'

After having felt great bodily distress, he broke out,

O Saviour, not one of thy disciples would watch with thee one hour; but here I am surrounded by friends waiting on and weeping over me! O how different was thy condition from mine! Thou wast exposed to the cold night, sweating bloody sweats, and forsaken of all! And lo I have nothing but help, comfort, and support. Surely none but God could love us so!

On the 29th he desired the New Testament might be read to him. While the 15th and 16th chapters of St. John's gospel were reading, he frequently cried out, 'That is charming! Dear Saviour! Sweet Saviour!' And on hearing the last verse, 'In the world ye shall have tribulation. But be of good

⁵Cf. 1 Tim. 1:15.

cheer, I have overcome the world',⁶ he broke out, 'Grace! Redemption! Love! Peace! All applied to me! I am afraid of nothing so much as the loss of feeling myself unworthy. That time is misspent that is not spent in the enjoyment of Christ!'

The same night he declared his tender love to some of his friends, and said, 'Tell them, I know that my Redeemer liveth, whom I shall see for myself. Even I—don't forget *even I*. Such a poor creature! Tell them, I hang only on the cross.'

The 30th, being put in mind of the many striking proofs of the Redeemer's love to him, he answered, 'Yes all thy will, my dearest Saviour, shall be done in me.' Then with a warm resentment against himself, added, 'Fool that I am! What should I be afraid of? Of thee my sweetest Jesus? A lamb that was slain for my sins? No, no! Thy name is Jesus, the sweetest of all names.'

Praying with many tears that the Lord would have mercy on him, and remove him out of his misery, peace flowed in as a river and he rejoiced exceedingly.

The remaining part of the evening he was serene and cheerful, and slept more than he had done for some weeks before, frequently calling out in his sleep, 'Sweet Saviour! Sweet Saviour!'

The last day of October, about six in the morning, feeling an extraordinary weakness, he said, 'Ah, if the convulsions would but come now, all would be over!' Soon after a convulsion-fit came, which in a few minutes put an end to all his distress, and proved the blessed means of translating him to his Redeemer's arms.

'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord. Even so saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labour.'⁷

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 12 (1789): 292–97.

⁶John 16:33.

⁷Cf. Rev. 14:13.

From John Nelson

Nottingham
November 14, 1768

This town is greatly alarmed by the death of Joseph Lee.¹ I trust it will make the backsliders tremble. I suppose he has been a professed antinomian for some years. He sometimes attended our preaching, but it was only to laugh at us. He frequently went to the alehouse, both working days and Sundays, and told his merry stories among the drunken crews. On Monday the 7th of this month he was drinking with his companions, and telling them a merry story, about eight o'clock at night. He seemed to be in as good health as ever he was in his life. And the people that were with him say they never saw him so full of jokes before. But in the midst of a story he stopped, laid his hand on his head, said 'I am not well', and never spoke more. However they bled him, but to no purpose. He seemed to be in a violent agony within, and died in about two hours after he was taken ill. Do not these things cry aloud to us, 'Prepare to meet your God'? I hope it will stir up all backsliders to remember from whence they are fallen, and cause them to repent and do their first works—lest they, drinking with the drunken, the Lord comes in an hour they look not for him and cuts them off at a stroke, and they find their portion with hypocrites and unbelievers.

John Nelson

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 580–81.

¹Note added by JW in *AM*, p. 580: 'Joseph Lee was one of our first society in Fetter-Lane, and received remission of sins one of the first in London. He worked in the same shop with Gascoign Graham and Matthew Errington, and was for several years a burning and shining light. But at Nottingham he turned antinomian both in principle and practice.'

From the Rev. George Whitefield

[London,] Tabernacle
December 28, 1768

Reverend and Very Dear Sir,

Pray have you or I committed the unpardonable sin, because we differ in particular cases and act according to our consciences? I imagine the common salvation is not promoted by keeping at such a distance. Enemies rejoice. Half-way friends especially are pleased.

You will be glad to hear that the time for completing the Orphan-house affair seems to be come.¹ Do you know of a good, judicious, spiritual tutor? Will you without delay make the first present of your works to the library? I hope we shall have a nursery for true Christian ministers. I know you will say, 'Amen'.

Yesterday, fifty-four years old. God be merciful to me a sinner! Though you are older, I trust you will not get the start of me, by going to heaven before, reverend and very dear sir,

Less than the least of all,

G. Whitefield

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 684.

¹In his initial trip to Georgia, Whitefield had established an Orphan House named Bethesda, just outside of Savannah. Almost immediately he began to talk about developing this effort into a college, but this hope was offset by the debt on the Orphan House. Finally, in 1765, this debt was paid and Whitefield began seeking support for adding a college. See particularly his *Letter to His Excellency Governor Wright, giving an account of the steps taken relative to the converting the Georgia Orphan-House into a College* ([Charleston, SC, 1768]; reprinted, London: Robert Wells, 1768). It soon became clear that Thomas Secker, Archbishop of Canterbury, opposed setting up schools in North America that he deemed would be for dissenters. As a result, Whitefield decided to lower his goal initially to establishing an academy (like Kingswood school) and was seeking JW's advice and help. For more on this effort to build a college, which failed to materialize, see Peter Choi, 'Whitefield, Georgia, and the Quest for Bethesda College', in G. Hammond & D. C. Jones (eds.), *George Whitefield* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 224–40.

From Christiana Simpson¹

Aberdeen
December 28, 1768

Reverend and Very Dear Sir,

I can hardly look into yours² without being moved, even to tears. I often think should I be so happy as see my honoured friend again in the land of the living, how would I open my heart and pour it all into his bosom, well knowing that there it would be lodged safe and secure. Dear sir, pardon the freedom I presume to use with you. My heart is full. O that you could read it—here would I drop my pen, could silence speak the rest.

How easy a matter is it to get the outward behaviour unblameable. One with a tolerable measure of prudence, with grace, may go this far. Indeed, I often wonder at myself with what a degree of contempt I can seemingly triumph over the very things which I know in my own mind I am lead captive by. Dear sir, I think there is nothing I would hide from you. Pray tell me freely what you fear concerning me. The more freely you speak, the more shall I be confirmed of the tender concern you have always shown for my happiness.

Address: 'Decr. 28 – 1768 / To John Wesley'.

Endorsement: by JW, 'C. S. / Pathos! / Dec. 28. 1768 / a'd Jan. 4, 1769'.

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 2/68.

¹JW met Christiana Simpson (d. 1812) in Aberdeen, Scotland in Apr. 1768. She was the sister of Thomas Simpson (d. 1806), who served as an itinerant from 1765–70, before JW made him head master of Kingswood School in January 1771. Letters from Christiana to JW between Dec. 28, 1768 and Oct. 12, 1772 reflect his offer to help her study music. This did not eventuate in a career, so in Sept. 1783 she became housekeeper at Kingswood (just as her brother was leaving). In 1786 she married Thomas McGeary (d. 1797) in Bristol, who had replaced her brother as headmaster of the school.

²This letter is not known to survive.

From Jane Hilton

Beverly
January 27, 1769

Reverend Sir,

In the midst of all my trials, my heart is filled with joy. I have my conversation in heaven. I feel a deeper communion with God than ever, and a clearer sight of the Invisible. Yet I pant after more. I want more humility, more resignation, and more faith and patience, that my heart may be more and more filled with love. Sometimes I am so carried out with love to God, and my fellow-mortals, that I am almost out of myself. I can see nothing here worth my staying for, but I desire patiently to wait till my change shall come. Till then, may I continually grow in grace, that I may be a vessel unto honour.

I hope you will still bear an unworthy worm on your mind. For I believe the prayers of the faithful will avail much, for

Your friend and servant,

J. H.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 7 (1784): 53–54.

From Richard Boardman

Barnard Castle
February 1, 1769

On January 23, 1769 my poor, dear wife was taken exceeding ill.¹ But she said, 'I have no desire to live; nor am I afraid to die.' That morning the Lord graciously visited her soul, on which she cried out, 'Christ is mine and I am his.' On the 24th the marks of her dissolution appeared more plain. This was to her the hour and power of darkness. She had now to grapple with principalities and powers. The enemy was suffered to buffet her grievously, by which her confidence was greatly shaken. At which she began to question the reality of her grace. Satan tempted her she had never been justified—God had never done anything for her. This occasioned her great distress, and from the bitterness of her soul she cried out, 'O for an assurance of God's favour! It is hard dying without a sense of his love.' I reminded her of the many kind visits she had been favoured with from Christ the day before. She replied, with some warmth, 'You know nothing about dying. It is a harder thing to die than you imagine! O, I find it a hard thing to die!' She continued much the same till the 27th. That morning she began to recollect what she looked upon as a peculiar instance of the divine mercy—viz., the death of her little child. Well, said she, the Lord has heard my prayers; I know he has. Many times have I prayed and wept before the Lord, that he would be pleased to take to himself my child. He has granted me my request; it is gone before. She saw the hand of God in this and rejoiced.

But she soon relapsed into her former doubts, and continued so till towards the evening. She then began to cry mightily to him who only could save. 'Lord', said she, 'if I am in thy favour, and if this sickness be unto death, oh show me a token for good.' She lay composed for a little time, and suddenly started up and said, 'Give me the Bible.' I did so. But I imagined she could not see to read. She kept it in her hand for some little time; and lifting up her eyes said, 'O Lord, I will now open this thy book. Show me, oh show me, the true state of my soul in thy word! Lord I will take the fifth verse of the first chapter I open to. She composed herself for sometime and then opened on Jeremiah 3:4, 'But thou shalt die in peace.' This was a word in season. God immediately applied it to her heart. Instantly the cloud burst. The darkness fled. The light of eternity broke in upon her soul. And from that moment she had neither doubt nor fear. 'I am now', said she, 'satisfied; I shall die and be happy forever.'

The physician now ordered her a sleeping draught, and she soon began to sleep. When she awoke, I said, 'My dear, thou hast slept a little.' 'Yes', said she, 'but it does not appear to be natural. But no matter, I have no doubt or fear.' She began to doze again. When she awoke, I asked her how she found herself now. She replied, 'I am happy! O I am happy! but do leave me a little while. I want time to life up my heart to the Lord.' She did so, but was soon asleep again. When she awoke the third time, her voice and strength were almost gone. And she faintly said, 'I wish ...' but her strength failed her. So that for sometime she could say no more. At length she said, 'I wish I could speak for God.' One asked, 'Do you now find Christ with you?' She said, 'O yes!' and would gladly have said something more, but could not. The next time she awoke, she bid a final adieu to everything that was mortal, and without a struggle fell asleep in the arms of her Beloved.

R. Boardman

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 472–73.

¹Richard Boardman married Olive Weatherby in Liverpool on Mar. 13, 1758. The daughter mentioned was named Mary.

From John Valton

Purfleet
February 25, 1769

Reverend Sir,

Mrs. S. having for some months wrestled against the world, the flesh, and the devil, last Thursday se'night was reduced to the utmost extremity. The enemy told her he would destroy her before night, but he was found a liar. She went in distress to sister Ottawill,¹ and told her case. They besought the Lord, who was entreated of them, and she rose up much eased. On Mrs. Ottawill's pressing her venture her soul upon Christ, she replied, 'I *will* venture upon him, and I believe he will not deceive me.' That instant the Lord broke in upon her soul, and made himself known to her as her Saviour. They praised God together most of the day. In the afternoon she came to tell me the tidings. It being our meeting-night, the Lord made the word sweet to her, and she went home praising God.

As to Mrs. Ottawill herself, she was justified soon after she joined the society, and never lost the light of God's countenance. He graciously visited her with such manifestations of his presence that she has been constrained to go out of the room on meeting nights, to give vent to her soul. Her past life has been quiet, harmless, and inoffensive; and she has had continual desires after God; but never had an opportunity to hear the truth till she came to this place. As to the things of God, she is well instructed. Her language shows she is taught of him. She is simple, teachable, thankful, and loves the means of grace.

She came to me yesterday and told me the Lord had made her pure in heart. We praised the Lord together. When she was gone, I thought, how is it that she has been so blest, in so short a time? But I remembered it is written, 'Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own?'² Yes Lord, and I rejoice in the prosperity of thy servants; and I rejoice that thou hast made me an instrument of good to them! But I chiefly rejoice, not that the spirits are subject unto me, but rather that my name is written in heaven!

I remain, dearest sir,

Your unworthy son in the gospel,

J. V.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 7 (1784): 111–12.

¹Thomas and Mary Ottawill, who lived in Rainham, were members of the Methodist society in Purfleet; cf. Jackson, *EMP* 6:69–70.

²Matt. 20:15.

From Henry Ince

Gibraltar
April 3, 1769

Reverend Sir,

At our first coming to this place, I found a people of such abominable practices as I never before had seen. However, I and two or three more took a room to meet in, and we were soon joined by some of the Royal Scotch. But this continued only a short time; the reason was, they would not allow your hymns to be sung, neither your works to be read. Upon this I was obliged to declare that while I could get any of your writings to make use of I would use them, since I had found them agreeable to the word of God. And as God gave me a word to speak, I cared not who heard, so he might be glorified. On this many were offended, and separated from us. Yet, in about two months we were thirty-seven in number. Till a little persecution came, then we were reduced to about eighteen. But, blessed be God! He is reviving his work again. We are now thirty-two, fifteen of whom can rejoice in the pardoning love of God, and most of the others are pressing hard after it. Several officers come to hear, and God gives us favour in the sight of all men. There is one gentleman of the town who has joined us lately, and is a very great help to us.

As to myself, God is ever gracious to me, who am less than the least of his children. I am astonished that he should work by me! O that I may be found faithful unto death! And that he may carry on his work in this barren place! So prays

Your unworthy friend,

H. Ince

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 7 (1784): 112–13.

From Mrs. E. J.

Newcastle
April 13, 1769

Reverend Sir,

About eleven years ago, the Lord called me to Dublin, and many were the happy hours I spent there in communion with the saints. A French woman, who used to be much at Mr. [William] Lunell's, told me I should see greater things than I had yet seen. After I left Dublin, I found in me the root of bitterness. For thirteen months I groaned under this burden. But I could in nowise believe that I could be delivered from it. One night I saw that 'Without holiness no man shall see the Lord'.¹ The conviction proved keen and sharp, so that I wrestled with the Lord that night in mighty prayer. Presently these words were brought to my mind, 'A clean heart I give unto thee.' But I staggered at the promise till the Lord applied the following words, 'be not faithless, but believing'.² From that moment my faith has not failed; but I have been enabled ever since to rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in every thing to give thanks. The Lord has saved me to the uttermost. Jesus hath utterly abolished the whole body of sin, and thoroughly sanctified me by the power of the Holy Ghost. I find I am enabled steadfastly to believe, and to walk before him in all well-pleasing, in singleness of heart. My evidence is as clear as the noon-day, and my soul is without spot of blemish. My every word and thought is sprinkled with the blood of Christ. I enjoy that faith which quenches every fiery dart of the devil. I find nothing in me contrary to the mind of Jesus. He hath given me that peace therein I find no man can give trouble. In Christ I possess and enjoy all things, and am freed from the fear of evil, for the Lord is always with me.

I am

Your friend, and sister in the Lord,

E. J.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 7 (1784): 54–55.

¹Cf. Heb. 12:14.

²John 20:27.

From Elizabeth (Patten) Bennis

Limerick
May 25, 1769

Dear Sir,

Since the Lord first called me by his grace to partake of his mercy, he has given me to esteem and love you as a dear parent. But my own littleness and your great worth created such an awe in me as caused me to keep a painful distance, notwithstanding your kind and loving solicitations to the contrary. (I hope this will not appear as flattery, it is indeed the truth of my heart.) But [I] have now resolved by divine assistance, this shall not be the case in future.

Blessed be my God, I have found my soul much quickened by your late visit, but am not satisfied till I feel restored *all* that I have lost.¹ I find many hindrances in pursuing this, and many plausible reasons why I should not expect it. But my necessities drive me forward and the mercies of God encourage me at times to hope and expect an entire deliverance. But the thought of my own unfaithfulness still comes between and causes my heart to fail. Indeed it is just, should I never be restored. And should I wait all the days of my life, and be saved at the last, surely it would be wonderful mercy. Yet my heart is pained at the thought. I want a *present* salvation, a heaven within. I want that I should sin no more.

That every moment I should feel
His love, and know I do his will,
Should find no slackness on my part,
But praise flow constant from my heart.²

I cannot describe my present state otherwise than by calling it a mixture of happiness and misery, and must continue to do so, till the Lord condescends again to visit with a fresh supply of his grace this unfaithful backsliding heart. Indeed whilst I am desiring, longing, and asking for this, I am ready to cry out, 'Will the Lord *indeed* condescend so far?' O I want more faith and more poverty of spirit.

27th. I feared when you left this [place] for Cork, I should again lose all my earnestness, and sink down where I was before. I have many fears of that kind still. But blessed be my God, it is not the case as yet. My soul is at times all desire and expectation, but my release is not yet come. This morning I found my heart all earnestness in prayer, being desirous not to come away till the Lord had blessed me. But not finding my expectations answered, I came away much cast down, and opened the Bible on Ezekiel 20th chapter, 15th verse. ... This threatening I thought applicable to my state, and suitable to my desserts.

But I will yet hope, even against hope. Perhaps the Lord may be entreated. ... My dear sir, I think if you would pray for me, the Lord would answer.

29th. Blessed be my God, my soul has been all yesterday and this morning in some degree happy, and still continues so, but not satisfied. I want a fuller manifestation of his love. I want to be all as he would have me be. I would make no conditions with him, only that he would give me himself. ... Amen Lord, let me be wholly and only thine.

The people here seem much stirred up, and happy in the expectation of your returning to us for a few days. I hope you have determined it shall be so. O come, and I fully think you will bring a blessing to

Your unworthy but truly affectionate,

Eliza Bennis

Source: published transcription; Bennis, *Correspondence*, 29–31.

¹JW had been in Limerick May 13–16, 1769.

²This is from stanza 4 of a manuscript poem of Eliza Bennis; cf., Bennis, *Correspondence*, 344–46. JW later published the poem in *AM* 5 (1782): 52–54.

From Mary Bosanquet

[Gildersome, Yorkshire¹]
c. July 1, 1769²

Reverend and Very Dear Sir,

I believe at last God hath fixed us where he would have us to be³—though not without the exercise of faith on many accounts. But I more and more believe God approves my settling in Yorkshire, though we have had a great deal of sickness, which has prevented in many respects our *doing* and *being* what otherwise [we] should. But by what little we see, [we] have reason to believe it will be far more in our power to help bear your burden with regard to the people than ever it has been yet. And we shall gladly do it in every respect if God permit, and shall thankfully receive any instructions or orders you think fit to lay on us.

The preaching we have not yet had,⁴ nor do we propose⁵ till the family are down. Neither till we have conversed with the preacher belonging to this place, which we have not had an opportunity of yet because Mr. Bumsted has been so ill.⁶

I thought to have been more particular about some of our own circumstances. But I must love my neighbour as myself, and at least for the present (as you have but little time) beg your attention a few minutes in behalf of a friend⁷ whom I am persuaded *you* would love if you knew, because I know there is many things in him you would much approve. But my dear sir, don't think I would wish in the least to bias *your* judgment in anything that did not to you appear perfectly right. Only as you were so kind as to say to him the other day that he might get what 'friends he could to write to you at the time of the Conference', I judged your reason might be to satisfy some whose minds through prejudice were not so easily satisfied as your own. And therefore I take the liberty of simply repeating what I have seen and

¹In 1768 Mary Bosanquet and her household (including Sarah Ryan, soon to die; and Sarah Crosby) left Leytonstone, Essex, to settle near Leeds, Yorkshire (Sarah Crosby's birthplace). They stayed with friends in Leeds briefly, then at Gildersome Hall outside Leeds (see JW's letter to this address on Dec. 28, 1768).

²This letter is clearly written prior to the Conference held in Leeds in early Aug. 1769. The urgency of gathering recommendations to allow Samuel Taylor to serve as a local pastor suggests a date relatively close to Conference time.

³Bosanquet was in process of buying the farm called 'Cross Hall' near Morley, Yorkshire, where she would reside for over a decade.

⁴That is, they have not yet started holding regular Methodist preaching services at their home (like they had done at Leytonstone).

⁵Orig., 'nor don't propose'.

⁶Orig., 'Bomstead'. Daniel Bumsted was one of four preachers assigned to the Birstall circuit (which served Morley) at the Aug. 1768 Conference (see *Works*, 10:354). Bumsted (d. 1789) joined the ranks of JW's itinerant preachers about 1763 (first appearing in the Minutes in 1765) and served until he 'settled' in 1775 (see *Works*, 10:440).

⁷Bosanquet identified this friend (in text she then struck out) as 'brother Taylor'. Richard Taylor, originally of Yorkshire, came to know Mary Bosanquet about 1767, while in London trying to resolve some debts. In 1768 he helped persuade Bosanquet to move to the Leeds area and located the Cross Hall farm she purchased. As this letter anticipated, Taylor and his family moved next door to Cross Hall and he supervised Bosanquet's farm. This proved a poor choice, as Taylor was a poor manager and soon in further financial trouble.

known of a sincere though injured brother.⁸

The first thing objected to him, and indeed the chief, is with regard to his honesty in following a business supposed not lawful. To this might it not be sufficient to give this plain answer, which I have had from his own mouth again and again: 'I never saw it at all in any such light. Many of the children of God persuaded me there was nothing wrong in it. And [in] *present* light I could not do it again. And as I then did it ignorantly, I do not (nor *did* not) feel any condemnation for it.'

Nevertheless he often expresses being greatly humbled under a sense of his folly in not leaving off business when you advised him to it. Though with regard to borrowing (the second thing for which he is accounted dishonest), he never did it after he knew his affairs bad; except two or three persons, and those of whom he borrowed before knew *well* his foundation and therefore there was not the least deception in the world used towards them.

Another thing which might be alleged for him is [that] he was brought up to nothing but the field and blacksmith's business. Consequently [he] had another to learn when he left off that of a smith (which he did on account of a weakness of body) and could not therefore be supposed to be as good a judge of the business he went into as that he had left off.

