

# John Wesley's In-Correspondence (1781–85)

## Table of Contents (Update: June 20, 2024)

1781 Jan. 16	Elizabeth Ritchie . . . . .	1–2
1781 c. Mar.	Thomas Taylor . . . . .	3–4
1781 Mar	Duncan Wright (autobiography) . . . . .	5–13
1781 Mar. 16	Thomas Payne (autobiography) . . . . .	14–19
1781 c. May	Rev. Cornelius Bayley . . . . .	20
1781 May	William Black Jr. . . . .	21
1781 June 06	Rev. John Fletcher . . . . .	22
1781 June 24	Rev. John Fletcher . . . . .	23
1781 c. July	Joseph Benson . . . . .	24–29
1781 c. July	unidentified correspondent . . . . .	30
1781 c. July	George Story (autobiography) . . . . .	31–39
1781 July 24	Baildon Yorkshire society . . . . .	40
1781 Aug.–Sept.	Rev. John Fletcher . . . . .	41
1781 Sept. 20	Robert Wilkinson [and George Shadford] (autobiography) . . . . .	42–47
1781 c. Oct.	[Thomas Vasey?] (good death account) . . . . .	48–53
1781 Oct. 15	John Hoskins (autobiography) . . . . .	54–58
1781 Oct. 23	Rev. Dr. Thomas Coke . . . . .	59–60
1781 Nov. 07	William Smith to Joseph Benson . . . . .	61
178[1] Dec. 27	Ann Bolton . . . . .	62
1782 Jan. 01	John Francis Valton . . . . .	63
1782 Jan. 04	Rev. Thomas Davenport . . . . .	64
1782 Jan. 06	Hester Ann Roe . . . . .	65–66
1782 Jan 10	Samuel Bardsley . . . . .	67
1782 Jan. 10	Elizabeth Ritchie . . . . .	68–69
1782 Jan. 15	Rev. Thomas Davenport . . . . .	70
1782 Jan. 26	Sarah (Ward) Nind . . . . .	71
1782 Jan. 28	Ann Loxdale . . . . .	72–73
1782 c. Feb.	John Pawson . . . . .	74
1782 Feb. 5	John Pawson (good death account) . . . . .	75
1782 Feb. 12	Dorothy (Furly) Downes (good death account) . . . . .	76
1782 Feb. 12	Thomas Simpson . . . . .	77
1782 Feb. 13	‘Respectful Reader’ . . . . .	78
1782 c. Feb. 15	James Barry . . . . .	79
1782 c. Feb. 18	Joseph Benson . . . . .	80–121
1782 c. Feb. 20	Robert Leister . . . . .	122
1782 c. Feb. 20	George Whitfield . . . . .	123
1782 Feb. 23	Ann Bolton . . . . .	124
1782 Feb. 24	Elizabeth (Nangle) Bradburn . . . . .	125
1782 Feb. 28	Thomas Taylor . . . . .	126–27
1782 c. Mar.	William Ferguson (autobiography) . . . . .	128–32
1782 c. Mar.	John Pawson . . . . .	133
1782 c. Mar.	Richard Swanwick . . . . .	134
1782 c. Mar. 01	[Thomas Tattersall?] . . . . .	135–36
1782 c. Mar. 15	Thomas Saxton . . . . .	137–39
1782 Mar. 16	Joseph Whittingham Salmon . . . . .	140
1782 Mar. 26	Thomas Carlill . . . . .	141
1782 Mar. 28	Mrs. K[atherine] K[eyse]ll . . . . .	142–43
1782 c. Apr.	[William Collins] (good death account) . . . . .	144–45
1782 c. Apr.	John Furz (autobiography) . . . . .	146–56

# John Wesley's In-Correspondence (1781–85)

## Table of Contents (Update: June 20, 2024)

1782 c. Apr.	Christopher Watkins . . . . .	157
1782 Apr. 01	unnamed noblewoman . . . . .	158
1782 Apr. 07	Hester Ann Roe . . . . .	159
1782 Apr. 24	John Allen . . . . .	160
1782 c. May	unidentified correspondent . . . . .	161–62
1782 May 16	Capt. Richard Williams . . . . .	163
1782 June 01	Ann Loxdale . . . . .	164–65
1782 June 06	James Wood . . . . .	166
1782 June 10	John Baxter . . . . .	167
1782 June 13	Hester Ann Roe . . . . .	168
1782 c. July	Freeborn Garrettson (good death account) . . . . .	169–73
1782 July 07	Mary (Bosanquet) Fletcher . . . . .	174
1782 July 07	Hester Ann Roe . . . . .	175
1782 July 15	Mrs. Martha Ward . . . . .	176
1782 July 29	Thomas Bond . . . . .	177
1782 Aug. 13	John Bredin for Adam Clarke . . . . .	178
1782 Aug. 15	Elizabeth Ritchie . . . . .	179
1782 Aug. 28	Mr[s]. M. L. . . . .	180
1782 c. Sept.	James Oddie (good death account) . . . . .	181–83
1782 Sept. 09	Ann Bolton . . . . .	184
1782 Sept. 16	William Roberts . . . . .	185
1782 c. Sept. 23	William Roberts . . . . .	186
1782 Sept. 28	Hester Ann Roe [on Robert Roe] (good death account) . . . . .	187–214
1782 Oct. 04	John Trembath . . . . .	215
1782 Oct. 28	Mrs. Martha Ward . . . . .	216
1782 Nov. 01	Thomas Taylor . . . . .	217
1782 Nov. 11	Elizabeth Ritchie . . . . .	218
1782 c. Nov. 15	[Mrs. Martha Ward?] . . . . .	219
1782 Nov. 16	Joseph Benson . . . . .	220–21
1782 Nov. 21	Hester Ann Roe . . . . .	222
1782 Nov. 28	Rev. Johannes T. Burckhardt . . . . .	223
1782 Dec.	J. M. . . . .	224
1782 c. Dec.	Sampson Staniforth (autobiography) . . . . .	225–39
1782 Dec. 05	Samuel Badcock (on Wesley family) . . . . .	240–48
1782 Dec. 14	Joseph Benson . . . . .	249–50
1782 Dec. 14	Rev. Thomas Davenport . . . . .	251
1782 Dec. 22	Mrs. Martha Ward . . . . .	252
1783 Jan. 03	John Allen . . . . .	253
1783 Jan. 03	Ann Bolton . . . . .	254
1783 c. Jan. 03	Ellen Gretton . . . . .	255
1783 Jan. 13	[Darcy (Brisbane) Maxwell] . . . . .	256
1783 Jan. 18	Ruth Hall . . . . .	257–58
1783 Jan. 29	Ann Bolton . . . . .	259
1783 Feb. 01	John Francis Valton . . . . .	260
1783 Feb. 03	Elizabeth Scaddan . . . . .	261–63
1783 Feb. 13	John Allen . . . . .	264
1783 Feb. 18	unidentified correspondent (good death account) . . . . .	265
1783 Feb. 21	Mary Freeman Shepherd . . . . .	266
1783 Feb. 25	William Collins . . . . .	267

# John Wesley's In-Correspondence (1781–85)

## Table of Contents (Update: June 20, 2024)

1783 c. Feb. 28	Thomas Hanby . . . . .	268–69
1783 c. Mar.	Dorothea (Garret) King (good death account). . . . .	270
1783 c. Mar.	J[ane] T[hornton] (good death account) . . . . .	271–74
1783 Mar. 11	unidentified correspondent (good death account) . . . . .	275
1783 Mar. 13	Charles Boone (good death account). . . . .	276
1783 Apr. 11	Ann Loxdale . . . . .	277
1783 c. May 10	Rev. Charles Wesley . . . . .	278
1783 c. May 22	Joseph Benson . . . . .	279
1783 May 24	unidentified correspondent (good death account) . . . . .	280–81
1783 May 24	Edward Dromgoole . . . . .	282–83
1783 June 07	Jonathan Brown . . . . .	284
1783 June 08	Thomas Taylor . . . . .	285
1783 June 20	unidentified correspondent . . . . .	286
1783 c. July 01	Hendrika Christina Rodenbeeck (good death account). . . . .	287
1783 July 14	Mr. M. H. . . . .	288
1783 July 15	Johanna C. A. Loten . . . . .	289
1783 July 31	Ann Bolton . . . . .	290
1783 c. Aug.	John Prickard (autobiography) . . . . .	291–301
1783 c. Aug.	Richard Rodda (autobiography) . . . . .	302–11
1783 Aug. 06	John Francis Valton (autobiography) . . . . .	312–33
1783 Aug. 06	William Roberts . . . . .	334
1783 Aug. 31	Thomas Olivers . . . . .	335
1783 c. Sept.	[Thomas Brisco] (good death account) . . . . .	336
1783 c. Sept.	W. A—t S—d . . . . .	337
1783 Sept. 10	Ann Bolton . . . . .	338
1783 Sept. 16	Ann Bolton . . . . .	339
1783 Sept. 20	Francis Asbury . . . . .	340–41
1783 Oct. 01	William M'Cornock (autobiography) . . . . .	342–47
1783 Oct. 14	Jonathan Hern (good death account). . . . .	348–49
1783 Oct. 25	unidentified correspondent . . . . .	350
1783 Nov. 05	Dorothy (Furly) Downes . . . . .	351
1783 Nov. 20	Mary (Walsh / Leadbetter) Gilbert . . . . .	352–53
1783 Nov. 21	William Collins . . . . .	354
1783 Nov. 21	John Haime (good death account) . . . . .	355
1783 Dec. 09	B. C. (good death account) . . . . .	356
1783 Dec. 13	John Pawson (good death account) . . . . .	357
1783 Dec. 26	Samuel Wesley (JW's nephew) to Mary Freeman Shepherd . . . . .	358
1784 Jan. 12	George Shadford . . . . .	359
1784 Jan. 13	Joseph Charlesworth . . . . .	360
1784 Jan. 22	William Moore . . . . .	361
1784 Feb. 07	Mary Gilbert . . . . .	362–63
1784 Feb. 16	Samuel Bardsley . . . . .	364
1784 c. Feb. 18	John Heald et al. . . . .	365
1784 c. Feb. 25	James Rogers & Hester Ann Roe (on Martha Rogers; good death account). . . . .	366–77
1784 c. Mar. 10	William Percival . . . . .	378
1784 Mar. 20	Francis Asbury . . . . .	379–80
1784 Mar. 23	Ann Bolton . . . . .	381
1784 Mar. 25	S. Saunders . . . . .	382
1784 Mar. 29	Adam Clarke . . . . .	383–84

# John Wesley's In-Correspondence (1781–85)

## Table of Contents (Update: June 20, 2024)

1784 Apr. 17	Rev. Dr. Thomas Coke . . . . .	385–86
1784 Apr. 17	Mrs. Martha Ward . . . . .	387
1784 c. Apr. 20	unidentified woman . . . . .	388–90
1784 c. May	Rachel Bruff . . . . .	391–93
1784 c. May	unidentified correspondent (good death account) . . . . .	394–95
1784 May 07	Richard Rodda . . . . .	396
1784 May 12	N. L. (good death account) . . . . .	397
1784 c. June	James Toole (good death account) . . . . .	398–99
1784 c. June	unidentified correspondent (good death account) . . . . .	400–03
1784 c. June	unidentified correspondent (good death account) . . . . .	404–05
1784 June 03	Thomas Wride . . . . .	406
1784 June 05	Robert Raikes . . . . .	407–08
1784 June 22	Ann Bolton . . . . .	409–10
1784 c. July 01	John Hampson's <i>Appeal</i> . . . . .	411–13
1784 July 03	Thomas Wride . . . . .	414–16
1784 July 16	[Marie Judith (Adams)?] Leuliet . . . . .	417
1784 July 26	Thomas Wride . . . . .	418
1784 Aug. 06–09	Rev. Dr. Thomas Coke . . . . .	419–20
1784 Aug. 10	Mary Bishop . . . . .	421
1784 Sept. 01	George Story (good death account) . . . . .	422
1784 Sept. 02	Elizabeth Ritchie . . . . .	423
1784 Sept. 07	Christopher Watkins . . . . .	424
1784 Sept. 17	Dorothea (Garret / King) Johnson . . . . .	425
1784 Sept. 23	Elizabeth Ritchie . . . . .	426
1784 c. Nov.	Mr. Mayo (good death account) . . . . .	427–28
1784 Nov. 02	Christopher Hopper (good death account) . . . . .	429
1784 Nov. 10	Elizabeth Ritchie . . . . .	430–31
1784 Nov. 30	Elizabeth (Verney) Henson (good death account) . . . . .	432
1784 Dec. 24	Joseph Benson (good death account) . . . . .	433–35
1785 c.	unidentified correspondent (good death account) . . . . .	436
1785 Jan. 17	John Pritchard (autobiography) . . . . .	437–46
1785 Jan. 20	Rev. James Creighton (autobiography) . . . . .	447–55
1785 c. Jan. 20	Thomas Tattershall (good death account) . . . . .	456–58
1785 Jan. 22	Joseph Wells . . . . .	459
1785 Jan. 25	John Hampson . . . . .	460–61
1785 Jan. 31	Adam Clarke . . . . .	462–63
1785 c. Mar. 20	Christopher Hopper (good death account) . . . . .	464–65
1785 Mar. 22	Mary (Bosanquet) Fletcher (good death account) . . . . .	466–67
1785 Mar. 30	unidentified correspondent (good death account) . . . . .	468–69
1785 c. Apr.	unidentified correspondent . . . . .	470–71
1785 Apr. 02	Joseph Taylor (good death account) . . . . .	472–73
1785 Apr. 05	unidentified correspondent (good death account) . . . . .	474
1785 Apr. 12	Joseph Pescod (good death account) . . . . .	475–76
1785 Apr. 20	Freeborn Garrettson . . . . .	478
1785 c. Apr. 30	Rev. Charles Wesley . . . . .	479
1785 May 10	Rev. Samuel Badcock . . . . .	480–83
1785 May 24	Joseph Pescod (good death account) . . . . .	484
1785 May 30	Thomas Wride . . . . .	485–88
1785 c. June	Thomas Tattershall (good death account) . . . . .	489–91

# John Wesley's In-Correspondence (1781–85)

## Table of Contents (Update: June 20, 2024)

1785 c June	Thomas Wride . . . . .	492–94
1785 June 03	Robert Oastler to James Oddie . . . . .	495
1785 June 14	James Oddie et al. . . . .	496
1785 June 20	Rev. Dr. Joseph Fisher . . . . .	497–98
1785 July 23	Thomas Wride . . . . .	499
1785 June 24	Robert Oastler to James Oddie . . . . .	500
1785 c. July	Samuel Mitchell . . . . .	501–07
1785 c. Aug.	[Richard Rodda?] (good death account) . . . . .	508–10
1785 Aug. 07	William Black Jr. . . . .	511
1785 Aug. 14	Rev. Charles Wesley . . . . .	512
1785 c. Aug. 15	Michael Moorhouse . . . . .	513
1785 Aug. 18	Mary (Bosanquet) Fletcher (on husband's death) . . . . .	514–19
1785 Aug. 28	Thomas Wride . . . . .	520–21
1785 Sept. 07	Thomas Wride . . . . .	522–26
1785 Sept. 08	Rev. Charles Wesley . . . . .	527–28
1785 Sept. 15	Mary Cooke . . . . .	529–30
1785 Sept. 19	Rev. Charles Wesley . . . . .	531
1785 Sept. 23	Mary Cooke . . . . .	532
1785 Sept. 30	John King . . . . .	533
1785 Oct. 03	Thomas Wride . . . . .	534–35
1785 Oct. 14	Matthias Joyce (autobiography) . . . . .	536–53
1785 Oct. 15	Joseph Benson (on John Fletcher) . . . . .	554–59
1785 Oct. 15	George Shadford (autobiography) . . . . .	560–74
1785 Oct. 22	John Burnet . . . . .	575
1785 Oct. 24	Mary Cooke . . . . .	576–77
1785 c. Oct. 25	Joseph Benson . . . . .	578
1785 Oct. 27	John King . . . . .	579
1785 Oct. 31	Dorothy (Furly) Downes . . . . .	580
1785 Nov. 01	William Boothby (good death account) . . . . .	581–82
1785 Nov. 05	Thomas Wride . . . . .	583
1785 Nov. 14	Thomas Wride . . . . .	584
1785 c. Dec.	John Gardner . . . . .	585
1785 c. Dec.	Alexander Knox to Methodist Lay-Preachers . . . . .	586–90
1785 c. Dec.	Jasper Robinson (autobiography) . . . . .	591–96
1785 Dec. 05	Mary Cooke . . . . .	597–98
1785 Dec. 09	Thomas Wride . . . . .	599–601
1785 c. Dec. 20	Joseph Benson (on John Fletcher) . . . . .	602–05
1785 c. Dec. 25	Mr. Vaughan (on John Fletcher) . . . . .	605–08
1785 Dec. 29	Thomas Wride . . . . .	609–10
1785 Dec. 30	Thomas Wride . . . . .	611–12

From Elizabeth Ritchie

Otley  
January 16, 1781

When I look at the date of your last kind favour,<sup>1</sup> I am really ashamed that my most grateful thanks have not sooner reached you. But we were in the general moving from place to place, and engaged with fresh persons, until the latter end of December—when it pleased the Lord in mercy to bring us to our own habitation. And though many changes have happened, and great ones in our family, yet it is mercy all. Our God is love. With thankfulness I oft reflect on my dear father's blessed transportation,<sup>2</sup> and find my dear sister just such a person as I could have wished my brother to have chose for a partner for life.<sup>3</sup>

We had a very comfortable journey and were much refreshed amongst many of our friends on the way. Your letter came safe to hand the evening before we left Worcester. No, no believe me my dear sir, the company of my new friends does not make me forget my old ones. And except I live more distant from my living head, what shall disunite my soul from them who are one spirit with him who is my all in all. On the closeness of our walk with Jesus depends the nearness, steadiness, and purity of our union with each other. We stopped a day or two with Mrs. Jones at Birmingham; they were very friendly and here we found many longing for full salvation. They had been represented to me as a people prejudiced against the doctrine of Christian holiness, but I found them that I conversed with far otherwise. We found Mrs.

[Sarah] Crosby at Derby and spent a fortnight very comfortably with her and Mrs. [Rachel] Dobinson.

We stayed a day or two at Sheffield. The work of God is very lively there. Six persons had found peace with God at one class meeting the week before we were there, and such a congregation I have not often seen. Their large preaching house is well filled. And though an enemy had gotten in amongst them, and party spirit had well neigh prevailed, it is ceased and love seems to be spreading amongst them. Two were set at full liberty the Sunday we were there. Brother [James] Rogers is greatly beloved, and is both very lively and useful.<sup>4</sup> We spent a few days at Cross Hall<sup>5</sup> before we reached home, and here my soul was refreshed indeed while recounting the blessings on each bestowed.

While absent from each other, our hearts were filled with praise. And glory be to my dear Lord, he still keeps me deeply humble at his feet for all his love bestows. I feel him my sun and my shield. The glorious rays that beam forth from his ineffable fullness warms, enlivens, and invigorates my soul. He defends me from the face of my enemies, and graciously covers my head in the day of battle. The sweet converse my soul enjoys with the Holy Trinity is inexpressible. Sometimes I almost long to drop my clay, that my spirit might plunge into all the depths of God. But when I reflect that I am only spared to gain more meekness for my heavenly inheritance, my soul is all desire to gain the full purchase of redeeming love.

I wish I could give you a favourable account of the work here. My soul deeply mourns for the loss many have sustained. Though upon the whole I have found things better than I expected from the accounts that had been sent me. Many do stand their ground and are steadily pursuing their way to Mount Zion. We have got Mr. [Samuel] Bradburn and Mr. [John] Oliver,<sup>6</sup> and they are both well received. Last

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<sup>1</sup>This letter is not known to survive.

<sup>2</sup>John Ritchie Sr. died in April 1780; JW was able to preach the funeral sermon (see JW, *Journal*, Apr. 19, 1780, *Works*, 23:166). His will was not proved until Nov. 17, 1780.

<sup>3</sup>Elizabeth's brother John married Elizabeth Scurr in Leeds on Aug. 9, 1780.

<sup>4</sup>James Rogers was currently stationed in Sheffield (see *Works*, 10:498).

<sup>5</sup>The home of Mary Bosanquet.

<sup>6</sup>Samuel Bradburn and William Simpson were assigned to Keighley by the 1780 Conference (see *Works*, 10:498). John Oliver was assigned to Epworth (*ibid.*), but apparently traded place with Simpson.

Sunday we had a love feast; in the evening Mr. Bradburn kept a watch night with us. It was a good time. The Lord is yet in our midst and two or three have lately found peace with God.

In your next, pray tell me if you have heard anything of Mr. [Robert Carr] Brackenbury lately, and how brother [Joseph] Bradford is in his health. May all the blessings our God waits to give be your constant portion now and forever prays

Your truly affectionate, though unworthy, daughter,

E. Ritchie

*Annotation:* another hand, '32nd'.

*Source:* manuscript draft, kept for records; Duke, Rubenstein, Frank Baker Collection of Wesleyana, Elizabeth Ritchie papers (Box CO 6).

Thomas Taylor, itinerant

c. March 1781

In the short account of myself, published last year in the *Arminian Magazine*, page 367 and 420, I omitted one circumstance of importance; namely, *the great salvation from sin*. This omission neither proceeded from any dislike to the doctrine, nor from any reproach it might draw upon me: for blessed be God, I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; seeing it is the power of God unto *full* salvation, to all who believe.<sup>1</sup> My sole reason for being silent on this head is 'I have not already attained'.<sup>2</sup> At times, I have felt nothing but love in my heart, and that for a considerable space. But I did not readily believe this great truth; my first religious sentiments, as well as acquaintance, being wholly contrary to it. Perhaps I might have received it sooner but for two things, which I wish all our brethren would attend to. The one was the strange manner in which it has been spoken of by many whose hearts were better than their heads. A truth so offensive to nature, should be guarded at all points, or it will not be received. For not only all the powers of darkness, but all the powers of fallen man will rise up against a doctrine, which aims at bringing about so entire a revolution in the soul of man. The other obstruction was the conduct of several who professed to have attained it; who said their hearts were purified and their wills wholly given up to God, but were still censorious. This was contrary to the love which thinketh no evil.<sup>3</sup> Besides, they would bear no contradiction, and were not well pleased if everything which they said of themselves was not believed. This was contrary to the love which beareth all things.<sup>4</sup> Nay, some whose moral conduct was irregular still held fast their profession. What allowances are to be made for ignorance I know not. But I know that such things clog the wheels of this blessed work, more than all outward opposition can do. I know not if my own prayer was not the first thing which struck me with a desire of perfection. I prayed that the will of God might be done in me as it is done in heaven;<sup>5</sup> that God would create in my soul his whole image,<sup>6</sup> and root out every root of bitterness;<sup>7</sup> and that my spirit, soul, and body, might be preserved blameless, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>8</sup> Thus my creed and my prayers, quite disagreed. The next thing was, the *Life of Mr. Brainerd*.<sup>9</sup> I had the greater regard to this because of its being published by a Presbyterian minister, and a man of deep understanding and piety. I saw that the agony of that dear man was for the whole image of God. I then read the *Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, and the *Thoughts on Christian Perfection*. Then I considered what God's word says upon the point. Here I observed the necessity of it, seeing 'no unclean thing can enter into heaven',<sup>10</sup> and that 'without holiness no man can see the Lord'.<sup>11</sup> Here I saw the efficacy of Jesu's blood, as 'cleansing from

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<sup>1</sup>See Rom. 1:16.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Phil. 3:12.

<sup>3</sup>See 1 Cor. 13:5.

<sup>4</sup>See 1 Cor. 13:7.

<sup>5</sup>See Matt. 6:10; Luke 11:2.

<sup>6</sup>See Col. 3:10.

<sup>7</sup>See Heb. 12:15.

<sup>8</sup>See 1 Thess. 5:23.

<sup>9</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *An Account of the Life of the Late Reverend Mr. David Brainerd* (Boston: D. Henchman, 1749); or JW's abridgement of the same.

<sup>10</sup>Cf. Rev. 21:27.