The second accusation is deviating from truth, or at least speaking somewhat different in giving account of his affairs one time and another. Could he be heard himself, this would be the easiest cleared of anything. When he first gave Mr. Hay,⁹ etc., the account of what he owed, it was before several loses. That is to say, he at that time reckoned debts which were owing to him, and that you know was but just, which since we cannot get.

A third accusation is want of industry. But indeed I need not say much on that head, for at present he hath the management of all our affairs, and hath wrought far more with his own hands than I could wish him to do. If he hath any fault concerning labour, it is going too far for his strength. And as to his spirituality, I do dare to say both himself and [his] family are a pattern, and I have seen a variety of graces in him tried pretty closely more than once. However, when he was in business his soul was not what now it is. God hath since greatly blessed him, and there is *in* him an humble teachable spirit. We told him what you had ordered concerning his preaching, that he should give over doing it till after the Conference; which he did without resistance, and would be now thankful for further directions from you. What we are praying for is this: if we can but raise about 60 pound more, that each might have something and he a free discharge. Then I believe, in a little farm, he could maintain his family and lay up for the remainder part of the debts too.

This I the rather judge from the great capacity which I observe in him for work of that kind, and his great application to it. If we might add to this his acting as a local preacher under your direction, he would praise God. And what we think of, supposing we can bring it to bear, *is this*, that he should have a small farm near us and take a great part of the care of ours as well as his own. Because there are several things in which a master working with the men is abundantly more serviceable than any looking-over that a woman could give them.

I trust a time will come when we shall see you at Gildersome. And my friend¹⁰ and I was saying the other day if you could use this house for what you used to say you would Leytonstone, provided it stood farther from London, we should be thankful. If ever you write in Yorkshire, I hope you won't forget it.¹¹

⁸Note in what follows that Bosanquet is raising only the possibility of Taylor serving as a 'local preacher', not an itinerant. Thus no record is printed of any discussion of Taylor at the 1769 Conference.

⁹This was possibly William Hey (1736–1819), who had recently established his surgical practice in Leeds; or his father Richard Hey (1702–67), of Pudsey, near Leeds.

¹⁰Sarah Crosby.

¹¹JW frequently retreated to homes of supporters when he needed extended time for writing. There were long-standing homes open to him in the London area (near Leytonstone), but he had

You will favour us with a few lines when leisure will permit, and I shall take the liberty of being more particular and oftener writing to you. Because otherwise we shall be more cut off from you than when at Leyton[stone]. And I trust you will never find in us anything contrary to the spirit of that obedience in which I desire to remain, dear sir,

Your grateful and affectionate,

M. B.

Source: Bosanquet manuscript draft; MARC, MAM Fl. 13/1/70.¹²

apparently suggested that if they lived further from London he might stay with Mary Bosanquet's household on such a writing retreat.

¹²We are indebted to David R. Wilson for bringing this letter to our attention, and providing an initial transcription.

From the Rev. Jacob Chapman

[Staplehurst]
July 1, 1769

Reverend Sir,

This day seven years [ago] I first received the preachers. It affords me strong consolation that I did so. I see they are sent of God. You are always heartily welcome to me, and I receive you because you belong to Christ, and are sent by him.

I can truly say that I love you dearer than my life. Blessed be the Lord, who brought me acquainted with you, and the people in connexion with you! The Lord says, 'He that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth me.'¹ It is unspeakable satisfaction to my mind, that I can depend on the word of God. I would believe, think, speak, and act in every thing according to his will, and because it is his will. Nothing satisfies me but the word of God.

It will give me real joy to hear from you. May the Lord guide you by his counsel, and receive you to glory! I am, reverend sir,

Yours, etc.,

J. Chapman

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 7 (1784): 113.

¹John 13:20.

From Elizabeth (Patten) Bennis

Limerick
July 13, 1769

Dear Sir,

I have often thought since you left Limerick, if you did not know me before, you now know me perfectly. All my weakness, ignorance, and errors lie open before you. The Lord knows I desire to appear in your sight what I am in *his* who knows and sees my heart, yet have been grievously exercised since I put my papers into your hands.¹ When you asked them I found a satisfaction in gratifying you, but have since been much tempted both to pride and shame. The exercise has often proved a blessing to my soul, and the looking over former experience has frequently borne me up and strengthened my hands when ready to faint, which makes me still willing to keep them. But indeed they were never intended to be even seen by any but myself, and from their many defects [I] do not see how they can be useful to any other. ... As I suppose you have by this time looked over them, I shall thank you to return them by the preacher who you may send here from Conference.

In the midst of many temptations, I do find the Lord my refuge and support, and at times am given to see, that my heart is wholly dedicated to him. ... Yet [I] am almost continually distressed that I do not live more suitable to such a profession, not only outwardly but inwardly. I see myself every moment full of flaws, wants, and deficiencies; an inconstancy of mind that causes much grief. I know this should not be. ... I see it is my privilege to enjoy constant union and communion with God, to live by faith, and rest in his will. ... I see the happiness of this state, and have had some sweet experience of it, and think I cannot be satisfied till I re-attain it. Yet while I thus see it my privilege and desire, and long so after it, I do not grow toward it. I do not enter into it. There is a something in the way which hinders, and which God only is able to remove. O that he would take it out of the way, that he would totally destroy every thing that opposes his will in my soul.

Mr. Bourk[e]'s² visit here has proved a blessing to my soul, and to his also. I hope the Lord will enable him to keep his hold, and stand by faith against every opposition. He has had some seals to his ministry since he came here. If you could spare him to us this year, I think it would be productive of good.

Dear sir, at present I am exercised inwardly by my enemy, and outwardly by the sickness of two of my children, so that I have much need of your prayers. Through all, the Lord does support me, and am confident that what is best he will do. May *he* continue to be your strength and support, and give you counsel in all your consultations, is the earnest prayer, of

Your ever affectionate,

Eliza Bennis

Source: published transcription; Bennis, *Correspondence*, 33–35.

¹JW had returned to Limerick in early June, and Bennis had entrusted him with her manuscript spiritual journal; see Bennis, *Journal*, 209–11.

²Richard Bourke (d. 1778) was admitted 'on trial' in 1765, to full connection in 1767, and assigned to the Limerick circuit at the 1768 Conference (see *Works*, 10:303, 343, 355). Bourke continued to itinerate until his death, and JW performed his funeral on Feb. 15, 1778 (see this date in JW, *Journal*, *Works*, 23:75–76).

From Ann Bolton¹

Witney
July 26, 1769

Reverend Sir,

On Monday, June 19, as my sister was hearing Mr. Rhodes preach,² she felt her right arm tingle, from her elbow downwards, which was followed with an entire loss of feeling and motion, and continued so without the least strength, although various means were used. The apothecary judged it necessary she should go to Bath. But the Lord interposed, for on Saturday the 24th, about eight o'clock at night, after being electrified, she found herself very faint and weak, and desired to be laid on the bed. Mr. S. calling to see her, she desired him to pray for her, when the Lord was not sought in vain. She says he gave her a full expectation that she should soon be happy in a sense of his love. On being put to bed, a violent shivering seized her. Her tongue seemed to be drawing down her throat. Her hearing and sight were gone, and the other arm appeared dead. But she was not deprived of the use of her reason for one moment. We all expected that death was very near. I sent for brother S. again. In the midst of this confusion, as I was leaning over her, I slowly said, 'Lord, look in mercy upon her!' She immediately cried out with great earnestness, 'He does! He does!' And then lifting up both her hands, clasped them together over her head, crying, 'This is faith! This is faith! Go praise the Lord, for he hath healed my soul and body in a moment.' She says in her extremity these words were applied, 'Be it unto thee even as thou wilt: stretch forth'.³ And immediately she stretched forth her hands, which till then had been dead. At the same time her soul was filled with joy unspeakable.

She had such wisdom and power to speak to all about her that it astonished us. We had two or three friends, a carnal neighbour, and the apothecary present, to whom she spoke exceeding close, showing them their need of repentance and of faith in Jesus. She told the apothecary, if he was not sensible that he was a lost sinner, and then enabled to call Jesus his Saviour, he could not be saved. On his asking her, 'Are you easy?' 'O', said she, 'I wish you were as easy.' But said he, 'Are you free from pain?' 'I wish', said she, 'you were as free from sin. There is but little difference in our age. See, I am likely to enter into eternity in the bloom of life, and you also may soon be cut down. Be in earnest for the salvation of your soul.' The word was not in vain, for he has ever since been much in earnest.

My father was much distressed at her speaking so much. But she said, 'God has opened my mouth, and therefore I must speak for him.' When wrestling with God for others, she had several conflicts with the enemy. On these occasions she often repeated these words, 'No, in the strength of Jesus no, I never will give up my shield.' She seemed to have a clear view of the last day, and frequently repeated these words, 'But gather first my saints, the judge commands, Bring them ye angels from their distant lands.'⁴ On Tuesday morning my brother said, 'My dear, are you happy now?' 'O yes! Yes!' said she,

¹Ann Bolton (1743–1822) was the eldest child of Edward and Sarah (Beecham), from Witney, Oxfordshire. Ann ('Nancy') was exposed to Methodist preaching and joined the society in Witney in Sept. 1764. JW often stayed with her and her brother Edward Bolton, a local preacher, when he passed through Witney and Finstock. Ann became one of JW's most frequent correspondents through the last two decades of his life. This is her first known surviving letter to JW. This letter focuses on her sister Sarah (b. c. 1750). Sarah recovered from this illness, married John Trimmell in Feb. 1770, and died in 1784.

²Benjamin Rhodes (1743–1816) was drawn into Methodist circles under the preaching of Peter Jaco in 1765. He was admitted 'on trial' as an itinerant in 1766, accepted in full connection the following year, and was currently assigned to Oxfordshire (10:317, 342, 368). Rhodes continued to itinerate through 1791. See *AM* 2 (1779): 358–66; or Jackson, *EMP*, 6:223–32 for his autobiographical letter to JW.

³Cf. Matt. 20:28.

⁴Isaac Watts, 'Psalm 50', st. 2., *Psalms of David* (1719), 135.

'Glory be to God, it is glory begun on earth! I am as full as I can hold.' When any one said, 'I hope you will be spared', 'Yes', said she, 'if God has any thing for me to do I shall. But do not think to comfort me by saying so. For blessed be God! I no more fear death than I do your approaching me. O what a mercy it is that I can say, "Thanks be to God who giveth me the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ!"'⁵ She said, 'I cannot desire life or death, but only that the will of God may be done. In one sense it will be my will, because his will is now become mine.' On Wednesday she had such a manifestation of God's love that we expected her soul would take its flight to glory, while she slowly breathed, 'Come Lord Jesus! Come now!'

At present, she feels nothing contrary to love. She expresses a great sense of the necessity of growing in the knowledge and love of God. She makes herself familiar with death, and speaks of it with pleasure. She desires her duty to you, and begs you to remember her before the Lord, and to praise him on her behalf.

I am

Your obliged and affectionate servant,

A. B.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 7 (1784): 167–69.

⁵1 Cor. 15:57.

Joseph Benson to the Rev. Dr. George Dixon¹

[July 27, 1769]

Reverend Sir,

Since I writ to you the other day,² a circumstance hath occurred to my mind which I think it may be well to intimate to you, and I hope will apologize for my freedom in troubling you with this.

I have just writ Mr. John Wesley a circumstantial account of the late affair at Oxford,³ and withal hinted that if he had leisure from his other important employments to write anything upon the occasion, I thought it might be of use, as it appeared a fair opportunity to give mankind a view of their proceedings and to expose their conduct pretty handsomely, since it certainly is quite indefensible. But I advised him, would he think proper to interest himself in the affair, at least to defer it some months, as I did not know but you intended publishing something relating thereto. Now, reverend sir, should you both write, as I cannot conceive you could have anything in view but the promoting the glory of God, with all submission to your superior judgment I humbly offer it as my opinion that it might be very advantageous to the cause for you to communicate to each other what you may write on the subject before it is published. Your mutual reviewal of each other's performances might certainly obviate the inconvenience of both of you dwelling upon the same arguments and saying the same thing. At the same time, that it might render what you both write more complete and perfect, and so less liable to objection. This might be very easily done without it being known, as I cannot think it would be well they should know that you hold any correspondence with Mr. Wesley, or any other so publicly noted as the author and support of Methodism. However, I don't know yet whether Mr. Wesley will either find the leisure for a thing of that kind; or if he should,⁴ whether he may not think that it will be more advantageous for him to be silent, if you will but undertake it.

But still, if he publishes nothing himself, I conceive it might be of use sir if you were to favour him with the perusal of what you have or may write, before it is made public, since his extensive learning, great abilities, and long and much experience in controversial writing, to say nothing of his piety and the acquaintance he must have with the state of the case, render him a person in my opinion very proper to advise in a thing of that nature. And I dare say he himself would be much obliged to you for such a mark of respect, and would certainly take kindly your correspondence and familiarity, and be glad to cultivate it. However that must be left entirely to your own superior judgment, whether you think it proper so to do. I only desire you would not take amiss the liberty I have assumed, since I assure you my intention is upright, however I may mistake in my sentiments of it. And if I have taken too much upon me, I humbly beg you will pardon the simplicity of one who, with the greatest regard and esteem for you, subscribes himself, reverend sir,

Your most obliged and humble servant,

Joseph Benson

Address: 'To / The Revd Dr. Dixon / Principal of St. Ed. Hall / Oxford'.

Source: Benson's manuscript draft of letter; MARC, PLP 7/6/2.

¹While not to JW, this letter provides background for the one that follows. They concern the decision to deny Stephen Seager, one of Benson's Kingswood students, admission to St. Edmund Hall, Oxford. See Randy L. Maddox, 'Resistance to Methodist Students at St. Edmund Hall, Oxford University: The Remarkable Case of Stephen Seager', *Wesley and Methodist Studies* 12 (2020): 71–91.

²No copy of Benson's earlier letter to Dixon is known to survive.

³This letter of Benson to JW is not known to survive.

⁴Benson originally wrote, then struck out, at this point: 'whether he will be inclined to meddle in an affair which could embroil him with the whole university, and of consequence get him more enemies, which may be of prejudice to the work wherein he is engaged'.

From Joseph Benson¹

[Bristol]

c. August 3, 1769

[Background Document²]

University College, Oxon
Monday, July 10, 1769

The Reverend Dr. Dixon, Principal of St. Edmund Hall,³ having acquainted the Vice-Chancellor⁴ that a person admitted a member of his society would offer himself to be matriculated, the Vice-Chancellor saw reason, from what passed in conversation between Dr. Dixon and himself upon the occasion, to make some farther enquiry into the character and conduct of the said person, previous to his matriculation. He therefore sent for him, and received from his own mouth, in the presence of Dr. Dixon, the following account of himself.

June 26, 1769

Mr. Seager,⁵ twenty-two years of age, was originally intended by his father either for the ministry or the law; was bred at two or three different schools till the age of thirteen or fourteen, where he learned nothing but English; was then put apprentice to a silver-plater at Birmingham. When he had been at business about three, four, or five years, he was desirous of buying out his time (but his master would not part with him) in order that he might go to school to improve himself in literature. At the age of near twenty-one he accordingly went to the school at Kingswood near Bristol, where he has been ever since, and has read Sallust, Caesar's *Commentaries*, part of Terence and Virgil, and is now reading the Greek testament.

The Vice-Chancellor submitted the above account to the Hebdomadal meeting,⁶ whose opinion it was that an enquiry should be made into Mr. Seager's character and religious principles during his apprenticeship. To which enquiry the following letter is an answer:

¹Joseph Benson (1748–1821), born of farming stock at Mamerby in Cumberland, and educated by a Presbyterian minister, received a sound classical education. Converted under the influence of a Methodist cousin, he was introduced to JW and appointed classics master at Kingswood School while still in his teens. In 1769 Benson entered St. Edmund Hall, Oxford, but was denied Anglican orders because of his Methodist sympathies. After serving for a short time as headmaster of the Countess of Huntingdon's ministerial training college at Trevecca, he would enter Methodist itinerancy in 1771. Benson was a great favourite of JW and the two corresponded often. This is his first known surviving letter to JW.

²It is generally known that in 1768 six students were expelled from St. Edmund Hall, Oxford University, in large part due to their associations with Methodism; see S. L. Ollard, *The Six Students of St. Edmund Hall expelled from the University of Oxford in 1768* (London: Mowbray, 1911). This is the record of a meeting to prevent another student from enrolling at St. Edmund Hall the following year.

³Rev. Dr. George Dixon (c. 1710–87), Principal of St. Edmund Hall, Oxford from 1760–87.

⁴Nathan Wetherell (1726–1808) was Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University 1768–72.

⁵Stephen Seager (b. c. 1747) attended Kingswood school 1768–79. Little is certain about his life after being denied matriculation at Oxford. He did not become a Methodist itinerant.

⁶An executive body of the University of Oxford that takes its name from its schedule of meeting every seven days.

Birmingham
July 2, 1769

Dear Sir,

Immediately on the receipt of yours I waited on Mrs. Lane,⁷ and she informs me that Stephen Seager behaved himself very well as an apprentice, with diligence and sobriety. He was for some years, while he continued with her, closely connected with the Methodists, and constantly attended their meetings, both public and private. He used to tell his companions in the shop he was born a preacher. And in consequence, I suppose, of that persuasion, on his leaving his mistress, he told her he should go to or near Bristol, to be instructed in an academy there, in such a manner as would qualify him to go to Oxford and become a preacher. This account may, I am persuaded, be relied on, and will sufficiently discover the genuine colour of his principles and character.

Your faithful and obliged humble servant,

J. Audley⁸

This letter being communicated to the Board, it was the unanimous opinion of the heads of houses and proctors that the whole affair should be laid before Convocation, and the sentiments of the house be taken, whether it will be expedient for the Vice-Chancellor to matriculate Mr. Seager under these circumstances.

For this purpose a convocation will be holden on Wednesday next, at twelve o'clock.

N. Wetherell, Vice-Chancellor

Source: printed broadleaf; held in Oxford University, Bodleian Library, Gough Collection.

[Benson's Letter to Wesley]

Dear Sir,

The contents will, I hope, sufficiently apologize for my troubling you with this. Below you have Dr. Dixon's answer to a letter I sent him last week, the purport of which was to desire if he writ anything in relation to Mr. Seager's affair, that he would communicate it to you before its publication.

Dear Sir,

By your favour of the 27th of this month I find you imagine I intend publishing some account of Mr. Seager's affair, but assure yourself I have no such intention. With what purpose I sent for an exact copy of his letter to the Vice-Chancellor will appear from the case drawn up below to be laid before counsel. By which means I trust by the blessing of God I shall be enabled to put a more effectual stop to such violent and unchristian-like proceedings in the University that could possibly be done by writing upon them, at least by myself. But I could wish Mr. Wesley (to whom I beg my kind respects) would be so good as by writing to make these persecutors ashamed of themselves. In about a fortnight or three weeks time I purpose, God willing, to be in town, when I intend to lay what I have sent you before counsel, and should be glad if Mr. Wesley in the meantime would recommend to me a proper person to lay it before, and would at the same time favour me with his observations and advice.

⁷Original note in document: 'Mrs. Lane was the person under whom Mr. Seager served the latter part of his apprenticeship.'

⁸John Audley (1707–82), a native of Birmingham, took his BA from Magdalene College, Oxford in 1727, and continued on to the D.D. degree in 1743. He was currently serving as Vicar of Curdworth, Warwickshire.

What I intend to lay before counsel is this:

The Statute Tit. 2, Sec. 3, *De tempore conditionibus Matriculationis*

The Statute Tit. 2, Sec. 5, *De officio Praefectorum circa Scholares Matriculandos*

The Statute Tit. 17, Sec. 3, §2, *De Auctoritate et Officio Vice-Cancellarii*

‘[...] *et ut Haereticos, Schismaticos, et quoscumque alios minus recte de fide Catholica et Doctrina vel Disciplina Ecclesiae Anglicanae sentientes, procul a finibus Universitatis amandandos curet. Quem in finem, quo quisque modo erga Doctrinam vel disciplinam Ecclesiae Anglicanae affectus sit, Subscriptionis Criterio explorandi ipsi ius ac potestas esto. ... Quod se quis de Schismate suspectus, etc.*

The paper dated July 10th, 1769; signed by the Vice-Chancellor Wetherell (1st⁹)

Mr. Seager's letter to the Vice-Chancellor Wetherell (2nd¹⁰)

The Case

Stephen Seager, aged 22, was admitted a commoner of St. Edmund Hall in the University of Oxford by the Revd. Dr. Dixon, Principal of the said Hall, on the 26 day of June. And on the same day the Principal acquainted the Vice-Chancellor that he intended to offer to him the said Stephen Seager in order to his being matriculated, voluntarily making known to him the particulars of his education, as they are above related by Stephen Seager himself in the paper No. 1. The proceedings of the Vice-Chancellor on this occasion are set forth as above in the same paper, till the holding of the Convocation on Wednesday, July 12th. The Vice-Chancellor then declared that the cause of holding that Convocation was to take the sense of the house, ‘whether it would be expedient for the Vice-Chancellor to matriculate the said Stephen Seager under the circumstances alleged.’ He then ordered the Registrar to read the above mentioned paper No. 1, dated July 10th and signed by himself. But the reply which Stephen Seager had sent to the Vice-Chancellor on July 11th, as contained in the paper No. 2, was not produced by him, nor ordered to be read. The Convocation having thus heard the case *ex parte* only, judged it not expedient for the Vice-Chancellor to matriculate the said Stephen Seager. His literary qualifications were never called in questions, nor was any objection made to then by the Vice-Chancellor or any member of Convocation. And he was all along willing and ready, and is now willing and ready, to subscribe to the 39 Articles of the Church of England, to take the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy, and that of fidelity to the University, and obedience to the Statutes, in the usual form.

In this Case it is Apprehended:

First, that the rights and privileges of private Colleges and Halls have been unjustly and unstatutably infringed. Every governor of a College or Hall in the University has always exercised a right to judge of the qualifications as to age, learning, etc., of the persons whom he admits into his society. The statutes of the University require such person under special penalties to be presented to the Vice-Chancellor within a time limited, that he may be matriculated. If the person thus presented submits *bonâ fide* to the tests which the statutes require, the Vice Chancellor is not warranted by the statutes or usage to repel him; nor can he refuse to matriculate him without manifest injustice to the person himself and the society of which he is an actual member.