<sup>11</sup>Cf. Heb. 12:14.



all sin'.<sup>12</sup> Here I saw the great promises made in the Old Testament; among which were Deuteronomy 30:6; Ezekiel 36:25–29. Here I saw it was a gospel command to 'love God with all my heart'. Thus I saw in God's book, that Jehovah commanded it; Jesus bled for it; and apostles preached it, and prayed for it; and the Spirit of God promised it. All this made me cry out, Lord, enable me to believe it! This is still my prayer; nor shall my soul ever rest till it feels that abiding rest which remains for the people of God.

But perhaps some will say, What do you mean by that high-sounding word 'perfection'? And some will search lexicons and dictionaries to find the true meaning of it. I have done the same, and to very little purpose. By this term I do not mean the perfection of God. He is possessed of such power, wisdom, goodness, purity, and love as none of his creatures can possibly be possessed of. Nor do I mean the perfection of angels. Indeed I cannot form a proper idea what their perfection is! Nor do I mean the perfection of just men made perfect. I cannot attain to that here below. Nor do I mean the perfection of Adam in paradise; for his body had such a perfection as ours cannot have till raised again. Nor do I mean such a perfection as exempts from all mistakes; nor such as excludes all growth in grace. This is so far from being the case in time that I am fully persuaded the saints will be growing forever. Nor do I mean such a perfection as exempts from temptation; no, for our Saviour himself was not exempt from it. What I mean I shall express in a single text, Philippians 3:3, 'For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.' Let the three circumstances in this important text concur, and such a one is, in the language of Scripture, a perfect man. I might refer to several declarations of St. Paul, such as Galatians 2:20, 6:14; Philippians 3:8, [Hebrews] 14:20. All which imply the same thing. Now all these texts speak of a state which I have not attained; but I follow on towards it. And I have no doubt but he will make a full end of sin, and bring in everlasting righteousness. Neither have I any doubt but he can speak a leprous soul, as well as a leprous body, clean in a moment. I am equally certain that preaching this doctrine is of the greatest utility—not only to the stirring up of drowsy believers, but even to the awakening of stupid, dead sinners. Hence I have observed that God has made some of very small gifts, who were constantly and strongly setting forth this doctrine, to my great astonishment, highly useful. It has been as if the gates of hell trembled before them, and Satan has fallen like lightning from heaven. I do not wonder that a doctrine so repugnant to all the corrupt tempers of human nature, should have so many enemies. But for either ministers or members of the Church of England to oppose it argues either a very dull head or a very perverse heart.

I hope in life and in death to proclaim that the precious blood of Jesus, by which God is reconciled to the world, does really purge the conscience from dead works, to serve the living God.

T. Taylor

*Titled:* 'A Supplement to the Life of Mr. Thomas Taylor'.

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 587–90.

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<sup>12</sup>Cf. 1 John 1:7.

From Duncan Wright (autobiography)

Stockton  
March 1781

I was born May 1736, in the Kirkton of Fortingall, near the river Lyon, and not far from the lovely banks of the 'soft winding Tay', Breadalbane, Perthshire.

I claim kindred to the Stuarts, McDonalds, and McGregors' families; perhaps more famed in story for martial exploits than for any extraordinary attainments in religion.

It might have been better for me to have had a hardy, highland education. But of this I was deprived by the removal of my parents to Edinburgh when I was very young. Here I had the best education my father could give me, who was my only schoolmaster. He was esteemed a pretty good scholar; but I doubt knew little of the life and power of religion. Yet he prayed with us at times, made us learn the [Westminster] Assembly's *Shorter Catechism*, and took care of us to the best of his knowledge. I lost him early, which was a loss indeed! For my mother, being too easy and indulgent, let us have our own way, which led us to all the follies and sins we were capable of. I do not remember that any creature took any pains to instruct me till I was near twenty years of age, but old Lady D. of Prestonfield, who at times advised me as well as she could. And yet the Lord did not leave me without drawings from above. For having a bookish inclination, I read and wept very often till my head ached, and hardly knew what ailed me. Only I wanted to be a Christian, and to be easy and happy, but knew not how. Had any living Christian taken a little pains to inform me, I doubt not but I should have embraced the proffers of mercy long before I did. Indeed I never felt any spirit of opposition to religion and religious persons. For as I had neither the form nor the power of religion myself, I knew I had little reason to speak an unkind word of those that had any appearance of either.

I was from my infancy feeble and tender. Yet having many relations in the army, no employment would relish with me but a soldier's life. Hence my mother never could prevail with me to follow any regular business, and this exposed me to vain and wicked company. Yet having some tenderness of conscience left, repenting and sinning, resolving and breaking through my resolutions, made my life a weariness indeed. So in order to be happy, I resolved to see the world in a military life. Hence I enlisted, the latter end of 1754, into the tenth regiment of foot. None of my friends knew what was become of me till I wrote to my mother from Limerick, in Ireland. My mother being infirm, did not survive this long. She died the spring following, and I fear my disobedience hastened her departure. An awakened conscience will smart, first or last, for this sin among others, stubbornness and disobedience to parents. So did mine. For the day I enlisted, I thought now I have done for soul and body—for I could form no conception how a soldier could be religious.

In the summer of 1755 we encamped near the city of Cashel, eight regiments of foot and two of horse, where William Coventry, a corporal in the Royal Scotch, frequently preached. I heard him once, but felt nothing but a kind of wonder at his courage in preaching among such a set as we were. I little thought that in less than four years I should be engaged in the same work in another camp.

We returned to Limerick for winter quarters, where I began to consider (as the soldiers had then a great deal of leisure time in the winter) how I should pass my tedious moments. I could play at cards and other games (then common among the soldiery, but now happily suppressed), but I seldom liked my company. For though I could swear sometimes, yet I could not relish so much of it as they were addicted to. I therefore bought and borrowed all the plays, novels, and romances, I could lay my hands upon: reading late and early. And my reading had this effect, at least, that it kept me out of worse diversions, and gave my mind a turn above such intemperance and lewdness, as were too common in men of my rank.

At last an old soldier, in the same barrack-room with me, found fault with me for spending my time, and spoiling my eyes, in reading such trash. I thought, I will show you I can read religious books as well as others. But I had none of my own. I borrowed two from one of our soldiers. One of them was *The*

*Marrow of Modern Divinity*,<sup>13</sup> which being wrote by way of dialogue attracted my attention; and before I read it half through I was *truly*, though *gently*, convinced that I was a lost sinner, and that Christ was all I wanted to make me easy, satisfied, and happy.

Now it was that a deep sense of my time, youth, and health spent in sin and folly; my ingratitude to God, the best of fathers; my slighting of Christ so long, and grieving the blessed Spirit; melted my heart and made my eyes a fountain of tears. I awoke as from a dream, and saw all about me like the men of Sodom, blind and groping about for happiness; or asleep, with storms of wrath ready to burst upon their heads. The immediate consequence was a distaste to all my books and diversions. I exchanged them for religious tracts. And having a praying heart, it soon found a praying place. For as I had no place of retirement in my room, I found a covered battery on the castle wall. This soon became my closet; and when on guard I used to cover my head with my watch-cloak, and stopping my ears with my fingers, spent many a happy moment in converse with God, weeping and making supplication.

Although I now forsook, in a sense, all for Christ, yet there was, at times, such a mixture of seriousness and levity that some might conclude I had no tincture of the fear of God. But my trifling in the day made me often water my couch with tears at night. But I had none to guide me. I did not know a man, among seven hundred, that had any knowledge of such a work as I now felt in my mind.

There was one indeed who I thought must have something in him, because he was sober and read good books. But when I began to tell a little of what I felt, I found him an entire stranger to everything of the kind. However the Lord made up the want of Christian fellowship by sending me such books, from time to time, as surprisingly suited my case; particularly Alleine's *Alarm*,<sup>14</sup> which proved of wonderful service to me. Among his directions for conversion, he advises the reader to enter into covenant with God; a form of which he has there given. I took the advice, set apart a day of fasting and prayer, wrote the covenant and signed it, and it was not long before the Lord showed me he did not despise the day of small things.

There was a society of Methodists in the town, but I knew them not; and when I did, they were such objects of universal contempt that I hardly knew what to make of them. However the last night of this year I ventured to go, and heard Mr. [James] Oddie. I likewise began the year 1756 with them, and from that time never missed an opportunity of hearing, morning and evening.

I think it was in April this year that the Lord justified me by his grace. I used to spend all my time in bed, while awake, in weeping and prayer. And it was in one of these weeping nights, that in an instant the Lord brought me out of darkness into his marvellous light. I did not know then what to call it, but its effects were many. I found an uncommon concern for the souls of the soldiers, and the sight of a Methodist used to set my heart on fire with love. Yet for half a year not a soul of them spoke a word to me, though I sometimes threw myself in their way. For much did I long to be acquainted with them, but my shyness was such that I could not break through to speak to them.

Mr. John Wesley and Mr. Thomas Walsh made us a visit this summer, and oh what a heaven upon earth did I feel in hearing them! And yet I could not speak to them for my life. At length that serious man, Mr. Thomas Seccombe, took notice of me, and when he was about to leave Limerick, desired Sidney Hoey (a mother in Israel she was to me and many of the soldiers) to get acquainted with me. She brought me to her house, and the same day to a class meeting, which was a day of gladness to me; for I had often found Solomon's words fulfilled: 'Woe to him that is alone when he falleth.'<sup>15</sup> For when I fell into perplexities and temptations, I had no one to help me; but now I found the real benefit of having fellowship with a loving people.

Part of 1757 and 1758 I spent at Dublin, and found their fellowship there also of very great service. The preachers were lively and faithful lovers of discipline. The society retained much of their simplicity and teachableness, and were in a good degree prepared for the blessed revival which followed

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<sup>13</sup>Edward Fisher, *The Marrow of Modern Divinity* (London: G. Calvert, 1645).

<sup>14</sup>Joseph Alleine, *An Alarm to Unconverted Sinners* (London: Baxter, 1672).

<sup>15</sup>Eccles. 4:10.

some time after, under Mr. John Manners.

It was of uncommon advantage to me to be among the Methodists at a time when both the preachers and people loved all our discipline, and practised it. I saw the blessed consequences; for few cared to stay among us but such as retained their fervour for the whole of religion. False brethren especially were soon tired, and went to the Independents, Anabaptists, or Moravians. But with great simplicity we used to crowd to the sacrament at St. Patrick's in Dublin, or the cathedral at Limerick, every Sabbath. These were happy times to me. For although I was bred a Presbyterian (if I was bred anything), yet the love of God threw down the walls of partition and made me love to be there, where I found most of the people of God. I soon saw our plan to be more noble than any poor, narrow dissenting scheme whatever, as intending the good of thousands and tens of thousands in the great bodies of the established churches. And I am still convinced that our present situation is infinitely better calculated for general good than the best-planned separation that can be conceived.

What occasioned my commencing a preacher was as follows. In September 1758 we returned to Limerick. And as government resolved to shoot a deserter in every city, *in terrorem*,<sup>16</sup> the lot fell on a young man in our regiment to die in Limerick. His name was Joseph Newton. He was a Derbyshire man, twenty-two years of age. I longed to talk with him. But as he was kept in a public guard-house, with no place of retirement, I could not tell how to speak to or pray with him, among so many people. But when I found the adjutant had been to inform him that he must die on Monday (this was on the Tuesday before), I saw I had no time to lose. I went in, and found him weeping as if his heart would break, and reading a *Whole Duty of Man* with all his might,<sup>17</sup> like a drowning man catching at anything to save him. I spoke a few words to him then, and again in the evening, though with uncommon reluctance, there being many soldiers round us. I prayed with him, and found very great freedom to speak to him and to all that were present. He had no plea, but saw himself an undone sinner without help, and almost without hope. Some of us visited him twice or thrice a day, and on Thursday his soul was set at liberty. From that time he witnessed a good confession to all that spoke to him. Everyone that saw him go to the place where he was shot could not but admire the serene joy that appeared in his countenance. He said but little, but his calm, happy death made a deep impression on many of our soldiers. For they could not but discern the difference between him and one they saw die awhile before at Dublin who showed the greatest reluctance, the field officer of the day being obliged to ride up to him several times to tell him he *must* die; while Joseph Newton was not above ten minutes on his knees before he dropped the signal and went to paradise.

I thought now was the time to try what could be done among the soldiers. I therefore told several that as many as had a mind might come to my room every night after roll-calling, and I would sing, read, and pray with them as well as I could. They came and crowded my room, and in a little while I had a class of them. But about the beginning of the year 1759 I was ordered for Scotland on the recruiting service. I found this not to be easy work for a Christian, yet through mercy I was kept from outward sin.

After an absence of four months, the French being expected to invade Ireland, we were ordered to join the regiment, which lay encamped near Kilkenny, and found my little flock, having had no one to look after them, were all scattered. The first morning we met (in a field adjoining) there were but three of us. But our number increased every time we met, and before our camp broke up I had a little society gathered again. And here it was that I got the name of a preacher. For it being frequently late in the evenings before we could meet, before I had sung and prayed our light was gone out, so that I could not see to read but was obliged to say something to them without a book, or send them away empty.

It was well I did not begin to preach among very knowing men, for they might soon have silenced me, as a little thing would have done it. But here there was none to hinder me but the commanding officer, and he did not choose to do it. Though he did not like the Methodists, yet he wanted us all to be

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<sup>16</sup>'To create fear or terror' and bring about obedience.

<sup>17</sup>Richard Allestree, *The Practice of Christian Graces; or, The Whole Duty of Man laid down in a Plain and Familiar Way for the Use of all* (London: D. Maxwell, 1657).

very good, as we did not know how soon our valour might be tried by the French. Therefore we had very strict orders against swearing, drunkenness, etc. But those orders did not effect any great reformation.

When we left the camp, as we still expected an invasion, we were scattered abroad in cantonments all over the south of Ireland. This hurt such of us as were weak in the faith very much. None can tell, but such as have tried, how hard it is for a soldier to stand his ground among so many unreasonable, as well as ungodly men; for such were most of the officers as well as soldiers. Men whose tender mercies were cruel.

I had myself suffered much loss in my mind for a year, and consequently had little inclination for preaching. Hence when we got the route for Galway, I was not at all sorry that there was no society to solicit me to preach among them. Even my friends among the officers were much concerned for me, as many serjeants were preferred to commissions. They said they doubted they could do nothing for me, as I made myself so ridiculous. Indeed this did not move me. But my unhappiness of mind was the great hindrance to my preaching. Yet in Galway it was that I had the most clear, undoubted seals to my mission, in the conviction and conversion of souls who never had heard any other Methodist preacher. Some of them are a comfort to me to this day, and some are fallen asleep in Jesus.

In 1761 we marched for Dublin again, and the following year back to Galway. All this time, from 1758 to 1763, I walked in darkness, and had no light. I fell into it by degrees. But by what particular thing, I am at a loss to know. But this I know, my case was truly deplorable. And yet I did not give way to any known sin. Neither did I miss any means of grace. Nay, I often went to the Lord's table when, to all sense and feeling, I was as dead as a stone. My gracious tears were all dried up. My stony heart could not melt. And yet I heard the greatest preachers, read the best books I knew, and conversed or corresponded with the most gracious Christians I could hear of. Nay, I frequently exhorted or preached the whole time; yea, and in that season had apparent success to my labours. I remark this to refute an idle conceit that none are fit to teach others but such as are happy themselves. I know that many times, though I forgot it while preaching, I was as miserable as a devil both before and after. And it was often suggested to me, 'Judas may cast out devils, and notwithstanding all this, be only an outcast.'<sup>18</sup> As I knew very little of myself when the Lord justified me, he saw good to show me now my utter helplessness, by leading me into the painful school of self-knowledge. And a dull scholar I proved, being five years in learning what others have learned in less than five months.

Yet notwithstanding my wretchedness, our little society at Galway was wonderfully blessed. As there was about this time a glorious revival in many parts of the three kingdoms, I communicated to them, from time to time, the intelligence I received of the work, and the fire soon kindled among them also. All were happy, or in earnest, but me. And I durst tell very few my sad case, for fear of hurting them. This was often the language of my heart,

My soul in sin so rooted stands,  
No common miracle can move,  
I know my spirit's cure demands  
Thy whole omnipotence of love.  
  
But whether thou hast ever heal'd  
A spirit so desperate as mine,  
It lies, alas, from me conceal'd,  
In lowest depths of love divine.<sup>19</sup>

If it be asked what could induce me to continue in the means of grace, I answer I never doubted my former experience of the truth and reality of religion. And (besides an unseen hand that upheld me) I

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<sup>18</sup>Cf. Lam 3:9, 18.

<sup>19</sup>CW, 'Penitential Hymns, III', st. 8–9, *HSP* (1749), 1:77.

retained a full conviction that in the favour of God alone there was life and happiness. So I was determined to be happy in the favour of God, or refuse every other comfort.

It was when I was thus in darkness, and in the deep, that the Lord, in a moment, 'restored to me the joy of his salvation'.<sup>20</sup> This was like a plenteous shower, upon a parched and dry land, that soon made my soul like 'a watered garden'.<sup>21</sup> The Lord now 'led me into green pastures, beside the still waters'.<sup>22</sup> What a change was this! The soul that was before all tumult and confusion, was now all joy and peace through believing. This was about June 1763.

And yet I soon found I had not attained what John Dillon, and Sidney Hoey informed me they had attained—viz., 'a mind constantly stayed upon God, and kept in perfect peace'.<sup>23</sup>

Being about this time confined to my room by a violent inflammation in my cheek, my pain made me pray the more earnestly that the peace of God might 'keep my heart and mind'.<sup>24</sup> also. The Lord heard, and gave me a glorious answer. I felt such a sudden, and such a delightful change, as I never before conceived possible. My joy was indeed unspeakable, my hope full of immortality, and my peace flowed like a river. I then understood those words as I never did before, 'We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord'.<sup>25</sup>

Just then we were ordered to the north of Ireland, to quell a set of rioters, called Hearts of Oak. Being something better, I marched on till we came to Carrick-on-Shannon, when our surgeon told me I must go no farther, at the peril of my life. My excessive pain, and the being left behind, would at some other times have tried me sufficiently. But now all was calm, and joy, and peace. And here it was that I first understood, how the blessed martyrs could clap their hands in the flames; for although for some nights my pain was excruciating, yet all was tranquillity within.

The little society here, and the McNeily's family in particular, took remarkable care of me. 'The Lord grant they may find mercy of him in that day!'<sup>26</sup> This state continued several months. But having none to direct me, and not being sufficiently aware of the need there was for constant watchfulness and prayer, I fell, by degrees, from that heaven of love.

In the beginning of 1764 I was called to suffer a little for the testimony of Jesus. And indeed but a little; for what were a few threatenings, a little reproach and shame, a few stones or rotten eggs, to what many of the dear servants of God have suffered even in this age?

Our lieutenant colonel did not care what a soldier's religion was, provided he did his duty. But our major, a warm blunderer, to whom the command of the regiment was left for a time, thought it a disgrace to have a serjeant a preacher among them. He therefore resolved to drive me out of preaching if possible. I shall not enter upon a detail of the several means he used for this purpose, as I believe he was ashamed of them himself before I left him. He found me so much the soldier, however, as not to be frightened out of what I thought was my duty. Yet I found it no easy matter to walk the streets of Newry, a gazing stock to both old and young. At last, as he found he could not prevent my preaching, he hit upon a method to get quit of me: namely, to put me into the tenth company, which was soon to be reduced. And thus it was that the Lord 'thrust me out into the harvest'.<sup>27</sup> For I was determined not to leave the army till some clear providence set me free. Before the time came for the reduction of the company, some of the

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<sup>20</sup>Cf. Ps. 51:12.

<sup>21</sup>Jer. 31:12.

<sup>22</sup>Cf. Ps. 23:2.

<sup>23</sup>Cf. Isa. 26:3.

<sup>24</sup>Cf. Phil. 4:7.

<sup>25</sup>2 Cor. 3:18.

<sup>26</sup>Cf. 2 Tim. 1:18.

<sup>27</sup>Cf. Rev. 14:15.

friendly officers wanted me to stay, and said they would get the major to put some old serjeant in my place. I begged they would not, and they acquiesced. Some of them, indeed, wished I could persuade all their men to be religious, for they had no trouble with the Methodist soldiers, but enough with the others. Yet they told me they feared what our enthusiasm would turn to, and mentioned [Oliver] Cromwell, who could preach and pray one part of the day, and kill and plunder the other.

Never were words more applicable to these fearful men than the following,

The same in your esteem,  
Falsehood and truth ye join;  
The wild pretender's dream,  
And real work divine;  
Between the substance and the show,  
No difference you can find;  
For colours all, full well we know,  
Are equal to the blind.<sup>28</sup>

Were the chaplains men of real piety and courage, much good might be done in the army. But the chaplaincy is generally a kind of sinecure, and the care of souls is left to any worthless wretch that will do it at an easy rate. When we lay in one city the care of four or five regiments was left to an unhappy man, who was an object of common ridicule among the soldiers for his perpetual drunkenness.

But although my commanding officer could not hinder me from preaching, and God gave me to see the fruit of my labours, yet I was not thoroughly satisfied in my own mind that it was my duty to preach. But this spring, at Waterford, God revived his work wonderfully among that society, and set my mind free from every scruple. So that when Mr. Wesley wrote me word that if I left the army he had immediate work for me, I had no objection but the precarious state of my health; for by preaching loud, and long, and by reading at all hours, I had brought myself so low that our surgeon sometimes thought me in a consumption. Mr. Wesley told me in answer to my objection, 'that our Master had all power in heaven, and in earth',<sup>29</sup> and that 'as my day, so should my strength be'.<sup>30</sup> And in the latter end of 1764, I found myself at liberty to go where providence directed.<sup>31</sup>

I was now entering upon a new scene of life; and though I was twenty-eight years of age, I was an utter stranger to mankind. Hence I imagined that blunt honesty, with innocency, would bear me through anything. But I have since learned, that we need the wisdom of the serpent, as well as the innocence of the dove, in our dealings with men, even about their souls. I mention this as an apology for some parts of my conduct, which had not always a due mixture of calm wisdom—my native impetuosity often hurrying me beyond the bounds of moderation; a thing too common with well-meaning, zealous young men.

I would observe farther that I was kept in such watchfulness and tenderness of conscience nine years after I knew something of religion among the soldiery, as to my grief and shame I have not always retained since that period. I was then continually among the open enemies of religion, which partly obliged me to vigilance. But being since then chiefly among the professed friends of religion, how often have I been off my watch! But whatever I have fallen into, I could never preach till I recovered a sense of the divine acceptance. O where are we safe, beyond the power of sinning, but in paradise!

When I came to Dublin, our society and preachers received me in the kindest manner, and a comfortable time I spent with them that winter [1764–65].

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<sup>28</sup>CW, 'Marks of Faith, III', st. 3, *HSP* (1749), 2:225.

<sup>29</sup>Cf. Matt. 28:18.

<sup>30</sup>Cf. Deut. 33:25.

<sup>31</sup>Wright would be formally admitted as a travelling preacher 'on trial' at Conference in Aug. 1765; see *Works*, 10:303.

One of our captains, without my knowledge, now recommended me to a late nobleman who, he told me, had an easy place for me, and desired my answer in two or three days. I thanked him and told him I had chosen another employment.

Here I was acquainted with Dr. Davis, whose case is worth relating. He was formerly remarkable for a peculiar lively turn of wit on all occasions, and happy was the company that could get him to spend the evening with them. But being persuaded by a friend to hear John Carr, one of our local preachers, his companions, alas, lost their merry Andrew.<sup>32</sup> He told me that he went to *see* the preacher merely to take him off, as he expressed it: 'But', said he, 'while I was leaning on my cane, looking at him through my fingers, during his first prayer, an arrow went to my heart, which sent me home, bruised and wounded.' He then sought the true Physician, who soon brought him to a healthful mind.

The regiment of dragoons, of which he was surgeon, marched into Dublin while I was there. One day, being at the soldiers' infirmary, a serious man, the porter of the house, one Francis May, said to him, 'Sir, we want prayer and a word of exhortation very much in this house; would you pray with two or three, sir, if I get them together?' 'Really Frank', said the doctor, 'I never prayed in my life, but with two or three serious people, and I know not how to begin with any other.' 'Sir', said Frank, 'it is high time you should begin. Begin today sir, begin now!' The doctor was prevailed on. Away went Frank, and informed them through all the house that Dr. Davis was going to preach to them. Down came every soul that could crawl—the sick, the lame, and the lazy—to the long room, where the chaplains used to read prayers. Away came Frank to the doctor. 'Now sir', said he, 'I have got a few of them.' When the doctor came to the room door, and saw the place full, he was for going back. 'Nay sir', said Frank, 'you cannot go back for your life! There they are, the Lord has delivered them into your hands, and will you start from his work!' In short, the doctor went in, stood on a form, sung and prayed; and having his pocket Bible with him, he read a portion to them, discoursed an hour and half, and from that time, preached to the soldiers wherever he could. As I knew his dangerous situation, I was a little afraid for him. But God took care of him; for going to visit some prisoners in Newgate, who had a malignant fever, he caught the infection and finished his course rejoicing in God his Saviour.

We had several remarkable conversions while I was in Ireland. One or two more may be mentioned. We often think it lost labour to talk to a man about his soul while drunk; but I know to the contrary. I knew one in the north of Ireland who, going home one summer evening, much in liquor, saw a crowd of people on a green at some distance; and imagining it to be a cockfight, he would see it before he went home. The preacher, being in the application of his discourse, said, 'Are there any drunkards here?', etc. The poor fellow, looking up, said, 'Yes, I am one.' At that instant he was seized with such concern for his soul as never left him till he became a new man.

I add another remarkable case. We had a little society in the county of Wexford who used to be much pestered with a popish mob. They met in a long barn, with the door near one end. The rabble wanted sadly to know what they did at their private meetings, but as the barn belonged to one that was no Methodist, they durst not break open the door. At length they contrived that one of them should get into the barn before the people came, and let his companions in at a proper time. To conceal himself the better, he got into a sack and lay down behind the door. When the society were all in, they fastened the door as usual. Soon after came the mob, hollowing and shouting to their friend to let them in. But God found other work for him, for being charmed with the first hymn, he thought it a thousand pities (as he afterwards said) to disturb them while singing it. And when the prayer began, the power of God did so confound him, that he roared out with might and main. And not having power to get out of the sack, lay bawling and screaming. At last one ventured to see what was the matter, and helping him out, brought him up confessing his sins and crying for mercy: which was the beginning of a lasting work in his soul.

But to return. This winter, three of the preachers going to Chapelizod, where one of them was to preach, as there was room in the coach, they invited me to accompany them. A river through which we were to pass happened to overflow part of the road. Our coachman thinking to drive in the most shallow

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<sup>32</sup>A 'merry Andrew' was a buffoon, or one who made sport for others.



water, drove near a wall; but the wheels turning on a large stone, overset us. Through mercy we got out, with little more damage than being well wet. But the coachman stood up to the neck, like one distracted, crying, 'Murder! Murder!' At last he got out, and then I and two others (Mr. [John] Johnson and Dempster<sup>33</sup>) walked home, and were no worse.

In the spring, there being no preacher in the Waterford circuit, I went thither, and spent some time very agreeably among my former acquaintances. And now it was that I saw what spirit many of the Irish papists were of. While I carried a sword by my side few of them cared to speak their minds. But now, that restraint being removed, several of them told me to my face that they thought it would be doing both God and the church service to burn all such as me in one fire! The infatuation of many of them, owing to the ignorance they are kept in, cannot be described. For upon the least pretence, and often without any, they rise in large parties, well armed, to destroy the lives and properties of their neighbours, oppose the magistracy, and even insult the army.

About this time a party of the light horse, being on foot, were conveying one of the white boys to Kilkenny jail. In going through a village, the papists crossed the way with a mock funeral. When they had got the soldiers in the midst, they threw down their coffin full of stones, and fell on old and young with the greatest fury. The soldiers defended themselves, till the serjeant and three or four more were killed, and several desperately wounded. For this, five of them were hanged at Kilkenny. They all died 'innocent' (they said) 'as the child unborn'! So did five more, who were executed a little while before, for burning a mill and burying the miller up to the neck. I could not understand at first how most of the papists that die here, by the hands of the executioner, die declaring their innocence, till I found out the secret: having confessed all their crimes to the priest, and received his absolution, they believed themselves guiltless, and were forbid to make confession to the *heretics*. However we had the comfort to see several of them brought to the experience of real Christianity. And there is no doubt but if there were a few preachers of Mr. [Thomas] Walsh's spirit, we should see many more.

Mr. [John] Wesley having signified to me some time before that I might travel with him if I had a mind, I gladly embraced the opportunity, and met him at Limerick in June 1765. This and the next year, I had an opportunity of seeing most of our large societies in the three kingdoms; and had my health, capacity, and industry kept pace with my opportunities, it might have been a time of extraordinary improvement. Besides all other advantages, I had constantly before me such an example of redeeming time as I hope will be of service to me while I live. But however profitable my travelling with Mr. Wesley might be, as the exercise was too much, I was obliged to give it up.

It was also of service to me to spend some time in London, among some of our old, happy Methodists; who bore with my weaknesses, and by their prayers and example confirmed me more and more in the truth as it is in Jesus.

What the Lord has been doing by me in Kent, Essex, Norwich, Manchester, Macclesfield, in the Yarm, and Thirsk circuits, and in Scotland, is known to him. I bless God that I have seen the work prosper and increase in most of the circuits I have been in, not indeed in consequence of *my preaching*, so much as by some regard to our discipline, and the labour of my colleagues. I have been happy in having those in general with me who were not *drones*, but hearty in the work of God. And their love to discipline has not been labour in vain. To God alone be all the glory!

Before I conclude, I must not forget to mention one circumstance in order to encourage others, and to justify the observation, 'that we hardly know what we are capable of, till we are put to the trial'.

When I was in Scotland, I remarked that many of the clergy were men of sense and piety, and took real pains in their work. And yet there was in many places a want of care and zeal for the spiritual

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<sup>33</sup>James Dempster (1740–1804), a native of Scotland, was admitted to full status as a travelling preacher in 1765 (see *Works*, 10:303). He served in Ireland, Wales, and Cornwall, before being assigned to serve the Methodists in North America in 1774 (see *Works*, 10:430). When the Revolutionary War broke out, Dempster (like Asbury) chose to stay, settling in the Mohawk Valley in upstate New York. After the war he served as an itinerant for the Methodist Episcopal Church.

welfare of the poor Highlanders. Many of these coming for employment to the larger towns were destitute of all help for their souls, as they did not understand English. In Edinburgh and Glasgow there have been places of worship built for them, within these few years, and well supplied. But in Aberdeen, Perth, and Greenock they still had none to help. When Mr. [Alexander] McNab went to Scotland in 1769, he began to preach to them as well as he could, and wanted me to come to his help. Mr. [John] Wesley accordingly appointed me for Scotland at the ensuing Conference, and desired me to try to recover my Erse—but of this I had no hope, as I could not read a verse of it, and never spoke two minutes in it on religious subjects in my life.

However, when I came to Perth, and saw their forlorn condition, several motives induced me to make a trial. I therefore bought a New Testament in the modern Gaelic, and got one of the society who could read it to give me some instructions. By Christmas I had made such a progress that my teacher was positive I could preach in it, and would needs invite the Highlanders to come and hear me. But I knew my deficiency better than he did. However, I was prevailed upon to let him invite them. He gave out the psalm and sung it for me. When I began to pray in Erse, I should have been set fast, had I not learned the Lord's Prayer beforehand. When I began to speak, I was often obliged to break off, and address the people in English. But by the grace of God, in less than four years, I could officiate in that language two hours together, without a word of English. While we were thus employed, the ministers in Perth, and in several other places, wished us good luck in the name of the Lord.

This was by far the most delightful work I ever had. But it was often hard enough, as I commonly preached at Greenock, in English, at 7:00 in the morning; then spent two hours from 10:00 to 12:00 with the Highlanders; walked to Port Glasgow, and preached in the streets at 4:00; then walked back to Greenock, and preached at 6:00, and then met the society. Although by this means I had many an aching head and pained breast, yet it was delightful to see hundreds attending to my blundering preaching, with streaming eyes, and attention still as night; or to hear them, in their simple way, singing the praises of God in their own tongue. If ever God said to my heart, 'Go, and I will be with thee,'<sup>34</sup> it was then, when with much trembling and deep sighs, I have gone to preach to them, hardly knowing what to say. I extol the name of my adorable Master that my labours were not in vain. How gladly would I have spent my life with these dear souls! But my health would not permit it, so I was obliged to leave them.

To conclude: how graciously did my heavenly Father strive with me by his Spirit, even from my infant days! And when I was an outcast, and lost as to anything of religion, he reclaimed the wanderer, and brought me to his fold; then led me into the wilderness to show me my heart! Healed my backslidings, comforted and fortified me for sufferings, and knowing my feebleness, led me gradually on to preach to those who most needed my assistance.

And, when he saw a little affliction needful, he sent it. And a profitable time it proved to me, all thanks to the Sender! I have since seen such beauty in holiness, and in the imitation of Christ, and have had such discoveries of the boundless love of God as I never had before. O for an eternity to praise him in!

If ever man could say the following lines, surely I may:

Pardon'd for all that I have done,  
My mouth as in the dust I hide,  
And glory give to God *alone*,  
My God forever pacifi'd!<sup>35</sup>

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 367–72, 414–19, 469–76, 526–28.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Cf. Exod. 4:12.

<sup>35</sup>CW, Hymn on Ezek. 16:62–63, st. 3, *Scripture Hymns* (1762), 2:45.

<sup>36</sup>This account is reproduced in Jackson, *EMP*, 2:48–106; along with further details of Wright's death.

From Thomas Payne (autobiography)

Waterford  
March 16, 1781

Reverend Sir,

1. At your request I undertake a work, of which, God knows, I am ashamed. For when I look back on my past tempers, words, and actions, I am really amazed that I am yet alive. For surely I have deserved the lowest place in hell. I was created to be happy. But I chose the means of misery, and firmly believe myself the most unworthy of all that body of preachers with whom I am connected.

2. I was born at Nailsworth, near Stroud, in Gloucestershire, in the year 1741, of very pious and upright parents. They were by profession Particular Anabaptists,<sup>1</sup> and they lived in the fear and love of God. My father laboured to train up his children in the same, seconding his precepts by his examples and prayers. He kept up family devotion twice a day, reading a chapter or psalm first. And twice a day, early and late, he spent a considerable time with God in secret. Thus he walked with God himself, and incited his children to follow him. He never spoiled the child by sparing the rod; but always remonstrated, and then corrected. And his well-timed corrections seldom failed to leave some good impressions upon us.

3. On his deathbed he gave me his dying charge, with a prayer which I believe God sealed in heaven. As my mother was weeping, and wishing that God would spare him a little longer, he said, 'Would you wish me so much evil as to be any longer detained from the joys of heaven? Poor Tom' (meaning me) 'will lose a good friend tomorrow, about two o'clock.' The next day, about that time he cried out, 'Lord, how long are thy chariot wheels acoming?' And within a few moments after, sweetly fell asleep.

4. I heartily thank God for a pious education, which laid a foundation for a future reformation. From the earliest period of recollection, I found the strivings of God's Spirit. I formed many good resolutions from time to time, but quickly broke through them all. Although when I was ten years old, I prayed much and desired to be truly religious. I was left under the care of a currier and leather-dresser, who carried on the shoemaking business. But being under little restraint, and continually exposed to bad company, I gave way to youthful follies. Till I left my place, without asking leave, and till my friends sent me to London. Being now among religious people who belonged to Mr. [George] Whitefield, my good desires revived, and produced a considerable amendment, in the whole tenor of my actions.

5. But I did not at all know myself. And having an inclination to see the world, I enlisted in the year 1759 in General Burgoyne's light regiment of dragoons. But upon examination, I was found not quite tall enough and so was discharged from them. Being ashamed to return to my friends, I enlisted in the service of the East India Company and was soon sent out in the *Triton* store-ship, for the island of St. Helena, on the south of Africa. I saw the island in a dream just before I enlisted. We sailed from Gravesend in December 1759, under convoy of the *Ripon* man-of-war, and in company with the *Onslow* East Indiaman, who afterward parted from us in a gale of wind. A French frigate bore down upon us in the Bay of Biscay, doubtless taking us for merchantmen. When we were preparing to engage I was troubled at first, knowing I was not fit to die, but I soon comforted myself with the unchangeable decree. After firing a few shots, the frigate bore away. The *Ripon* chased and took her. But we saw our convoy no more, till some time after she came to St. Helena.

6. We had now a week's calm. It then blew a hurricane for three weeks without intermission. All our masts were loosened, and several set of sails torn in a thousand pieces. Both our chain and hand pumps were kept going for a month, without any intermission. During this time one poor man fell overboard, and cried out, 'a boat for God's sake', and sunk. A second fell down from the mast on the quarterdeck, and dashed out his brains. A third, going up to furl the mainsail, must have shared the same fate, but that as he was falling he caught and hung by his hands and feet to the clew-garling of the sail. But he did not give God the glory. Afterwards, as we were sailing near the equator on a calm sea, he was

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<sup>1</sup>I.e., Calvinist in theology; believed in limited atonement and unconditional election.

scraping the shipside, standing on one of the half-parts, and as usual, damning his own eyes and limbs. The captain hearing him said, 'You should not curse and swear in that manner. The half-part may turn with you, and you may be drowned with an oath in your mouth.' But he swore on. In less than five minutes the half-part did turn. He fell and rose no more. The captain instantly put the ship about; but it was all in vain! This alarmed me a little. But then I thought 'It was decreed', and was easy again.

7. The day we arrived at St. Helena, I had another shock. Two men were swimming near our ship. A very large shark (which I verily believe had followed our ship four hundred miles) bit at one of them and missed him. He cried out, 'A shark!' But too late, for his comrade was immediately bit in two. Indeed we had men killed continually. Some getting drunk, rolled down precipices; others fell into the sea. And I verily think half of the army, and half of the other inhabitants of the island, did not live out half their days. Which often gave me very serious thoughts of the uncertainty of human life.

8. My seriousness was increased by an extraordinary occurrence, which I simply relate just as it was. One night, as I was standing sentinel at Mr. M——'s door, I heard a dreadful rattling, as if the house was all shaken to pieces and tumbling down about my ears. Looking towards it, I saw an appearance, about the size of a six-weeks' calf, lying at the door. It rose, came towards me, looked me in the face, passed by, returned again and went to the door. The house shook as before, and it disappeared. A few days after, our head innkeeper, Mr. M——, told the officer of the guard that the same night Mrs. M—— died he, with eight persons more sitting up, observed the house shake exceedingly. That they were greatly surprised, and carefully searched every room, but to no purpose. That not long after there was a second shaking, as violent as the former. That a while after, the house shook a third time; and just then Mrs. M—— died.

9. I now really desired to serve God. But I had none to help me forward. I longed for some religious acquaintance, and every year when the store-ship came from England I diligently inquired, whether any good men came in it? At length one arrived who had been educated at the Foundry school in London. And he was once serious, but had turned again to folly. However he was now desirous to return to God. I found likewise another young man who had an earnest desire to save his soul. And we three agreed to serve God together. I now fasted and prayed, and having a little larger income, endeavoured to help my neighbours. But this quickly puffed me up with pride, till I was suffered to fall into outward sin. This humbled me indeed. I abhorred myself, and saw the necessity of a deeper work in order to my being happy, either in this world or in the world to come.

10. My companions and I were greatly strengthened by an uncommon trial that befell us soon after. We frequently went out at night, to pray by the side of a mountain. One night, as we were walking together and talking of the things of God, I heard a noise and saw something in the form of a large bear pursuing me closely. My hair stood on end, and as we were walking arm in arm, I suddenly pulled both my companions round with me. They both saw him, and one of them fainted away. It then reared itself upon its hind legs into the air. I said, 'Satan we are come hither to serve God. And we *will* do it, in spite of thee and all the devils in hell.' Instantly it sunk into the earth. We then prayed upon the very spot, and soon found ourselves strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.

11. In about a week after, I 'spoke unadvisedly with my lips'.<sup>2</sup> It cut me to the heart. I went to a quarry at the foot of the mountain, fell prostrate on the earth, and cried out, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the guilt and power of sin?'<sup>3</sup> But I was a strong Calvinist, and that kept me from the blessing a long time—waiting for the irresistible call, and thinking it horrid presumption to venture upon Christ till God compelled me by his almighty arm. Thus I waited, till I met with a German author, who convinced me of the absolute necessity of 'striving to enter in at the strait gate',<sup>4</sup> of 'taking

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<sup>2</sup>Cf. Ps. 106:33.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Rom. 7:24.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Luke 13:24.

the kingdom of heaven by violence',<sup>5</sup> of 'laying hold of God's strength',<sup>6</sup> in order to make peace with him; of venturing my spirit, soul, and body, with all my sins, sorrows, cares, and all my wants on the absolute mercy of God in Christ Jesus.

12. With a full purpose of doing this, I called my companions to the old spot to prayer. And while I was praying, and wrestling for Christian liberty,

Panting for everlasting rest,  
And struggling into God!<sup>7</sup>

I cried out, with an uncommon ecstasy of joy and astonishment, 'O God, *my* heart is fixed, my heart is fixed. I will sing and give praise!'<sup>8</sup> Being divinely assisted, 'I believed with my heart unto righteousness';<sup>9</sup> on which, God 'shed abroad his love'<sup>10</sup> therein, and gave me 'the Spirit of adoption, crying, Abba, Father'.<sup>11</sup> Which Spirit witnessed with my spirit that I was a child of God. I then could not refrain from declaring what God had done for my soul. I cried out to those about me, 'Why cannot you praise God *with* me and *for* me? I am so filled with the love of God, methinks I am just ready to fly up to heaven with my very body.'

13. But I had a Calvinian library, which I often read. And hence I imbibed that miserable notion that it was absolutely necessary every believer should come down from the mount. Hence I was persuaded that I must lose my first love. That I must *doubt* of my justification, which those wretched casuists lay down as one great mark of sincerity. For want of knowing better, I listened to these, till I lost the witness of the Spirit. I then fell into doubts concerning my justification; nay, and concerning the being of a God. I sunk deeper and deeper, till I got to my old German author again. I then found that I must strive, not only to gain but to hold fast the witness of the Spirit and the hope of the gospel. Yea, that I must dispute every inch of ground with the world, the flesh, and the devil. Thus convinced, I went with renewed repentance to the throne of grace. And I found the fountain open. At two several times, it pleased God to give me so strong a discovery of his love to my soul that it was then impossible to admit the least shadow of a doubt.

14. I now thought I could never be moved, God had made my hill so strong. I hired a little dwelling. I got a large library of books. I gathered more and more of the soldiers to join with me in fasting, praying, reading, singing, and every other means whereby we might edify each other. I began to exhort, and many were convinced of sin. Some were justified. Some English backsliders were restored, who died happy in God. But soon after I was preferred to a higher rank, which was a means of my forsaking God. To please man, I did violence to my conscience and grieved the Holy Spirit of God. But I found no peace herein. Conviction returned, and I was on the brink of despair. Many times in a day I threw myself on the bed, in unspeakable anguish of mind, seeing no door of hope, but taking it for granted I should breathe my last in horrible fear. For about a year I could not believe even the being of a God. I thought, if there was such a God as the Scripture speaks of, he would either have saved or damned me before now. I do not know that I slept one whole night, for thirteen months together; nor indeed one whole hour, without some dreadful dream presaging the wrath to come. To complete my distress, and make me perfectly miserable, the ungodly who denied and the Pharisees who despised all heart religion

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<sup>5</sup>Cf. Matt. 11:12.

<sup>6</sup>Cf. Isa. 27:5.

<sup>7</sup>Cf. CW, 'The Spirit and the Bride say Come', st. 16, *HSP* (1742), 303.

<sup>8</sup>Cf. Ps. 57:7.

<sup>9</sup>Cf. Rom. 10:10.

<sup>10</sup>Cf. Rom. 5:5.

<sup>11</sup>Cf. Rom. 8:15.

were continually laughing me to scorn, crying, 'Ha! ha! So would we have it. Where is our reprover now?'

15. One man on the parade (to provoke *me*) called upon the devil to d[am]n his Maker. Immediately a horror fell upon him, and from that hour he had no rest, day or night, till he made an open confession to a magistrate that seven years before he had murdered a soldier, whose apparition followed him wherever he was. Upon this confession, judicially repeated, he was condemned to die. When under sentence, he sent for me and begged I would converse and pray with him, which (with the leave both of the governor and the chaplain) I did, till the day of his execution. He then declared, 'This is the best day I ever saw. This is my wedding day. I am married to Christ, and I am going to heaven, to praise him to all eternity.'

16. I was now promoted again. I had five different offices, and a large revenue therefrom. But as business increased, religion wore off; till (to avoid running into more sin) I married. My wife's mother was one of the most pious women in the island. But my wife's religion consisted in going to church, and then running a continual round of pleasure—of eating and drinking, dressing, playing, dancing, singing. Indeed we both swam down the stream together. For I was afraid to think. I did not dare to meet my own conscience, and endeavoured to stifle my own convictions with business and with frantic mirth. Yet sometimes I could not help thinking. And my convictions were then so keen that I was many times under strong temptation to put an end to my own life. Perhaps I should have done it, but for a dream which I had a little before. I thought I saw myself standing on the summit of a frightful precipice, whence I was suddenly hurled down headlong through the air, expecting every moment to be dashed in pieces; when I was turned into a white dove, and flew up again.

17. About this time I saw, at a friend's house, two volumes extracted from Mr. [William] Law's *Works*, and a volume of your *Sermons*. Hence my convictions returned stronger than ever. I sincerely and deeply lamented my grievous fall. My heart was broken in pieces for my repeated and aggravated sins against so good a God. And I sincerely prayed that he would send me any kind of affliction which would bring me back to himself. I saw prosperity had ruined me, and cared not what I suffered so I might once again love and serve God. And I referred it wholly to him, to use whatever means he saw fit in his adorable providence. At the same time I had a vehement desire to hear once more the genuine gospel of Christ.

18. One night I started in my sleep, and waked my wife, saying, 'Peggy, I shall be obliged to leave you, and to go to England.' She said, 'It is only a foolish dream; go to sleep again.' I endeavoured so to do, but could not, this being so strongly impressed on my mind. Not long after, I disobliged some of my superiors by the just discharge of my duty. In consequence of this, I received orders to return to England. The man I saw in my dream pushing me off the precipice being the very man who bore false witness against me, out of fear of the governor, who cursed and drove away those that came to give evidence in my favour. I saw the hand of God herein, and acquiesced in his providence.

19. I came to England, and preferred a petition to the honourable East India Company. But they did not answer it, as indeed I had not with me the proper evidences to support it. I left my wife and child behind, and she was breeding with another. She did not desire to come with me. Nor did I then desire that she should. I remained in London, waiting for the arrival of some of my evidences, till I had spent almost all my money, having only a few shillings left. I could not now tell what to do, as I had not one friend in London. Till hearing of you, sir, I found a desire to have some conversation with you. I went to the Foundry, but instead of you, met with Mr. [Peter] Jaco. I told him my situation and circumstances. He said, 'I can do nothing for you.' I asked, if he knew of any under-clerk's place that I could get till providence cleared my way? He said no. I left him; but was not humbled enough yet for God to lift me up.

20. I said to myself, I have been a soldier and I will be so again. I could not murmur nor repine, having a deep sense of my backsliding from God, and being fully convinced that although his ways are often past finding out, yet he does all things well, and for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness. I enlisted in the fifteenth regiment of foot, and was immediately made clerk of the regiment. I should have been farther preferred, but I was too religious. I was not like other men. Indeed I do not know

that we had three men in the whole regiment who pretended to any religion at all. I had now again a few opportunities of calling sinners to repentance. I went home to Nailsworth upon a furlough, and began exhorting the people to turn to God. I did the same at Stroud, then at Cirencester, and afterwards at other places. Here my former sentiments were shaken, and I began to halt between two opinions. At length the gracious providence of God brought me to Leeds, in Yorkshire. Here I found such a large body of affectionate people as I never saw before. And some of them desired me to preach. But my officers threatened me that if I did I should be tried by a court martial. And I still doubted my call to preach. So I determined to take this method: never to preach unless invited to it, and then to observe whether there was any fruit.