⁹See above.

¹⁰This letter has not been located.

Secondly, that it was an unprecedented and irregular step in the Vice-Chancellor to bring this affair before the Convocation; he having proposed it to them for their opinion as a matter of *expediency*, whereas it was a matter of *right*. The Convocation was not called together to make a new statute, or explain the sense of a doubtful one, or to exercise any act of authority where they had proper jurisdiction; but to determine for the Vice-Chancellor whether it was expedient for him to act without the sanction of any statute, against constant usage, and in subversion of the rights and privileges of a particular society in the University.

Third, that supposing the Convocation had *power* to direct the Vice-Chancellor in this matter (which is presumed they had not, because he was not strictly bound by their determination), yet their proceeding was irregular and unjustifiable, because the affair was laid before them in a defective and partial manner; the Vice Chancellor having only ordered the accusation contained in Dr. Audley's letter to be read in the Convocation, but he did not order the defence to be read which Stephen Seager had sent with an intention and request that it might be communicated in the same manner as the former.

Quaere?

Are these sufficient grounds for the Principal of St. Edmund's Hall to apply to the Court of King's Bench for a redress of grievances in this case, by moving for a mandamus in order to compel the Vice-Chancellor to matriculate the said Stephen Seager?

Source: Benson's manuscript copy for his records; MARC, PLP 7/12/28.

From the Rev. George Whitefield

The Downs, on board the *Friendship*, Capt. Ball
September 12, 1769

Reverend and Very Dear Sir,

What hath God wrought *for us, in us, by us!* I sailed out of these Downs almost thirty-three years ago! Oh the heighth, the depth, the length and breadth of thy love O God! Surely it passeth knowledge. Help, help O heavenly Father, to adore what we cannot fully comprehend! I am glad to hear that you had such a Pentecost-season at the college.¹ One would hope that these are earnest of good things to come, and that our Lord will not yet remove his candlestick from among us. Duty is ours. Future things belong to him, who always did, and always will order all things well.

Leave to his sovereign sway
To choose and to command:
So shall we wondering own his sway,
How wise, how strong his hand!²

Mutual Christian love will not permit you, and those in connection with you, to forget a willing pilgrim, going now across the Atlantic for the thirteenth time. At present I am kept from staggering; being fully persuaded that this voyage will be for the Redeemer's glory, and the welfare of precious and immortal souls. Oh to be kept from flagging in the latter stages of our road! *Ipse, deo volente, sequar, etsi non passibus aequis.*³

Cordial love and respect await your brother, and all that are so kind as to enquire after, and be concerned for, reverend and very dear sir,
Less than the least of all,

G. Whitefield

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 7 (1784): 273–74.

¹JW had visited Trevecca in late August, to attend a celebration of Lady Huntingdon's birthday and the first anniversary of the college she had established there. See JW, *Journal*, Aug. 23–24, 1769, *Works*, 22:200–01.

²JW's translation of a hymn by Paul Gerhardt, titled 'Trust in Providence', st. 13, *HSP* (1739), 143.

³'He, God willing, I will follow, if not with equal steps.' This may be a slight misprint in *AM* of a very similar quote Whitefield used in a Dec. 3, 1753 letter to JW: '*I prae, sequar, etsi non passibus aequis.*' This is a combination of two quotations, from Terence (*The Lady of Andros*, 172, and *The Eunuch*, 908), and Virgil (*Aeneid*, ii.724). 'Go before; I will follow after, though not with matching steps.'

From Hannah Ball¹

[High Wycombe]
September 26, 1769

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I return you thanks for another proof of your care for my soul.² I bless my God, he enables me to

Trace his example, the world to disdain
And continually trample on pleasure and pain.³

This morning I found myself as much in need of fresh grace for the soul as a beggar of food for the body. Every fresh trial requires a renewal of grace. Blessed be God, that in him all fulness dwells! I only desire a seeking mind; for God has promised, 'They that seek shall find.'⁴ I have reason to praise God. I find him faithful to his promise, for he never sends me away empty. I hope soon to have the pleasure of hearing you preach on holiness of heart—a subject which few relish. May I be more and more convinced of the necessity of present holiness of heart. And may your words have the desired effect on believers, that they may see and feel the necessity of sanctification. Satan not unfrequently hinders the upright from seeking Christian perfection. I pray God to give you strength to preach this doctrine, as you have hitherto done, to your life's end.

Your affectionate servant,

H. Ball

Source: published transcription; Ball, *Memoir*, 33–34.

¹Hannah Ball (1733–92), of High Wycombe, was drawn to Methodism by the sermons of Thomas Walsh. She soon began correspondence with JW, with letters surviving from 1768–89. This is Ball's first surviving letter to JW.

²This reference is likely not to JW's letter of Mar. 29, but a later letter not known to survive.

³Cf. CW, 'Hymns for Christian Friends XVII', st. 3, *HSP* (1749), 2:284: 'To track thy example, / The world to disdain, / And constantly trample / On pleasure and pain.' A revised form of this hymn with 'trace thy example' was apparently being sung in Methodist settings, and would make its way into the 1780 *Collection of Hymns*, #472 (see *Works*, 7:656).

⁴Cf. Prov. 8:17, and Jer. 29:13.

Lady Huntingdon to Joseph Benson¹

Bath
October 11, 1769

Mr. Benson,

By a letter from Mr. [John] Wesley I find he is inclined to part with you by the summer. Your character from him and others dispose me to secure you as first master under Mr. Fletcher at my college. Could Mr. Wesley spare you one day to come over to Bath, matters might be settled more to your satisfaction, as well as mine. I desire my love to Mr. Wesley, and am sir,

Your friend faithfully,

S. Huntingdon

Address: 'To / Mr. Benson / Schoolmaster / at Kingswood'.

Endorsement: by Benson; 'L Huntingdon, Oct 69'.

Source: holograph; Duke, Rubenstein, Frank Baker Collection of Wesleyana, Box CO 4.

¹While this letter is not to JW, it is included because of its centrality to his interactions with Joseph Benson in the coming months. By late Nov. 1769 Benson had decided to accept the offer to move to Trevecca, though he did not make the move until mid-1770. See James Macdonald, *Memoirs of the Rev. Joseph Benson* (London: T. Blanshard, 1822), 16.

From Elizabeth (Patten) Bennis

Limerick
October 17, 1769

Dear Sir,

After some delays occasioned by unforeseen circumstances, I have received the two books, and your kind letters from Dublin and Bristol.¹ I want words to express the gratitude I feel for your love and tender care over me. May God still continue this mercy to a poor unworthy creature. Weak and imperfect as my petitions to the throne of grace are, I cannot cease offering them up for you whilst I am able to pray for myself.

As to the state of my soul at present, it still continues (as mentioned in a former letter) to be a mixture of happiness and distress. I feel my heart given to the Lord, and he knows that it is the desire of my soul that his will should be done in me, by me, and upon me. Yet I find such deficiencies in every respect as bows me down and hinders my constantly rejoicing in him, and am often afraid that I shall perish after all. Can this be consistent with perfect love? I do not feel that measure of happiness and resting in God which I once did. My soul mourns after it, and cannot be satisfied without it, yet cannot come by faith so as that I may receive it. When I would, I find my way so closed up that I cannot get through, and such a feebleness of soul that I cannot persist, but sink down again into an inactive sorrow and distress. The Lord does give me to feel the consolations of his spirit, and *does* draw my heart after himself. But [I] do not find that total oblivion of self, that entire sequestration from every earthly thing, that delightful fellowship with and constant enjoyment of God, which I once possessed but lost by my unfaithfulness. O how can I feed those sheep committed to my care? The charge lies very heavy on me. Dear sir, cease not to pray for

Your unworthy child in Christ,

Eliza Bennis

Source: published transcription; Bennis, *Correspondence*, 38–40.

¹See the letters of July 24 and Sept. 18, 1769 (*Works*, 28:234, 246–47). The two ‘books’ were manuscript volumes of Bennis’s spiritual journal that JW was returning.

From Joseph Pilmore¹

Philadelphia
October 31, 1769

Reverend Sir,

By the blessing of God we are safe arrived here, after a tedious passage of nine weeks. We were not a little surprised to find Capt. [Thomas] Webb in town, and a society of about a hundred members, who desire to be in close connection with you. 'This is the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes.'²

I have preached several times, and the people flock to hear in multitudes. Sunday night I went out upon the common. I had the stage appointed for the horse-race for my pulpit, and I think between four and five thousand hearers, who heard with attention still as night. Blessed be God for field-preaching! When I began to talk of preaching at five o'clock in the morning, the people thought it would not answer in America. However I resolved to try, and had a very good congregation.

Here seems to be a great and effectual door opening in this country, and I hope many souls will be gathered in. The people in general like to hear the word, and seem to have some ideas of salvation by grace. They seem to set light to opinions—that which is the most prevalent is *universal salvation!* And if this be true, then perhaps (as Count Zinzendorf observed) we may 'See the devil falling before the Saviour, and kissing his feet!' I have been to visit Mr. Stringer,³ who is very well. He bears a noble testimony for our blessed Jesus, and I hope God does bless him.

When I parted with you at Leeds, I found it very hard work. I have reason to bless God that ever I saw your face. And though I am well nigh four thousand miles from you, I have an inward fellowship with your spirit. Even while I am writing, my heart flows with love to you and all our dear, dear friends at home. In a little time we shall all meet in our Father's kingdom,

Where all the storms of life are o'er,
And pain and parting is no more.⁴

This, reverend and dear sir, is and shall be, the earnest prayer of
Your unworthy son in the gospel,

J. Pilmoor

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 276–77.

¹Joseph Pilmore (1743–1825), a native of Yorkshire, was converted by JW around 1759. After some time at Kingswood school he entered the itinerancy 'on trial' in 1765. At the 1769 Conference, in response to the plea of Thomas Taylor's letter of Apr. 11, 1768, Pilmore and Richard Boardman were appointed to cross the sea to North America, to serve the fledgling Methodist movement in the colonies (*Works*, 10:374). This is his first surviving letter to JW. His last name was often spelled 'Pilmoor'.

²Ps. 118:23, Mark 1:11.

³This may be the Joshua Stringer JW had met in Georgia.

⁴CW, 'On the Death of a Child', st. 6, *Redemption Hymns* (1747), 37.

From Richard Boardman¹

New York
November 4, 1769

Reverend Sir,

After a nine-weeks' voyage of great difficulties, we safely arrived at Philadelphia. Several said there had not, in the memory of the oldest man on the continent, been such hard gales of wind as those for a few months past. Many vessels have been lost, while others got in with loss of masts and much damage to their cargoes. We observed shipwrecks all along the coast of the Delaware. I never understood David's words as I now do. 'They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters, these see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep.'² In calm, serene weather I found much exercise of mind, strong temptations, and great dejection. In rough, stormy weather, particularly when it appeared morally impossible the vessel should live long amidst conflicting elements, I found myself exceeding happy, and rested satisfied that death would be gain. I do not remember to have had one doubt of being eternally saved, should the mighty waters swallow us up. This was the Lord's doing! O may it ever be marvelous in my eyes!

When I came to Philadelphia I found a little society, and preached to a great number of people. I left brother Pilmore there, and set out for New York. Coming to a large town on my way, and seeing a barrack, I asked a soldier if there were any Methodists belonging to it? 'O yes', said he, 'we are all Methodists; that is, we should all be glad to hear a Methodist preach.' 'Well', said I, 'tell them in the barrack that a Methodist preacher, just come from England, intends to preach here to night.' He did so, and the inn was soon surrounded with soldiers. I asked, 'Where do you think I can get a place to preach in?' (It being then dark.) One of them said, 'I will go and see if I can get the Presbyterian meeting-house.' He did so, and soon returned to tell me he had prevailed and that the bell was just going to ring to let all the town know. A great company soon got together, and seemed much affected.

The next day I came to New York. Our house contains about seventeen hundred hearers. About a third part of those who attend the preaching get in, the rest are glad to hear without. There appears such a willingness in the Americans to hear the word as I never saw before. They have no preaching in some parts of the back settlements. I doubt not but an effectual door will be opened among them. O may he now give his Son the heathen for his inheritance!

The number of blacks that attend the preaching affects me much. One of them came to tell me she could neither eat nor sleep, because her master would not suffer her to come to hear the word. She wept exceedingly, saying, 'I told my master I would do more work than ever I used to do, if he would but let me come; nay, that I would do every thing in my power to be a good servant.'

I find a great want of every gift and grace for the great work before me. I should be glad of your advice. But, dear sir, what shall I say to almost everybody I see—they ask, 'Does Mr. Wesley think he shall ever come over to see us?'

I am, dear sir,

Your affectionate son and servant,

R. Boardman

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 7 (1784): 163–64.

¹Richard Boardman (c. 1738–82) began itinerating about 1764, though the first time he appears in the Conference Minutes is in 1765 (see *Works*, 10:304). The death of his wife and daughter left Boardman open to accept appointment in 1769 to the fledgling Methodist community in North America.

²Ps. 107:23–24.

From Emma Moon

Potto

November 4, 1769

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I find the greatest reason to adore my dear Redeemer for his love towards me, who gives me the sweet experience of the increase of his life in my soul. I find the Lord always before me, yet by different operations of his Spirit. I see an infinite fullness in Jesus, and feel my heart drawn out with a strong desire for greater degrees of his love. I see myself the most unworthy, weak, and ignorant of all his creatures. My path is exceeding narrow, and my dangers daily great. Yet the Lord is always sufficient, and I can trust him at all times. At other times I find my spirit lost in his fullness, and swallowed up in the ocean of his love. My soul lies in the dust before him, while I desire all his creatures to praise his name. After such strong consolations I often find myself much assaulted with men and devils. In which moments I hear my Saviour whisper to me, 'It is given to thee not only to believe, but to suffer for my sake.'¹ I then feel such a patient resignation of myself, and all things, into his hand that I do not find a wish in my heart but what I can sacrifice to him, which gives me constant happiness and a power to rejoice in all things. I often find the greatest danger in my most prosperous moments, both for body and soul—at which times the enemy is sure to whisper, 'Now take thy ease.' But I look to Christ for strength to despise, and fight, and conquer all my enemies. As to my conduct, I desire to shun every appearance of evil, both in word and work. I thank the Lord who so keeps me that I know nothing by myself. Yet by this I am not justified, for I look to be daily plunged into that fountain which is opened for sin and uncleanness. To be washed from all my pollution, I cast myself entirely upon *him*, who saves me for his own name's sake, and trust to be swallowed up in his fullness every moment, for I know no end thereof.

I am, reverend and dear sir,

Yours, etc.,

E. M.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 610–11.

¹Phil. 1:29.

From John Dillon

Dublin
November 21, 1769

Reverend Sir,

I look upon it to be my duty to give you some account of the society here.

The preachers, stewards, and leaders are all in unity.

There is reason to believe that the leaders are as the heart of one man, for the glory of God and the good of souls.

The bands and classes meet well, and are increasing in the knowledge and love of God.

Several new members are added; others have found peace, and some backsliders are brought back.

The leaders say this society has not been in so good a way for a great while past. But I could wish there was more simplicity amongst us, and a greater looking through all men to God, that he might carry on his own work in his own way.

Through mercy, I have been enabled to preach hitherto (except a little at first) as often as I should have done here, had I been in perfect health. Sometimes two or three nights in a week. Since I came here, I have been sorely tempted that the Lord would work no more by me. But a few nights ago, while I was speaking, he set one at liberty who did not belong to us. Since then, she can scarce do anything but praise God. I hope the Lord is about to make bare his arm.

I am, reverend sir,

Yours at command,

J. D.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 275.

From Johan Hinrik Lidén¹

London
November 24, 1769

Max. Rever. D. Joh. Wesley²
s. d. l.
Joh. Hen. Lidén

Magnopere doleo, Vir Summe Reverende, me amico Tuo et iam diu exspectato colloquio, apud communem nostrum Amicum Dominum Ley, frui nuper non potuisse. Promiseram dudum, in Societate Regia, eodem me die adfore.

Quas mihi Amicorum Optimus, Dominus Ramel, tuo nomine tradidit Libros et Responsiones ad propositas a me quaestiones, recte accepi: quas vero Tibi rependam gratiarum actiones, nescius omnino sum. Adeo enim grata mihi erant ut nihil supra. Novi occupationes Tuas, per multos dudum annos indefessas, vel minimum temporis spatium interstrepere notui; me ignaro, meas Tecum communicavit Questiones Dominus Ley, ad pergratum simul praestitit amicitia officium. Vel inde vides me praeoccupatis minime favere opinionibus. Fateor multa me dudum in Methodistarum controversia legisse, sed praesens plura atq[ue] meliora expertus sum. Si non alium ex mea in Angliam peregrinatione tulerim fructum, saltem Religionis apud Vos statum studiose explorare conatus sum. Historiam Methodistarum aliquando condere mecum constitui; neque enim extra Angliam Vestram admodam nota omnibus res est. Gratias tibi hunc publice agere licebit promeritas. Sed de his coram plura. Etenim Angliam me non prius relicturum spero, quam Te, Vir Amicissime, salutaverim hominem vere religiosum, periculis interritum, cupiditatibus inactum[?], inter adversa felicem, et in mediis temporalibus placidum. Tu vero in Salvatore dulcissimo recte valeas, meq[ue] semper memor sis. Vale.
Dabam, Londini, d. xxiv. Nov. MDCCLXIX

Translation

To the Most Reverend John Wesley
Johan Henry Liden
freely sends greetings!

I deeply regret, most reverend sir, that I was not able to enjoy that friendly and long expected conversation with you at the house of our friend Mr. Ley. I had promised earlier to be present at the Royal Society on the same day.

¹Johan Hinric Lidén (1741–93) was born in Sweden. His father was an academic and Johan also pursued an academic life, writing his Master's thesis on the history of Swedish poetry. Lidén was active in a Pietist strand of Swedish Lutheranism and after completing his Master's degree he took time to tour through Denmark, Germany, and England. While in England he made contact with JW and was favourably impressed by Methodism. An extract of his journal account of this meeting is available in *WHS* 17 (1929): 2–4. See also Olé Borgen, 'John Wesley and early Swedish Pietism: Carl Magnus Wrangel and Johan Hinric Lidén', *Methodist History* 38 (2000): 82–103; esp. 94–99.

²Prof. Owen Ewald of Seattle Pacific University assisted in transcribing the Latin and providing the translation that follows.

I have received in good order the books and responses to the questions I had proposed, which Mr. Ramel,³ handed over to me in your name; but I know not with what deeds of thanks I may repay you. Indeed, they were more welcome to me than anything earlier. Not knowing the many demands on your time over the last tiring years, Ley shared with you my questions. His friendship provided a very pleasing service—not to preoccupy you, much less to court a favourable opinion. I admit that I have read much about the controversy over the Methodists. I have recently experienced many good things. If I take no other benefit from my travels in England, at least I tried to examine carefully the status of religion among you. I have agreed to prepare a history of Methodism in the near future, for the situation is utterly unknown to all outside of England. I will be publicly allowed to give you well-earned thanks. However, face to face I will thank you even more. In truth, I hope that I will not leave England before I have greeted you, a person truly religious, undaunted by dangers, untouched by desires, happy amid adversities, and peaceful in changing times, O most affectionate sir!

But may you be strong in the sweetest Saviour, and may you always remember me.

Farewell!

Address: 'To the Rev. Mr. John Wesley'.

Annotation: by JW, 'M. Liden / 24 Nov. 1769 / ad. 30'.

Source: holograph; MARC, WCB, D6/1/224.

³Hans Ramel (1724–99), currently a secretary at the Swedish Ambassador in London, was active among the Methodists.

From Joseph Benson¹

[c. November 25] 1769

The story was not invented of me particularly. On the contrary, I have reason to think I was very little concerned in it. For though Mr. Bork's² letter did not mention anyone's name, yet by the letters the Trimbottoms wrote,³ and what I heard from Mr. Whitehead⁴ and others concerning the reports in Bristol, I have reason to think I was not the person accused—at least, so they told me when I asked them. And so you intimated in your letter to Mr. Lewis⁵ desiring him to inquire of me particularly, which letter he bluntly read before Mr. Hind, who thence inferred you thought him a person of no veracity. I leave, therefore, you to judge what temptation I had to be 'ruffled'. ...

I knew you were not well reconciled to me when you left Bristol. And farther, it occurred to my mind in what manner you had parted with most of the masters, who I find have generally gone away with offence. And, in particular, how disrespectfully you spoke of Mr. Wh—⁶ in the public society, which I can assure you grieved me much, as I know it did many beside me who heartily love you and the cause wherein you are engaged. I had also just heard what method you took to tell Mr. Henderson your mind.⁷

...

You think 'honour and power have done me no good'. I should think you mentioned honour by way of irony; and as for power, I am puzzled to find where I have had any, unless you mean over a few children.

But so it is, and so it always has been. You have had the misfortune to mistake your friends and enemies. Whoever has made it a point (in order to gain your favour) to contradict you in nothing, but professed implicitly to follow your direction and abide by your decision, especially if they added thereto the warmest expressions of regard for you and told you a tale of their being saved from sin and perfected in love, they never failed to gain your favour in an high degree, and, what is worse, have often used it to a bad purpose, by filling your ear with insinuations against others. And such have generally gained credit with you. ... On the other hand whoever, from a conviction that all men are fallible and that implicit obedience is due to God alone, could not in conscience acquiesce in your bare *ipse dixit*, but have believed it their duty to call in question some things you have advanced, and perhaps made bold to take notice to yourself of what appeared to them amiss—if added to this, their modesty would not permit them

¹John Telford gives excerpts from this letter of Benson, replying to JW's letter of Nov. 19, 1769. Telford's source has not been located.

²Surely Richard Bourke, the itinerant, currently stationed in Ireland.

³Apparently the parents of a Kingswood student from Ireland, who was involved in the story; cf. JW to Benson, Nov. 5, 1769 stressing the connection to Ireland.

⁴John Whitehead (c. 1740–1804) was admitted as a travelling preacher in 1765, served in Ireland and England for four years, and had just desisted travelling in 1769 (see *Works*, 10: 303, 367). He was currently in Bristol, and preparing to take leadership in Kingswood School (though this lasted only briefly as he soon married Ann Smith and became a linen-drapeer.