21. Soon after, one of our soldiers told Mrs. Walsh, that they had a preacher in their regiment. She sent for me, and desired me to give an exhortation. I did so, and contrary to my expectation, my officers were so far from punishing me that they gave me all the liberty I could desire. And it pleased God to employ me as an instrument of awakening and converting several souls. I preached many times in the streets of Leeds. Mr. [Thomas] Mitchell then sent for me and asked me, 'For whom do you preach?'<sup>12</sup> I said, 'For Christ, in order to convert sinners to him.' He invited me to preach in your preaching house, which I did many times. And I frequently went into the circuit for him, and for Mr. Robert Roberts, who were glad to have sinners converted to God, whatever instruments he was pleased to make use of. And it was here, that, by reading and considering yours, Mr. [John] Fletcher's, and Mr. [Walter] Sellon's works, I was entirely delivered from the whole hypothesis of absolute predestination. And so, I am firmly persuaded, will every sensible man be, who has a real desire to know the whole truth of God, and then gives them a fair reading, with frequent and fervent prayer.

22. It was now that the thought of my wife and children lay upon my mind. And I saw no way either for me to escape from the army, or them from St. Helena. But nothing is too hard for God. He first made a way for *me*. My colonel demanding thirty guineas for my discharge. It was soon raised and paid. Being now once more a free man, I desired to join with the people called Methodists. I saw (to begin with smaller things) that wherever they came, they promoted: 1) cleanliness, industry, frugality, and economy; 2) loyalty, conscientious subjection to the king, and all that are in authority; and 3) real, vital religion, which was well-nigh banished from the earth.

23. I was received upon trial at the Leeds Conference, in the year 1772. Thence I was sent to London, where the sensible Methodists were so kind as to bear with my weaknesses, and they were not a few. I bless God that I was stationed here for my improvement. And even here, it pleased God that my labour was not in vain. You was then pleased to send me to Ireland, to take off my rough military edge, and to break me thoroughly to the work on the rough mountains of the north. The damp, dirty, smoky cabins of Ulster were a good trial for me for the present. But what makes double amends for all these inconveniences, to any preacher who loves the work of God, is that our people here are in general the most zealous, lively, affectionate Christians we have in the kingdom.

24. When I had been a little above a year in Ireland, my wife (who was before unwilling to leave home, as well as afraid of a sea-voyage and of venturing into the northern climate) wrote me word that her father and mother were dead, and that she was willing to leave St. Helena, and not afraid, either of a sea-voyage, or of a cold climate. I informed you of this, and you was pleased to make application to the East India Company, who generously ordered my family to be brought to England, with every needful accommodation, at their own charge. By the blessing of God they arrived safe. You was pleased to send my little boy to Kingswood School, and my little girl to Publow,<sup>13</sup> and to send me word not to take any thought or care about them. After a while you sent over my wife to me. This has proved an unspeakable blessing to her. She has been convinced of sin, converted to God, and I trust, made pure in heart.

25. As to myself, I have been many times so unfaithful to the grace and gifts wherewith God has entrusted me that I abhor myself in dust and ashes, as an unprofitable servant. Yet this I can say from the

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<sup>12</sup>Thomas Mitchell and Robert Roberts were stationed in Leeds 1771–72 (see *Works*, 10:397).

<sup>13</sup>I.e., the boarding school for girls, run by Hannah Owens and her daughters.

ground of my heart: I am not at all careful where or how long I live in this world, so I may answer the end of my being; so I may have the testimony of my conscience that I do all to the glory of God. For I know, that to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. I fear God, and uniformly endeavour to work righteousness. I believe that God is both able and willing to cleanse me from all unrighteousness. And I lie before him as clay in the hands of the potter, to be just what he would have me to be: as holy and as happy as my nature and state can bear. I am not afraid of being too holy. But I believe it is my privilege to be all-holy, in the very complexion of my soul, in all my tempers, thoughts, words and actions. I am convinced that grace is stronger than sin, and that Christ is stronger than the devil; and that gospel-liberty implies a deliverance from the guilt, power, and nature of sin—into peace, life, love, and holiness. I can say farther that though I do not yet fully enjoy these inestimable blessings, yet God is pleased to own my weak labours, so that more and more sinners are converted to God every time I go my circuit.

26. And now, what shall I render to the Lord for all the benefits that he has done unto me? I can only praise him as long as I live, and be telling of all his wondrous works. Praise the Lord, then, O my soul! And let all within me praise his holy name!

Dear sir, blot out or keep in just what you please of this narrative. And in so doing you will oblige  
Your son in the gospel,

Thomas Payne

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 580–87, 636–42.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>This account is reproduced in Jackson, *EMP*, 2:277–94; along with an account of Thomas Payne's death by Charles Boone (see March 13, 1783 below).



From the Rev. [Cornelius] B[ayley]<sup>1</sup>

c. May 1781

On Tuesday, April 27, 1781, after a week's illness, died Thomas Eden, aged about sixty. He was by trade a bricklayer, and all that knew him acknowledged his singular skill and eminence in everything relating to that profession. His wife being dead, and leaving him no family, he had retired from his business many years ago. Yet he exercised it occasionally; for though he declined following it with lucrative views, he was always, to the end of his life, ready to give his judgment, his time, and his labour for the service of others—whether to repair the cottage of poverty, or to raise structures for the worship of God.

Contented with an estate of not quite forty pounds per annum, this honest and benevolent man lived in a small house, in Tabernacle Walk, Moorfields. He used sometimes in summer to make little excursions into the country, to preach to poor people, and was frequently useful among them. He likewise sometimes wrote verses. But it must be owned that his talents either as a preacher or a poet were not very conspicuous. His most frequent and beloved employment was visiting the sick, often relieving their temporal wants, always praying with them, and soothing their sorrowful hours with the consolations of religion.

His foibles were such as are most excusable; his virtues such as are most rare among mortals. Indeed his chief foible was, if truly considered, one of the highest virtues to which humanity can attain. I mean, his neglect of money. He was one of those few great souls who can set bounds to the craving passion, who resolve to be contented with a little, and reject opportunities of being richer.

Singularly abstemious in his diet, frugal and even penurious in what concerned himself, he was towards the needy and distressed liberal to an extreme. He often straitened himself greatly, by giving before his rents were due.

For the excess and apparent imprudence of his charities the writer of this account has often found fault with him; but now retracts the censure. Reader, he was in reality one of the only true economists. He knew a way of placing his property at far higher interest than the usurer, and on far better security. He sent most of his money before him to that country, to which his soul aspired, and in which he now rests from his cares and labours.

Let us copy such disinterestedness and devotedness to God in our own lives, and not be content (as is too frequent) with only admiring it in others.

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 642–43.

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<sup>1</sup>Bayley had been ordained a priest and was now serving as curate to Rev. Richard Conyers in Deptford.

From William Black Jr.<sup>1</sup>

[Amherst, Nova Scotia]  
May 1781

In the year 1779 I saw if I would go to heaven I must lead a new life. But I did not know I wanted an inward change, or see the deplorable state I was in by nature, till I was at a prayer meeting held at Mr. Oxley's.<sup>2</sup> While they were praying my heart began to throb within me, my eyes gushed out with tears, and I cried aloud for mercy, as did most that were in the room, about fourteen in number. One indeed could not hold from laughing when we began to cry out, but it was not long before he cried as loud as any. In a few moments it pleased God to fill Mrs. Oxley with joy unspeakable. After this, we went almost every night to Mr. Oxley's to sing and pray.

Going thence one night, and seeing the northern lights, I thought, 'What if the day of judgment be coming?' I threw myself down on the ground and cried to the Lord for mercy. On Sunday Mr. Wells, an old Methodist, came to Amherst and gave us an exhortation, in which he said, 'Sin and repent, sin and repent, till you repent in the bottomless pit.' The words went like a dagger to my heart, and I continued mourning after God for five week and four days, till our monthly meeting. I was then strongly tempted to put an end to my life, but God enabled me to resist the temptation. Two days after, an old Methodist, after praying with me said, 'I think you will get the blessing before morning.' About two hours after, while we were singing a hymn, it pleased God to reveal his Son in my heart. Since that time I have had many blessed days and many happy nights.

One Sunday night, after my brother Dicky and I were gone to bed, I asked him, 'Can you believe?' He answered, 'No.' I exhorted him to wrestle hard with God, and got up to pray with him. But he was unbelieving still, so I went to sleep again. Yet not being satisfied, after talking largely to him, I got up again and began praying for him, being fully persuaded that God would set his soul at liberty. And so he did. He pardoned all his sins and bade him, 'Go in peace.'

It being now between 12:00 and 1:00, I waked my brothers John and Thomas and told them the glad tidings. They got up. We went to prayer, and when we rose from our knees Tommy declared, 'God has blotted out all my sins.' I then went to my father and mother (who were both seeking salvation) and told them the joyful news. My father said, 'Willy, pray for *us*.' I did, and earnestly exhorted him to wrestle with God for himself. So he did, and it was not long before God set his soul also at liberty. The next morning it pleased him to show my sister Sally his pardoning love. Blessed be his name for all his benefits!

Not long after, Mr. Oxley's son came to our house and lay with me, and complained of his hardness of heart. After I had talked with him for a little while the Lord laid his hand upon him in a most wonderful manner, so that he rolled up and down and roared as in the agonies of death. But between 1:00 and 2:00 in the morning he likewise could rejoice in God his Saviour. There are a few of the wonderful works of God among us. But he is also working on the hearts of the inhabitants in general.

William Black Jr.

*Source:* published transcription; JW, *Journal*, April 15, 1782 (*Works*, 23:236–37).

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<sup>1</sup>William Black Jr. (1760–1834), born at Huddersfield, was taken to Nova Scotia by his mother in 1775, following his father who had left in 1774. After his conversion in 1779, described above, he began to exhort and preach locally. In 1786 he was taken into full connexion in the Methodist Episcopal Church and devoted his life to spreading the gospel, becoming known as 'the Apostle of Methodism to Nova Scotia'. For a fuller account, see Jackson, *EMP*, 5:242–95; and Richey, *William Black*.

<sup>2</sup>Likely George Oxley (1736–90), who lived with his wife Mary (Bowden) Oxley (1740–1824) in River Philip, near Amherst.

From the Rev. John Fletcher

Madeley  
June 6, 1781

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I rejoice to hear that your spiritual bow abides in strength.<sup>1</sup> I would have wished you joy about it since my arrival, if I knew where a letter could overtake you.<sup>2</sup> I heartily thank you about the directions you give me to hinder my bow, so far split, from breaking quite. Now I must imitate your prudence, or the opportunity of doing it will soon be lost for good.

I would do something in the Lord's vineyard, but I have not strength. I can hardly, without over-doing myself, visit the sick of my parish. I was better when I left Switzerland than I am now. I had a great pull back in venturing to preach in the fields, in the Cevennes, to about two thousand French Protestants. I rode thirty miles to that place from Montpellier on horseback, but was obliged to be brought back in a carriage. And now that I am here, I can neither serve my church nor get it properly served. Mr. [Alexander] Greaves owns the place is not fit for him, nor he for it. He will go when I can get some body to help me. Could you spare me brother Bayley?<sup>3</sup> It would be a charity. Unless I can get a curate zealous enough to stir among the people, I will give up the place. It would be little comfort to me to stay here to see the dead bury the dead. I thank God however for resignation to his will. As soon as I shall discern it clearly, I shall follow it. For I trust I have learned in what state soever I am, therewith to be content. What a blessing is Christ to the soul, and health to the body! When you go to or come from the Conference, be so good as to remember that you have now a pilgrim's house in the way from Shrewsbury to Broseley. And do not go and climb our hills without baiting.<sup>4</sup> At our first interview, I shall ask your thoughts about a French work or two I have upon the anvil, but which I fear I shall not have time to finish. Be that as it will, God needs not the hand of Uzzah nor my finger, to keep up his ark.<sup>5</sup> I read with pleasure and edification, your *Arminian Magazine*. Your storehouse is inexhaustible. The Lord strengthen you to Nestor's years;<sup>6</sup> or rather, to the useful length of St. John's life.<sup>7</sup> It is worth living to serve the church, and to teach Christians to love one another.

I am, reverend and dear sir,

Your affectionate, though unprofitable servant,

John Fletcher

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 47–48.

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<sup>1</sup>See Gen. 49:24.

<sup>2</sup>JW wrote Fletcher likely late in Mar. 1781, while in Manchester, having learned that Fletcher was finally returning from his sojourn in Europe (the letter is not known to survive). JW was in the midst of his regular preaching tour by the time Fletcher reached Madeley in mid-April.

<sup>3</sup>Cornelius Bayley did go to assist in Madeley, but could only stay until Sept.

<sup>4</sup>I.e., taking a meal.

<sup>5</sup>See 2 Sam. 6:7.

<sup>6</sup>Nestor of Gerenia, legendary long-lived king of Pylos in Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

<sup>7</sup>St. John was reported to have lived into his nineties.

From the Rev. John Fletcher<sup>1</sup>

Madeley  
June 24, 1781

Reverend and Dear Sir,

As to Miss L[oxdale], I believe her to be a simple, holy follower of the Lord.<sup>2</sup> Nothing throws *unscriptural* mysticism down like holding out the promise of the Father, and the fullness of the Spirit, to be received *now*, *by faith* in the two Promisers, the Father and the Son. Ah, what is the *penal fire* of the mystics to the *burning love* of the Spirit, revealing the glorious power of the Father and the Son, according to John 14:26, and filling us with all the fullness of God? Plain scripture is better than all mystic refinements.

When I was at Nyon, near Geneva, three ministers received the word and preached the truth. When persecution arose because of the word, the two pastors were afraid; but the curate of the first pastor, a burgess of the town, stood by me. This Timothy opened his house, when the pastors shut both their pulpits and houses. And I heard him preach a discourse before I came away, worthy of *you* sir, upon the heights and depths of holiness. He wrote an apology for me, which he sent to the head of the persecuting clergy, and so stopped the torrent of wrath.<sup>3</sup> He made observations upon the mischief done to Christianity by a bad clergy—such as George Fox and you, sir, would not disown. When I told him of you and the Methodists, he expressed a greater desire to come to England: to hear you, to see the English brethren, and to learn English, that he might read your works and perhaps translate some of them. He can have no living in his own country, because he<sup>4</sup> will not *swear to prosecute all who propagate Arminian tenets*; which is more honest than the clergy, many of whom are Arians, Socinians, or deists, and do not scruple to take the Calvinian oaths! I shall endeavour to wait upon you at Leeds, at the time of the Conference. In the meantime I am, reverend and dear sir,

Your obedient servant, and affectionate son in the gospel,

John Fletcher

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 49.

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<sup>1</sup>Fletcher is replying to a letter of JW (not known to survive).

<sup>2</sup>Ann Loxdale (1755–1812) was a daughter of Thomas Loxdale (1720–93) and Hannah (Skitt) Loxdale (1729–1805), of Shrewsbury. She had been converted by Rev. Richard De Courcy, vicar of St. Alkmund in early 1779, and was aware of the Wesleyan side of the revival through her brother-in-law, Thomas Eden, and Hester Ann Roe. See the letter to Loxdale by Roe of June 30, 1779, in *Spiritual letters, by Mrs. H. A. Rogers* (Bristol: R. Edwards, 1796), 37–40.

<sup>3</sup>See the account in Patrick Streiff, *Reluctant Saint: A Theological Biography of Fletcher of Madeley* (Peterborough: Epworth, 2001), 242–48.

<sup>4</sup>Orig., 'we'.

From Joseph Benson

[Leeds]  
[c. July 1781<sup>1</sup>]

[manuscript draft of opening<sup>2</sup>]

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I have long had thoughts of offering to your consideration a few things on a certain subject. But partly from a conviction of my ignorance and want of experience in such deep things of God, and partly from a fear that amidst the multiplicity of important affairs which daily pass through your hands you would not think it worth your while to give anything I could say the attention needful to form a proper judgement of its truth and consequence, I have deferred my design until now. And I should probably have deferred it longer still, had not the many instances of misconduct (should I say? or rather notorious wickedness) in the professors of Christian perfection occurring of late in this circuit, together with others of a similar kind which I have been privy to in other places, convinced me that it was high time some step should be taken, more if possible than have been taken to prevent such abuses of one of the most precious doctrines of the gospel.<sup>3</sup> I must, though with reluctance, take up my cross and fulfill this disagreeable task. The reason of my speaking thus is because I know that Christian perfection is above all other doctrines dear to you, and that they who touch it touch the apple of your eye. Nor are you to be blamed for this. Nay you are highly to be commended, for surely<sup>4</sup> the mind of Christ, the image of God, the divine nature, is more needful, more useful to the soul than the eye is to the body. And for my part, be assured my dear sir, I would as soon wound the eyes of your head as I would injure that holiness, that perfect holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. But if you had got a mote into your eye which gave it pain, or had contracted a film upon it which obscured its sight, as in that case if I had it in my power I should think it my duty to lend you assistance, that the mote being taken out or the film removed, you might again enjoy the full benefit of eyesight without pain or inconvenience; so in the matter before us I intend no damage to perfection itself, but to the many imperfections which obscure its light and interrupt its progress.

For permit me to say in the first place I do most firmly believe it is our privilege as Christians to live and die in the possession of the glorious liberty you so clearly describe and so strongly defend.

You will now perceive, dear sir, the subject I mean is Christian perfection, a subject you have insisted much upon for many years, both from the pulpit and the press; which you have largely explained, ably defended, and strongly enforced; but which however has been most dreadfully abused by not a few who have cordially received the doctrine you and most of us teach concerning it. Now I have no doubt but any doctrine may be, and perhaps at one time or another every doctrine of the gospel has been, abused.

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<sup>1</sup>The letter is not dated in any of its sources. Benson was stationed in Leeds, and JW was there in July–Aug. 1781. It would have had to reach JW's hands about this time to allow him to edit it before it appeared in the October issue of *AM*.

<sup>2</sup>We know of this letter from three sources. The first sheet of Benson's initial draft (covering what is reduced later to the opening paragraph) survives among his papers, providing a clearer sense of his hesitance in writing. Then in 1823, when Benson allowed some of his doctrinal letters to be published after his death, he included (perhaps with some editing) the full letter sent to JW. Finally, there is the version published by JW in 1781 in *AM*, as an essay: 'Thoughts on Perfection by Mr. J. B.' We include all three settings, to facilitate comparison.

<sup>3</sup>Orig., '... high time for somebody to speak to you freely on the subject, and as nobody else (as far as I can find) will venture to do it, I must...'

<sup>4</sup>Orig., '... surely holiness, perfect holiness, is more ....'

And I allow that the abuse of a thing is no argument against its use. But when the abuse of a doctrine is so general,<sup>5</sup> does it not behove those who teach it to enquire whether this abuse arises wholly from the temptation of the devil joined with the wickedness of man's heart, or whether it is not in part occasioned by the unscriptural and irrational view which they give of it; and whether or no, is it not [...]

*Source:* Benson's manuscript draft; MARC, PLP 7/12/2 (incomplete, only one sheet present).

[Benson's published transcription of complete letter]

[1.<sup>6</sup>] I have long thoughts of offering to your consideration a few things on a certain subject. But partly from a conviction of my ignorance, and want of experience in such deep things of God, and partly from a fear that amidst the multiplicity of important affairs which daily pass through your hands, you would not think it worth your while to give anything I could say the attention needful to form a proper judgment of its truth and consequence, I have deferred my design till now. And I should probably have deferred it longer, had not instances of misconduct convinced me that it was highly necessary some farther steps should be taken, to prevent such abuses of one of the most precious doctrines of the gospel.

[2.] How abuses might gradually prevail, even in those who had experienced a high degree of grace, is easy to conceive. The enemy might first tempt them to look at their great attainments, not to inflame their gratitude, but to excite self-complacency and pride. The temptation might be yielded to and the Spirit of God be grieved. His light would be obscured and his comforts withdrawn. This might have alarmed them. But confident that all sin was rooted out of their hearts, at such a time they did not take the alarm, but rather sunk into a lukewarm and indolent state. Hence false peace, and its inseparable attendant, unwatchfulness. The Spirit of God was now more grieved than before, and withdrew his sacred influences. Thus being stripped of their strength, they became weak as other men and a prey to every temptation. They were led captive by the devil at his will, and fell into all manner of wickedness.

[3.] Now if it was in some such way as this that many, for whom God had done such great things, have fallen: If they have yielded to temptation, and given way first to pride, next to unwatchfulness, and then to lukewarmness and indolence; till, being forsaken of God and in the power of their enemies, they were capable of committing all manner of sins; it will not be difficult to point out some steps which might be taken in order to prevent this deplorable evil. Excuse me, my dear sir, if I take upon me to offer to you a hint or two on this subject.

[4.] And 1) granting, as we certainly must if we believe the Bible, that the Lord Jesus was manifested to 'take away our sins',<sup>7</sup> all our sins; and allowing Christian perfection to be represented as an eradication, or extirpation of sin; would it not be well to inform those who profess to have experience this deliverance very particularly, and urge upon them very strongly, in what sense sin is, and in what sense it is not rooted out. That though they are delivered from every sinful temper, word, and work; from every desire and pursuit contrary to the love and forbidden by the law of God; yet first, their thoughts and desires, dispositions and actions cannot bear to be examined by the strict justice of God. And therefore, if the law of God is the one perfect and infallible rule of right, they are not *sinless*, but every day chargeable with defect, and in some sense with sin, in one respect or another, according to this infallible standard.<sup>8</sup> And secondly, that being still in the body, the seat of various animal appetites and passions, which we cannot lay aside till death, they have still the flesh—i.e., their animal nature, their corrupted body (as well as the devil and the world) as a third enemy to guard against every day, and hour, and moment, as being

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<sup>5</sup>Orig., '... general (~~may I not almost say universal~~), does...'

<sup>6</sup>Paragraph numbering is added to facilitate comparison to JW's published version.

<sup>7</sup>1 John 3:5.

<sup>8</sup>Note that JW omitted this sentence in *AM*.

ever liable to its solicitations. And that therefore, thirdly, the whole of the deliverance from sin which they feel depends on the constant indwelling of the Holy Ghost—which Spirit, if they grieve, their animal nature (to say nothing of the devil and the world) will again get the upper hand, and they will find all their corruptions there as before, and their heart as wicked as ever.

[5.] Now as the first of these observations lays a deep foundation for humility, so do the two following for watchfulness. For as he has great reason to be humble who is every day coming short of the glory of God, even of his glorious likeness and of his perfect will; so has he great need to watch continually who is not only surrounded with enemies from without but has an enemy within himself, even a depraved body, an animal nature, whose appetites and passions have been and (when not restrained by grace) will ever be the sources of so much sin and misery in the world. And if I mistake not, the following particulars will strike at the root of lukewarmness and indolence so incident to those who think they have attained, and will lay a foundation equally firm for hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and labouring for the meat that endureth to eternal life.

[6.] Granting 2) that the Lord hath promised to circumcise our heart so that we shall love him with all our heart, ought not those who experience it to be continually taught that no bounds can be set to the love of God. But that those who love him with all their heart may have the vessel of their heart enlarged, so as to contain still more love; and that those who love him perfectly may love him more perfectly still. Thus will the flame of holy desire be kept alive in their soul. And notwithstanding all they have received, they will still be able to adopt the words of the hymn and to say,

A point my good, a drop my store,  
Eager I ask, and pant for more.<sup>9</sup>

[7.] Again 3) allowing this state of grace to be termed 'Christian perfection', and those who possess it to be named 'perfect' Christians, ought they not to be informed that God hath predestinated them to be conformed, *entirely conformed*, to the image of his Son, so as to be perfect images of Jesus Christ, even as Jesus Christ is the perfect image of his own Father; to represent the Lord Jesus to the world even as the Lord Jesus represents the Father to the church; that as all the perfections of the indwelling Godhead shine forth with effulgent brightness through the man Christ Jesus, so all the graces that adorned the humanity of the Lord Jesus may appear conspicuously in their temper and conduct. And if so, that of consequence they still need to adopt the apostle's words and to say: 'Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus';<sup>10</sup> seeing they have not attained as great a degree of humility, meekness, love, etc., as dwelt in the Son of God, are not yet arrived at the measure of the stature of his fulness, are not yet perfect and entire, lacking nothing. Ought they not still to press toward the mark for the prize of their high calling till, being quite complete in him, they obtain the honour and felicity of being where he is? Surely if St. Paul is to be credited, even those that are perfect ought to be thus minded.

[8.] Once more: Allowing that God may, and that he frequently does instantaneously, in a moment, so baptize a soul with the Holy Ghost and with fire, as to purify the soul from all dross and refine it like gold and silver, so that the soul is renewed in love, in pure and perfect love, as it never was before; yet first, ought not those who have experienced this to be repeatedly told that there is a further, and still further, renewal to be experienced day by day, as long as we are in the body—even a gradual growing up into Christ, our living head in all things, till we are filled with the fullness of God. And further, that they have in them this mind of Christ, in order that they may walk even as he walked; that they are filled inwardly with this heavenly sap of grace in order to this grand end, that they may bear outward fruit. Consequently, thirdly, that they ought chiefly to judge of their state by their fruitfulness; by their obedience to the whole will of God; by their improvement of time and employing their talents for

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<sup>9</sup>CW, 'Hymn to the Holy Ghost', st. 2, *HSP* (1739), 184.

<sup>10</sup>Phil. 3:12.

God; by doing, as they have opportunity, all possible good unto all men, even unto their bodies and souls—thrusting as many good works into every hour as they possibly can.

Permit me to add, dear sir, that if this outward holiness, as well as the internal love from whence it springs, is to be included (as it certainly is) in the notion of Christian perfection, who dares say he has fully attained? Who, in the evening, upon a review of the whole day, will not see he might have filled up his time better, in one respect or another? Might have managed this conversation, done this work, employed this hour to greater purpose? And above all, that he might have been more full of zeal for the glory of God and the good of mankind, and might have laboured still more for the advancement of the one and the other?

As this is the case, would it not be well to advise the professors of this grace to be very modest, both in thinking and speaking of their attainments?

I am, etc.

J. Benson

*Source:* published transcription; [Joseph Benson,] *Letters, Chiefly Doctrinal* (London: T. Cordeux, 1823), 50–55.

[version JW published as ‘Thoughts on Perfection by Mr. J. B.’]

[1.] I have long thought of offering a few remarks on a certain subject. But from a conviction of my ignorance, and want of experience in such deep things of God, I have deferred my design till now. And I should probably have deferred it longer, had not the many instances of misconduct in the professors of Christian perfection convinced me that it was highly necessary some farther steps should be taken to prevent such abuses of one of the most precious doctrines of the gospel.

2. How these abuses might gradually prevail, even in persons who had experienced a high degree of grace, is easy to conceive. The enemy might first tempt them to look at their great attainments—and this not with a view to lay them low, under a sense of their great unworthiness, and inflame their gratitude to him who had done so much for them; but to excite self-complacency in them. They might then yield to the temptation and grieve the Holy Spirit of God. If they did, his light would be obscured and his comforts withdrawn. Now this should have alarmed them. But being confident that all sin was rooted out of their hearts, they were not alarmed; but rather sunk into a lukewarm and indolent state. Hence *false peace*, and its inseparable attendant, *unwatchfulness*. The Spirit of God, being now more grieved than before, withdrew his sacred influences. Thus being stripped of their strength, they became weak as other men, and open to every temptation. They were then led captive by the devil at his will and fell into outward sin.

3. Now, if it was in some such way that several, for whom God had done such great things, have fallen; if they gave way first to pride, next to unwatchfulness, and then to lukewarmness and indolence, till, being again forsaken of God, they were capable of committing uncleanness with greediness; it will not be difficult to point out what steps ought to be taken, in order to prevent this deplorable evil.

4. And first, granting, as we certainly must if we believe the Bible, that the Lord Jesus was manifested to ‘take away our sins’,<sup>11</sup> all our sins; and allowing Christian perfection to be represented as an eradication, or extirpation of sin; would it not be well to inform those who profess to have experience this deliverance very particularly, and urge upon them very strongly, in what sense sin is, and in what sense it is not rooted out. That though they are delivered from every sinful temper, word, and work; from every desire and pursuit contrary to the love of God; yet first, their thoughts and affections, dispositions, and actions cannot bear to be examined by the strict justice of God. Secondly, that being still in the body, the seat of various animal appetites and passions, which we cannot lay aside till death, they have still their

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<sup>11</sup>1 John 3:5.



animal nature (as well as the devil and the world) to guard against. And that therefore, thirdly, the whole of that deliverance from sin depends on the constant indwelling of the Holy Ghost—who if they grieve, so that he withdraw from them, their animal nature (to say nothing of the devil and the world) will again prevail, and they will find all their corruptions re-enter.

5. Now as the first of these observations lays a deep foundation for humility, so do the two following for watchfulness. For as he has great reason to be *humble* who is every day coming short of the glory of God, even of his glorious likeness and perfect will; so has he great need to *watch* continually who is not only surrounded with enemies from *without* but has an animal nature *within*, whose appetites and passions have been and (when not restrained by grace) will ever be sources of much sin and misery in the world. And if I mistake not, the following particulars will strike at the root of lukewarmness and indolence so incident to those who think they have attained, and will lay a foundation equally firm for fervency of spirit and diligence in action, for hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and for labouring for the meat that endureth to eternal life as though we had hitherto attained nothing.

6. Granting secondly, as we certainly must, that the Lord hath promised to ‘circumcise our heart’ so ‘that we shall love him with all our heart’,<sup>12</sup> ought not those who experience it to be continually taught that *no bounds* can be set to the love of God; but that those who love him with *all their heart* may have their vessel still enlarged, so as to contain *more love*; and that those who love him *perfectly* may love him *more perfectly* still? Thus will the flame of holy desire be kept alive in their soul. And notwithstanding all they have received, they will still be able to say,

A point my good, a drop my store,  
Eager I ask, and pant for more.<sup>13</sup>

7. Again thirdly, granting it is the will of God that we should be *perfect* Christians, having in us all the mind of Christ, and walking as he also walked, ought not those who profess this perfection to be put in mind that God hath predestinated them to be conformed, *entirely conformed*, to the image of his Son;<sup>14</sup> so as to be *perfect images* of Jesus Christ, even as he is the *perfect* and ‘express image’<sup>15</sup> of his Father; to represent the Lord Jesus to the world even as he represents the Father to the church? That as all the perfections of the indwelling Godhead shine forth with effulgent brightness through the man Christ Jesus, so all the graces that adorned his humanity may appear conspicuously in their temper and conduct: discovering to all that they have not only ‘Christ in them’ the hope of glory,<sup>16</sup> but are arrived at the measure of the stature of his fullness, being *perfect men* in him? And ought they not therefore to be assured that they have still need to adopt the apostle’s words, ‘Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfected’,<sup>17</sup> inasmuch as they have not attained as great a degree of humility, meekness, love, etc., as dwelt in the Son of God, and are not yet as ‘complete in the whole will of God’<sup>18</sup> and ‘as perfect’ and ‘entire, lacking nothing’,<sup>19</sup> as he was. Much less are they ‘entirely holy, as he that hath called

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<sup>12</sup>Cf. Deut. 30:6.

<sup>13</sup>CW, ‘Hymn to the Holy Ghost’, st. 2, *HSP* (1739), 184.

<sup>14</sup>Cf. Rom. 8:29.

<sup>15</sup>Heb. 1:3.

<sup>16</sup>Cf. Col. 1:27.

<sup>17</sup>Phil. 3:12.

<sup>18</sup>Cf. Col. 4:12.

<sup>19</sup>James 1:4.

them is holy',<sup>20</sup> and 'perfect as their Father in heaven is perfect'.<sup>21</sup> And that therefore, having not yet arrived at the mark set before them, they have as much need as ever to forget the things behind, and press on to the things before, till being matured in grace, they are fit to receive the prize of their high calling?<sup>22</sup>

8. Once more: Allowing, what (I think) neither reason nor Scripture forbids us to allow,<sup>23</sup> that God *may*, and that he often *does*, *instantaneously* so baptize a soul with the Holy Ghost and with fire as to purify it from all dross, and refine it like gold, so that it is *renewed in love*, in *pure* and *perfect* love, as it never was before; yet ought not those who have experienced this to be repeatedly told: 1) That there is a further, and still further renewal to be experienced 'day by day' (2 Corinthians 4:16) as long as we are in the body, even a gradual growing up into Christ our living head in all things, till we are filled with the fullness of God. And 2) that they have got *in them* this power from on high, that they may fulfil the will of God in 'all good works'.<sup>24</sup> That they are filled with this sap of grace in order to this grand end, that they may bring forth *outward fruit*. And therefore, 3) that they ought chiefly to judge of their state by their fruitfulness; by their obedience to the whole will of God; by their improvement of their time and talents for God; by doing, as they have opportunity, all possible good unto all men, unto their bodies and souls; and by thrusting as many good works into every hour as they possibly can. And if this outward holiness, as well as the internal love from whence it springs, is to be included (as it certainly is) in the notion of Christian perfection, who dares say he has fully attained? Who, in the evening, upon a review of the whole day, will not see he might have filled up his time better in one respect or another? Might have managed *this* conversation, done *this* work, employed *this* hour to greater purpose? And above all, that he might have been more full of *zeal for the glory of God* and *the good of mankind*, and might have laboured still more for the advancement of the one and the other?

*Source*: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 549–53.

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<sup>20</sup>Cf. 1 Pet. 1:15.

<sup>21</sup>Cf. Matt. 5:48.

<sup>22</sup>See Phil. 2:13–14.

<sup>23</sup>Note that this clause is JW's addition; not found in Benson.

<sup>24</sup>2 Tim. 3:17.

From an Unidentified Correspondent

c. July 1781

On Friday, June 15, 1781, Captain G. Spencer's ship was taken by a small privateer. Himself and a boy were left in the vessel, accompanied by four of the privateer's crew—one of whom, an American, was prize master, two Swedes or Danes, and one boy. They were off Whitby, and intended carrying his ship into Dunkirk. When he found there was no help, he was enabled joyfully to acquiesce in the Lord's will, and to believe it would work for good. He found all care respecting himself, wife, friends, property, or imprisonment quite removed; and employed his time in reading the Scriptures and some hymns he had on board. He found the promises very precious, and thought, that if he had been tried, he could with Paul and Silas have sung, had his feet been thrust in the stocks.

As the privateer's crew could not work the ship without his assistance, they had frequent occasion to call him from the cabin. When the prize master was with him on one of these occasions, he took the liberty of speaking to him on the folly of seeking happiness in such a course of life as he was now in. Happening to open the Bible on that passage in Habakkuk, 'Although the fig tree shall not blossom, ...',<sup>1</sup> see, said he, the comfort those have that fear God, amidst the darkest scenes of providence. I am now an instance of it. You see me unruffled, although I am stripped of all my property, myself in your hands, and nothing before me but the prospect of a tedious imprisonment in an enemy's country. Yet I can trust the Lord, and thank him for all. *Your* hearts are bent only upon getting to harbour, unloading your ship, and securing your plunder. Then you flatter yourself with some satisfaction. Yet you know not that ever you may come there. You have to die. You have to go into another world, *and what peace will these things then afford you?* The prize master took it kindly, and said it is very true. The captain likewise reproved some of the others for swearing, and they submitted to his reproof. When it drew near the evening, he prevailed on them to let the ship sail nearer the shore; by which means they fell in with an English vessel, and when he was near enough he hailed her, and notwithstanding all the opposition the four men could make, he laid her to, till the other ship sent some of their crew on board, by whose assistance he was again put in possession of his own vessel. Upon this the prize master said, 'Now captain, we are all *your* prisoners. I see God Almighty will take care of his own.' The privateer's men having some firearms on board, they attempted to shoot him while he was hailing the ship, but the pistol only flashed in the pan. When he had an opportunity of speaking to the captain that assisted him, he said he should be glad to know what return he might make him? The captain replied, 'I wish for none. You may give the men something, if you please.' Mr. Spencer said, 'Captain, I heartily thank you, and hope the Lord will reward you.' The other replied, 'The Lord rewards all that trust in him.' And Mr. Spencer looked upon this as an additional proof of the Lord's care, in sending him deliverance by one that feared him.

There were three of the ship's crew put on board the privateer, on whose account Captain Spencer was now much concerned—especially for the mate, and a boy who was a relation of his. But to his great surprise, when he arrived at Sunderland he found they had got there almost as soon as him. Their release was occasioned by the following circumstance. Soon after the privateer separated from the ship, they chased another sloop. But wanting all the assistance they could get to work the vessel, they requested the prisoners to help them; to which they readily consented, on condition that if the sloop was taken they should be set at liberty. Upon capturing the sloop, the captain put them on board her, and they arrived soon after at Hartlepool.<sup>2</sup> From thence they came to Sunderland, where to their mutual joy they met their master. One of the men (who had been remarkably wicked) was detained on board the privateer, which was afterwards taken and sent into Shields. Captain Spencer says while he was in the enemy's hands they treated him with great respect.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 655–57.

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<sup>1</sup>Hab. 3:17–18.

<sup>2</sup>Note in original: 'I suppose the sloop was ransomed.'

From George Story (autobiography)

c. July 1781

I was born in the year 1738, at Harthill, in the West Riding of Yorkshire. At four years of age I had learned the catechism, and had repeated it before the minister in the Church.

About that time I had a narrow escape. Being near the edge of a deep pond, my foot slipped and I plunged in; but recovering myself, I struggled to the side and, laying hold on some weeds, got out—no one being near that could give me any assistance.

In my sixth year I had read the Bible through several times, and other books that came in my way; particularly the history of the sufferings of the Protestants, in the valleys of Piedmont,<sup>3</sup> which fixed in me an aversion to the principles of the Church of Rome. Among the practical treatises in this history, was a caveat against dancing, wherein was asserted that 'every step a dancer takes is a step to hell'.<sup>4</sup> This so affected me that no inducement could ever prevail upon me to attend the dancing school; which I esteem a singular mercy as it prevented connections that might have proved very pernicious.

One day I wantonly threw a stone and killed a young bird belonging to a neighbour. Though no one saw me, yet for several nights I had little sleep. The idea of the bird's expiring in agonies, through my wickedness, filled me with inexpressible anguish. I would have given a great deal to have restored the little creature to life. Tears and prayers to God for pardon, and promises to offend him thus no more, was the only way wherein I found relief.

My parents taught me early the fear of the Lord, as far as they knew. And though their instructions were tedious and irksome, yet they made an impression on my mind that was never lost, but often recurred when I was alone, or in places of temptation.

Our minister was a pious, venerable man, and performed his duty with a solemnity that often struck me with awe of the divine presence. Particularly when he was reading the burial service, I frequently had a distant prospect of judgment and eternity. I was agreeably affected with thunder and lightning. It filled me with a sense of God's majesty and power; for which reason I would get into the midst of it, though ever so dreadful (if I was not prevented), that I might enjoy the whole report and see the full blaze.

In my seventh year I lost all relish for learning, and contracted several evil habits. The two following years, my time at school was spent to little purpose. Part of this I attribute to the being too early taught to read, and too close application to it; and part to the want of a proper master, who could suit my genius and engage my curiosity for useful knowledge. But my master dying, and being succeeded by one whose ability and method were adapted to my capacity, I soon recovered my thirst for learning, and made considerable improvement therein.

Before I was well able to carry a gun, I was fond of shooting. Till being out one day in the fields, my gun went off at half-cock, and was within a very little of killing my brother. This filled me with such horror that I could not endure that exercise anymore.

When I was about ten years of age, God began to revive his work of grace in and about Sheffield; the rumour of which spread into our village, and occasioned serious reflections in the minds of many. One evening, as I was hearkening to the conversation of my parents on that subject, I was struck with an observation they made: that prayer was nothing unless the mind was stayed on God. At night, when I

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<sup>3</sup>Likely the anonymous work, *An Account of the late Persecution of the Protestants in the Valleys of Piedmont, by the Duke of Savoy and the French King, in the year 1686* (Oxford: John Crosley, 1688); perhaps as reprinted in Thomas Bray, *Papal Usurpation and Persecution*, Vol. II, Part I (London: Joseph Downing, 1712).

<sup>4</sup>Joan Whitrowe. *Faithful Warnings, Expostulations and Exhortations, to the several Professors of Christianity in England, ... also, an Epistle of Bartholomew Tertian, written to the Waldensian Churches* (London, 1697), p. 12.

repeated my customary prayers, I watched my thoughts narrowly, and soon found that they wandered from the Lord all the time. This discovery deeply affected me. I strove with all my might to think on God as being present, seeing and hearing me; and after repeated efforts, through grace, I prevailed. I now began to delight in duties; to pray fervently, and feelingly, with or without a form. And many times the Lord answered me in such a manner as clearly convinced me of his omniscience and omnipresence. I read the Bible with pleasure and profit. The sufferings of Christ filled me with wonder and gratitude, as I now understood that he endured them all for my sins, and to save my soul from eternal destruction. Reading in the Thirty-Nine Articles that justification was by faith, I endeavoured to cast my soul upon the Lord in the best manner I was able, and at times was persuaded that he had forgiven all my trespasses. Though I had never heard any of the Methodist preachers, yet from that time I felt an esteem for them. And notwithstanding they were loaded with all manner of reproach, and represented in the most detestable light, those calumnies only increased my regard for them, because I understood that true Christians in all former ages had met with the same treatment from the world.

Having acquired all the learning that was taught at a country school, my friends began to think of putting me to some business. Going one day to the bookseller's shop in a neighbouring market town, I got acquainted with him. And my friends accepting of his proposals, I soon after went with him to his place of residence. This introduced me into company, and exposed me to temptations I never knew before. And yet the Spirit of God strove with me more than ever. Almost every night I was called to a strict account by that inward monitor, and reproved for the faults of the day. And I could seldom sleep till with prayers and tears I had implored mercy, and in some degree obtained it from the Lord. And in this manner I went on for about a year.

I had often been perplexed with the doctrine of predestination, but now the tempter drew me insensibly into it. He continually suggested that if I was to be saved, I certainly should live as I list.<sup>5</sup> But if I was ordained to be damned, there was no remedy. God himself could not save me. And therefore it was mere folly to give myself so much concern about it. But although these suggestions tended to stupefy my conscience, and harden my heart, yet I was more uneasy than ever. The Methodists at that time were few and feeble. They had seldom any travelling preachers. I sometimes attended their prayer-meetings, and often followed them up and down the town, hoping they would turn and speak to me. But none took any notice of me. I was left alone to struggle with sin and Satan.

One day, hearing a preacher was to be there, I attended; but he did not come. Upon this, one of the local preachers, who was then a Calvinist, gave an exhortation: in which he fairly repeated the words that Satan had so often suggested to me—viz., that if we were to be saved, we could not possibly perish; and if we were to be damned, there was no help for us. This made a deep impression, and confirmed all that the devil had been preaching to me for years. I believed the horrible doctrine, and from that time determined to give myself as little trouble as possible about religion.

Being surrounded with books, I read the first that came to hand: histories, novels, plays, and romances by dozens. But they only pleased while my eyes were upon them, and afterwards furnished matter for a thousand vain imaginations. I then read the lives of the heathen philosophers with admiration, and determined to copy after them. I perfected myself in geometry and trigonometry. Then I learned Macaulay's shorthand; soon after, geography and astronomy, together with botany, anatomy, physic, and several branches of natural philosophy. Once I intended studying the law, and read a great deal in the statutes at large and other law books. But the subject was too dry and unentertaining for one of my desultory disposition. I could recollect reading over three hundred volumes, of one kind or another (some of them were large folios) before I was sixteen years old. My passion for books was insatiable. I frequently read till ten or eleven o'clock at night, and began again at four or five o'clock in the morning. Nor had I patience to eat my meat, unless I had a book before me.

But about this time I was weary of the shop, and entered the printing office. This opened a new scene of things, which pleased me for a season. I was determined to be a complete master of my business,

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<sup>5</sup>*OED*, 'as I please'.

and in about two years was able to accomplish my day's work in six hours. So that I had much time upon my hands for study and recreations. One summer I was an angler, and attended the rivers early every morning. But this, after a few months' trial, brought me neither pleasure nor profit. The next summer I commenced florist, took a garden, was passionately fond of auriculas, polyanthuses, etc. But this too soon grew insipid. Happiness was not to be found in these pursuits. In the midst of my reading I met with some deistical authors. I read and reasoned, till the Bible grew not only dull but, I thought, full of contradictions. I staggered first at the divinity of Christ, and at length gave up the Bible altogether, and sunk into fatalism and deism.

This new light promised great satisfaction. I thought myself much wiser than others. But alas, it soon led into a dreary labyrinth! My ideas of God and religion were quite confounded. I felt the wretchedness of my heart, but could discover no way to escape from it.

About the age of eighteen the management of the printing office fell to my share. I had a weekly newspaper to publish, all the paragraphs to select from the public prints, the advertisements to prepare, the press to correct, and the journeymen and apprentices to superintend. This flattered my vanity, increased my native pride, and consequently led me further from God. I then sought happiness in card playing. But after repeated trials, it appeared such a silly waste of time, and so opposite to common sense, that I was obliged to give it up. Twice or thrice I got into company and was intoxicated with liquor. But in the midst of this folly I saw its madness, and turned from it with abhorrence. I likewise saw its ruinous consequences in those I was daily surrounded with. However I hoped a horse-race was a more manly and rational amusement. I therefore attended the races at Doncaster, with the most flattering expectation of the happiness I should find that week. The first day vanished away without any satisfaction. The second was still worse. As I passed through the company, dejected and disappointed, it occurred to my mind, 'What is all this immense multitude assembled here for? To see a few horses gallop two or three times round the course, as if the devil was both in them and their riders! Certainly we are all mad. We are fit for Bedlam if we imagine that the Almighty made us for no other purpose but to seek happiness in such senseless amusements!' I was ashamed and confounded, and determined never to be seen there any more.

When I was twenty years old, I was glad of the opportunity of seeing London. I went up full of the most sanguine expectation of finding the happiness I was in search of, and therefore lost no time in seeing and hearing everything new and curious that I could gain access to. But new things quickly grew old, and the repeated sight of them soon proved disgustful. No happiness followed, but an unaccountable anguish of spirit, whenever I attended to the sensations of my own mind. Then I would gladly have travelled into any part of Europe or America, hoping a continual change of scenes would satisfy me. But it was war time, and I could not embark for Holland without a passport from the Secretary of State, which I did not know how to procure.

At length I resolved to try if religion would afford me any relief. I went to several places of worship, but even this was in vain. There was something dull and disagreeable wherever I turned my eyes, and I knew not that the malady was in myself. At length I found Mr. [George] Whitefield's chapel in Tottenham Court Road, and was agreeably entertained with his manner of preaching. His discourses were so engaging that when I retired to my lodgings, I wrote down the substance of them in my journal, and frequently read them over with pleasure. But still nothing reached my case, nor had I any light into the state of my soul. Meantime on the week nights I went to the theatres; nor could I discern any difference between Mr. Whitefield's preaching and seeing a good tragedy.

Being now weary of everything, and every place being equal to me (for I carried about with me a mind that was never at rest), I embraced the invitation of my friends and returned into the country. I was kindly received and solicited to enter into business for myself. But reflecting that I was young and inexperienced, I declined the offer and engaged with a person to manage his printing office. I was now in an agreeable situation. I wanted for nothing. I had more money than I knew what to do with. Yet notwithstanding, I was as wretched as I could live, without knowing either the cause of this misery or any way to escape.

I had now for some years attempted to regulate my conduct according to reason. But alas! I stood condemned, in a thousand instances, even at the bar of that partial judge. From my infancy I was

exceeding passionate; and this evil grew upon me, and caused bitter reflections on various occasions. I knew that anger was a paroxysm of madness, that it was contrary to reason in every respect. I therefore guarded against it with all my might. Sometimes I conquered, and those transient victories greatly pleased me. But if an unexpected temptation suddenly occurred, all my resolutions were but as a thread of flax before the fire; and my behaviour was more like that of an enraged wild beast than of a rational creature. Sometimes, when among facetious company, I endeavoured to catch their spirit. But in the midst of levity I had a dread upon me. Experience taught me, that their laughter was madness. As soon as I returned to sober thoughts, I found my feigned mirth left a melancholy upon my mind. And this was succeeded either by storms of passion, or an aversion even to life. During this dark night of apostasy I lost all remembrance of God's former goodness. I wandered to different places of religious worship, but found sufficient matter everywhere to be disgusted. At length I forsook them all, and on Sundays confined myself to my room, or retired to the centre of a neighbouring wood. Here I considered, with the closest attention I was able, the arguments for and against deism. I would gladly have given credit to the Christian revelation, but could not. My reason leaned to the wrong side, and involved me in endless perplexities. I likewise endeavoured to fortify myself with stronger arguments and firmer resolutions against my evil tempers. For since I could not be a Christian, I wished however to be a good moral heathen. Internal anguish frequently compelled me to supplicate the Divine Being for mercy and truth. I seldom gave over till my heart was melted, and I felt something of God's presence. But I retained those gracious impressions only for a short time.