⁵Likely Thomas Lewis, who was a General Steward in Bristol (see *Works*, 10:873). JW's letter to Lewis is not known to survive.

⁶Likely George Whitefield.

⁷John Henderson (1757–88), the son of the itinerant Richard Henderson. John began studying at Kingwood at a young age and by the age of eight he understood Latin well enough to teach it there. In 1769 he too moved to Trevecca, to teach Greek, and this would be the occasion of JW's remarks. In 1781 Henderson went to Pembroke College, Oxford, where he acquired a reputation as a polymath in languages, philosophy, law, and medicine.

to tell you how sincerely they loved you or how much they were devoted to God—such persons have in general stood low in your esteem, and had the misfortune and discouragement to find you set light by their services and put a misconstruction on their whole conduct. And yet they were all the while your most faithful and affectionate friends, who would tell to your face what they would not even intimate behind your back, and would notice to yourself weaknesses and mistakes (*et humanum est errare*⁸) which they would by all means conceal from the world.

'If you will go, you must go.' Is this all the answer I must have when, after stating the case and showing you the necessity, I asked your advice in an affair of such importance. These are all the thanks I must receive for putting myself to so many inconveniences to serve you. After exhausting my spirits from morning to night in a school where you are sensible I should have had an assistant, especially for these twelve months last, to the prejudice of my spiritual proficiency, to say nothing (for they are not worth mentioning) of temporal inconveniences. And why should I not take you at your word? No, I have too much love for the children, too much regard for their parents, and (whether you will believe it or no) too much sense of my duty to God and respect for yourself, to leave things in such confusion.

Source: published excerpts; Telford, *Letters*, 5:157–59.

⁸'To be human is to be capable of error.' An ironic reference to this phrase in JW's Sermon 39, 'Catholic Spirit', I.4, *Works*, 2:84.

From the Rev. Gilbert Boyce¹

[Coningsby, Lincolnshire]

1770

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I remember I once told you I had begun to write something in answer to what you (now a long time since) had last wrote to me. But I soon after laid it aside, and never intended to proceed any farther in it, because what you had written to me was no answer to what I had written to you. But since that time, it having been so often reported that you had, both publicly and privately, told many persons you had written to me last, and from thence it was inferred by many of your followers, in a sort of triumph, that what you had written was *unanswerable*. On hearing of this, many of my friends requested—nay, from time to time strongly importuned—me to draw up an answer and send it to the press. I have at length yielded to their restless solicitations, and have attempted an answer not only to your last letter, but also to some things which you have advanced in your *Notes* on the New Testament and in some other writings.

You will easily perceive, sir, that I write no more from anger now than I did before; that I am just as free, open, and simple as I was then. I have no notion of giving men hard names, defaming their persons or characters. No, sir, I look upon that to be a most scandalous, unchristian, and unjustifiable practice, and what I hope I shall never be guilty of. I have no design in the least degree to promote unchristian strife and contention; but on the contrary, love, peace, and unity. And therefore I do not contend for mere opinions, but for that 'faith which was once delivered to the saints'.² I hope therefore my publishing what I have now written in answer to your last letter, with an abstract of what was formerly passed between us, as introductory thereto, will not displease you.

For my desire is still to do everything that is just and right, to have everything kept in the same place where our great Master has fixed it. And to know *what* is just and right, and *where* and *how* everything in the worship and service of God ought to be fixed, we must undoubtedly have recourse to the word of God. Therefore (according to Article 6) I say, 'Holy Scripture contains all things necessary to salvation. So that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith.'³ You also say, 'Can any steward of the mysteries of God be found faithful if he change any part of that sacred *depositum*? No. He can abate nothing. He can soften nothing. He is constrained to declare unto all men "I may not bring down the Scripture to your taste. You must come up to it or perish forever".'⁴

What words can be more awful and solemn than these? Again, you appeal to the 'law and to the testimony, as the only sure and infallible test of all. That all doctrines are to be decided by Scripture and reason. That whatsoever is agreeable to these you receive, as on the other hand, whatever is contrary thereto you reject.'⁵ To all which, with the utmost readiness and cheerfulness, I subscribe a hearty 'Amen'.

And yet we are still divided. How must we account for it? The Scripture is not divided against itself. The Father is not divided. The Son is not divided. The Spirit is not divided. God is unity. And we are sure there is no division in heaven. Saints and angels are perfectly united in worship, adoration, and praise. What means all this jumble, confusion, and distraction here on earth? Is it because the Scripture is

¹JW and Gilbert Boyce had exchanged several letters in 1750 (see *Works*, 26:418–24, 424–27, 439–40). This is Boyce's preface letter to a published collection of their earlier interchange.

²Jude 3.

³Church of England, Article of Religion VI.

⁴JW, *Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*, Part III, III.2, *Works*, 11:291.

⁵This is apparently Boyce's summary of JW's argument in *A Letter to the ... Bishop of Gloucester*; see particularly II.15 (*Works*, 11:514) and II.17 (516).

not sufficiently clear and convincing. No, that cannot be. For how would God be just if the rule he gave us to walk by was not easy and intelligible? Is it because he is mindless of his creatures, careless whether they are happy or miserable? No, this cannot be neither. For how would he be a merciful God? 'God is love'.⁶ Once more, is it because he leaves every man to his liberty to choose what he pleases and reject what he does not like? No, this is not at all likely. For where would be his authority as a lawgiver? But it is to be feared men have taken this ungiven liberty, and thereby have thrown the Christian world into all that anarchy and disorder which so evidently, but lamentably, appears at this day.

From this unhappy source has issued such a mighty stream on contention as will not, I fear, be easily stopped. And indeed how should it be otherwise, when men will not be governed by the rule as God gave it, but will boldly either add to or diminish, or change some part or other of it, or substitute something of their own instead of it, to gratify and make it speak in favour of their own selfish and ambitious humours, their high conceits and fond opinions? But you have observed in your rules for your societies, 'The Scripture is the *only* rule, and the *sufficient* rule.'⁷ This is bravely said indeed, sir. All therefore that I insist upon, and desire of you, is that you would prove by this unerring rule, of which 'nothing can be abated, nothing softened',⁸ nor changed, that the Church of England is the one true Church of Christ; or show me where to find it. When you have finished this work, sir, you will certainly have performed a very noble and a very signal piece of service for much great good to mankind. And I promise you that if I live to see it done, I will immediately join myself thereto, and use my utmost endeavours to persuade as many as I can to join with me.

I am, reverend and dear sir, with great respect and esteem, truly and unfeignedly,
Your very affectionate, though unworthy, brother in the Lord Jesus Christ,

Gilbert Boyce

Source: published transcription; Boyce, *Serious Reply*, 1–4.

⁶1 John 4:8, 16.

⁷See JW, *General Rules of the United Societies*, §7, *Works*, 9:73.

⁸JW, *Farther Appeal*, Part III, III.2, *Works*, 11:291.

From Sarah Crosby

[Batley, Yorkshire¹]

February 14, 1770

I am greatly obliged to my honoured father for his kind and friendly answer to my last.² I feel myself very unworthy of favours from anyone, but most of all from *him* who is such an one as Paul the aged, and ready to be offered as a sacrifice for the service of his people's faith, having fought a 'good fight'.³ O that he may finish his course with great joy.

You ask how the work of the Lord prospers in my soul, etc.⁴ I have had a great desire to tell you as simply as I can, for the longer I live the more beauty and sweetness I discern in true childlike simplicity. Yet a little while and I shall be where all veils shall be taken away, the shades dispersed, and the lights of eternity shining shall disclose the inmost recesses and most latent mazes of the human soul. And as I am fully convinced at that awful period the voice of the almighty, all wise, and all gracious BEING, whom now I call with reverence 'My father, and my friend', shall pronounce the blessed or the dreadful sentence; I therefore judge it now my highest wisdom, and find it productive of my greatest happiness, with humble submission to desire to know his thoughts concerning me, which I find are thoughts of peace and not of evil. I have a desire not only to leave vain things to the vain, but to pass through the judgment of all creatures and constantly to live in obedience to that light shining upon me, which my steadfast hope is will shine to the perfect day.

As for myself, I am all infirmities. I see as clear as the light that shines that there is no health, no strength, no power to effect any good thing. Separate from Jesus I can do nothing. And separate from evil I am all human weakness. Words can't describe how mean I am. After all my Lord has done for me, and borne with me, I am less than nothing! Once I thought I was put in possession of much. But now I see I possess nothing. Jesus holds all in his own hand, from whence I receive each moment by looking to him—or go without, which I too often do. Indeed, he allows me to call *him* 'mine', which I esteem an inestimable privilege, and in the enjoyment of which I am often very happy. I frequently feel such an heaven-felt delight in communion with the holy Jesus, in whom I am made sensible dwells all the fullness of the Godhead, as is far superior to any delights I ever felt in created good (though I have sometimes felt great delights in the refined pleasures of friendship). Yet at some times my Lord suffers⁵ me to be present with the burdens I have to bear for a time. And I have desire to know your judgment. Though lately I have been convinced that part is bodily, for I am not so well in health as I was some years ago.⁶

I feel it is good thus to write, for even now his love fairly flows, and by believing I feel him present.

I shall rejoice to receive a letter from you soon, filled with holy instructions, etc. And I pray to be interested in your prayers, that I may practice all the will of God. I pray that the God of peace and love may be your comforter and guide, supporting you under all your trials, that your heart and mouth may be

¹In late 1768 Sarah Crosby joined Mary Bosanquet in relocating from Leytonstone, Essex to a farm in Batley, Yorkshire, about 5 miles southwest of Leeds.

²We have no surviving content from this letter of Crosby to JW.

³See 2 Tim. 4:7.

⁴JW does not raise this question in his letter of Jan. 1, 1770 to Sarah Crosby (see *Works*, 28:273), so there is at least one intervening letter that does not survive.

⁵Four lines of text are crossed out at this point in Crosby's initial draft, and almost certainly did not appear in the holograph to JW, since the thought line continues across the divide.

⁶Four and a half lines of text are crossed out at this point and illegible. Again, none of this material likely appeared in the letter sent to JW.

ever filled with his praise.

I am, my dear and honoured father, in the spirit of obedient love,
Your affectionate child and servant,

S. C.

Source: manuscript draft, kept for her records; Duke, Rubenstein, Sarah Crosby letter-book, 45–47.

From Thomas Eden [Jr.]¹

[Broad Martston, Gloucestershire]

February 14, 1770

Reverend Sir,

For some time, since I have known the Lord, I have been convinced of the necessity of a farther, and greater change, that I might glorify God inwardly and outwardly—especially as a preacher of the gospel. He has been pleased many times to shine upon my way and make it more plain to me. And very often, a desire after this, has reigned over, and kept still, all other desires. But when he is about to bless me, I shamefully oppose his gracious will, by false reasoning. Now, sir, if you can lead me through these difficulties, I shall esteem you my best friend, under our *exalted* Jesus.

I have often found the word of one who believed the work greatly *blessed* to me, as I did when I was with you at Witney. The Spirit of God so applied the word to my soul that I could have wished to have been in company with none but God, that I might have fully poured out the desire of my heart unto him. But often when I think of receiving salvation *now*, I much question my having been enough convinced of my want of it. I fully intended to have been with you at London, before you set out on your spring journey, but the Lord prevented me, by permitting affliction to befall me. I had a fever, and a disorder which threatened my lungs. The physician apprehended great danger, but the Lord gave me such an assurance that he would complete the work that the messenger, death, was no way terrible. But my merciful restorer has brought me back from the gates of death, for which I praise and adore his holy name.

The work of God here is in some measure widening and deepening. Several are lately brought into the rest 'that is glorious'.²

I remain

Your affectionate brother in Christ,

T. E—n

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 7 (1784): 274–75.

¹Thomas Eden was born in 1750 in Broad Marston, Gloucestershire, to Thomas and Susannah (Smith) Eden. He did join JW soon after this letter, and was admitted as a travelling preacher in 1771 (see *Works*, 10:395), but did not remain long. See the letter from his father (Aug. 24, 1772) and his later letter to JW (July 25, 1773).

²See Isa. 11:10.

From Mrs. A. F.¹

February 21, 1770

Reverend Sir,

I have experienced, within these few days, the infelicity of having my mind drawn two ways at once, which made me so long defer writing about going to Bristol. My inclination strongly prompts me to go, but my duty seems to fix me at home.

I should be sorry you should think an over-fond attachment to the low affairs of life prevented me from embracing the happy occasion. Indeed sir, my concern with them is of constraint, and not of choice; though I willingly submit to the confinement, from a conviction it is that state of life which providence allots me. The thought that I am doing the will of God often prevents me from murmuring. I know his will is my sanctification, and therefore I am persuaded he will require nothing but what is necessary to carry on that work. If I did not believe this, I should repine, when I long exceedingly to be rid of all the cares, and solitudes of life—which, though they only relate to the perishable body, yet too often encumber and fatigue the immortal soul. O how happy are they who are delivered from all these perplexities! Who are safely lodged in the mansions of eternal repose! I almost envy their happiness, and cannot forbear lamenting when I reflect that, a few months ago, when I was so near to such felicity, I was not then admitted to be a partaker of it. O why did not the everlasting gates lift up their heads, to receive a poor wandering pilgrim in! I sometimes chide, and sometimes deplore, my wretched nature that was not at that time ready for such a blissful state. But when I consider that salvation is all of grace, and that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, I stand amazed that a life so insignificant, and so unimportant, should be again restored from the grave. If it has been in answer to the prayer of any, sure it is only to convince them that if their request was granted, yet there was no need of me. Oh sir, deeply impressed as I have constantly been since my illness, by such thoughts as these, can I help enquiring,

What is life? And its dull round
To tread, why was my spirit bound?²

Whenever I assemble with the congregation of the faithful, I think, how far short does this fall of that worship which is paid before the throne! Here a thousand things intrude upon the mind, interrupt our most serious devotion, and disturb our most retired moments. But there, we shall always see, adore, and love!

There is nothing I meet with but what makes me wish and long to be in heaven. If I am lively, and affected by the sweet refreshing showers of divine love distilling upon my soul, it soon grows less when I begin to reflect how small and faint is that which I now feel to what I should at this time possess, if I was among the happy number of just men made perfect! If I am dull and stupid, as I often am, I mourn that I am not in that place where I can never be subject to such sad vicissitudes. If I am happy in friendship, and favoured with the company I like, I think it a poor resemblance of the most perfect blessedness. If I meet with disappointments, I sink under them and say,

To mourn and to suffer is³ mine,
While bound in a prison I breathe,

¹It seems this correspondent had been invited by JW to move to Bristol, likely to help at either the New Room or Kingswood School.

²Cf. John Gambold, 'The Mystery of Life', st. 1, *HSP* (1739), 7: 'O what is life! And this dull round / To tread, why was a spirit bound?'

³Orig., 'be'; changed by JW in his personal copy of *AM*.

And still for deliverance pine,
And long for the summons of death.⁴

This is a true picture of my mind, and in this light I view all the occurrences I meet with. It has so far a good effect upon me as to keep me free from too great an attachment to all below, where I see there is nothing certain but disappointment, nothing solid but misery. And convinces me that so insatiable as my thirst often is for uninterrupted happiness, and so incapable as everything is here of quenching it, there must be a state where all my boundless wants will be supplied. And that for that state I was created, and only placed in this world to be prepared for it. Convinced of this, I thankfully receive a taste of heavenly joys, the love of God shed abroad in my heart, which may indeed well be called,

The cordial drop, heaven in our cup hath thrown,
To make the nauseous draught of life go down.⁵

That the same divine consolation, which alone can recompense all your labour, lessen all your toil, and sweeten all your care, may abound for your present comfort, and your eternal salvation, is the unfeigned desire of

Your real well-wisher,

A. F.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 7 (1784): 219–21.

⁴Cf. CW, Hymn 5, st. 6, *Funeral Hymns* (1746), 8.

⁵John Wilmot, 'A Letter from Artemesia in the Town to Chloe in the Country', ll. 44–45.

From Mary Marston¹

Worcester
March 25, 1770

Reverend Sir,

According to your desire, I will give you a plain account of God's dealing with my soul. It was four years last September since I had the witness in my soul that God, for Christ's sake, had forgiven all my sins. From that time, though I never gave up my confidence, I soon found I had an evil heart prone to depart from the living God. This caused me much sorrow. But the preachers spoke of a deliverance from it, and as I knew some who did enjoy it, I believed it to be attainable, and sought it with all my heart.

One Sunday morning, in August 1768, brother Lewty read part of Mr. G—'s treatise on perfection.² While I was engaged in prayer, I found a great change wrought in my soul. Some days after, these words were applied, 'God has chosen thee to be perfect before him in love'.³ My heart was then filled with love and joy. The witness of the Spirit was as clear as the sun at noonday. But I was afraid to speak of what I felt; and thereby I grieved the spirit of God, and lost what he had given me. This increased my sorrow. But reading your Thoughts on Perfection, where you mentioned that you knew those who had lost it, and had gained it again, gave me hope.⁴ I then desired God to heal my backslidings. In the beginning of December 1768 he answered my prayer. Since then I have had the abiding witness, and find a growth in every grace. He permits my faith and patience to be tried. But I can thank him for it all, believing that he knows what is best for me. My soul is humble before him, and I find prayer to be pleasant and profitable; but at times I find some wanderings. I long for the full image of Jesus, that I may be perfect and entire, lacking nothing.

I hope, sir, you will tell me whatever you think concerning me. In so doing, you will greatly oblige

Your obedient servant,

M. M.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 7 (1784): 221–22.

¹JW apparently met Mary Marston in Worcester as he passed through Mar. 14–15, 1770. He dispatched a letter the next day asking for an account of her spiritual state (see *Works* 28:289–90). This is her response. This is apparently the Mary Marston who was buried July 28, 1771 in Worcester, which explains her correspondence with JW ending after May 1771.

²This may be a reference to a set of sermons that touch on Christian Perfection included in an appendix to Robert Gell, *An Essay towards the Amendment of the English Translation of the Bible* (London: Andrew Crook, 1659), 743–806; JW had copied these sermons out in manuscript during his student years, see MARC, MA 1977/157, JW III.8, pp. 36–128.

³Cf. Eph. 1:4.

⁴JW, 'Thoughts on Christian Perfection' (1760), *Works*, 13:54–80.

From Augustus Montague Toplady

Westminster
March 26, 1770¹

Sic fatus senior, telumque imbelles sine ictu
Conjecit: rauco quod protinus aere repulsum;
Et summo clypei nequicquam umbone pependit.
Aeneid II²

Dreadful his thunders, while unprinted, roar;
But when once publish'd, they are heard no more.
So distant bugbears fright; but, nearer draw,
The block's a block, and turns to mirth your awe.
Dr. Young³

[p. 1]
Sir,

Possibly the following letter may fall into the hands of some who are unacquainted with the merits of the occasion on which I write. For the information of such, I must premise that, in November, 1769, I published a two-shilling pamphlet, entitled *The Doctrine of Absolute Predestination stated and asserted: with a preliminary Discourse on the Divine Attributes. Translated, in great measure, from the Latin of Jerome Zanchius*. [p. 2]

Though you are neither mentioned, nor alluded to, throughout the whole book, yet it could hardly be imagined that a treatise apparently tending to lay the axe to the root of those pernicious doctrines which, for more than thirty years past, you have endeavoured to palm on your credulous followers, with all the sophistry of a Jesuit, and the dictatorial authority of a pope, should long pass without some censure from the hand of a restless Arminian, who has so eagerly endeavoured to distinguish himself as the bellwether of his deluded thousands.

Accordingly, in the month of March 1770 out sneaks a printed paper (consisting of *one sheet*, folded into *twelve pages*; price, *one penny*) entitled *The Doctrine of Absolute Predestination stated and asserted, by the Reverend Mr. A. T.*, wherein you pretend to give an abridgment of the pamphlet above referred to.⁴ But,

1. Why did you not make your abridgment *truly public*? For an apparent reason: that if possible it might elude my knowledge, and so escape the rod. Born of a *stolen* embrace, it was needful for the spurious, pusillanimous performance to *steal* its way into the world. It privately crept abroad from the Foundery, the seat of its nativity. It was sold indeed, but sold under the rose.⁵ It was carefully circulated in the dark, and the friends of Mr. Wesley were designed to be the sole sphere of [p. 3] its acquaintance. Thus 'everyone that doth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deed should be reproved.'⁶ In such conduct, I can discern much of the Jesuit, but nothing of the saint. I had to this hour

¹This tract was first advertised on May 25, 1770 in the *Public Advertiser*.

²Virgil, *Aeneid*, ii.544–46; 'So spoke the old man and hurled his weak and harmless spear, which straight recoiled from the clanging brass and hung idly from the top of the shield's boss' (Loeb).

³Edward Young, *Epistles to Mr. Pope*, i.193–96.

⁴See JW, *Works*, 13:410–22.

⁵I.e., privately or in secret.

⁶John 3:20.

remained unapprised of the secret stab, but for the information received from some of superior integrity to yourself. I will put *Christianity* quite out of the question, and suppose it to have no kind of influence. But should you not at least act as a man of common *honour*? Come forth openly, sir, in future, like an honest generous *assailant*; and from this moment forward disdain to act the ignoble part of a lurking *sly assassin*.

2. Why did you not abridge me *faithfully* and *fairly*? Why must you lard your ridiculous compendium with *additions* and *interpolations* of your own, especially as you took the liberty of prefixing my name to it? Your reasons are obvious. My publication had spread among some of your people, and the longer it continued to diffuse itself, the more you trembled for your Diana. Hence, Demetrius like, you found it needful, by the help of a pious fraud, to prejudice your Ephesians against the doctrines of St. Paul. The book was likely to give the Arminian Babel a shake. Therefore no way so effectual to secure it as by endeavouring to spike the cannon which was planted against it. That you might seem to gratify the curiosity of your partisans, and keep them really *hood-winked* at the same time, you [p. 4] draw up a flimsy, partial compendium of Zanchius—a compendium which exhibits a few detached propositions, placed in the most disadvantageous point of view, and without including any part of the evidence on which they stand.

But this alone was not sufficient to compass the desired end. Unsatisfied with carefully and totally suppressing every proof alleged by Zanchius in support of his argument, a *false colouring* must likewise be superinduced, by inserting a sentence or two now and then of your own foisting in. After which you close the motley piece with an entire paragraph, forged every word of it by yourself; and conclude all, as you began, with subjoining the initials of my name, to make the ignorant believe that the whole, with your omissions, additions and alterations, actually came from *me*—an instance of audacity and falsehood hardly to be paralleled!

I am very far from desiring the reader to take my word in proof of the charge alleged against you. As an instance of your want of honour, veracity, and justice I refer to the following paragraph: 1) as published by *me*; and 2) as quoted by *you*. [p. 5]

1. 'When all the transactions of providence and grace are wound up in the last day, he (Christ) will then properly sit as *judge*, and openly *publish*, and solemnly *ratify*, if I may so, say his everlasting decrees, by receiving the elect, body and soul into glory; and by passing sentence on the non-elect (not for having done what they could not help, but) for their *wilful ignorance* of divine things and their *obstinate unbelief*; for their *omissions of moral duty*, and for their *repeated iniquities and transgressions*.' *Doctrine Of Absolute Predestination*, p. 87.

2. 'In the last day Christ will sit as judge and openly *publish* and solemnly *ratify* his everlasting decrees, by receiving the elect into glory, and by passing sentence on the non-elect (not for having done what they could not help, but) for their *wilful ignorance* of divine things and their *obstinate unbelief*; for their *omissions of moral duty*, and for their *repeated iniquities and transgressions* WHICH THEY COULD NOT HELP.' Wesley's Abridgement, p. 9.

Whether my view of the doctrine itself be in fact right or wrong is no part of the present enquiry. The question is, have you *quoted me fairly*? Blush Mr. Wesley, if you are capable of blushing. For once publicly acknowledge yourself to have acted criminally. 'Unless', to use your own words on another occasion, 'shame and you have shook hands and parted.'⁷ [p. 6]

Your concluding paragraph, which you have the effrontery to palm on the world as *mine*, runs thus: 'The sum of all this: one in twenty (suppose) of mankind are elected; nineteen in twenty are reprobated. The elect shall be saved, do what they will; the reprobate shall he damned, do what they can. Reader, believe this, or be damned. Witness my hand, A T.'

⁷JW Letter to John Bailey (1750), I.16, *Works*, 9:297.

In almost any other case, a similar forgery would transmit the criminal to Virginia or Maryland, if not to Tyburn. If such an opponent can be deemed an *honest* man, where shall we find a *knave*? What would you think of *me*, were I infamous enough to abridge any treatise of yours, sprinkle it with interpolations, and conclude it thus: 'Reader, buy this book, or be damned. Witness my hand, John Wesley?'

And is it thus you contend for victory? Are these the weapons of your warfare? Is this bearing down those who differ from you with *meekness*? Do you call *this* binding with *CORDS OF LOVE*? Away, for shame, with such disingenuous artifices. At least, endeavour to *conceal* that narrow sectarian spirit, which betrays itself more or less in almost every thing you write. Renounce the low serpentine cunning, which [p. 7] puts you on *falsifying* what you find yourself unable to *refute*. And, as you regard your character and the cause you espouse, dismiss those dirty subterfuges (the last resources of mean malicious impotence), which degrade the man of parts into a lying sophister, and sink a divine beneath the level of an oyster-woman. Cease to fight like the French, with old nails and broken glass. Charge fairly and fire as forcibly as you can. But if you persist to employ the weapons of scurrility and falsehood, the splinters will not only recoil on yourself, but you will continue to be posted for a theological coward.

And why should *you*, of all people in the world, be so very angry with the *doctrines of grace*? Forget not the days and months that are past. Remember that it once depended on the toss of a shilling, whether you yourself should be a 'Calvinist' or an 'Arminian'.⁸ Tails fell uppermost, and you resolved to be an *universalist*. It was a happy throw which consigned you to the tents of Arminius, for it saved us from the company of a man who, by a kind of *religious gambling* peculiarly his own, risked his faith on the most contemptible of all *lots*; and was capable of tossing up for his *creed* as porters or chairmen toss up for a *halfpenny*. [p. 8]

I have read of princes and other eminent persons who, having risen from ignoble life to greatness, took care to have some striking memorials of their former obscurity frequently in their view, by way of a counterpoise to pride and as a preservative from being exalted above measure. When from the pinnacle of your own importance you look down upon the advocates for free grace, and consider them as reptiles, to be treated as you please, only recollect the humbling circumstance of which I have just reminded you; and repress the complacent swellings of self-adulation by some such soliloquy as this: 'I have been in danger myself of believing that St. Paul says true, when he declares that God *hath mercy on whom he will have mercy*. How precious was the shilling, and above all how lucky was the throw, which convinced me of St. Paul's mistake!' Forgive us if we as implicitly determine *our* faith by the Scriptures as you determined *yours* by the fall of the *splendid shilling*.

But even since this memorable *epocha*, you have by no means proved yourself that *steady* Arminian you would have the world believe. Proteus-like, you disdain to be shackled and circumscribed by any certain form.⁹ There are times when you vary as much from your [p. 9] preceding self as you do at all times from the rest of mankind. Possessed of more than *serpentine* lability, you cast *your* slough not once a year, but almost once an hour. Hence your innumerable *inconsistencies* and flagrant *self-contradictions*; the *jarring* of your principles (ever at intestine war with each other), and the *incoherence* of your religious system. Your scheme of doctrines reminds me of *the feet* of a certain *visionary* image,¹⁰ which, as the sacred penman acquaints us, seemed to be composed of iron and clay—heterogeneous materials, which may indeed be *put* together, but will never *incorporate* with each

⁸Apparently referring to when JW 'drew lots' to see if he would print against Whitefield; see George Whitefield, *A Letter to the Reverend Mr. John Wesley: In Answer to his Sermon entitled Free-Grace* (Boston: G. Rogers, 1740; London: W. Strahan, 1741), 7.

⁹In his 2nd edn. (1771) Toplady added at this point a sentence: 'Her ladyship of Loretto, though she has a different suit for every day in the year, is *semper eadem* [ever the same], when compared with the *quondam* fellow of Lincoln College.'

¹⁰See Dan. 2.

other. Somewhat like the *necromantic soup* of which you have probably read in the tragedy of Macbeth, your doctrines may be stirred into a chaotic jumble, but witchcraft itself would strive in vain to bring them in coalition. On the contrary, *evangelical truth* knows nothing of this *harlequin* assemblage. It is not like Joseph's coat of *many colours*; nor made up of a patch from Donatus, of another from Pelagius, and a third from Arminius; but is invariably simple, uniform, and harmonious; resembling the robe of its adorable Teacher, which was 'without seam, and woven from the top throughout'.¹¹

On *one* occasion you had the candour to own your levity, as to points of faith. I am acquainted [p. 10] with a very respectable person (Mr. J. D.) who, not many years ago, taking the freedom to tell you that 'your prejudices, like armed men, stood with their swords ready drawn, to guard all the passes of conviction, and hew down every truth as fast as it presented itself to your mind', you had the unusual honesty to answer, 'Ah, sir! If you knew how distressed I have been what doctrines I should embrace, and how I have been *tossed about from system to system*, you would think me the most open to conviction, and the least liable to prejudice of any man you ever knew.' This answer did you real honour, for I am persuaded you spoke true. Yet why should you, who have been so remarkably *tossed about*, take upon you to revile those who have been enabled to *stand fast*? I hope for your own sake that you will never cease *tossing about*, until you have gained the harbour of truth. And that, amidst all your manifold shifting *from system to system*, you will at length be enabled to fix on the only *right* system, which asserts the lawfulness of God's doing what he will with his own.

I am told the *penny-sheet* (which occasions this free address) is to be followed some time hence by a *four-penny* pamphlet against Zanchius,¹² [p. 11] wherein you are to besiege the doctrine of predestination in form. Commence the siege, and welcome. Open your trenches and plant your batteries. Bring forth your strong arguments and play them off with vigour. I publicly profess, and subscribe my name to it, that if I cannot beat you back, I will freely capitulate and own myself conquered. But remember that if you would do any thing to purpose you must make a regular attack. You must encounter the whole of Zanchius, and take his arguments in their regular connection and dependency on each other. You must go through with my *preface*, which I prefixed to my translation of that great man. Having carried and dismantled the *out-work*, you must next proceed to demolish the dissertation on the *divine attributes*. Which having destroyed, you are then to assail the citadel—I mean those five stubborn chapters which make up the body of the treatise itself. All the allies or the arguments drawn from Scripture and reason, must likewise be put to the sword. This should you attempt to do in a manner worthy of a scholar and a divine, I shall have no objection (if life and health continue) to measuring swords, or breaking a pike, with you. Controversy properly conducted is a friend to truth, and no enemy to benevolence. When the flint and the steel are in [p. 12] conflict some sparks may issue, which may both warm and enlighten. But I have no notion of encountering a *wind-mill* in lieu of a *giant*. If, therefore you come against me (as now) with *straws* instead of artillery, and with *chaff* in the room of ammunition, I shall disdain to give you battle. I shall only laugh at you from the ramparts.

Much less, if you descend to your customary resource of *false quotations*, despicable *invective*, and unsupported *dogmatisms*, shall I hold myself obliged again to enter the lists with you. An opponent who thinks to add weight to his arguments by scurrility and abuse resembles the insane person, who rolled himself in mud in order to make himself fine. I would no more enter into a formal controversy with such a scribbler than I would contend for the wall with a chimney-sweeper.

When some of your friends gave out, two or three months before your late doughty publication, that 'Mr. John' (as they call you) was *shutting himself up*, in order to answer the translator of Zanchius, I really imagined that something tolerably respectable was going to make its appearance. But

¹¹John 19:23.

¹²JW never published such a pamphlet.

*Quid dignum tanto tulit hic promissor hiatus?*¹³

[p. 13]

After the teeming mountain had been *shut up* a competent time, long enough to have been brought to bed of a Hercules, forth creeps a puny toothless *mouse*! A mouse of heterogeneous kind, having little more than its *head* and *tail* from *you*;¹⁴ and the main of its *body* made up of some mangled, castrated citations from Zanchius.

*Currente rotâ, cur urceus exit?*¹⁵

If I may judge of the future, by the past, and unless you amend greatly in a short time, your *four-penny* supplement, when it appears, will be no less inconsiderable than the *penny* sheet already extant. And, as the *mouse* is not cheap at a *penny*, I am very apprehensive the *rat*, when it ventures out, will be far too dear at a *groat*.

Hitherto your treatment of Zanchius resembles that of some clumsy, bungling *anatomist*—who in the dissection of an animal dwells much on the larger and more obvious particulars, but quite omits nerves, the lymphatics, the muscles, and the most interesting parts of the complicate machine. Thus, in your piddling extract from the pamphlet you have thought proper to curtail you only give a few of the larger *outlines*, without at all entering into the spirit of the subject, or so much as [p. 14] *producing* (so far from attempting to *refute*) any of the turning points, on which the argument depends. Wrench the finest eye that ever shone in a lady's head from its socket, and it will appear frightful and deformed. Whereas in its natural connection the symmetry and brilliancy, the expressiveness and the beauty, are conspicuous. So it often fares with authors. A detached sentence, artfully misplaced, or unseasonably introduced, maliciously applied, or unfairly cited, may appear to carry an idea the very reverse of its real meaning. But re-place the dislocated passage, and its propriety and importance are restored. I would wish every unprejudiced person into whose hands your abridgment of my translation has fallen, to suspend his judgment concerning it until he sees the translation itself. On comparing the two together, he will at once perceive how candid and *honest* you are; and what quantity of confidence may be reposed on your integrity as a citer.

When I advert to the unjust and indecent manner in which you attacked the late excellent Mr. [James] Hervey; above all, when I consider how daringly free you have made with the Scriptures themselves, both in your commentaries and in your alterations of the text itself; I cease to wonder at the audacious licentiousness of your pen respecting *me*. I should rather wonder if you treated *any* opponent with equity, or [p. 15] canvassed any subject impartially. Rise but once to *this*, and I shall both wonder and rejoice.

You give me to understand that I am but 'a *young* translator'. Granted. Better however to be a young translator than an *old plagiarist*. Which of our ancient divines have you not evaporated and spoiled? and then made them speak a language, when dead, which they would have started from, with horror, when alive?

Yet Brutus is an honourable man!¹⁶

¹³Cf. Horace, *Art of Poetry*, 138: 'Quid dignum tanto serit hic promissor hiatus'; 'What will this promiser produce worthy of such boastful language?'

¹⁴Toplady adds a note: 'The Advertisement on the backside of Mr. Wesley's title page, and his concluding paragraph, p. 12.'

¹⁵Horace, *Art of Poetry*, 22, 'the revolving [potter's] wheel, why does it turn out a worthless pitcher?'

¹⁶See Shakespeare, *Julius Ceasar*, Act II.

How miserably have you pillaged even *my* publication? Books, when sent into the world, are no doubt in some sense public property. Zanchius, if you chose to buy him, was yours to read; and if you thought yourself equal to the undertaking, was yours to *answer*. But he was not yours to mangle. Remember how narrowly you escaped a prosecution some years ago, for pirating the poems of Dr. Young.

I would wish you to keep your hands from literary picking and stealing. However, if you cannot refrain from this kind of *stealth*, you can abstain from *murdering* what you steal. You ought not, with Ahab, to *kill* as well as *take possession*.¹⁷ Nor, giant-like, to strew the area of your castle with the bones of such authors as you have seized and slain. [p. 16]

On most occasions you are too prone to set up your own infallible judgment as the very *lapis lydius* of right and wrong. Hence the firebrands, arrows, and death which you hurl at those who presume to vary from the oracles you dictate. Hence particularly your illiberal and malevolent spleen against the Protestant dissenters,¹⁸ though [p. 17] yourself are, in many respects, a dissenter of the worst kind. I would not however by this declaration be understood if I meant to dishonour that respectable body by classing *you* with *them*; for you stand alone, and are a dissenter of a cast peculiar to yourself. And yet, like Henry I, you are for making the length of your own arm the standard-measure for everybody else. No wonder therefore that you eminently inherit the fate of Ishmael; that your 'hand is against every man, and every man's hand against you'.¹⁹ Strange! that one who pleads so strenuously for universal love in the Deity should adopt so little of the love for which he pleads! That a person of principles so large should have a heart so narrow! *Bigots* of every denomination are much the same; and of all vices, bigotry is one of the meanest and most mischievous. Its shrivelled, contracted breast leaves no room for the noble virtues to dilate and play. Candour, benevolence, and forbearance become smothered and extinguished, partly from being cramped by littleness of mind, partly from being overwhelmed with intellectual dust. Bigotry is a determined enemy to truth, inasmuch as it essentially interferes with *freedom of enquiry*, restrains the grand indefeasible *right of private judgment*, confines our regards to *a party*, and by limiting the extent of *moderation* and mutual *good-will* tears up *charity* by the very roots. In short, bigotry is the very essence of popery, and too [p. 18] often leads its votaries, before they are aware, into the bosom of that pretended church, whose doctrines and maxims are the worst corruption of the best religion that ever was. And though this baneful vice is so *uncomfortable* even to those who entertain it; so *unreasonable* in itself; so *contrary* to the genius of the gospel; and so extensively *pernicious* in its effects; yet is it not as *common* as it is detestable? May all God's children be enabled to cast it, with the rest of their idols, 'to the moles and to the bats'!²⁰

You have obliquely given *me* a sneering lecture upon 'modesty, self-diffidence, and tenderness' to opponents. And it must be owned that the lesson comes with a *peculiar* grace and quite in character from *you*. The words *sound* well; but, like many other prescribers, you *say* and *do* not. Else why do you represent me as telling my readers that they must, 'upon pain of damnation believe, that only one person in twenty is elected'? Why do you introduce me as enjoining them to believe under the same penalty that 'the elect shall be saved, do what they will; and the reprobate damned, do what they can'? This is a sample indeed of *your own* modesty, tenderness, and self-diffidence. But God forbid that I should give

¹⁷See 1 Kings 21:19.

¹⁸Toplady adds a note: [first he quotes a paragraph for JW, *Preservative against Unsettled Notion*, p. 244 against 'new-light' predestinarians, then contrasts it with the more irenic comments to Roman Catholics in JW, *Letter to a Roman Catholic*. Whereupon he comments] 'Far be it from me to charge Mr. Wesley with a fondness for *all* the grosser parts of popery. Yet I fear the partition between that church and him is somewhat *thinner* than might be wished. Or rather, like the loving Pyramus and Thisbe, they endeavour to remedy the want of a perfect coalition by kissing each other through a hole in the wall.'

¹⁹Gen. 16:12.

²⁰Isa. 2:20.

such dismal proof of *mine*. I [p. 19] believe and preach that the chosen and ransomed of the Lord are 'appointed to salvation though sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth'.²¹ And with regard to the rest, that they will be condemned, not for doing what they can in a moral way, but for *not* doing what they can—for *not* believing the gospel report, and for *not* ordering their conversation according to it.

Let me likewise ask you when or where I ever presumed to ascertain the *number* of God's elect? Point out the treatise and the page, wherein I assert that only 'one in twenty of mankind are elected'. The book of life is not in *your* keeping, nor in *mine*. 'The Lord', and the Lord *only*, 'knoweth them that are his.'²² He alone who 'tellethe the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names',²³ calleth also 'his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out',²⁴ first from a state of sin into a state of grace, and then into the state of glory. Yet, as the learned and devout Beza expresses himself, 'I shall never blush to abide by that simplicity which the Holy Spirit, speaking in the Scriptures, hath been pleased to adopt.'²⁵ And it is but too certain that in the Scriptures are such [p. 20] awful passages as these: 'Broad is the way and wide is the gate which leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat.'²⁶ While on the other hand, 'Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.'²⁷ 'Many are called, but few chosen.'²⁸ 'Fear not little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.'²⁹ 'There is a remnant, according to the election of grace.'³⁰ Declarations of this tremendous import, instead of furnishing you with fuel for contention, and setting you on a presumptuous and fruitless calculation of the *number* that shall be saved or lost, should rather bring you on your knees before God, with your hand upon your breast and this cry in your lips: 'Search me, O Lord, and try me. Prove me also and examine my thoughts. Show me to which class I belong. Give me solid proof that my name is in the Lamb's book of life, by making it clear to me that I am in the faith.' And ever remember that true faith utterly disclaims all ground of pretension to justification and eternal life, but on the sole footing of God's *absolute grace* and the Messiah's *finished redemption*. Pelagianism is for serving the Deity as Pope Celestine III is said to have treated the emperor Henry VI. It quite kicks off the crown from the head of sovereign grace, and makes the [p. 21] will of God bend, and truckle, and shape itself to the caprice of man. Arminianism, somewhat more specious, but altogether as pernicious, cuts the crown in *two*, by dividing the praise of salvation between God and man, and fairly runs away with half. On the contrary, that *faith* which is of divine operation acts like the emperor Charles V when he retired from the throne. It *resigns* the crown entirely and *renounces* it for ever, without reserving so much as a single jewel for itself.

Should the Holy Spirit vouchsafe to lead you thus far you will then no longer be ready to object that 'the elect shall be saved, do what they will', for you will know by heart-felt experience that the converted elect are, and cannot but be, ambitious to perform all those good works in which God hath ordained them to walk; and to act worthy of him who hath graciously and effectually called them to his kingdom and glory.

²¹Thess. 2:13.

²²Tim. 2:19.

²³Ps. 147:4.

²⁴John 10:3.

²⁵Toplady adds note: '*Me verò istius Simplicитatis, quam Sp. S. amplexus est, nunquam pudebit.* Beza, in Matt. 2:2.'

²⁶Matt. 7:13.

²⁷Matt. 7:14.

²⁸Matt. 22:14.

²⁹Luke 12:32.

³⁰Rom. 11:5.

Your pretended fear of *antinomianism*, like your real fear of the *comet* which was expected to have appeared a few years back,³¹ is perfectly idle and chimerical. You publicly testified your apprehensions that the *latter* would dry up our rivers, and burn up our vegetables if not reduce the earth itself to a cinder. But your prophesies proved to be ‘the [p. 22] baseless fabric of a vision’,³² and our rivers, trees, and earth remain as they were. Nor will the doctrines of grace, experimentally received into the heart, destroy or weaken the obligation of moral virtue. On the contrary they will operate on the practice, not like your scorching comet on our globe, but like the genial beams of the sun, which diffuse gladness, and occasion fruitfulness wherever they arise. Whoever wishes in earnest to lead a *new life* must first cordially embrace the good *old doctrine* of salvation by grace alone.

In short, your own tenet of *sinless perfection* leads directly to the grossest *antinomianism*. I once knew a lady who you had inveigled into your pale, and who in a short space professed herself *perfect*. Being in her company some time after, I pointed out a part of her conduct which to me seemed hardly compatible with a sinless state. Her answer was to this effect: ‘You are no competent judge of my behaviour. You are not yourself perfectly sanctified, and therefore see my tempers and actions through a false medium. I may to you *seem* angry, but my anger is only Christian *zeal*.’ I could, moreover mention the names of some of your *quondam*³³ followers who, from professing themselves sinless, have cast off all appearance of godliness, and are working all manner of iniquity with greediness. If you are in search of *antinomians*, truly [p. 23] and justly so called, you must look for them not among those whom you term ‘Calvinists’, but among your own hair-brained *perfectionists*. Had not you yourself (to remind you of but one instance) a proof of it not very long ago? You formed a scheme of collecting as many *perfect* ones as you could, to live together under one roof. A number of these flowers were accordingly transplanted from some of your nursery-beds to the *hot-house*. And a hot house it soon proved. For would we believe it? The *sinless* people *quarrelled* in a short time at so violent a rate that you found yourself forced to disband the select regiment.³⁴ A very small house, I am persuaded, would hold the *really perfect* upon earth. You might drive them *all* into a *nutshell*. But to return.