Being employed in abridging and printing the life of Eugene Aram, who was hung in chains at Knaresborough for murder, I observed that by intense application he attained to a prodigious knowledge in the sciences and languages.<sup>6</sup> I was so engaged with this account that I determined on the same acquisitions; vainly imagining that, as I had the desire, so I had the capacity to learn everything. While I was musing upon these matters, and fixing the plan for my future proceedings, the following thoughts fastened upon my mind, and broke in pieces all my schemes. 'The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. What did this man's wisdom profit him? It did not save him from being a thief and a murderer; no, nor from attempting even his own life. True wisdom is foolishness with men. He that will be wise, must first become a fool, that he may be wise!' I was like a man awakened out of sleep. I was astonished. I felt myself wrong. I was conscious I had been pursuing a vain shadow, and that God only could direct me into the right path. I therefore applied to him with earnest importunity, entreating him to show me the true way to happiness; which I was determined to follow, however difficult or dangerous.

Just at this time a work of grace broke out in the village where I was born, through the labours of a person remarkably zealous for the cause of God. My mother in particular was deeply convinced of the truth, which she soon experienced, and retained the life and power thereof to her dying day. She was much concerned for me, hoping if I could be brought among religious persons I should likewise soon be convinced. She therefore, by an acquaintance, entreated me to converse with the Methodists. I answered, 'If my mother desires it, I will visit them with all my heart.' The first time I entered a Methodist's house, they went to prayer with me and for me, a considerable time. I looked upon them as well-meaning, ignorant people, and thought no more about the matter. In a few days they desired I would come and see them again. Considering it was my mother's request, I went without hesitation. I found four or five persons in the house, with whom I disputed about religion for some hours, till I had fairly wearied them. They laboured to convince me that I was a sinner, and in danger of eternal death if I did not repent and return to God. These were subjects I had no kind of idea of. And as their arguments were only supported by Scripture, for which I had very little regard, all they said made not the least impression.

As I was about to withdraw, not a little elevated with my imaginary victory, one of the company desired to ask me a few questions. The first was, 'Are you happy?' My countenance instantly fell, and I answered from the dictates of my conscience, 'No.' She then inquired if I was not desirous of finding

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<sup>6</sup>See *The Genuine Account of the Trial of Eugene Aram for the murder of Daniel Clark, late of Knaresbrough, in the county of York*, 4th edn. (York: C. Etherington, 1767).

happiness? I replied it had been my pursuit ever since I could remember, that I was willing to obtain it on any terms, and that I had sought for it every way I could think of but in vain. She then showed me the true way of obtaining the happiness I wanted, assuring me if I sought the Lord with all my heart I should certainly find in him that peace and pleasure which the world could not bestow. Every word sunk deep into my mind. And from that moment I never lost my convictions, nor my resolution to be truly devoted to God.

I immediately broke off all connection with my companions, threw my useless books into the fire, and sought the Lord with all my might. I soon discovered the importance of the Scriptures; that there was no other revelation of the divine will to mankind; that I must credit the truths contained therein, however opposite they appeared to my own vitiated reason. I found my reason had been deceived and corrupted by the suggestions of an enemy, and that I could trust it no more till it was renewed by grace; that my memory was filled with a train of false ideas, every moment presenting themselves and leading me from God; and that my understanding was totally dark, till divine illumination should visit me.

Reading Mr. Hervey's *Dialogues*, this light shone upon me, and I was much delighted with the discovery of the divinity of Christ, and the atonement which he made for sinners.<sup>7</sup> About this time I heard Mr. Fugill preach.<sup>8</sup> His discourse was suited to one in my state, and the power of my evil reasonings was suspended while he described the work of grace in the soul. I saw the way of justification and full sanctification so clearly that I could trace the path as if it had been a road delineated in a map.

The next discovery I had was the hardness of my heart. This called off my attention from everything else. Neither fears nor joys, heaven nor hell, made any impression on it. I often thought that Satan himself could not possibly have a more obdurate heart. I found it was full of pride, ambition, anger, evil desire, unbelief, and everything that was vile and vain. Being invited to join the society, I gladly embraced the opportunity, and found much encouragement to seek the Lord, notwithstanding all the wretchedness I felt in myself.

Attending to the experience of the people, I observed that almost all of them, during the time of conviction, were exercised with horrible fears and terrors. And thence I concluded it was necessary I should have the same. For at that time I did not know that frequently those distracting terrors were from the enemy, in order to drive the soul into despair. I therefore used every method to bring myself under dreadful apprehensions, hoping this would break my stubborn heart. But I could never find that kind of experience. After several weeks struggling with this obduracy, at last I resigned myself to the Lord, when he was pleased to regard my distress; and while William Brammah was at prayer, the softening power of grace descended and removed the stony heart.

I now found a great change in my mind. But it was not complete, for I had no consciousness of the pardon of sin, which I was convinced was the privilege of the children of God. Therefore I could not conclude myself justified. However I began to seek for that blessing with all diligence. Many difficulties occurred in the way. The old train of pernicious ideas continually presented themselves. I could not meditate a moment without sinking into deism. And I was equally embarrassed with the doctrine of predestination. Indeed their connection seemed inseparable. I could not by any means disjoin one from the other. And I repeatedly found that the moment I suffered my mind to embrace either of them, I lost sight of God and plunged into blackness of darkness. The wretchedness I then felt was insupportable, accompanied with suggestions to blaspheme or to embrace atheism. After many sore conflicts, the Lord showed me a path by which I might escape—and that was by staying my mind upon him, and ceasing from these reasonings. This I found was a safe, though painful path. It equally mortified my proud reason and vain imaginations. While gracious promises occurred, and encouraged me to follow on to know the Lord. Now I began to look up for the pardon of sin. I saw that it was purchased by Christ, and that God gave it freely. That no works or sufferings of mine could in the least degree merit this blessing, but that it

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<sup>7</sup>I.e., James Hervey, *Theron and Aspasio* (London: Rivington, 1755).

<sup>8</sup>William Fugill (d. 1800), a native of Rothwell, near Leeds, itinerated for about 10 years, until he was expelled from the connexion in 1764. See Atmore, *Memorial*, 147–48.



was to be received by faith.

But here again I was greatly embarrassed. The Scriptures universally testified that I must believe or perish. My friends were continually urging me to believe and I should be saved. Upon close examination I found that I did believe every truth in the Bible. Yet this did not bring a sense of justification. And I durst not think that God was reconciled to me, when I was conscious of the contrary. But the Lord soon brought me out of this dilemma by showing me that to forgive was his prerogative, and to believe was my duty. This believing *for* salvation, I found was a distinct thing from believing I *was* saved. I found it implied the lifting up of my heart to the Lord in fervent prayer, looking to him with a single eye and steady aim, without evil reasonings or vain wanderings; cleaving to him with all my strength; casting my soul upon his mercy, and depending upon his promises.

While I persisted in this, I found I was saved from many evils, and the great blessing I had in view was often near. Sometimes I could lay hold on it for a moment, and found peace and joy. But I had been so long habituated to unbelief that it often rose spontaneously and overturned all my consolation. I had therefore to renew my efforts hourly, and to rise as speedy as possible from every fall. In this exercise I continued about two months. Many times I lost my way by too scrupulously regarding the experience of others. Yet I had never found anything like despair, unless I willfully reasoned myself into it. Nor could I attain to any deep terrors, which were too much insisted on as a necessary branch of conviction. I likewise formed wrong ideas of justification. I wanted some great work to be wrought upon me, that I might have something very remarkable to boast of. And therefore, when the Lord gently drew near, and manifested his peace in a small degree, I rejected it with displeasure. I even contended with the Lord. Till he strongly impressed upon my mind these words, 'I will bring the blind by a way that they know not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight: these things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.'<sup>9</sup> I was now convinced of the necessity of receiving, with thankfulness, the smallest tokens of the divine favour; and that I must suffer, with childlike simplicity, the Lord to lead me in his own way. This was soon followed by a clear manifestation of pardoning mercy, that excluded all doubts, temptations, and fears, accompanied with a joy unspeakable and full of glory.

I continued praising a reconciled God for some days. The happiness I felt carried me above every difficulty. I could discern and reject the first approach of temptation. I now thought my mountain was so strong I should never be moved. I did not know that I should meet with war any more. Indeed I expected to go right forward to heaven, in a short time. My mind had been so intensely engaged in seeking pardon that I had quite forgot there was a further work of grace to be wrought in me. But the Lord did not suffer me to remain long under that mistake. He soon discovered the remains of the carnal mind, and the necessity of its removal. I had scarce begun earnestly to seek after that blessing before the tempter returned with double rage. I saw an invaluable privilege before me, but the way was difficult; a thousand arguments were presented to discourage my pursuit.

Once I lost the peace of God by attending to a discourse which set justification exceeding high, confounding it with full sanctification. Viewing myself in this false glass, and not finding I had all the marks which the preacher said belonged to one born of God, I fell into the snare of Satan; gave up my shield, and suffered myself to be persuaded that all I had experienced of the goodness of God was a mere delusion. For some hours I was in as deep distress as I had ever known. And I saw no way to escape but by returning to the Lord in faith, who then discovered and broke the snare.

I had suffered much by evil reasonings on many occasions. But now I was determined to use double vigilance against them. Yet the enemy suggested to me, 'Thou mayest now take thy time. Thou art a child of God; and if once in Christ, always in Christ. As for full sanctification, it will be accomplished some time or other, perhaps in the article of death. God has begun the work, and he will finish it. Therefore take thy ease, and enjoy thy present comfort.' But I saw, whether these were true or false arguments, yet the conclusion was deadly. Therefore I rejected the suggestions with all my might, and

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<sup>9</sup>Isa. 42:16.

determined to be wholly devoted to God.

In the midst of great exercises of mind, through manifold temptations, I omitted no opportunity of exhorting all about me to flee from the wrath to come. God was pleased to smile upon my weak endeavours, and to make me instrumental in the conversion of several. Afterwards I was convinced I ought to act in a more public manner. But I saw the danger of being too forward, as well as of being too backward, and was enabled to keep from both extremes. When an opportunity offered of giving an exhortation in any of the neighbouring societies, I did it with much fear and trembling. But I durst not shun the cross. Indeed I laboured under great disadvantages. Through a natural impediment in my speech, I could not easily pronounce several words. And it was a considerable time before I could conquer, or substitute others in their place. I hoped my acquaintance with authors on most subjects might be of some use to me. But I was greatly mistaken. My mind was in a situation that forbade all kind of meditation. If I attempted any such thing, I was instantly filled with my old deistical ideas again. I was therefore necessitated to stay my thoughts upon the Lord, and to follow his light and truth as they shone upon me. What knowledge I had acquired while in the spirit of apostasy from God, I was obliged to throw away, as altogether useless.

After some time, a scene opened which was both painful and profitable. We took an old chapel in a neighbouring village, the inhabitants of which, in general, differed very little from the savage Indians. Here I frequently preached to large congregations, and met with plenty of persecution for my pains. But it was not unexpected, and I was determined to stand it, though it should cost me my life.

One time a popish gentleman hired some men to pull me out of the pulpit. Though I was ignorant of their design, I providentially fixed my eye upon them as soon as they came in. They were confounded, and stayed peaceably till the service was over. Sometimes the mob revenged themselves on the door and windows, throwing whatever came next to hand; and then followed us through the street with mire and dirt. At an adjoining village where I was to preach, some had engaged a madman—and to qualify him more perfectly for the work, had made him drunk. He came armed with a large club, and raging in a most furious manner. I was waiting calmly for the event, when the man's wife came, and having endeavoured in vain, to persuade him to go away, fell into violent fits. Seeing this, he instantly became as quiet as a lamb, and we returned without the least injury.

Soon after, I entered into the most afflicting dispensation I had ever known, which continued three months. I gradually sunk into unaccountable anguish of mind, as if the powers of darkness surrounded me without intermission. Sometimes such a horror penetrated my whole soul as if I had committed some atrocious crime and was instantly to stand before the great Judge to receive the sentence of eternal damnation. Very often I expected instant death. My whole frame seemed just dissolving. In the midst of all, I found the grace of God was sufficient to support me under it. My conscience was free from condemnation, and I saw this distress was part natural and part diabolical. I still kept cleaving to the Lord and staying my mind upon him. The cloud broke, and my former peace returned. I found something daily dying within me, but what it was I could not tell. When I was at the lowest, I began to rise again, and continued increasing in the life of God for three months more. I was then one evening meeting my band, when the power of the Lord descended in an uncommon manner, and I believed he had purified my heart. At first I rejected it through a sense of my unworthiness. But the witness again returned. I considered, 'What have I either done or suffered that could induce the Lord to show me this great mercy?' And I was upon the point of giving up again, when it occurred to my mind, 'By grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works lest any man should boast.'<sup>10</sup> I was then constrained to acquiesce and said, since it is so, I will hold fast if I can.

The next morning I awoke in such power and peace as I had never known, and the promises in the latter part of the 30th chapter of Ezekiel were applied in such a manner as left no doubt but the Lord had wrought that great change in me. Nevertheless it was not in the manner I expected. I supposed a soul saved from all sin would be a great, wise, and glorious creature; whereas I found myself infinitely little,

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<sup>10</sup>Cf. Eph. 2:8–9.

and mean, and base. I had such a discovery of my own nothingness as humbled me to the dust continually. I felt myself as ignorant and helpless as an infant, and knew I could not stand a moment without the divine aid. Nor did I find such overflowing joys as I expected, but only an even permanent peace, which kept my heart in the knowledge and love of God.

Meantime several scriptures were opened to me at once, and I found a delightful relish for the whole. But still I found knowledge in divine things was to be acquired gradually, through patient labour. And that even this was limited; God giving no more than was necessary, and at such times as he pleased.

I walked in this liberty some months, till one day I met with a circumstance which grieved me. I attended too much to the temptation, and was not inwardly watchful. So before I was aware, the temptation took place in my heart, and I found myself angry for a moment or two. As I never expected to feel this evil any more, my distress was inconceivable for three or four hours; the enemy suggesting that I was now an apostate from the pure love of God, and could never be restored. I cried mightily to the Lord, and he discovered the device of the enemy, and healed the wound that had been made. He likewise showed me that, as I had received Christ Jesus, so I must walk in him; that the same faith by which I entered into rest must be continued, in order to be established in that liberty.

The Conference being at Leeds, in the year 1762, I attended with a design of edifying by the public discourses and private conversation of the preachers. And herein I had abundant reason to be satisfied. Mr. [John] Wesley's sermons were in a peculiar manner calculated for establishing me in what I had lately experienced. During the Conference it appeared there wanted several more preachers as itinerants, in different circuits. My friends proposed me for one, and asked if I had any objection. As I was resigned to any station providence seemed to point out, I submitted to the judgment of my brethren. Being <sup>11</sup>admitted on trial, I returned home to settle my affairs; and in the latter end of February 1763 I went into the Dales circuit.<sup>12</sup>

When I got to Darlington, the town was in an uproar, occasioned by George Bell's prophecy. That day, according to his prediction, the world was to be destroyed. Many people were much frightened. But their fears soon gave place to resentment, and they threatened to pull down the [meeting] house and burn the first preacher that came. However considering that God was all-sufficient, I told Mrs. Oswald, if she would venture the house, I would venture myself. Notice being given for preaching, the place was soon filled with people, rude enough. Providentially I found in the Newcastle paper, a paragraph, wherein Mr. Wesley disavowed all connection with Mr. Bell, and all credit to his prophecy.<sup>13</sup> This I read to the people, which instantly quieted them, and they attended patiently to the end of the meeting. A poor backslider was that night cut to the heart, and roared out in a tremendous manner. But shortly after he found mercy, and died in peace.

In this circuit I found several societies of sincere people. But many of them were settled upon their lees. Those who had obtained justification were resting in their past experience, and had little expectation of being saved from inward sin till death. I spoke strongly of full salvation, and God gave the word success. Several were stirred up to seek for purity of heart, and others were convinced of sin. Mr. Samuel Meggot, a zealous, pious preacher, was my fellow-labourer, in whom I found the affection of a parent. Meeting me one day in the Dales, he said, 'You must make haste to Barnard Castle. The people are all in confusion. Six or seven of them have found full sanctification, and the rest are tearing one another to pieces about it.' When I got to the town I found many were not a little prejudiced against me, as a setter forth of strange doctrines. I attempted to preach among them, but could find no liberty. I met the society, but it was still the same. I was just going to conclude when, in an instant, the power of God descended in a wonderful manner. The assembly were all in tears, some praising God for pardoning

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<sup>11</sup>George Bell (fl. 1760s) converted in London about 1758. He came to claim the power to heal miraculously, and predicted that the world would end on Feb. 28, 1763. When JW resisted these claims, Bell withdrew from Methodism.

<sup>12</sup>*Works*, 10:293–94

<sup>13</sup>A reprint of JW's letter to the *London Chronicle* (Feb. 8–10, 1763), p. 143, *Works*, 27:320.

mercy, and others for purifying grace. And even those who could not yet understand this new doctrine were constrained to say, 'If we do not believe it, we will never speak against it any more.' The snare of the enemy was effectually broken, and from that time the work spread not only through the town but also into the neighbouring societies. We seldom had any meeting, public or private, but some were either convinced, justified, or saved from all sin.

The society in Weardale consisted of thirty-six members. But one Sunday, at two o'clock, the divine power descended upon the assembly. Six persons, one after another, dropped down, and as soon as they came to themselves, cried out for mercy. The work from that time revived and spread through different parts of the Dale, and the society was soon doubled in its number—many of whom stand to this day.

In other places the people were remarkably lively, and many were added to the societies. I continued in this circuit till July 1764, having the satisfactory evidence that I was acting in a station suitable to the designs of providence. This greatly supported me in the various difficulties that unavoidably occurred. Indeed I exerted myself much above my strength, both in preaching and travelling, often venturing in tempestuous weather over those dreary fells, when even the mountaineers themselves durst not. I was frequently in danger of being swallowed up in the bogs, or carried away by the torrents. Sometimes I have rode over valleys where the snow was eight or ten feet deep, for two or three furlongs together. When the danger was most imminent, I not only found a calm resignation, but a solid rejoicing in the God of my salvation.

*Titled:* 'A short Account of Mr. George Story'.<sup>14</sup>

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 14–20, 70–78, 122–28.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Editor's Note: 'Written by himself'.

<sup>15</sup>This account is reproduced in Jackson, *EMP*, 5:218–41; along with additional information on Story's death.

Baildon Yorkshire Society<sup>16</sup>

Baildon, near Bradford  
July 24, 1781

Having read many of your books, and heard many of your preachers, and being in connexion with you, we have from time to time been advised by them and you constantly to attend the Church [of England]. But we find that neither you nor your preachers have given any countenance to the doctrines of Calvinism. This induces us humbly to ask the following questions.

First, whether you would have us to go to that Church, where the doctrines of Calvinism are continually inculcated? And where the doctrines taught by you, Christian perfection in particular, are continually exploded?

Secondly, whether you think we shall be profited, in any degree, by hearing such preaching?

Thirdly, whether it is not a means of filling our hearts with prejudice either against those preachers or against the truth?

Fourthly, whether hearing them does not expose us to temptation from those who continually ask, How did you like the sermon today? We cannot dissemble; and if we do not, we offend them.

If you please, you may give us your sentiments in the *Arminian Magazine*.

John W—, Francis B—, Nathan. O—, Joseph B—, John R—

*Source:* published excerpt, *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 92–93.

[second setting]

You advise all the members of our societies, constantly to attend the service of the Church [of England]. We have done so for a considerable time. But very frequently Mr. R., our minister, preaches not only what we believe to be false but dangerously false doctrine.<sup>17</sup> He asserts, and endeavours to prove, that we cannot be saved from our sins in this life, and that we must not hope to be perfected in love on this side eternity. Our nature is very willing to receive this, therefore it is very liable to hurt us. Hence we have a doubt whether it is our duty to hear this preaching, which experience shows to weaken our souls.

*Source:* published excerpt; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 152–53.

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<sup>16</sup>JW published two summaries of this letter, which vary a little, so both are given. The summaries are in articles where JW provides his response: 'Some Thoughts Upon an Important Question' and 'On Hearing Ministers Who Oppose the Truth', see *Works*, 9:518–211.

<sup>17</sup>John Richardson (c. 1736–91) had been perpetual curate of Baildon since 1766.

From the Rev. John Fletcher

[Madeley]  
August–September 1781

Reverend and Dear Sir,

The fear of taking up your precious time often hindered me to tell you what was on my mind, both at Cross Hall and at Leeds. I found freedom to unbosom myself to you one morning as we walked from breakfast to the preaching house—but one or two preachers coming up to us as I began to speak made me wait for a better opportunity, which I did not find. And to tell you the truth, sir, I was not sufficiently clear in my own mind about what I had to say. And I sometimes doubted whether it was right to trouble you with my private thoughts concerning a thing which frequently seemed to me nothing but the baseless fabric of a fond conceit. I mean the idea that my connexion with Miss [Mary] Bosanquet might end in settling with her for life.<sup>1</sup> Now there is some probability that such an event might take place, I will write what I designed to say, and will ask your advice about it. The first time I saw Mary Bosanquet I was drawn to her by a sympathy which I resisted from a variety of reasons. However, it left this lasting impression on my mind that if I ever married, she should be the person of my choice. A variety of reasons made me keep these thoughts to myself. And they would probably have been forever buried in my breast, if the Lord had not opened the way, giving me an opportunity of exchanging some letters with her some years ago. This providential correspondence confirmed me in the high opinion I had of her good nature, good sense, and devotedness to God. But my disorder threatening me with dissolution near, I dropped all thoughts of changing my state except by it passing from time into eternity. When I began to recover abroad, and my spitting of blood was stopped, my relations urged me to marry. And having been used myself again to company by conversing with my friends, the idea of living again alone at Madeley, deprived of all the comforts of society, appeared to me unwise and as being quite contrary to my present state of health—which calls for the comforts and helps of Christian society. This strongly brought to my mind my first thoughts with respect to Miss Bosanquet. But I was much discouraged by the consideration of my age, and by the fear of not being a person suited to one who, in my opinion, deserves a partner in every respect far superior to myself. Having nevertheless taken the liberty of intimating my thoughts to her, I find that her entangled affairs call her also to a change by which she may be extricated from some outward difficulties without hindering her present usefulness. Now sir, if we have both peculiar reasons to alter our state, and strong reasons to think providence designs us for each other; and if God smiles upon our intimacy by giving us spiritual blessings together, as he did particularly last Wednesday, when at a meeting in Miss. Bosanquet's house I saw my Christian privileges so clearly and felt so much of the power of faith and love as to be constrained to profess a degree of the glorious liberty of God's children;<sup>2</sup> may we not correspond and converse together as persons who have a particular affection for each other? And do you not give us your fatherly consent so to do?

A word of answer will particularly oblige.

*Source:* Fletcher's manuscript draft; MARC, MAW Fl, 36.4.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Fletcher and Bosanquet would be married Nov. 12, 1781. See JW's letter congratulating them on Nov. 24, 1781.

<sup>2</sup>The material from 'and if God ... God's children' appears at the bottom of the page, but with a mark to insert somewhere above. This is the most likely place.

<sup>3</sup>A close transcription of this draft, showing Fletcher's original spelling, multiple cross-outs, and the like is available in Forsaith, *Labours*, 347–49.

From Robert Wilkinson and George Shadford

September 20, 1781

Before hearing the gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation, I was often terrified in dreams and visions of the night. Sometimes I thought I was falling down steep precipices; at others, that the devil was standing over me to take me away immediately.