I cannot dismiss your objection concerning the supposed *fewness* of God’s truly elect people without observing that, how *few* soever they may appear, and really be in a single generation, and as balanced with the many unrighteous among whom they live below, yet when the whole number of the Redeemer’s jewels is made up, when the entire harvest of his saints is gathered in, when his complete mystic body is presented collectively before the throne of his Father, they will amount to ‘an exceeding great multitude which no man can number’.³⁵ On earth the [p. 24] company of the faithful may to us, who know but in part, resemble Elijah’s cloud, which at first seemed ‘no bigger than a man’s hand’.³⁶ Whereas, in the day of God, they will be found to overspread the whole heavens. They may appear now, to use Isaiah’s phrase, but as ‘two or three berries on the top of a bough, or as four or five in the most fruitful branches thereof’,³⁷ but they shall then be like the tree in Nebuchadnezzar’s vision, the ‘height of which reached unto heaven, and the sight of it to the end of all the earth; the leaves thereof were fair and

³¹See JW, Sermon 15 (1758), *The Great Assize*, III.4, *Works*, 1:369–70.

³²Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, Act IV, Scene 1.

³³I.e., ‘former’; Toplady is referring to the perfectionist controversy in London in the mid 1760s.

³⁴In his 2nd edn. (1771) Toplady added at this point: ‘Had you kept them together much longer, that line would have been literally verified in these squabbling members of your Church Militant: “The males pulled noses, and the females caps”.’

³⁵Rev. 7:9.

³⁶1 Kings 18:44.

³⁷Isa. 17:6.

the fruit thereof much'.³⁸ The kingdom of glory will both be more *largely* and more *variously* peopled than bigots of all denominations are either able to think, or willing to allow.

Go now, sir, and dazzle the credulous with your mock victory over the supposed reprobation of 'nineteen in twenty'. Go on to chalk hideous figures on your wainscot, and enjoy the glorious triumph of battering your knuckles in fighting them. But father no more of your hideous figures on me. Do not dress up scare-crows of your own, and then affect to run away from them as mine. I do not expect to be treated by Mr. John Wesley with the candour of a gentleman, or the meekness of a Christian; but I wish him, for his reputation's sake, to write and act with the honesty of a heathen.

You would choose to be deemed a minister of the national Church. Why then do you decry [p. 25] her *doctrines*, and, as far as in you lies, sap her *discipline*? That you decry her doctrines needs no proof: witness, for example, the wide discrepancy between her decisions and yours on the articles of *freewill, justification, predestination, perseverance, and sinless perfection*; to say nothing concerning your new-fangled doctrine of the *intermediate state* of departed souls.³⁹

That you likewise do not overflow with zeal for the *discipline* of the Church of England is manifest, not only from the numerous and intricate regulations with which you fetter your societies, but from the measures you lately pursued, when a foreign mendicant was in England, who went by the name of 'Erasmus' and styled himself bishop of Arcadia.⁴⁰ This old gentleman passed for a prelate of the Greek church, though to me it seems not improbable that he might rather be a member of the Romish. Thus much, however, is certain: that the chaplains of the then Russian ambassador here knew nothing about him, and that to this day the Greek church in Amsterdam believed him to [p. 26] have been an impostor. With regard to this person, I take the liberty of putting one or two queries to you.

1. Did you or did you not get him to ordain several of your lay preachers according to the manner of what he called the Greek ritual?

2. Did these lay preachers of yours, or did they not, both *dress* and *officiate* as clergymen of the Church of England, in consequence of that ordination? And under the sanction of your own avowed approbation? Notwithstanding, putting matters at the best, they could only be ministers of the Greek church, and which could give them no legal right to act as ministers of the Church of England. Nay, did you not repeatedly declare that *their* ordination was, to all intent and purposes, as valid as *your own* which you received forty years ago at Oxford?

3. Did you or did you not strongly press this supposed Greek bishop to *consecrate you* a bishop at large, that you might be invested with a power of ordaining what ministers you pleased to officiate in your societies as clergymen? And did he not refuse to consecrate you, alleging this for his reason, That according to the canons of the Greek church more than one bishop must be present to assist at the consecration of a new one? [p. 27]

4. In all this, did you or did you not palpably violate a certain oath which you have repeatedly taken? I mean the *Oath of Supremacy*, part of which runs thus: 'And I do declare that no foreign prince, person, prelate, state, or potentate hath, or ought to have, any jurisdiction, power, superiority, pre-eminence, or authority, ecclesiastical or spiritual, within this realm: so help me God.' Now is not the *conferring of orders* an act of the highest *ecclesiastical power and authority*? And was not this man a *foreigner*? And were not the steps you took a positive acknowledgment of a *foreign power and jurisdiction*? And was not such acknowledgment a *breach of your oath*?

³⁸Dan. 4:11–12.

³⁹Toplady adds a note: 'In Mr. Wesley's first edition of his *Notes* on the New Testament, published in 1755, are the two following assertions (than which even he himself has, perhaps, never given a more striking specimen of *presumptions* and *inconsistency*): "Enoch and Elijah are not in heaven, but only in paradise" (note on John 3:13). "Enoch and Elijah entered at once into the highest degree of glory, without first waiting in paradise" (note on Rev. 19:20). This it is, to be wise above what is written!'

⁴⁰See the letter of B. Richards to JW, Mar. 10, 1764, and the background in the first footnote.

It matters not whether Erasmus was in fact an impostor or a genuine Greek bishop. Unless you were very insincere, you took him to *be* what he passed for. If you did *not*, you were a party to a fraud. Either way, pretend no longer to love the Church of England! You who so lately endeavoured to set up *imperium in imperio!*⁴¹ If you are honest, you will either publicly confess your fault, or for ever throw aside your gown and cassock. You will either return to the service of the Church, or cease to wear her livery. You may think, perhaps, that I make too free in expostulating with you so plainly. And yet, on maturer thought, I question [p. 28] whether you may or not. How can Mr. Wesley, who on all occasions makes so very free with others, be angry with *young* translators for copying (though at humble distance) so venerable an example? Nor indeed ought a person who, beyond even what truth and decency permit, takes so great liberties with the rest of his contemporaries, to wonder if, so far as decency and truth allow, the rest of his contemporaries take as great liberties with *him*.

You complain, I am told, that the evangelical clergy are leaving no stone unturned 'to raise John Calvin's ghost, in all quarters of the land'. If you think the doctrines of that eminent and blessed reformer to be formidable as a ghost, you are welcome to do all you can towards *laying* them. Begin your incantations as soon as you please. The press is open, and you never had a fairer opportunity of trying your strength upon John Calvin than at present. Only take care that you do not, with all your skill in theological magic, get yourself into a *circle*, out of which you may find it difficult to retreat. And, a little to mitigate your wrath against the raisers of Calvin's ghost, remember that you yourself have been a great ghost-raiser in your time. Who raised the ghosts of John Goodwin, the Arminian regicide; and Thomas Grantham, the Arminian Baptist? Who [p. 29] raised the ghost of Monsieur DeRenty, the French papist; and of many other Romish enthusiasts, by translating their lives into English for the edification of Protestant readers?

Should you take any notice of this letter, I have three requests to make; or rather, there are three particulars on which I have a right to insist:

1. Do not quote unfairly.
2. Do not answer evasively.
3. Do not print clandestinely.

Canvass the points of doctrine wherein we differ, as strictly as you can. They will stand the test. They scorn disguise. They disdain to sue for quarter. *Truth*, like our first parents in the state of innocence, can show herself *naked*, without being either afraid or ashamed. And 'he that doth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God.'⁴²

O that you may at last begin to act from this principle, and no longer prostitute your time and talents to the wiredrawing of chicanery, and the circulation of error! I am not insensible of your parts. But alas, what is distinguished *ability*, if not wedded to *integrity*? No less just than ingenious is the remark of a learned and noble writer: 'The riches of the mind, like [p. 30] those of fortune, may be employed so perversely as to become a nuisance and a pest, instead of an ornament and support to society.'⁴³

I am sir,

Yours, etc.,

Augustus Toplady

Source: Augustus Toplady, *A Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley; relative to his pretended Abridgment of Zanchius on Predestination* (London: Joseph Gurney, 1770).

⁴¹'An empire within an empire.'

⁴²John 3:21.

⁴³George Lyttelton, *Dialogues of the Dead*, Dialogue XXIV.

From Richard Boardman

[New York]
April 24, 1770

[...] Our house contains about seventeen hundred hearers. About a third part of those that attend the preaching get in; the rest are glad to hear without. There appears such a willingness in the Americans to hear the word as I never saw before. They have no preaching in some of the back settlements I doubt but an effectual door will be opened among them. O may the Most High now give his Son the heathen for his inheritance! The number of blacks that attend the preaching affect me much. [...]

Source: published extract; Drew, *Thomas Coke*, 51.

From Joseph Pilmore¹

New York
May 5, 1770

Dearly² Beloved Brethren,

As it hath pleased God to send us, his poor, unworthy creatures, into this remote corner of the world, to preach his everlasting gospel, I trust you will bear us on your minds and help us by your prayers to fulfill the ministry which we have received of the Lord. We are at present far from you, and whether we shall ever be permitted to see you again in the body, God only knows. However, though we are absent from you, yet we are present with you! And I hope we shall continue so united, that

Nor³ joy, nor grief, nor time, nor place,
Nor life, nor death can part.⁴

It was a great trial to us to leave our native land; more especially to leave our fellow-labourers in the gospel, who were more dear to us than all the beauties of the British isle! Dear brethren, I feel! I feel you present while I write! But oh, the Atlantic is between! Oh, this state of trial! This state of mutability! – But, where am I wandering? This is not our home! This is not our rest! After a little while we shall rest, ‘Where angels gather immortality, [...] and momentary ages are no more.’⁵

Our coming to America has not been in vain. The Lord has been pleased to bless our feeble attempts to advance his kingdom in the world. Many have believed the report, and unto some the arm of the Lord has been revealed. There begins to be a shaking among the dry bones, and they come together that God may breathe upon them. Our congregations are large, and we have the pious of most congregations to hear us, which makes the Presbyterian bigots mad! But we are fully determined not to retaliate. They shall contend for that which God never revealed, and we will contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. The religion of Jesus is a favourite topic in New York. Many of the gay and polite speak much about grace and perseverance. But whether they would follow Christ ‘in sheep skins and goat skins’⁶ is a question I cannot affirm. Nevertheless, there are some who are alive to God. Even some of the poor, despised children of Ham are striving to wash their robes, and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. We have a number of black women who meet together every week, many of whom are happy in the love of God. This evinces the truth of the apostle’s assertion, that ‘God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him.’⁷ The society here consists of about a hundred members, besides probationers; and I trust it will soon increase much more abundantly.

Brother [Richard] Boardman and I are chiefly confined to the cities, and therefore cannot, at present, go much into the country, as we have more work upon our hands than we are able to perform. There is work enough for two preachers in each place. And if two of our brethren would come over, I

¹Addressed to Rev. John Wesley and all the Brethren in Conference.

²Orig., ‘Dear’; corrected in errata (at end of vol. 9).

³Orig., ‘Neither’; corrected in errata (at end of vol. 9).

⁴CW, ‘At Parting’, st. 7, *HSP* (1742), 160.

⁵See Edward Young, *Night Thoughts*, Night 1, ll. 140–44; included by JW in *MSP* (1744), 2:234.

⁶Heb. 11:37.

⁷Acts 10:34–35.

believe it would be attended with a great blessing.⁸ For then we could visit the places adjacent to the cities, which we cannot pretend to do till we can take care of them. They need not be afraid of wanting the comforts of life, for the people are very hospitable and kind. When we came over, we put ourselves and the brethren to a great expense, as being strangers to the country and the people. But the case is different now, as matters are settled and everything is provided. If you can send them over, we shall gladly provide for them. And I hope in a few years the brethren here will be able to send them back to England according to the appointment of the Conference.

I am, dearly beloved brethren,
Yours inviolably,

J. Pilmoor

P.S. I have been pretty well in general since I arrived here, and hope this climate will agree with me. But I have very great trials, and humbly desire that all the brethren would pray for me.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 7 (1784): 222–24.

⁸It would be another year before Conference assigned two more preachers (Richard Wright and Francis Asbury) to North America; see *Works*, 10:398.

From the Rev. Dr. Carl Magnus Wrangel¹

Stockholm
May 5, 1770

Dear and Much Beloved Brother in Christ Jesus,

If I have long deferred to express to you in writing the gratitude your brotherly love and affection demands of me,² it has not proceeded from want of good-will, but I have been desirous of filling my letter with something which may give you satisfaction. I hope my heart will ever be impressed with the warmest gratitude for the comfort I enjoyed in your society. Though absent in body, I have often been amongst you, and my soul has been often refreshed at the thought of the great mystery of love which is manifest in the communion of saints.

When I left England, I arrived first at Gothenburg, the nearest seaport in Sweden, and lodged at the Right Rev. Bishop Doctor Lamberg's,³ who was fellow-chaplain with me at Court. After I left Sweden, he was preferred to the bishopric of Gothenburg, while I was preaching the gospel in the fields of America. I found him to be a great friend of yours. He had heard you preach while on his travels in England. I sent him your books, and he was well pleased with what he read, and desired me to remember him to you.

I have now been upwards of a year in the capital of the kingdom, and though I have, during the time, officiated as Chaplain to the King, I have at the same time preached in most of the churches here, and I must say, with the sincerest sense of gratitude to Divine favour, with uncommon success. The station I have been in has given me much admission to the great. And whenever I preached, the churches have been uncommonly crowded. The king, on his death-bed, made me a privy-counsellor.⁴ When I spoke to him of the way of salvation, he received the word with gladness, and departed in the Lord, to the great edification and comfort of the whole family. His queen also, who is of English descent, is eminent in piety.⁵ This I hope will be attended with good consequences in favour of religion.

The general state of religion in this kingdom is not the best. However there are a few in this city who are willing to receive the gospel.

Last parliament session several clergymen, and amongst them four bishops, agreed to my proposals concerning a society for propagating practical religion. We intend as soon as the plan is rightly fixed to enter into correspondence with several parts of the world, and we expect the honour of your correspondence also. The affair is a secret to the public, and will be carried on so, till it is well settled.

Providence is about to settle me in a station of great importance to this kingdom, at which I almost tremble! I am about to be named the Almoner of his Majesty. If this should happen, I shall stand in

¹Carl Magnus Wrangel (1727–86) was born into a line of high-ranking military men, of German descent, who had settled in Sweden. He was the only male member of his family who did not pursue a military career, choosing instead to study theology. After his ordination he was made a chaplain of the Royal Court in Sweden, but also sent to be provost of the Swedish mission in Delaware. Wrangel came in contact with Whitefield and other Methodists while in North America. When he left to return to Sweden, Wrangel went through England, where he met JW (see JW, *Journal*, Oct. 14–18, 1768, *Works*, 22:161). Back in Sweden, Wrangel was now working to set up a society for propagating practical religion, which was organized in 1771 as the *Societas Svecana pro Fide et Christianismo*. See Ole Borgen, 'John Wesley and early Swedish Pietism: Carl Magnus Wrangel and Johan Hinric Lidén', *Methodist History* 38 (2000): 82–103; esp. 83–98.

²JW had written Wrangel on Jan. 30, 1770; see *Works*, 28:283–84.

³Erik Lamberg (1719–80) was bishop of Gothenburg from 1760 to his death.

⁴Adolf Frederick (1710–71) was king of Sweden from 1751 until his death on Feb. 12, 1771.

⁵Louisa Ulrika (1720–82, of Prussia was the wife of Adolf Frederick and Queen of Sweden.

great need of the intercession of all my friends in Christ Jesus, as this office is of importance to religion in general. Finally, my dear brother, let me be included in all your prayers, and let me hear from you.

I am with the greatest sincerity of affection, dear and reverend brother,

Your most humble and affectionate brother and servant,

C. M. Wrangel

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 7 (1784): 330–32.

From Elizabeth (Patten) Bennis

Waterford
May 20, 1770

Dear Sir,

Having come to this city on a visit to my daughter, your kind favour of 12th April was forwarded to me from Limerick.¹ Indeed my heart is thankful for your care over and advice to me. Your kind enquiry concerning my state fills me with shame and distress when I consider what a dwarf I am amongst the people of God. The Lord does make it the desire of my soul to do his will and knows I *would* be wholly and entirely his. But [I] feel many hindrances, which nothing but his all powerful grace can remove. These bear me down, and keep me continually loaded with distress. O when shall my complainings end. I know assuredly that it is the privilege of God's people to have and retain the testimony of his Spirit. And [I] think it cannot be otherwise in the nature of things that I find it clouded is owing to my own disobedience and unbelief, and [this] is indeed a cause of sorrow to me. At times I have strong hopes that the Lord will revive his work in my soul, at other times [I] have grievous fears and dejections, and am ready to give up all hope. I have been particularly exercised in this manner since I came to this city—my own unfaithfulness so placed in view, and such severe reproaches for my baseness, as has caused sore and bitter repentance. Oh that it would last, that I could 'weep my life away, for having grieved his love'.²

But I am such a poor unstable creature that even this does not last. But like the natural man beholding his face in a glass, I quickly forget until the Lord again reminds me of my state.

Brother Saunderson is now in Limerick.³ The select band meet regular, and a few have been lately added to it. They speak open and free but mostly in a complaining state. I have conversed freely with brother Saunderson and do now correspond with him (he seems athirst for sanctification). But I think I discern self in all I do and say, and this discourages my forwardness in speaking to others, and generally fills me with after distress. Brother [Richard] Bourke is on this circuit. The people here go on at a poor rate, nor do I think it likely to be otherwise until they have a stationed preacher. They desired me to mention this, and would thank you to think of them. As I shall return home in a few days, you will please direct your next to Limerick.

I am, dear sir, etc.,

Eliza Bennis

Source: published transcription; Bennis, *Correspondence*, 41–43.

¹See JW to Eliza Bennis, Apr. 12, 1770, *Works*, 28:293. In Nov. 1768 Bennis's daughter Eleanor (b. 1748) married Jonas Bull, of Waterford. From that point Bennis made regular trips to Waterford.

²Cf. CW, 'For a Tender Conscience', st. 4, *HSP* (1749), 2:231.

³Hugh Saunderson first appears as a travelling preacher in the 1768 *Minutes* (where it is spelled 'Sanderson' this first time; see *Works*, 10:355). He served until 1777 when he desisted from travelling (see *Works*, 10:465).

From Lady Glenorchy¹

Edinburgh
May 29, 1770

Reverend Sir,

When I consider how much you have to do, and how very precious your time is, I feel unwilling to give you the trouble of reading a letter from me. Yet I know not how to delay returning you my best thanks for the pains you have taken to procure me a Christian innkeeper and school-master.² And though you have not as yet been successful, I hope you may find some before you reach London, who are willing to leave their native country and friends for the sake of promoting the interest of Christ's kingdom. If Mr. Eggleston's *objections* relate *only* to temporal things, perhaps it may be in my power to remove them.

I am exceedingly obliged to you, dear and honoured sir, for your good advice. It is agreeable to that small glimmering of light the Lord has been pleased to give me for five years past. May he enable me to walk up to what I *now* see to be my privileges, and to press forward to receive *all* he is willing to give! I am persuaded one must be *altogether* a Christian to be happy, and I feel more and more, every day, the truth of our Saviour's words, 'Ye cannot serve two masters.'³ I tremble lest I should be tempted to return (even in thought) to that vain world which held me so long its *willing* slave. Let me entreat you to remember me before the throne of grace, and to beg of God to deliver me from this body of sin and death, and to bring me into the glorious liberty of his children.

I am, reverend sir, with esteem and respect,
Your obliged servant,

W. Gl—n—hy

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 7 (1784): 278–79.

¹Willielma Campbell, Viscountess Glenorchy (1741–86), was the daughter of William and Elizabeth (Hairstanes) Maxwell. She married John Campbell, Viscount Glenorchy (1738–71) in 1761. In 1765, while recovering from illness, Lady Glenorchy came under the influence of the sister of Rowland Hill and experienced an evangelical conversion. Particularly after her husband's death in 1771, Lady Glenorchy devoted herself and her wealth to furthering evangelical causes.

²Lady Glenorchy and Lady Darcy Maxwell hoped to set up a school like Kingswood at Edinburgh; cf. JW to Lady Maxwell, Feb. 17, 1770, *Works*, 28:285–86.

³Matt. 6:24.

From Jane Catherine March

Bath
June 27, 1770

I return you many thanks, dear sir, for your kindness in writing to me.¹ I often think that my soul does approach the Lord in simplicity, freely unburdening itself of every care, fear, wish, and desire; and who I believe has not only love enough patiently to attend to my complaints, kindly interesting himself in my concerns, and sympathizing in all my griefs, but power also to relieve me under every pressure, to save me from every snare, to guard me against every danger, and to supply each present want.

In general I think I live (if I know myself) in forgetfulness of my bearing the character of a gentlewoman, and I am not conscious that I advert to 'my being a *woman*' more than I ought, to behave with the modesty and dignity of my sex. My silence usually proceeds from diffidence, and sometimes from discouragement, from my views and thoughts of myself *as a Christian*. However I have aimed to follow your advice, and made this use of my present journey, the learning to speak for God. And I have particularly been constrained to relate my own experience, which has seemed needful for the edification of those I have conversed with—the best method I could convey instruction to their minds without arrogating to myself the office of teacher. I have found it 'good to be here'.² The Lord has made it answer every end, and afford me every token of my having done his will in coming that my timorous mind could wish or desire. I have met sister [Mary] Bishop's class three times, and find the believers beginning to experience that second awakening previous to deliverance from evil tempers. I believe you will find much increase of life, and joy over this little flock, when you next meet them.

You will find sister Bishop strikingly like Miss [Mary] Bosanquet in person, voice, manner; only more reserved and less fluent of words—though with as much propriety and elegance of expression as Jane Cooper. She seems following after entire devotion of heart and life, both intentionally and practically. We have had many sweet meetings, wherein we have enjoyed fellowship one with another. She has a large field of usefulness in this place, and gifts for what she is called to, with amazing steadiness. She seems to have learnt 'the being obstinately good'.

We spent a few days at Mr. G.'s in Bradford. His son and daughter-in-law and niece have joined the society there, and know in whom they have believed. He very candidly inquired, and willingly heard all you meant by the doctrine of Christian perfection, or Mrs. [Sarah] Cayley's experience (who is with me here) and who related to him in the most explicit manner all her strength and weaknesses, and he appeared quite satisfied with the rest of faith which she enjoys.

With thanks for all favours, I remain, dear sir,
Your obliged and affectionate,

Source: published transcription; *MM* 22 (1799): 100–01.