At such times I have often waked, shrieking in such a manner as terrified all who heard me. Afterwards I heard the gospel for a season, at Rookhope in the county of Durham—but the people not receiving the joyful sound, the servants of God forsook the place. I was left with much uneasiness on my mind. What I formerly delighted in was now hateful to me. I could play no more on the violin, or at cards, nor sing vain songs. Neither had I a desire to speak any more than I was forced to. The people saw my distress, but not knowing God, could not point out a cure.

In this condition I continued for some weeks. I began to read religious books, and likewise to bow my knees before God in secret. Sometimes I could weep much. But having no one to direct me, after a time I got back into folly, and pursued my evil practices with more eagerness than before. About four years after, I was called to live in Weardale Chapel.<sup>4</sup> I then heard the Methodists very frequently. I was often softened under the word. I never found a desire to mock the people as many do; but rather stood in awe of them. But all this while I continued in my sins. The first Sunday in Lent 1767 I heard, as usual, a Methodist preacher in the afternoon. I did not then find that the word made any impression upon me. But at night, on my bed, the Lord cut me to the heart, and I could not help roaring for the disquietness of my soul. I then felt I must perish eternally, unless some ways to escape were found which I knew not of. Immediately I wished for the Methodists to pray with me; but in particular, for a young man, Stephen Watson, who is now in glory.<sup>5</sup>

One morning I fell down on my knees to ask forgiveness for my many offenses, and continued to cry night and day. My burden increased, and temptations were very strong. I then began to compare myself with the most sinful of my companions, and with other notorious sinners I had heard of; but I could find no equal. I said from the ground of my heart, 'Of all the sinners under heaven I am the chief.' The enemy then suggested that I was guilty of a sin which God never would pardon.

Tongue cannot express the distress I then felt. The heart knoweth its own bitterness. I thought, never man suffered what I did. That saying, 'A dreadful sound in his ears',<sup>6</sup> continually followed me. I found the enemy ready day and night to devour me. When in private prayer, I thought he had hold of my clothes. For many nights he suggested, if I prayed, he would appear and tear me in pieces. Yet I durst not but pray. Though my prayers were mostly made up of sighs and groans. One day, drawing towards evening, the enemy came in as a flood and the temptation was to put an end to a wretched life. I resisted. But it continued to come as quick as lightning, and I was afraid that the tempter would prevail. So that I durst not carry a penknife about me. That was the only time I was banished from private prayer, because I durst not stay alone. That night we met our class. I then cried out to one of my brethren, who was waiting for me to go with him to the meeting. 'O Cuthbert! I am driven to distraction!' He spake to me as comfortably as he could. But as we walked together, I found as if one was hanging on the skirts of my

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<sup>4</sup>Weardale is a valley area in Co. Durham; St. John's Chapel is the largest village in the valley and is likely what Wilkinson is naming.

<sup>5</sup>An insertion appears [in square brackets] in *AM* at this point (apparently by Shadford or JW): 'From the time he knew Jesus, he was a pattern to all the society. And after having walked four years in the light of God's countenance, he departed in the full assurance of faith; having testified, for many months before his death, that the blood of Jesus had cleansed him from all sin. His last words were, "Glory be to God forever and ever! Amen and Amen!"'

<sup>6</sup>Cf. Job 15:21.

clothes. After the first prayer was over, it was with difficulty I rose from my knees. When the leader asked how I found the state of my soul, I answered, 'I am left without one spark of hope that God will ever have mercy on me.' 'No', said he, 'you are not; for if you were, you would not now be using the means of grace.'

He encouraged me to follow on. But I still found no comfort. All the time of my convictions I had but very little ease; and when I had, I had a fear almost equal to my pain, lest I should fall back into sin or speak peace when God did not. O how I longed for deliverance from sin! I often cried, 'Lord, if I am forever banished from thy presence, let me not sin again!'

Not long after, that text in the 51st Psalm followed me, 'Then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee.'<sup>7</sup> I thought, if God did pardon *me*, he could refuse none, but the foulest on this side hell might come and welcome. But this was the sting, I thought he would not. However I kept using the means, and went frequently among the Methodists, to get them to pray with me. And I would have been glad if they had asked me to stay all night, but shame would not let me tell them so. I often thought I never could get over another night. My neighbours said I was besides myself, for I could not rest in my bed. I often rose and wandered in the fields, weeping and bewailing my desperate state. But blessed be God, he that wounds can heal!

In the beginning of July, as Stephen Watson and I were sitting together, he had a volume of the *Christian Library* in his hand, out of which he read one of Mr. Rutherford's letters.<sup>8</sup> When he had done, 'Stephen', said I, I 'find as it were, a melting warmth in my breast.' 'So do I too', said he. He then asked, 'Cannot you believe that God has pardoned your sins?' 'No', said I, 'I dare not.' On which I immediately lost my comfort.

Sunday the 12th of July, Joseph Watson preached in the chapel in Weardale.<sup>9</sup> He gave out that hymn,

All ye that pass by,  
To Jesus draw nigh,  
To you is it nothing that Jesus should die?  
Your ransom and peace,  
Your surety he is,  
Come, see if there ever was sorrow like his.

For you and for me,  
He pray'd on the tree,  
The pray'r is accepted, the sinner is free:—

Then, all within me cried out,

The sinner am I  
Who on Jesus rely,  
And come for the pardon, God cannot deny.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Ps. 51:13.

<sup>8</sup>JW included an abridgement of Samuel Rutherford (1600–61), *Joshua Redivivus; or Mr. Rutherford's Letters* (1664) in *Christian Library*, 28:47–265.

<sup>9</sup>Apparently a local preacher; there was no itinerant by this name at the time.

<sup>10</sup>*Festival Hymns* (1746), 8–10, st. 1, 5.



I then believed that God for Christ's sake had forgiven all my sins, and found that peace which arises from a sense of reconciliation. The people of God who knew my distress perceived by my countenance that the Lord was gracious to me, before I had the opportunity to tell them. I then went rejoicing home, and could not help telling what God had done for my soul.

It was not long before my faith was tried. One of our brethren, a Calvinist, lent me a book. As I read, I thought Mr. Wesley was quite in the wrong, and I found something in me that rose against him. Yet one thing I remember I could not swallow, which was the author asserted that a sense of inbred sin would reconcile us to death. 'No', said Mr. Wesley, 'nothing but perfect love.' Indeed I could not persuade myself that the sting of death could reconcile us to death itself! However I read, and reasoned myself miserable. Yet the Lord gave me grace to wrestle with him in prayer. And every day I found more or less the witness of my sonship. I was then afraid if I sought after holiness I should rob Christ of his glory. Some of our people, hearing that I read that book and conversed with the man who lent it, took it for granted that I was prejudiced against the doctrine of perfection and those that preached it. They told this to my band-leader. I went one Sunday morning as usual, at seven o'clock, to meet my band and found myself in a peaceable frame of mind. No sooner did the leader begin to pray than he cried, 'Lord, never suffer us to be prejudiced against thy servants, seeing that thy will is our sanctification!' I found, as it were, something in me saying, 'He means me.' When he spoke his experience, he expressed the same thing; on which, I said, 'It is me you mean?' He answered, 'What I have said, I have said.' I then found violent prejudice against him. My peace was gone. My soul was torn in pieces within me. I told one of our people as we went home how my leader had behaved towards me. I did not regard breaking the band rules,<sup>11</sup> because I was determined never to meet in a band any more. I had no rest, though I could not give up my confidence in God. Nevertheless my corruptions boiled so within me that I could have fought with a feather.

On Friday night we had preaching. I went to it like one possessed with a legion of devils. Afterwards the bands met, and the preacher earnestly exhorted all present to look for the second blessing, and insisted that it might be received. Now, thought I, if there is such a thing, none can stand in more need of it than I do. But the enemy suggested, 'There are those that have known God several years and have not attained; and shalt thou be delivered who hast been justified only a few months?' Immediately I found power to resist the temptation, and said within myself, 'God is not tied to time.' No sooner did that thought pass through my heart than the power of God seized me. I found I could not resist, and therefore turned myself over upon the seat. I cannot express how I was. I found such a travail in my soul as if it would burst from the body. I continued so till I was motionless and insensible for a season. But as I was coming to myself I found such an emptying, and then such a heaven of love springing up in my soul, as I had never felt before—with an application of these blessed words, 'He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.'<sup>12</sup> If possible, I could have put my band-leader into my heart. The book I mentioned before had pleased me so well that I had given orders to him that lent it me to buy me one of them. But no sooner did God work this change in my soul than I found an utter aversion to it, and told the man, 'You must not buy it, for I shall never read it more.'

In the year 1768, I was sent to call sinners to repentance, in and about the city of Carlisle.<sup>13</sup> Here I was much persecuted; but blessed be God he delivered me out of the hands of all my enemies, and gave me several seals to my ministry.

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<sup>11</sup>Members of Methodist bands were supposed to preserve confidentiality about what was spoken in band meetings.

<sup>12</sup>John 7:38.

<sup>13</sup>Wilkinson would be formally admitted 'on trial' as an itinerant at Conference the following year; see *Works*, 10:366.

[Thus far Mr. Wilkinson lived to write himself. One of his fellow-labourers added what follows.<sup>14</sup>]

My acquaintance with Mr. Wilkinson was very short. The first time I ever saw him was a little above three years ago. The next time was after last Bristol Conference. He was there appointed to labour with me in and about Grimsby.

When we met in the circuit, we were both in health. But the day before our quarterly meeting I was taken very ill of a fever. However the next morning I ventured to set out for the meeting, but having fifteen miles to ride, it was with much difficulty I got safe thither. And then I was unable to attend either the love-feast or the watch-night.

But I shall never forget the prayer Mr. Wilkinson put up for me at the close of the love-feast, that the Lord would spare me a little longer, and raise me up again to labour in his vineyard. His prayer pierced the heavens. The power of God came down upon the people like a torrent of rain. They were so affected that they wept and rejoiced abundantly. Immediately I shared with them, although I was not in the same room, the divine presence broke my heart to pieces. My soul overflowed with love, and my eyes with tears. I know not that I was ever so powerfully and suddenly affected under any person's prayer, except on the day I was converted to God. Immediately I had faith to believe the Lord would raise me up again, and for several minutes it appeared to me as if I was perfectly well. The next day I went along with him to Louth, and in that time we had a good deal of conversation together, which chiefly turned upon these two points—viz., predestination, and Christian perfection.

He told me with sorrow of heart, how often he had been grieved for the immense hurt that he had seen done by the preaching of unconditional predestination: as it blocked up the way of repentance, weakened the foundation of diligence, damped the fervour of believers after holiness, and had a tendency to destroy it root and branch. He likewise very warmly expressed his love for Bible-holiness, saying it was the delight of his soul to press after it himself, and to enforce it upon others; and that while he was doing this, the Lord blessed him most in his labours, and shone clearest upon the work he had wrought in his own soul. He signified to me that the Lord had circumcised his heart to love the Lord his God with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his strength. And I believe at that time he was full of faith and the Holy Ghost.

He was truly meek, and lowly of heart; and little, and mean, and vile in his own eyes. I found my mind amazingly united to him for the time we were together, like the soul of David and his beloved Jonathan. I loved him much for the mind of Christ I saw in him, and for his zeal for the Lord of hosts. We parted at Louth, and I endeavoured, with the fever upon me, to creep along to Tedford to preach. But it was with much trouble I went through my discourse. That night the fever seized upon me more violently, and never left me for near a month. About a week after, Mr. Wilkinson came to Tedford to see me. We spent about three hours together very profitably. We then both of us prayed, and commended each other to God.

A few days after we parted he was taken ill of the fever, and could not rest until he came to his wife at Grimsby, where he lay ill for four or five weeks. He then appeared to be recovering fast, and walked about a little. But he suddenly relapsed, and was carried off in about a week.

He bore all his afflictions with great patience, frequently lifting up his heart to God, and repeating these words: 'But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth, more than my necessary food.' Job 23[10–12]. When he perceived that he should die, he exhorted his wife to cast all her care upon the Lord, and encouraged her to believe that his grace was sufficient for her.

He then prayed for her and his two children, earnestly entreating the Lord to protect them in this troublesome world, and to supply all their wants.

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<sup>14</sup>Editorial insertion by JW. The fellow labourer was George Shadford.

He next prayed fervently for Mr. [John] Wesley, that the presence of the Lord might continue with him all his days, and crown him at last with eternal glory.

He then remembered his three fellow-labourers in the circuit,<sup>15</sup> praying that the Redeemer would assist us in the great work; that he would go forth with, and bless the labours of all the preachers; and that the kingdom of the Redeemer might spread unto the ends of the earth; and preserve them until they join the church triumphant.

In the night season he had a severe conflict with Satan, and his spirit wrestled with God in prayer. Yea, he was in an agony, as he said afterwards. At last the tempter fled, and he seemed as if he was admitted into heaven, to converse with God, with angels, and saints.

He suddenly waked his wife (who was in the same room) and said, 'Thou hast been sleeping, but I have been in heaven. O what has the Lord discovered to me this night! O the glory of God! the glory of God and heaven! The celestial city! the New Jerusalem! O the lovely beauty! the happiness of paradise! God is all love! He is nothing but love! O help me to praise him! O help me to praise him! I shall praise him *forever*! I shall praise him *forever*!' So Robert Wilkinson departed this life in peace, on Friday, December 8th, about eleven o'clock, 1780.

It seemed a great providence that he died on the market day, when a number of friends out of the country were present, who quickly published, in their little villages that a funeral sermon would be preached on Sunday. The house was well filled, and the Lord made it a solemn time. I believe there was scarcely a dry eye in the congregation.

I have often taken notice how the Lord makes the triumphant death of good men a peculiar blessing to his children who are left behind. So it was at this time. The people of God were remarkably blessed in hearing the dying testimony of our dear friend. The worldly people and the backsliders also were cut to the heart.

At the conclusion of the sermon I dropped these words: 'Earth has lost, and heaven has gained a child of God. Let us pray the Lord to add another to the church militant.' We did so; and the Lord answered our prayer, by setting a young man's soul at liberty, so that he went from the solemn place as the shepherds from the heavenly vision, blessing, praising, and glorifying God.

The minister of the parish behaved exceeding kind. He came to the preaching house, stayed awhile, and then walked slowly before the corpse; whilst the people sung a hymn of praise. When we arrived at the church, one of our friends asked him if we might sing a hymn. He answered, 'I have no objection. I am against nothing that is good.' So we sung those awful words,

Thee we adore, eternal name,  
And humbly own to thee;  
How feeble is our mortal frame,  
What dying worms we be!<sup>16</sup>

The people sang lustily and with a solemn spirit; for the divine presence was with us all the way through, and in such a manner as I never knew before at any funeral.

When the minister read these words, 'Not to be sorry as men without hope',<sup>17</sup> Mrs. Wilkinson (who hung upon my arm with her two little babes) was so overwhelmed with the presence of God that she could not refrain from crying out, 'Sorry? No! Glory be to God! Glory be to God! Glory, and praise, and blessing, be ascribed unto God, *forever*, and *ever*!' Her spirit seemed as if it was ready to launch into the eternal world, to be with Jesus and her happy husband. A remarkable power fell on all that could hear her. So that the people were melted into tears; some of sorrow, others of joy.

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<sup>15</sup>In addition to George Shadford, as Assistant, Robert Howard and William Warrener were assigned to the Grimsby circuit alongside Wilkinson (see *Works*, 10:498).

<sup>16</sup>Isaac Watts, 'Life and Eternity', st. 1; in JW, *CPH* (1738), 53.

<sup>17</sup>BCP, Collect for Burial of the Dead.

From this time the work of God began to revive at Grimsby, and the country people caught the fire, and carried it along with them into their little societies.

Robert Wilkinson was, as you have described him, 'An Israelite indeed. A man of faith and prayer. Who having been a pattern of all good works, died in the full triumph of faith.'<sup>18</sup> O what a blessing to live, and die a Christian! May I also be a follower of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises! In my life, and at my death, may I be like him!

G. S.

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 179–83, 236–42.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>1781 *Minutes*, Q. 5, *Works*, 10:507.

<sup>19</sup>These accounts are reproduced in Jackson, *EMP*, 6:211–22.

From [Thomas Vasey?]<sup>1</sup>

[Bedford]  
c. Oct. 1781

Mrs. D[orothea] B[arham] was descended of a family very respectable in Wales, and religiously disposed.<sup>2</sup>

As she grew up, she was regular in her attendance on the worship of God, as professed in the established Church. But it does not appear that she was ever awakened till she was about thirty years old. Soon after this she sought the Lord in earnest, but at first secretly.

In 1753, on account of a consumptive disorder, she went from Wales to Bath and Bristol. Here it was that she heard the 'gospel preached to the poor',<sup>3</sup> and as such received it. She found great assistance in her acquaintance with Mr. C.<sup>4</sup> and many of God's dear people, who spoke to the state of her soul, with demonstration of the Spirit, by whose testimony she was led to seek and find Jesus.

As to the last stage of her life, little more need be related than some of those frequent testimonies which dropped from her lips at various times during a painful illness of more than four months confinement—an illness which she had foreseen should terminate in her dissolution. These testimonies I shall endeavour to give faithfully, and as near as may be in her own words.

On her entrance into this confinement in June last, her observation was:

In my last dangerous sickness (in 1777) I found at times so much sweetness, as if I had been laid on the bosom of Jesus, and was afraid of nothing so much as a recovery. But my poverty was not then made known to me as it is now. In this, though he is no less near to me, yet I find myself so poor and worthless, so perfectly cast on him, and so without any strength or support but by naked faith, that no mortal can tell my poverty. Those who are newly awakened cannot even guess how it is with me. Nor can anyone from former experience tell how it will be with him when he comes into my situation. All my desire and prayer is that I may only sink down into his sufferings and death. I know he has many things yet to show me which I have not yet learned. O when his candle shines into the recesses of the heart, how many things do then appear in their true light, which before we never could have suspected! My dear Lord, do thou come and

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas Vasey (c. 1746–1826) had apparently been admitted previously into the itinerant ministry, but this first time his name appears in the *Minutes* is for his appointment in 1775 to the southern Wiltshire circuit (see *Works*, 10:441). He became trusted enough by JW to be among the Legal Hundred named at the 1784 Conference. And in Sept. 1784 he was one of the first two lay preachers that JW ordained, to send to North America. Two years later Vasey received Episcopal ordination from Bishop White of Philadelphia. Vasey returned to England in 1788 and continued to serve Methodist circuits, spending his last 14 years as a reader at City Road Chapel. See *DEB*, 1135. Vasey was the Assistant for the Bedford circuit, 1780–82.

<sup>2</sup>This is an account of the death of Dorothea (Vaughan) Barham (1721–81). Originally of Trecwn, Pembrokeshire, Dorothea was the sister of Ann Vaughan (1707–77) and John Vaughn (c. 1713–89). Both sisters ended up in Bristol and became close friends of CW's family. Dorothea married Joseph Foster Barham (1729–89), a prominent Moravian from Bedford in 1754. Joseph Barham was apparently baptized into the Church of England in May 1772 (becoming "dually aligned" for political or personal reasons). Their first son, Joseph Foster Barham (1759–1832), was educated in Moravian schools in England and Germany; their youngest son, Thomas Foster Barham (1766–1844) attended Cambridge instead, and married a daughter of a priest in the Church of England.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Matt. 11:5; Luke 7:22.

<sup>4</sup>Possibly used in sense of 'Mr. Charles' [Wesley].

prove me; try me, and seek out the ground of my heart. Look well if there be any way of wickedness or deceit in it, which stands in the way and would hinder me from being prepared for thy coming to fetch me home to thyself! I want only to be fully resigned to thy will.

As her longing to go to her Lord was very ardent, so her frequent disappointments in not being taken at such times when appearances tempted her to believe her hour was come caused such pitiful and tender expostulations with him as very deeply affected those who were present.

After pausing a little, she said, 'The world and everything in it, is now passed away from me. I cleave to nothing in it. No, not even to my dear children. I only pray for them, for I am dispensed as to any further concern about them as to this world, and find all my comfort in resigning them to the Lord.'

During her sickness, she frequently dwelt much on the subject of love, earnestly pressing it on those about her, and was herself humbled and affectionate in her own spirit. But if perchance, through pain and restlessness, a cross or impatient word escaped her, she hastened to entreat the Lord, and those whom she thought she had grieved, to pardon her.

And here it must be owned, to our Lord's praise, that he had brought under sweet subjection to his own meek and suffering mind, a temper naturally disposed to be hasty.

At such times, when she would pitifully moan with pain, weariness, and extreme weakness, her soul would seek and find its repose in resignation to his will, saying, 'O my God, my Saviour, my blessed Jesus! Thou dost all things well! Only be very near to help and support me. Finish thine own work soon and take me. Ah! how is it I must yet be continued here so long? I fear thou hast something against me which retards the accomplishment of thy will and work, and detains me here. O show to me what it is! Humble me, and take away my reproach whatever it may be which stands in my way!'

'I feel myself', said she at another time, 'so entirely unworthy in every respect, that I have no words to describe it by. I can go to him in no triumphant way but as a pardoned criminal. If I may but be found washed clean in his most holy blood, and clothed in his white robe of righteousness, this is all I want. I live only by his mere patience.' Then looking on her domestics, and those about her, said, 'May God reward you all a thousandfold for your patience and love towards me; and especially you my dear husband and children, for all your love and goodness, of which I am quite unworthy!'

Here she named each of her children with particular emotion, begging all of them to forgive her whereinsoever she had grieved or offended them. To one of them she added, 'Believe me that true religion does not consist in anything *outward*, but it is a hidden work of God in the heart.'

But that which most of all occupied her soul was the love of that God who, (as she expressed it) to redeem her and a lost world, had so devoted himself to suffering.

'All the blessings', said she, 'which I now enjoy, and shall to all eternity, flow to me as the purchase of his blood.' And then broke out, 'My all, my all is purchased by thine agonizing love!'

Here it was observed, if such sensations as these can be excited in the heart of a sinner, walking *here* by faith only, what must be those of a departed spirit in the immediate vision of him, who has thus loved and given himself for us? 'O', replied she, 'it will be an ocean of love and gratitude, without a bottom or a shore! Were we to be under such sensations here, it would be impossible for the body to survive them.'

Speaking at another time about the state of her soul, and her expected dissolution, she said, 'Though at present I know nothing in particular by myself, which should hinder me to rejoice if Christ should call me home this night; yet I am sure his faithfulness will not suffer me to be taken till he has shown me wherein there is any obstruction in my way, and removed it from me. As to everything else, his only will be done.'

And here it may be observed, that though it appears from hence that at this time she knew nothing why our Lord should delay his coming, yet by the sequel, it seems owing to that faithfulness and tender jealousy of God over his own house, that she was not to be taken till he had thoroughly purged the chaff from his own floor, to gather his pure wheat into his garner; and to render the soul of this his chosen one,

able 'to abide the day of his coming'.<sup>5</sup> And she herself, notwithstanding she had no doubt of her acceptance, yet would often lament that all was not yet right.

'What', said she, 'is this unregenerated stuff that is in my way? To be clay resigned indeed in the potter's hands, this, believe me, is sooner said than felt. This I now know, so as I never did before. O that patience may have its perfect work!'

Incessant longings to be delivered from this tabernacle, and to see him whom unseen she loved, kept her in a habitual state of prayer and praise. When thinking on the moment when she should be fetched home to behold his face, her loving impatience thus broke out, 'When, O when wilt thou, my dear, my blessed Jesus come and fetch me to thyself? Ah! what a thought is that? But I will wait thy will, and thy time, when the days of my mourning shall be ended, and I shall be with thee forever. Meantime I will trust thee that thou wilt not forsake me. Only I pray thee, sink me still deeper in thy wounds, and let thy agonies be my support.'

At another time, she said: 'O my precious Saviour, how thankful should I be that thou hast given me to believe, that all these things are working together for thy glory and my good! Thanks be to thee that I believe all that happens to me, is perfectly good and right, and all is just as it should be! For it all comes from thy hand. "These light afflictions will only work out for me, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."<sup>6</sup> But all my prayer is, that thy dear will may have its perfect work in me, and I be fully resigned to it.' Then turning to one present, she said, 'O how am I kept from looking beyond the present hour of distress! My thoughts are all confined, and as it were locked up, not being suffered to look any further. What a mercy is this! I receive it as a great comfort bestowed on me.'