¹JW's previous surviving letter to Jane March is in Aug. 1769; she is surely referring to a more recent letter that does not survive.

²See Matt. 17:4.

From Elizabeth (Patten) Bennis

Limerick
July 8, 1770

My Dear Sir,

Your letters always bring encouragement with them.¹ I rejoice to hear that many have again recovered their strength, and at times am enabled to hope it may be my case, but am often cast down and ready to doubt, from the great unfitness I find in myself. I feel it is the desire of my soul to be wholly given up to the Lord, yet do not find my mind so clear concerning the work of sanctification as it has been. Neither does the necessity of it appear in the manner it used to do. And yet my soul is reaching after a something, without coming to any particular point; only this, that I want more of God. My soul is happy, yet I feel a void which nothing but God can fill. The intercourse is open, yet [I] have not that full clear vision, that immediate, intimate, open access which I have had in time past. There is a mist between, which my sight cannot penetrate. I cannot help sighing after former experience, but have not that earnestness of soul that might bring the blessing near.

But why should I not also acknowledge the goodness of my God? He does make himself the desire of my soul, and I find his love to be better than life. I have nothing. I am nothing. I desire to be nothing. But he is my all in all. And for him I give up every other good, taking him alone for my portion and my inheritance in time and to all eternity. He knows I fear nothing so much as a separation from him, and desire nothing so much as an establishment in his grace, so as never more to offend him. O that he would bind my heart to himself forever.

Sister Parry is taken home where the wicked cease to trouble.² And Mrs. Bindon soon followed. They both died happy.³ Sister Parry died whilst I was in Waterford.

I believe brother Linnell⁴ had trials in Waterford, for the people are poor and believe the expense of a preacher's horse would be more than they could bear, but think if it were possible for them to have a constant preacher without a horse it would answer better for them.⁵ I think brother [Hugh] Sanderson is not in much danger of suffering through pride in Limerick.

Nancy Stretton is married to brother Leary in Clonmel.⁶ Brother [Richard] Bourke and I made up this match whilst I was in Waterford, and think it is the Lord's doing. She is comfortably settled as to the things of this life,⁷ and I trust will be a means of saving his soul. Brother Bourke has taken Clonmel into

¹Bennis is replying to JW's letter of June 13, 1770; see *Works*, 28:296.

²Sister Parry had been a member of Bennis's band, and a close friend, since 1754; see Bennis, *Journal*, 105–08, 113.

³Published version reads 'they both died triumphantly rejoicing in God their Saviour, and have left a clear testimony that the religion of Jesus is not a cunningly devised fable'.

⁴Orig., 'Linnel'. William Linnell would be admitted 'on trial' as a travelling preacher at the 1770 Conference in August. He gained full connection the following year, but desisted from travelling in 1773 (see *Works*, 10:380, 395, 416).

⁵Published version is more extended: 'to let them have a single preacher resident in the city, or even to exchange monthly with the circuit preacher (without throwing any of the horse expense on them). I think it might answer a good end, as yet the circuit is best able to bear experience. Indeed, I feel much for the city society, a handful of poor simple souls that need every support and encouragement. Dear sir, I hope you will not think me too presumptuous in dictating, but I find my soul knit to these poor sheep.'

⁶Anne Stretton was likely the sister or mother of John Stretton (1744–1817), who was a convert of Bennis in Waterford and about this time emigrated to Newfoundland, where he contributed much to the spread of Methodism.

⁷The published version reads instead: 'She is as usual all alive to God'.

the circuit, and doubt not but there will be good done there.⁸

The work is very dead here; though blessed be God, some souls are alive. The select band appointed a day of fasting and humiliation since I came home, and it was a happy day. Brother [John] Mills is ill with rheumatism and is gone to Dublin to bathe in the salt water.⁹ I trust the Lord brings me sometimes to your mind, and think whilst I live I shall remember you. I am, dear sir,

Your sincerely affectionate,

Eliza Bennis

Source: holograph; privately held, WWEP Archive holds photocopy. See also Bennis, *Correspondence*, 45–47.¹⁰

⁸The published version reads: ‘Brother Bourke at my request has taken Clonmel into the circuit, and doubt not but there will be good done there. But as this has caused an entire alteration in the circuit from the former plan, I have to request your forgiveness for my officiousness. If you disapprove it can be re-altered.’

⁹JW gives the first name in his letter to Bennis of Oct. 28, 1771, *Works*, 28:429–30.

¹⁰It is striking that the published transcription is more extensive than the holograph. Likely this means that Eliza’s son was working from her initial draft, which included some detail that was left out in the letter sent. Or, he gives an initial letter, that was resent in briefer form because it was assumed lost.

From Rebecca Yeoman¹

Newcastle [upon Tyne]

July 20, 1770

Sir,

I have often thought of you since you left Newcastle, and can bless God that I have not forgotten the labours of love you bestowed upon us, for which the Lord will reward you.

I bless his name that I still retain a sense of the necessity of being cleansed from all sin. I long to feel my soul all on fire, to be dissolved in love, but I have not yet the victory over unbelief. O when shall the happy moment come that I shall enjoy that sweetness I was wont to feel in my soul, and every moment live in God and hold communion with him? I am as weak as helpless infancy. My dependence is on God. I look upon every earthly thing as empty. I desire his will to be done in and by me, that I may live to serve him alone, and only him to know. Nothing else can make me happy but an entire dedication of my whole soul to his disposal. I have real need of a watchful fear at all times, lest I should deviate in anything from the narrow path. O dear sir, pray for me that I may ever humbly keep at the feet of Jesus, ever looking to receive out of his fulness grace upon grace.

I feel much liberty in my band, and they are made a great blessing to me; though even in this the enemy is not wanting. Well may it be said, he goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.² I feel him as such. Yet I trust the Lord will keep me. Since you were here there has been a little shyness between Jane Johnson and me. Being both singers, I often, when in the room together, strove not to stand near her. The reason was the hardness of her voice, with my own, hurt my head. But when going wrong with the tune, I would give her some signal. Yet this she could not bear. There was also a stubbornness of temper, a mimicking of fine speaking, and other things which wrought such prejudice in me as almost destroyed all the love that subsisted between us. I found I was hurting my own soul and wounding my sister. I was told that she was coming no more to the singing on my account. I am now convinced that I was more in fault than she, and thought I would go to her and own my fault, and endeavour in the Lord to love her as I ought, and persuade her back to the singing. I did so, and spoke to her with the greatest tenderness. She said she had forgiven me, but would not come again to the singing. Dear sir, you must forgive me in this. I am determined to look less at the failings of others, as I am not wanting in them myself.

Jenny Scott (whom you admitted into the band) and I are very helpful to each other. Sister Hall and sister Strolger,³ with one or two more, are the only companions I have. I want to be more in earnest, and hope that ere long you will have the happiness to rejoice over me as one fully saved of the Lord. I trust I shall have an interest in your prayers as, I would assure you dear sir, you are not forgotten by me.

Your obliged and affectionate servant,

Rebecca Yeoman

Source: published transcription; *Christian Miscellany and Family Visitor* 1 (1846): 276.

¹Rebecca Yeoman (1746–1826) was assisting at the Orphan House when JW came through Newcastle in early June 1770. They exchanged letters for the next 15 years, even after Rebecca married Robert Gair in Sept. 1772 in Newcastle.

²See 1 Pet. 5:8.

³Mary Strolger (1740–1802) of Newcastle. JW had known her since at least 1767; see JW to Margaret Dale, Mar. 29, 1767, *Works*, 28:71–72.

From Mary Marston

Worcester
July 26, 1770

Reverend Sir,

I have for some time past found a more deep, solid, and abiding happiness in God than ever. I am enabled continually to live by faith in Christ. Yet I long for a larger degree of every fruit of the Spirit. I would not do any thing that would offend the eyes of his majesty. I feel myself weak and helpless, and ignorant of every thing but what he teaches me. I am enabled to cast myself upon Jesus just as I am, bringing nothing with me but my wants. And so gracious is he that he does not lay folly to my charge, but does bless and refresh my soul without upbraiding me.

As far as I know, I have but one end in view, which is to devote myself to God without reserve. My greatest ambition is to sit at Jesu's feet, feeling myself to be nothing and God to be all in all.

Since I heard from you,¹ I have been variously tried both from within and without. But the more Satan strives to hinder, the more earnest am I for the whole image of God. Sometimes the enemy would make me think that God is all mercy; and that, do what I will, I shall be saved at last. That I need not deny myself and take up my cross so much. But glory be to God! He saves me from the fowler's snare. I should be glad you would inform me which is the most excellent way to walk in, and what are the chief hindrances which I am likely to be exposed to. If you will write soon and speak freely, you will greatly oblige, reverend sir,

Your unworthy servant,

M. Marston

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 7 (1784): 332–33 .

¹The most recent surviving letter from JW was dated Apr. 1, 1770.

From Elizabeth Johnson¹

[Bristol]
July 28, 1770

Reverend Sir,

I am much obliged to you for your kind enquiries,² and bless the Lord that I can answer them, I hope, to your satisfaction.

For two years past, I have been so afflicted with fevers that my body is weakened much. But glory be to God, my soul is full of vigour, life, and motion! I can bless him for the continual power of his Spirit in my heart, which is given up to him and knows no other good. He condescends to let me sit under his shadow with great delight, while his fruit is sweet to my taste. I always have peace in him. He hath subdued my will to his. I can continually say, good is the will of the Lord. I bless him, I am always enabled to believe, which makes me feel him always present. I can even turn my eyes inward, and find him my God and my all. I live upon him. He is the life of my life, and the soul of my soul! I am in a great measure separated from men and means; yet I find no lack, for he supplies my wants out of the riches of his abundance.

Though I have lately been near death, yet I had no fear of it. But I had a very awful apprehension of the majesty and glory of God! I am now in a state of great weakness, but entirely resigned to the will of my heavenly Father. He knows what is best; and therefore all within me says, 'Thy will be done, O God!'

As I am yet in the body, I have great feelings for his church and people. I rejoice in their prosperity, and sympathize with them in their adversity. But I can help them with nothing but my prayers. At times my soul is exceeding sorrowful, then I am relieved by resigning all my cares and concerns to our adorable Lord. The general state of my soul is deep poverty, conscious nothingness, sweet penitence, and sacred shame for all I do and say. So that I have no confidence but in the ever-living Lord, whom I find to be my all-sufficient Good.

I am, reverend sir,

Your unworthy servant,

E. Johnson

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 7 (1784): 333–34.

¹Elizabeth Johnson (1721–98), the daughter of a West India merchant resident in Chippenham, Wiltshire, was disinherited by her father when she joined the Methodists. She remained single (though in later years was known as 'Mrs. Johnson'), living on an annuity bequeathed by her uncle. Elizabeth's home on Hilgrove Street was a center of Methodism in the city of Bristol and she was described by JW as 'deep in grace, and lives like an angel here below'. See *An Account of Mrs. Elizabeth Johnson* (Bristol: Pine, 1799).

²The JW letter with these inquiries is not known to survive.

From the Rev. Jacob Chapman

Staplehurst
July 31, 1770

Reverend Sir,

I have it much upon my heart to write to you. I can most truly say that I love you with a pure heart fervently. It gives me peculiar pleasure that you have written so clearly and strongly that God is really willing that *all men* should be saved. I should think that no man, and particularly no good man, could be unwilling to believe this, but rather would rejoice at it.

I am sincerely glad that you are for *a Bible religion*. May it be pure and undefiled, without the least mixture! Why should we be wise, in the least degree, above what is written? It is very comfortable to be delivered entirely from a party spirit. It frees us from many a perplexity, and calms the mind. It is an unspeakable consolation that I am willing to believe, do, and suffer everything God desires me; that I am at his disposal without the least reserve.

I can truly say that the more persons speak against you, the more I love you. I hope you will always find me loving, faithful, and thankful. I have much reason to love and thank God, who brought me to be acquainted with you.

I am, dear sir,

Your most unworthy brother, and humble servant,

J. Chapman

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 7 (1784): 387–88.

From a Member of the Church of England

Sarum
October 18, 1770

Worthy Sir,

The reason of my troubling you after this manner is my being informed that one Thomas Wride¹ is sent by Mr. Wesley to preach at Whitehaven, etc.

Thomas Wride is a native of Salisbury, and was very remarkable here and in London for laziness and running into debt. He was a member of Mr. Wesley's society here for some time, but his conduct was such at last as caused Mr. Wesley's preacher here to look upon him as a person not fit for a Christian society and accordingly rejected him as such! But notwithstanding this, he (having a great stock of assurance, and long quite weary of the shoemaker's stool) offered his service as a preacher to Mr. Wesley, which was accepted. (It is the opinion of some of the Methodists here that he effected this with the help of an old Methodist preacher of a bad character.) Accordingly, Mr. Wesley imposed him as a preacher on the Methodists in Devonshire. While he was there he went by the name of the 'sleepy preacher'! But they soon discovered the cheat! And accordingly the Methodists of all the principal places in that circuit would not let him preach at all! Since that Mr. Wesley (not willing to lose so honourable a servant!) sent him to Rochdale, etc., in Lancashire; and now to Whitehaven, etc.

One of my neighbours told me some time ago that the last payment she received from Thomas Wride she thought was the last that ever she should receive from him; and because the sight of his account should vex her no more, she rubbed it out!

He lodged with one Mr. Jesse Bugden (a member of Mr. Wesley's society here) for a considerable time. Mr. Bugden, having a regard for him, let him have his lodging, washing, and small beer for 9d. per week. He always left it to Thomas Wride to pay when he would, and to mind what was due. When Thomas Wride left Mr. Bugden's lodging, he left it in debt. Mr. Bugden could not remember how much was due, but would have been glad to have received it on Thomas Wride's own word as before. But he never as much as offered to pay him from that time to this. Nay more than that, he told one of his friends that unless Mr. Bugden could remember how much it was, he would not pay him at all!

Another of his creditors here told me a little time past that he should have sent a writ after him long ago, had it not been that he has a great regard for his father. That he had not only omitted paying him, but had used him exceeding ill with his tongue.

I was in London some time in the summer just past. I and a friend of mine called at a house where Thomas Wride lodged when he lived in London. My friend showed me a milkscore chalked upon the door-post of the house, which belonged to Thomas Wride; partly discernible, but nigh worn out with age, which (the women of the house told me) was not paid.

You know sir, it is too often the case that laziness and impudence go together. I have a letter by me that Thomas Wride sent to one of his creditors in London, part of which I here subjoin—in reading of which you will see how great a stock of impudence (instead of honesty) the author made use of:

Sarum
September 26, 1764

Mr. Tingle,

I am not fond of writing for writing's sake, but lack of prudence on your part renders my writing expedient. The reason for my troubling myself to write, and you to read, this present letter is I hear that, notwithstanding all that I have done or said, [it] proves so ineffectual that you 'will not stay much longer, but I will have him in a gaol soon'. O rare! You will, you will, you will; what will you? Not be plaintiff, judge, and jury too, it's to be thought. But you talk as if you had

¹Thomas Wride (1733–1807) was admitted on trial as a travelling preacher in 1768 (cf. *Works*, 10:366) and into full rank in 1770 (10:380).

all the law in your own hand, and would dispense thereof at your pleasure. You will have me in a gaol you say, but be so kind as get my consent first. ...

Was there ever anything appeared equal to this? Mr. Tingle is a salesman in London, and it was for a suit of clothes that Wride got into his debt. I suppose it was two or three years before Thomas Wride sent him this letter, and that the debt was contracted; and it was not paid in July last!

You see sir that the end of troubling you is to prevent the people of Whitehaven and others from being imposed upon by a person of a vile character; and I hope it will answer the desired end.

I remain sir,

Your worship's most obedient humble servant,

A Member of the Church of England

P. S. It is by the desire of one of the Methodists' society here that this letter is sent; and he hopes it will meet with its desired success.

Source: holograph; MARC, PLP 115/9/30.

From Edward Evans¹

Philadelphia
December 4, 1770

Reverend and Very Dear Sir,

It is now about thirty years since I first heard of you and your brother Mr. Charles Wesley. And then was begot in me a great love for you both, and a desire to be known to you by cordial correspondency of mutual love. But Mr. [George] Whitefield, with whom I was in unity at that time, preferred the Calvinist[s] to you—you being not, as he thought, sound in the doctrine of reprobation. Therefore [he] was not for encouraging any correspondency but lay that way. [This] was perhaps the reason I did not then write to you. Mr. Whitefield, though a good man, yet in many respects a weak and vain man, having sunk entirely into what is called Calvin opinion, with which I was not satisfied; and falling into an acquaintance with the people called Moravians, they took with me, and thereby my affection became loose to Mr. Whitefield as they were increased to them.

I was much pleased with them in many respects, their seeming deadness to the world, their plainness and self-denial, and great simplicity, engaged me to them very close. I blessed God for these people more than for any I had known. Surely, said I, these are the people, and I will go with them. Yet I had not forgotten you. You often came into my mind, which made me speak to them at times of you. Peter Böhler was the first acquaintance I had amongst them. He told me [he] had a personal acquaintance with you and your brother, but by slight and insinuation diverted my purpose of writing to you, as I became more generally acquainted with them and their plan. They fully engaged my time and attention amongst them for about twelve years, in which course of time I found great changes amongst [them], and generally for the worse. The Count was a warm-spirited man, and having the absolute rule and direction over all their affairs, did as came into his mind, and all his dogma and notion, of which he was ever full of coming over successfully² must be implicitly observed and followed as the Bulls or decretals of the pope. These things with grief I often noticed. And many Jesuitical evasion[s] and tricks sometimes played on one or another made me often stare, and think surely I was mistaken. These were not the people I expected. Those and many other things set me greatly to reasoning, how could these things be, seeing they are not know[n] in the Scriptures? Nor were they ever taught by our Lord and Saviour, nor any of his apostles. So that they must be nought but the whims of the Count. And having a bad appearance, and a bad tendency to levity and uncleanness of both flesh and spirit, deceit and treachery, I could not endure them. And being fully convinced that these things were so, I and my friends left them.

I, being sick of disappointment, I thought to retire and spend the remains of my days in a separated way, and cleave to Jesus only. Other[s] might do as they may, but here I was not permitted to have my own will, nor sit all the day idle. But my Master called me out again, and that in a more public manner than heretofore. And through grace I have been, in I hope a good degree, obedient to his call for now about eleven or twelve years past. I have left the city mostly, and gone into the lanes and highways in the country, to compel sinner[s] to come in. And, praised be the Lord, he has made many that they have come in, and yet there is room. But now, behold when I least expected it, what God has done: inclined your heart to send two dear men from your Conference to us, by which means my old desire is renewed, as I now perform what I long intended, namely of writing to you and acquainting you that I am one with you in the Lord.

Your dear young men, I mean brother [Richard] Boardman and brother [Joseph] Pilmore, have been a welcome and an acceptable present to us. I think I have seen them as they are, and they are very dear to me, and much beloved. I find them truly sincere, and heartily concerned for the good cause. Their

¹Edward Evans (d. 1771), a cordwainer, was one of Whitefield's converts in Philadelphia. As this letter describes, he went from Whitefield to the Moravians, and then (on meeting Joseph Pilmore and Richard Boardman) in 1769, he joined the Methodists.

²Orig., 'suckfeucly'.

fervency and labour therein greatly delights me. The Lord is with them, and owns and blesses [them] greatly to the people, not only here in town, but wherever they go. [God] is pleased to begin in the mind of the people an unfeigned love for them. So that you may expect much good has been done by them, and that much more good will be done by them. The Lord preserve them little and low. Be for him and all will be well. I have took a delight to do, and still shall, God being my help, do what I can in encouraging them, and strengthening their hand in the Lord, by every little assistance I can give them. Many doors are opened, and many more are opening for the preached word. The Lord send more faithful labour[er]s into his vineyard! Amen.

I was in hopes that our Master had inclined you to make us a visit this year. But I judge it is to be next year, when perhaps it will be the best time. We cannot give up so good a hope. We know all things are possible with him with whom we have to do. This I can assure you, that you will be received with the greatest love by the generality of the people, for I well know the mind of the people toward you. They love your name.

Now what shall I say more? Have I not need to apologize for saying so much? No, I will not, neither, but will presume to say, if you judge of my love by the lengthiness of my letter, you may think I highly esteem you, which I sincerely assure you I do, and in the spirit of love I conclude,

Your unworthy friend, servant, and brother in the Lord our Saviour,

Edward Evans

N.B. If you think me worthy, pray present my most kindest respects to your dear brother Mr. Charles Wesley. If you think it worthy an answer, please to direct for Edward Evans in Philadelphia, to the care of Mr. Francis Harris, Merchant.

Endorsement: by JW, 'Philad[elphi]a, Edw. Evans 2 Cor. 5.15, Luke 1.72 / + a[nswere]d Feb. 7, 1771'.
Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/610/58.³

³A prior transcription published in *Methodist History* (Oct. 1975), 57–59.

From Joseph Benson

[Draft Copy¹]

[Trevecca²]

December [c. 15,] 1770

Reverend Sir,

Ever since I enjoyed a sense of the pardoning love of God, I have been convinced of the possibility and indeed necessity of experiencing something vastly superior to anything I had possessed. This I was led to expect chiefly, I suppose, from a consideration of what you urged respecting the doctrine of Christian Perfection. It appeared clear beyond dispute that such a state was promised in Scripture. Your arguments in many places seemed quite conclusive. I saw I might as well deny the Bible as deny it to be attainable. Besides I felt a want in my heart. I had not rest. I was not happy, unless now and then when I had manifestations of God's love. But I could not in *every* point adopt your doctrine itself, any more than the means of attaining it. Sanctification appeared in Scripture a gradual work and perfection a point we were exhorted continually to aim at and endeavour after—and that in whatever state of grace we were, and to which none of the scriptural saints profess to have attained (Heb. 6:1; and Phil. 3:10). On the contrary, the instances you introduced received what they had experienced instantaneously. This confounded me. As did your brother's preaching and that of many others who spoke very differently on that point.

About a year ago it was often suggested to my mind 'I have not the Spirit!' The reason was my experience did by no means answer the plain texts of Scripture which described the state of those who were possessed of it. I was therefore led frequently to pray 'Lord give me thy Spirit.' I found my heart particularly drawn out when meditating upon those words, 'How much more shall my Father give his Holy Spirit, etc.'³ When I went to Oxford last, I had fully purposed to devote all my time and attention to this and wait for it. But I found employment of another kind prepared for me. I returned to the college [Trevecca] with the same purpose. When I got home I found all things apparently in a strange situation. Mr. [John] Fletcher had been very close with the students and insisted upon it [that] neither himself nor they were believers. This had almost disposed some to leave the college. These were hard sayings. Others acknowledged they had only the *drawings* of the Father. My Lady [Huntingdon] asserted no one in the college *knew the Lord*. Most of them had experienced very clearly the pardon of sin. This they stood to. I was distressed what to do. My sentiments (which I told Mr. Fletcher) [were that] there was weak as well as strong faith; that we might have the former, though not the latter. With regard to myself, I said I <had received⁴> a degree of faith, but at the same time was satisfied my faith could by no means bear the test of many passages in Scripture. Thus we continued. I was sometimes even tempted to give up all religion, and inclined to think it was all imagination. I knew however God would hear prayer; here I fixed and

¹The holograph of this letter sent to JW is not known to survive. We know of the letter from three surviving sources: a draft copy in Benson's papers (presented first); a shorter form that Benson published much later (presented second); and an even shorter summary that Benson sent at the time to Alexander Mather for comment. For more details on the two manuscript forms, and the text of the summary sent to Mather, see Randy L. Maddox & J. Russell Frazier, 'Joseph Benson's Initial Letter to John Wesley Concerning Spirit Baptism and Christian Perfection', *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 48.2 (Fall 2013): 60–77. JW's reply to the letter he received contains reference to material found in Benson's initial draft that does not appear in his published version. Thus the first form presented here should be considered the closest to what JW received. We include Benson's published version for sake of comparison.

²Benson was now a master at Lady Huntingdon's newly opened college in Trevecca, Wales.

³Luke 11:13.

⁴The top left edge of this page is missing. This is a reconstruction of the likely text.

cried, 'I know nothing, but would not oppose the truth. Lord, teach me!' In this disposition I was till last Saturday morning, when I was considering the subject and took up your sermon on Christian Perfection, and reading that part which respects the privileges of Christians as superior to Jews,⁵ when the following truths appeared in great evidence to my mind. And the more I search the Scripture the more I am convinced of them. I earnestly entreat you to give them an unprejudiced and candid consideration, which their importance certainly deserves. For my part, I know nothing in earth or heaven any way comparable to them. I again beseech you, do not hastily decide. Consider them again and again. Every well-disposed soul to whom I have propounded them falls in with them at once.

1. A person may believe on Christ for the remission of sins and yet not have *received in the proper sense, the Holy Ghost*.
2. The receiving the Holy Ghost is that great privilege of the new covenant which distinguishes it from and renders it vastly superior to the old.

[1.] The second proposition appears plain from these among a variety of other scriptures.

Joel 2:28–29, 'And it shall come to pass afterwards, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy' (speak to edification) [...] 'and also upon my servants [...] will I pour out my Spirit' in those days.⁶ This St. Peter declares to be the standing privilege of the gospel dispensation, though it did not commence till the day of Pentecost. This is plain from the following texts.

John 7:38[–39], 'He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. This he spake of the Spirit which they who believed on him *εμελλον λαμβειν οι πιστευσαντες εις αυτον ουπω γαρ ην πνευμα αγιαν οτι Ιησους ουδεπω εδοξασθη*.'⁷

John 14:15ff., 'If ye love me, keep my commandments, and I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth which the world cannot receive because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him, but ye know him, for he *abideth with you*' (this he did already) 'and shall be in you. I will not leave you orphans. I come unto you. In that day ye shall know that *I am in the Father and you in me and I in you*. He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father. And I will love him and manifest myself to him. If any man love me, he will keep my word, and my father will love him and we will come unto him and make our abode with him. [...] He shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance.'

[John] 16:7, 'It is expedient for you that I go away, if I go not away the Comforter⁸

[John] 16:7, 'It is expedient for you that I go away, if I go not away the *Comforter will not come* unto you; but if I depart *I will send him* unto you.'

1 Pet. 1:9[ff.], '... of which salvation the prophets [...] searched diligently, searching what time the Spirit did signify when he testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and the *glory that should follow*. Unto whom it was revealed that not unto themselves, but unto us, they ministered the things which are declared unto you, by them who have preached the gospel unto you which *the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven*.'

Matt. 11:11, 'Amongst those born of a woman there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist, yet he that is *least* in the kingdom of God is *greater than he*.'

⁵I.e., JW, Sermon 40, *Christian Perfection* (1741), II.7–8, *Works*, 2:107–08.

⁶Benson did not typically insert quotation marks around direct quotations of Scripture. They have been added here for clarity.

⁷'...were afterwards to receive. For the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.'

⁸Page 2 of the draft letter ends here, and page 3 is missing. Benson's published version of the missing material (which is identical to what he sent Mather) is inserted here—with indentation to show where the insertion begins and ends.

Luke 9:27, 'There be some that shall not taste death till they shall see the kingdom of God *come with power*.'

See also Ps. 68:18, 2 Tim. 1:14, Gal. 5:22–25, Heb. 8:10–11.

[2.] That the first proposition is true will appear from hence. (I would not be understood to assert that the Holy Spirit does not work repentance, or that he does not enlighten men's minds and give manifestations of himself. This he may do without our being baptized with the Holy Spirit, without receiving the Holy Ghost.)

1) It cannot be denied but that many of the Jews had remission of sins, the favour of God, and his love shed abroad in their hearts. See Exod. 34:6, Ps. 32:1, Isa. 1:18. Indeed, almost all the Psalms breathe a spirit of love and joy in a pardoning God. John the Baptist preached repentance and remission of sins (Mark 1:4, Luke 3:3). Luke 1:77, 'To prepare the way of the Lord, *by giving the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins*.' Our Lord while upon earth forgave the sins of many whose diseases he healed (as Matt. 9:2–6, Luke 7:48–49). But as the Holy Ghost was not given till after Christ's exaltation, it follows the *Holy Ghost given* is different from the pardon of sins, and *this* may be where *that* is not.

2) Many texts speak of them as distinct things.

As Acts 2:38, Peter said, 'be baptized for the *remission of sins* and ye shall receive the *gift of the Holy Spirit*. The promise is to as many as the Lord shall call.'

Acts 8, the Samaritans 'believed Philip's preaching concerning the kingdom of God', but did not receive the *Holy Spirit* till Peter and John went and 'prayed for them'.

Acts 19:2, 'Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?'

Eph. 1:13–14, 'In whom *having believed* (πιστευσαντες) ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise which is the earnest of your inheritance.'

Acts 3:19ff., 'Be converted, *for the blotting out of your sins* (οπως αν ελθωσιν), *that* the times of refreshing *may come* from the presence of the Lord.'

Luke 3:3, 'John came preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins'; and in the 16th verse says, 'one mightier than I cometh [...] he shall baptize you with the *Holy Spirit and fire*, etc.'

See Matt. 3:12; Titus 3:5–6.

3) From experience: (1) *Negatively*, — who of us can with justness and propriety apply to himself the above mentioned texts of Scripture, taking them in their plain, obvious, literal sense, undisguised by the false glosses of men? And many more, such as:⁹

[John 14:20,] 'In that day ye shall know that I am in the Father and you in me and I in you.'

John 17:20[–23], 'Neither pray I for these alone, but for all that shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one. [...] I in them and thou in me.'

Rom. 8:2[ff.], 'For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath freed me from the law of sin and death.' [ver.] 9, 'But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit; if the Spirit of God dwell in you. And if any have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.' [ver.] 14–16, 'For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again unto fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The same Spirit beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God.' [ver.] 26, 'Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not [what] we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered.'

1 Cor. 2:9–10, and to the end of the chapter.¹⁰

⁹The surviving leaves of the draft letter pick up at this point.

¹⁰Quoted in published form: 'Eye hath not seen ... the things God hath prepared for them that love him, but he *hath* revealed them to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searcheth all things, the *deep things of*

1 Tim. 1:14, 'And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.'

1 John 2:20[–27], 'Ye have an anointing from the Holy One, and know all things.'

1 Cor. 3:16, 'Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you.'

2 Cor. 1:22, 'Who hath sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.'

Eph. 4:30.

The whole of St. John's first epistle, especially the fifth chapter.

(2) Positively, some of the children of God whom I have known and many you have known, after having long rejoicing in the privilege of remission of sins, were convinced of the necessity and of receiving something more, promised as they conceived in Scripture. This they earnestly sought, and after such discoveries of their own hearts as they never had before any idea of, after going through a dreadful scene of trials of various kinds and temptations from the power of darkness, trouble, and distress, the Lord who is faithful to his promises, came suddenly to their hearts and made them the temple of [the] indwelling God. This with one voice they declare as very different from and vastly superior to what they experienced in consequence of the remission of sins, while they had what was called the first love.

[3.] This will ascertain the meaning of those passages of Scripture which speak of the kingdom of God. — John the Baptist, our Lord's disciples, and himself always declared 'the kingdom of God is at hand'. They never mention it as actually commenced, till at the day of Pentecost. In the meantime people are directed to prepare for it by repenting and believing the gospel, whereby they received remission of sins, their hearts drawn out in love to God, and a degree of peace and joy in believing. And is not this all that the generality now look for or experience? Is not this all that those called gospel ministers know anything at all about or point out to others? Are they any more than John's disciples? Like Apollos who 'taught diligently the things of Jesus, knowing only the baptism of John.'¹¹ They indeed exhort people to a conformity to the will of God, but how? Not by declaring and maintaining they *must receive the Holy Ghost* to dwell in their hearts or they can never attain to such a conformity, and that in a very different manner from what they have hitherto experienced. I could ask who do actually grow in grace in consequence of such directions? Where is the man who, after twenty years experience, is one whit nearer the mark, supposing they have not received this power. Nay, it is well if they are not in general ten times more carnally minded. And no wonder. They have missed the mark. They are not directed in that only way it is <possible, the way¹²> the infinitely wise God hath pointed in his Word.

[4.] This accounts scripturally and reasonably for what you have called the 'second gift', etc. And on these principles, the expediency and necessity may (I will venture for it) be fully evinced. This I am persuaded is a key to the whole Scripture, and renders them consistent with themselves. It hath, I assure you, opened such a scene of things to my view as I never beheld. Oh how much more fully to possess them! I cannot look into the New Testament without discovering continually confirmations of my sentiments and seeing it as a new book. Oh my dear sir, I am convinced I am only one of John's disciples. I have hitherto known nothing of the grand characteristic and distinguishing privilege of Christians. And yet I have pretended to preach the gospel, without the Spirit of Christ! And in some degree God may have been *with me* and blessed his own word, as far as it was truly set forth. What might we expect if he was *in us*? Glory be to his name, I <now¹³> feel an expectation of knowing by *happy* experience that everyone

God. ... The spiritual man discerneth all things, yet he himself is discerned of no man.'

¹¹Cf. Acts 18:25.

¹²A two-inch section of the first line at the top of the page is missing. The general sense is clear but exact wording is uncertain.

¹³There are two small tears on the edge of the page, but this and the following missing words can be reconstructed with sufficient confidence.

that asketh receiveth. I know, I feel, I want that <gift> he hath promised will make me a Christian, happy and useful.

Adieu, honoured sir, and believe me to be
Your obedient servant

Source: Benson draft copy in his papers; MARC, PLP 7/12/8.

[Published Version]

College at Trevecca
December [c. 15,] 1770

Reverend and Much Honoured Sir,

Ever since I was made a partaker of the pardoning love of God, I have been convinced of the possibility, and indeed necessity, of experiencing something vastly superior to anything I have possessed. This I have been led to expect from a consideration of what you urged respecting the doctrine of Christian perfection. It appeared clear beyond dispute that such a state was promised in Scripture, and your arguments in many respects seemed conclusive. I felt, moreover, a *want* in my heart. I had not *rest*. I was not happy, unless now and then when the Lord gave me some manifestations of his love.

About a year ago it was often suggested to my mind 'I have not the Spirit'! The reason was my experience did by no means answer the plain texts of Scripture which described the state of those who were possessed of it. I was therefore led frequently to pray 'Lord give me thy Spirit', and found my heart particularly drawn out when meditating upon those words, 'How much more shall my Father give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him.' When I went to Oxford last, I had fully purposed to devote all my time and attention to this and wait for it. I found, however, employment of another kind prepared for me. I returned to the college with the same purpose. — But I continued a long time in great perplexity. I was sometimes even tempted to give up all religion. I knew however God would hear prayer, and therefore cried to him, 'I know nothing, but I will not oppose the truth. Lord, teach me!' In this disposition I remained till last Saturday morning, when I was considering the subject and took up your sermon on Christian Perfection, and while reading that part which respects the privileges of Christians as superior to Jews, the following propositions appeared with great evidence to my mind, and the more I search the Scripture the more I am convinced of their truth. I earnestly entreat you to give them an unprejudiced and serious consideration, which their importance certainly deserves. Do not hastily decide. Every well-disposed soul to whom I have propounded them falls in with them at once.

1. A person may believe on Christ for the remission of sins and yet not have received in the proper sense, the Holy Ghost.
2. The receiving the Holy Ghost is that great privilege of the new covenant which distinguishes it from and renders it vastly superior to the old.

[1.] The second proposition appears plain from these among a variety of other passages of sacred writ.

Joel 2:28–29,¹⁴ 'And it shall come to pass afterwards, I will *pour out my Spirit* upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy' (speak to edification) [...] 'and also upon my servants [...] will I pour out my Spirit' in those days. This St. Peter declares to be the *standing* privilege of the gospel dispensation, though it did not commence till the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). This is plain from the following texts.

¹⁴The scripture references are at the end in the published form, but were at the beginning in Benson's draft and are moved here for ease of comparison.

John 7:38[–39], ‘He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. This he spake of the Spirit which they who believed on him were about to receive (εμελλον λαμβανειν), for the Holy Ghost was *not yet given*, because Jesus was *not yet glorified*.

John 14:15ff., ‘If ye love me, keep my commandments, and I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may *abide with you for ever*, even the Spirit of truth which the world cannot receive because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him, but ye know him, for he *abideth with you and shall be in you*. [...] In that day ye shall know that *I am in the Father and you in me and I in you*. ... If any man love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him and we will *come* unto him and make *our abode* with him. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, he shall teach you *all things and bring all things to your remembrance*.’

[John] 16:7, ‘It is expedient for you that I go away, if I go not away the *Comforter will not come* unto you; but if I depart *I will send him* unto you.’

1 Pet. 1:9[ff.], ‘... of which salvation the prophets [...] searched diligently, searching what time the Spirit did signify when he testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and the *glory that should follow*. Unto whom it was revealed that not unto themselves, but unto us, they ministered the things which are declared unto you, by them who have preached the gospel unto you which *the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven*.’

Matt. 11:11, ‘Amongst those born of a woman there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist, yet he that is *least* in the kingdom of God is *greater than he*.’

Luke 9:27, ‘There be some that shall not taste death till they shall see the kingdom of God *come with power*.’

See also Ps. 68:18, 2 Tim. 1:14, Gal. 5:22–25, Heb. 8:10–11.

[2.] That the first proposition is true will appear from hence. (I would not be understood to assert that the Holy Spirit does not work repentance, or that he does not enlighten men’s minds and give manifestations of himself. This he may do without our being baptized with the Holy Spirit, without receiving the Holy Ghost.)

1) It cannot be denied but that many of the Jews had remission of sins, the favour of God, and his love shed abroad in their hearts. See Exod. 34:6, Ps. 32:1, Isa. 1:18. Indeed, almost all the Psalms breathe a spirit of love and joy in a pardoning God. John the Baptist preached repentance and remission of sins (Mark 1:4, Luke 3:3). Luke 1:77, ‘To prepare the way of the Lord, *by giving the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins*.’ Our Lord while upon earth forgave the sins of many whose diseases he healed (as Matt. 9:2–6, Luke 7:48–49). But as the Holy Ghost was not given till after Christ’s exaltation, it follows the *Holy Ghost given* is different from the pardon of sins, and *this* may be where *that* is not.

2) Many texts speak of them as distinct things.

As Acts 2:38, Peter said, ‘be baptized for the *remission of sins* and ye shall receive the *gift of the Holy Spirit*. The promise is to as many as the Lord shall call.’

Acts 8, the Samaritans ‘believed Philip’s preaching concerning the kingdom of God’, but did not receive the *Holy Spirit* till Peter and John went and ‘prayed for them’.

Acts 19:2, ‘Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?’

Eph. 1:13–14, ‘In whom *having believed* (πιστευσαντες) ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise which is the earnest of your inheritance.’

Acts 3:19ff., ‘Be converted, *for the blotting out of your sins* (οπως αν ελθωσιν), *that* the times of refreshing *may come* from the presence of the Lord.’

Luke 3:3, ‘John came preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins’; and in the 16th verse says, ‘one mightier than I cometh [...] he shall baptize you with the *Holy Spirit and fire*, etc.’

See Matt. 3:12; Titus 3:5–6.

3) From experience: (1) *Negatively*, — who of us can with justness and propriety apply to himself the above mentioned texts of Scripture, taking them in their plain, obvious, literal sense, undisguised by the false glosses of men? And many more, such as:

John 17:20[–23], ‘Neither pray I for these alone, but for all that shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one, as thou Father art *in me*, and *I in thee*, that they also may be *one in us*. The glory thou has given me I have given them, that they may be one, as we are one, *I in them and thou in me*, that they may be perfected in *one*.’

Rom. 8:2[ff.], ‘The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus *hath made me free from the law of sin and death*.’ [ver.] 14–16, ‘As many as are *led* by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. Ye are in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. The Spirit itself *beareth witness* with our spirits that we are the sons of God.’ [ver.] 26, ‘He maketh intercession for us with *groanings unutterable*.’ See the whole of Rom., chap. 8.

1 Cor. 2:9–10, ‘Eye hath not seen ... the things God hath prepared for them that love him, but he *hath* revealed them to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, *the deep things of God*. ... The spiritual man *discerneth all* things, yet he himself is discerned of no man.’

2 Tim. 1:14, ‘The Holy Ghost *dwelleth in us*.’

1 John 2:20[–27], ‘Ye have an *unction* from the Holy One, and *know all things*. the unction *abideth in you*, etc.’

2 Cor. 1:22, ‘Who hath sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. I *live not* but Christ liveth *in me*.’

1 John 4:13, ‘We know *we dwell in him and he in us*, because he hath given us of his Spirit.’

See also Eph. 4:30, Gal 4:6, 1 Cor. 3:16, Acts 1:5–6, etc.

(2) *Positively*, Many of the children of God, after receiving the promise of pardon, etc., have been convinced of the necessity of something beyond their present experience, and after such discoveries of their own hearts as they had not before any idea of, after going through a dreadful scene of temptations of various kinds, the Lord, who is faithful to his promises, has come suddenly to his *temple*. This with one voice they declare as very different from, and vastly superior to, what they experienced in consequence of pardon.

[3.] This will ascertain the meaning of those passages of Scripture which speak of the kingdom of God. — John the Baptist and our Lord always declare ‘the kingdom of God *is at hand*’. They never speak of it as actually commenced, till at the day of Pentecost. In the meantime people were directed to prepare and wait for the reception of it by repenting and believing the gospel, whereby they received remission of sins and a degree of peace and joy in believing. And is not this all that the generality now look for? Are they any more than John’s disciples? What have they which the Jews had not? John had not? — A plain proof they know nothing of the kingdom of God (Matt. 11:11). No wonder persons do not grow in grace. They miss the mark. We cannot grow but by having *an indwelling God*.

[4.] This accounts scripturally and reasonably for what you have called the ‘second gift’, etc. And on these principles, the expediency and necessity may (I will venture for it) be fully evinced. This has thrown a surprising light on a variety of passages of Scripture, which I could never understand before. I am fully convinced I have hitherto been only one of *John’s disciples*. I have known nothing of the grand characteristic and distinguishing privileges of the gospel dispensation. Thanks be to God for the hope of glory it hath opened to my view, which I hope to possess!

I am, etc.

J. Benson

Source: published transcription; [Joseph Benson,] *Letters, Chiefly Doctrinal* (London: T. Cordeux, 1823), 1–6.

From Hannah Ball

[High Wycombe]
December 16, 1770

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I hope you do not think me negligent in not replying to your letter ere this.¹ Glory be to God! He has lengthened out my life to this time, and I am still the living monument of his sparing mercy. This day three years [ago] the Lord was pleased to set my heart free—a day I desire to remember with thanksgiving to my life's end. Since Mr. Furz has been here, my soul has been built up in God.² But before he or you came, I was almost ready to faint through trials, sickness, and temptations; yet not quite overcome—my head was still kept above water. I never expected to find a smoother path, for the Lord applied these words with power to my heart, 'I will show you what great things thou shalt suffer for my sake.'³

I bless God I can answer every question you proposed. I feel a clear deliverance from pride, anger, and my own will. I have no will but his, and no love but what is placed on him. And I have an uninterrupted sense of his presence, as more than a loving father. Christ is my husband, and I am his bride; and it is always my care to walk agreeably to so noble an alliance. But I feel a constant need of watchfulness in all things, that I grieve not his Spirit.

Our society improves, and I trust we shall be a holy and happy people. The children meet twice a week, every Sunday and Monday. They are a wild little company, but seem willing to be instructed. I labour among them, earnestly desiring to promote the interest of the church of Christ.

Begging your prayers, I remain, reverend and dear sir,
Your affectionate servant,

H. Ball

Source: published transcription; Ball, *Memoir*, 83–84.

¹This is Ball's reply to JW's letter of Nov. 5, 1769, *Works*, 28:250.

²John Furz (c. 1712–1800), a native of Wilton, near Salisbury, was awakened in part by a sermon c. 1732 by Westley Hall. Furz became active in local preaching and organizing societies in nearby settings after his conversion, aligning with Methodism, and came to JW's attention. In the early 1750s Furz consulted with JW, who brought him into the itinerant ministry. Furz appears in the *Minutes* first in 1755 (*Works*, 10:273), but as one already active. He continued to travel as a preacher until 1781 when health deterioration led him to locate. See his biography, c. Apr. 1782, in-letters.

³See Acts 9:16.