I cannot pass over some other of those effusions she breathed out, at various times, in tender prayer and broken language to her Lord. These were for the most part uttered when she was most tried by pains and extreme weakness.

Why, O my Jesus (said she) art thou so long in coming to fetch me! Surely thou seest me not ready. I know there must be something in my heart which is not yet in that order which thou wouldest have it; some temper or other unsubdued, some impatience, something best known to thee. O my dear Saviour, come! Come soon and take it from me! Let me part with everything displeasing in thy sight! O for thy tender love and mercies sake, show it me! Purge it away, and renew me after thy blessed image! I am all weakness and unworthiness, but thou art both able and willing to hasten and fulfil thine own work! Thy precious and powerful blood can subdue all things unto itself. I want nothing but to be made ready for thee; and then, O how gladly would I go to thee this night! How very poor I am thou knowest! But I want to praise thee, to do nothing but praise thee. For thou hast been all mercy and goodness to me! O help me, you who are about me to praise him! To praise him with my latest breath! O that everything that hath breath might praise thee my Lord!

Then pausing awhile, she called to one standing by, and said,

O let your every thought and aim be directed to praise him, and be devoted to him. Life is otherwise misery itself. Were I to live my days over again, how would I redeem the time I have alas too much spent without living to his praise! I beg you to be very careful to pass by no conviction or light he gives you, but to follow it with your whole heart. It may cost something to flesh and blood to do so, but what of that? You will never repent it. To live to him is the only life worth living.

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<sup>5</sup>Cf. Mal. 3:2.

<sup>6</sup>Cf. 2 Cor. 4:17.

In speaking to her husband [Joseph] of the Lord's dealings with them during twenty-seven years, she said, 'Surely nothing but mercy and goodness has followed us! He has blessed us in ourselves, he has blessed us in our children, and we and they are become his property! Affliction can scarcely be said to be known by us. Our crosses have been chiefly of our own making; one trial excepted, and that is a trial indeed! Alas!'

At another time when under great bodily distress, lifting up her eyes to heaven, she cried out, 'Come, Lord Jesus come! O come soon and be revealed!' Then speaking to me she said, 'Let there be no sorrow when I am taken away, but rejoicing only, and giving of thanks. He has heard my prayer. O how I long to be with him! There is nothing but thankfulness I owe to him from first to last; and also for this, that he has heard my cry, and saved me from excruciating pain and preserved my senses!'

And here it may not be amiss to remark that though her pains were sometimes very great, and herself weakened to an extreme, through want of rest, yet she never desired to obtain any relief by opiates, lest by the stupefaction of her senses she might be rendered unfit for the conscious operations of his Spirit.

Having had some sleep, she said in the morning, 'Last night on waking, methought a bright crown of glory was presented to me visibly, brilliant and beautiful beyond imagination.' Adding that 'It seemed to me as if my Saviour himself had been before me, in that part of his sufferings where he was sinking under the weight of the cross he bore.'

So quick a perception had she of the least thing that she thought could grieve either those about her or that Spirit by which she was sealed unto the day of redemption that, if but a hasty word or a momentary impatience under suffering showed itself, she would moan pitifully and say:

O my ingratitude to my God and Saviour! O that I should have a hard or repining thought of thee! Surely there is no heart so ungrateful as mine! Thou dost all things well. What are my pains compared even with those of many of thy dear children, and of so many thousands of the poor who are in want of friends, destitute and afflicted; while I abound with mercies on all sides, having all I can want, and so many dear friends waiting on me the unworthiest worm of all. But O what are my sufferings compared with what have been thine, O my Jesus, to redeem me to thyself! O I am not thankful as I ought to be.

As her disorder increased, her nights grew worse. After having had a very distressing one from pain and bodily contraction, 'O', said she, 'my Physician is very good! No creature can help me in these moments! But he can. I am in his hands and he will help me, and take me to himself. I can—I do—and I will trust him.' At another time she asked, 'Do you think I am preparing for the nuptial crown?' Upon one saying, 'O yes, I believe so with all my heart', she answered, 'O it is a great thing to believe this possible. I am indeed the poorest and the worst. But all things are possible to the power of his blood. I shall never think of going to him as a great Christian. If I can but *creep* through and be saved at any rate, this will be the greatest mercy to me, and is all I can expect.' Then pausing a little, she added, 'It is to me as if Christ was undressing me, that he may dress me with himself. My pains are now coming on again, but I shall soon be in my casket. I know he will keep me, even until I see his face in glory!'

When it was observed that the hour was coming when she should no more remember her present anguish, for the joy in the sight of him her Beloved, 'O yes', said she, 'when I shall see what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor heart can conceive!'<sup>7</sup>

Being seized at another time with violent contractions, she cried out, 'My sufferings, dear Saviour, are thine; and thine are mine! O how does he comfort me in a sense of this! Ah hide me in thy bosom! A blessed time is coming. Every pain I suffer is from him, and all is right. I believe I shall not be long before I go to him.'

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<sup>7</sup>Cf. 1 Cor. 2:9.



Pleased with the certain expectation of a speedy dismissal, it became no small part of her sufferings that she found she was yet to be tried by frequent disappointments. By these gracious means she was for about a fortnight so worked down into such a state of entire *passivity* as to form no wish but that of giving herself up unto suffering. Of this she bore testimony as follows: 'I have sent for you', said she to me 'earlier than usual this morning, to tell you I am still here for my humiliation. I thought I should have gone last night, for which my longing was so great, and my prayer so ardent; but he has thought otherwise.' 'You ask, and receive not; because you ask amiss.'<sup>8</sup> 'O my God, forgive my folly if what I have asked has not been pleasing to thee! Thou knowest thy poor unworthy worm would not offend thee, but would wait thy leisure. Yet forgive my importunity! I want—I long to be gone!' Then looking on us, she said, 'Tell me, do I utter anything wrong or displeasing to God? This I would not do, if I knew it. Lord thou knowest that I would not!' This was on the 13th of September.

On the 16th, in the morning she said to me, 'I have sent for you to let you know that our Lord's process with me is going forward. I have had such a night of distress that I thought I must have been suffocated by this phlegm. And O how I felt an unwillingness to suffer what I did! Our Lord has shown me by this that I must be brought into perfect obedience to his will in all things. O I want to be made willing to suffer all his dear and blessed will. I must be nothing, and he all—pray for me.'

On the 18th she dwelt much on the subject of love. 'Love, only love', said she, 'is the fulfilling of the law.'....

In this state of resignation to our Lord's will, and in a growing sensibility of her own absolute unworthiness, she waited out the expected moment of her departure; which happened on the 26th of September in the afternoon, after about four months confinement, chiefly to her bed, without any power to help herself. She fell asleep in the Lord in the 60th year of her life.

The following are a few memorandums concerning herself, found after her death in her own handwriting.

On June 19, 1754, I received a particular blessing in hearing a sermon preached by Mr. O—, went home, and prostrate on my face, entered into a covenant with the Lord, of which I have never repented.

In November 1757, I was in deep perplexity about myself, on reflecting how slow a progress I made. But my Lord manifesting his love to me, how amazed did I then feel! My perplexity and grief were instantly removed far away, and all was peace within.

In April 1758, hearing a sermon preached on the ten virgins,<sup>9</sup> I was so convinced by it that I did not possess the state of the five who were wise that I was brought into great perplexity. In this state I had such a sight of the hardness of my heart, that I lost all confidence in God. I was then indeed so truly miserable that no hell could seem worse. But my gracious Redeemer, out of tender compassion drew near to me; when I felt his blood melting my hard heart. In the morning I found myself as one who had been sorely bruised. I was as a child before him, saw myself as all unworthiness, and from that time I have believed from the bottom of my heart that none are more unworthy than myself. So that when I hear ill of anyone, I feel pity for them, knowing that it is unmerited grace which keeps me.

In May 26, 1774, for some days past my desire has been to have a clearer light how I might be to my Lord's joy. On this morning, with full conviction of spirit, I was made sensible that the entire surrender of my will to his was absolutely needful; also an attentive ear to his teaching in all things—to follow him in the utmost simplicity in all things.

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<sup>8</sup>Cf. James 4:3.

<sup>9</sup>See Matt. 25.

I cannot express the thankfulness of my heart in knowing experimentally the great value of a dying Saviour, who has done all for me and is only waiting to apply his precious merits to purge me; and which he has promised he will do. O my Jesus, give me but a hungry heart each day to have thy blessed work accomplished in me, that I stop not short but may be made quite ready whenever thou shalt be pleased to call me to thyself.

The following is a prayer she wrote down about the beginning of her late sickness, when she expected her dissolution was swiftly approaching.

My Lord and Saviour, it often seems to me as if my end was near. O praised be thy name for all thy patience and tender love to me, a poor unworthy creature! It is my earnest desire to devote every future day and hour to thee in thought, word, and deed; so that my will may be entirely given up unto thine, and my abiding happiness be to lie at thy feet and to suffer thee to take away from me everything which might in the least hinder the completion of thy work in me. May I be humbled in the dust, that as the poorest beggar, I may feed continually on thee and derive virtue out of thee! Only unite my heart to thee, and let me have no desire after anything but thyself. I pray thee dear Lord, that if thou seest fit to send me bodily pain and sickness, I may then find thee particularly near to me, and may be enabled to thank and praise thee in whatever trial thou seest it best to visit me! Let everything be truly sanctified to me. Thou knowest, Lord, that I am very weak, and could pray thee to spare me from great pain and long illness. Yet I trust it is my desire to be quite resigned to thy blessed will, believing that if it is to be so, it will be for my good, as I know thy heart is all love.

I pray thee to forgive me in everything and to wash me clean in thy most holy blood! O forgive me whereinsoever I have been to blame in regard to my dear husband, and reward him for all his care towards me. Forgive me, wherein I have been to blame also in respect to my children, and take them into thy peculiar care. I pray thee also, whereinsoever I have been to blame as to my relations, brethren, friends, and servants, in all things forgive me. For I am a poor, weak sinner, and have been to blame in every respect. I pray thee not only for thy forgiveness, but that they may also forgive me. I now lay me at thy feet. O in mercy keep me near to thy side, and in thy own good time, receive me to thyself!

*Titled:* 'An Account of Mrs. D. B. who departed this life, on the 26th of September, 1781'.<sup>10</sup>  
*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 12 (1789): 350–55, 408–14.

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<sup>10</sup>JW imbibed from the 'holy living and holy dying' tradition of Jeremy Taylor and others a model of the 'good death' as one who dies peacefully (with no fear of judgment), welcoming death as entry into a more blessed existence. He encouraged his preachers and followers to send accounts of such deaths, and started include these accounts in *AM* 3 (1780) — see the letters to JW of Oct. 15, 1759 and Dec. 27, 1760. These initial accounts spurred a growing number that were sent in for publication over the last decade of JW's life. We have highlighted this by adding the notation (good death account) to relevant letters in the table of contents for each five-year folder of in-letters.

From John Hoskins (autobiography)<sup>1</sup>

Old Perlican, Newfoundland  
October 15, 1781

Reverend Sir,

I take this opportunity of giving you a short account of the dealings of God with my soul for a few years last past: together with some account of his work in Newfoundland.

In March 1774, I left London, went down to Poole in Dorsetshire, and embarked for Newfoundland. My design was to work there, till I got money enough to pay my passage to New England; where I intended to keep a school for my living; to work out my salvation, and to spend my little remains of life (being in my fifty-sixth year) with the people of God; and, as far as I was able, to help forward the salvation of others.

When I was about fourteen years of age, I tasted of the love of God, and felt the powers of the world to come. From that time I had frequently strong desires to live to God; to give myself wholly unto him.

In 1746, I first heard the Methodists at Bristol. The word fell on my soul as dew on the tender herb. I received it with joy, and soon joined the society. In about three weeks I received a clear sense of forgiveness; but soon fell into reasoning and doubting. Sometimes I was in heaviness through manifold temptations; and it was near ten years before I had the abiding witness. Oh, how slow of heart to believe! and how unwilling to give up all to God!

After a passage of five weeks I arrived at Trinity, in Newfoundland. I saw myself indeed a poor pilgrim on the earth, having no money; nor did I know one person in the place. As I was walking about on the shore, seeing a few low, mean houses, or rather huts, built with wood; and a rocky, desolate country: and meditating on the destruction which sin hath made in the world, I rejoiced exceedingly, that I was under the care and protection of an almighty and all-gracious God. Going by one of these houses, I heard a child cry; and thought, as there was a family, there might be some person with whom I might advise how to get into business: yet I was afraid, as I had been on board a ship with a crew of English, cursing, swearing, savages, lest I should meet with the like people in this barren and uncultivated country. However I knocked at the door; when a woman, the mother of the family came out, and asked me and my son (a lad about sixteen who was with me) to come in. She gave us some seal and bread to eat, and some coffee to drink, the best the house afforded. She then directed me to several places, where she thought I might get business. The minister of the place advised me to keep a school at Old Perlican, a place seven leagues from thence, across the bay. Accordingly I went in a boat to Old Perlican. The people received me, and were glad of one to teach their children; there being about fifty families in the place. They likewise desired I would read prayers, and a sermon to them on Sundays: there being no manner of public worship before; neither Sundays nor weekdays.

I accepted the call, as from God, knowing it was my duty to do all the good I could, to the souls as well as bodies of my fellow creatures. Accordingly I read the Church [of England] prayers, and some of your sermons, and sung your hymns, by myself alone, for many weeks. For my congregation did not know how to behave in divine service; no not even to kneel in prayer, or to sing at all: but would stand at a distance and look at me, as if I had been a monster: and yet they called themselves members of the

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<sup>1</sup>John Hoskins (1718–90) was a British Methodist who left England for Newfoundland in the spring of 1774. While he intended on going on to New England, he ended up settling in Old Perlican and setting up a school. Since there was no religious worship in the town, Hoskins began to hold a service where he read prayers from the BCP, then one of JW's sermons, and sang some Methodist hymns. Over time this service came to include him 'explaining' the materials and exhorting his hearers. By 1778 the society had grown to about 50 members. In the winter of 1779 Hoskins made a trip back to London, where JW suggested he be ordained for the work, so that his community could have sacraments. Hoskins returned to Newfoundland for a time, until declining health brought him back to England.

Church of England.

I then, according to my poor ability, began to explain to them, some parts of the Common Prayer, the Articles of the Church, and the most essential parts of the religion of the heart: such as repentance, remission of sins, and holiness. I insisted on the necessity of conversion. I told them, ye must be born again;<sup>2</sup> you must know your sins forgiven, or you cannot be saved; you must have the witness in yourselves: God's Spirit to witness with your spirit that ye are the children of God.<sup>3</sup> From that spirit of faith and love, dwelling within you, will spring forth the fruits of good living, in all holiness of life and conversation; and you are to grow in grace daily, till you are finally renewed, and all that is within you is holiness unto the Lord.

Sometimes in reading the sermons, I spoke a few words extempore, to make them (if possible) understand the meaning of what was read.

A few now began to be more serious, and would kneel in prayer, and help me to sing. Soon after, I perceived six or seven were awakened, and had a real desire to flee from the wrath to come. I advised them to meet together once a week, to help each other in working out their salvation, and told them I would meet with them. Accordingly we met on Sunday evenings. Our number soon increased to sixteen. And two or three in a little while testified that they knew their sins were forgiven.

About this time, Mr. Arthur Thomey (an Irish merchant) came here on business.<sup>4</sup> He advised me to preach extempore; which from that time I did, after my poor, broken manner.

About a year after, Mr. Thomey came and preached two or three times, and confirmed what had been spoken before.

Our society is now increased to forty. Eight are believers, the rest are earnestly groaning for redemption.

A few days before Easter, in the year 1778, an uncommon circumstance occurred. A woman named Honour Read saw herself on the brink of hell. Suddenly a light darted down the chimney into the house where she was. Though it was in the night, the house, she said, was as light as in the middle of the day. Her husband David Read was a few nights after visited in the same manner. They spent several whole nights in wrestling with God, for a blessing. On Easter Sunday, after I had done preaching in the morning, a few of us stayed in the house. Honour Read began to speak of what God had done for her soul. Six or seven cried out aloud, 'What shall we do to be saved?'<sup>5</sup> They then kneeled down, praying and crying so loud that it alarmed the neighbourhood. Several came to know what the matter was? They stood amazed, and could say nothing. I kneeled down and endeavoured to pray with them. And then I stood up to sing a verse or two of a hymn. But their cries drowned my voice, so that I could not be heard for near half an hour. The person who first spoke found a clear manifestation of God's love to her soul. So did several others also. And most of them hold their confidence still, and evidence the truth of it in their life and conversation.

The winter before last, while I was in England, the Spirit of the Lord was among them in an uncommon manner.<sup>6</sup> They met together, as usual, twice a week (besides Sundays) to strengthen each others hands in God. About the middle of January, there was a very extraordinary outpouring of the Spirit upon them, and it spread throughout the whole harbour. The great point they sought to know, was the forgiveness of their sin. And those who expected it, cried to God and received it in a very short time. In about a month thirty believers were added to the little number we had before, and twenty to the society.

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<sup>2</sup>John 3:7.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Rom. 8:16.

<sup>4</sup>Arthur Thomey (d. 1784), an Irish trader who emigrated to Newfoundland in 1771, was converted by Laurence Coughlan and became a local preacher.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. Acts 16:30.

<sup>6</sup>This was when JW encouraged Robert Lowth, Bishop of London, to ordain Hoskins, so that he could provide sacraments of his little community; see JW to Lowth, Aug. 10, 1780.

When they were met together for prayer, which they did then almost every evening, there was such a crying out for mercy as astonished all who heard, or saw them. So long and earnest were they in prayer, sometimes four or five hours together. And they could not rest till they clearly knew that their sins were all washed away.

Upon one person (a young man, an under-agent to a merchant, Mr. Lester, of Poole) convictions wrought so strong, and afterwards the love of God was poured into his soul in so full a manner, that some thought him almost delirious; on which his deputy master took him away by force, and has since sent him to England.

Several children and young persons were greatly affected,; and came soon to know the love of God. My son also at that time received remission of sin. A lad about fifteen, when his father wanted to send him in a boat to work on a Sunday, wept and fell into fits. His father is since convinced and converted, and is become a new man. His mother also and two of his brothers are earnestly seeking salvation.

A woman, sixty-seven years of age (midwife to the parish), who could not read a letter in a book, was convinced, and found redemption in a wonderful manner. She said she saw as it were her sins all laid before her where she was kneeling down, and then that they were all taken away in a moment. She continued praying and praising God from that time, till the last moment of her life. Yea so earnest and fervent were her prayers and praises that, not content to pray in the house, she would frequently in the night go out and kneel down in the snow, and pray to and praise God.

I visited her in her last sickness, when she was strong in faith, giving glory to God. She said she saw angels about her, ready to carry her to her Saviour, whom she saw waiting to receive her. I asked her which she would choose, to die now or to recover and live longer with us? She said, if it was her Saviour's will she should live longer, she would submit—but would rather die and go to him. She often said in her sickness, the stronger her pain was, the greater was her joy.

She lay ill about a fortnight, and then sweetly fell asleep in Jesus, without a groan or a sigh. From the time of her conversion to her death, was about six months.

August 10, 1780. Three weeks after, another sister died happy in God. In her last sickness some of her neighbours, who were self-righteous, came to see her. She exhorted them with great earnestness to repent, and told them if they did not they would go to hell. Though she had some conflicts with the enemy, she had not a doubt of the love of God in all her illness, which was about three weeks.

Hearing of the work of God in this place, people from several harbours (or parishes) many miles distance came on purpose to inquire, and to see into the truth of it. Five or six from a village eight miles off (called Island Cove) have been here, and heard and felt for themselves the truth as it is in Jesus. They have now built a house for divine service in their own place, where they meet together to worship God in spirit and in truth. There are thirty of them joined in society; twenty are believers, the rest (almost the whole place) are seeking the Lord.

Blessed be the Lord, his work goes on swiftly here, and in several parts of this island. But in Harbour Grace and Carbonear, where Mr. [Lawrence] Coughlan laboured, it is dwindled almost to nothing, chiefly by means of Calvinism and antinomianism. I must beg your prayers for me, that I may not hinder his work. For I am a poor, weak, and helpless creature—slow of heart to believe, unable to do anything for God as I ought or would. But there is one circumstance that gives me encouragement: we are despised and persecuted for Christ's sake. Our enemies have threatened to pull our church down, and the merchants have given out that they will send me out of the country.

At the time God wrought powerfully on the souls of the people, they sent for Mr. Thomey. He came near fifty miles, and preached to and exhorted them to continue in the faith, when God blessed the word to many souls. But the enemy stirred up some of the Irish to persecute him. Accordingly several of them came one evening, armed with clubs, and swore they would kill him. While he was preaching they came into the church, and one, with his club, struck at him in order to cleave his skull; but missed him and struck the candlestick. The people then got between, and pushed them off. As he was going to his lodgings, several more with clubs came in a fury, like men athirst for blood, and swore they would kill him. They foamed at the mouth, and came towards him, crying, Where is he! Where is he! But though he

passed by very near to them, they could not see him. So he got away from them unhurt.

About the middle of August 1780 I went over to Trinity, with an intent to preach there. And though many were willing to hear, they were afraid to let me have a house to preach in. However I went to several of their houses, and conversed about the ways of God and gave them some books. After staying three or four days, I went to one of the merchants, to ask him to let me go in one of his boats that was going to Perlican. I was informed by his clerk that he was on board one of his ships in the harbour. I went on board in order to speak to him. Presently one of the sailors came to me and said, Will you preach us a sermon? The next salutation was, a dab in my face with the tar-brush, full of tar. Then one or two of them held me behind, while two or three more daubed me, almost all over with tar: the rest looking on. The merchant and captain were below in the cabin at the same time. I heard afterwards that the merchant said, if they had asked him, he would have given them feathers to have feathered me all over.

When they loosed me, I got into the boat that carried me on board, in order to go on shore, when they threw a piece of wood after me. But it did me no hurt, being guided by an unseen hand. They then cursed me, and said, You will preach that people will be damned, will you? When we see you on shore we will make an end of you. All that I said to them, from first to last, was, What harm have I done to anyone of you? To which they made me no answer. The merchant and captain being asked about it, were ashamed; and said if they had known, I should not have been used so.

The next day some of the sailors went about looking for me. One of them went with a knotted rope in his hand, to beat me or any of the converts (as they call the people) that he could find. As I was walking about, looking for a boat, not knowing their design, I went by him with the knotted rope; but he was asleep on the ground. When he awoke, he went in quest of some of the converts; and coming where some men were standing, one pointed to a poor man, signifying he was one of them. On this the sailor took hold of him, and beat him in a terrible manner. The poor man prayed him not to beat him so: assuring him he was *no convert*, neither came from Perlican but from English Harbour (a fishery about three leagues from Trinity). As for me, all the boats in the harbour were forbid to take me in. However one from Perlican came by stealth, and took me away.

I am now old and grey headed. And it is time to make the most of the few days I may have left, to the glory of God and the benefit of my own soul.

As to the necessities of life, I am in some measure provided for at present by the poor people here. Many who have but little food and raiment for themselves gladly give me a part of that little, out of love to God and their own souls. But more they cannot give. As to anything farther I leave it with you, sir, to do as you think best. But if you can do no more, you will please to write me a few lines of instruction and advice, which I want very much.

I cannot conclude without informing you that this summer I went over to Trinity, where I was so used last year, and made a second attempt to preach there. The day after I arrived, which was Sunday, I gave away at the church door about twenty little books. The people received them very thankfully. Every day the week after I visited from house to house, when many were inquisitive to know what this new religion (as they called it) was? The next Saturday in the afternoon I put up a paper on the church door, to give notice that if there was no preaching in the church I would preach in the churchyard at eleven o'clock in the forenoon on Sunday. Accordingly I went at the time appointed. But the flag was hoisted, and the church doors were opened for service, though there had been no service in the forenoon all the summer before. I went into the church, and about six persons with me. We sat some time, but no preacher nor people came. (The man that reads there is a fisherman, who does it for part of his livelihood.) I therefore sang some verses of a hymn, and kneeled down to pray. While I was at prayer, a person who calls himself the constable came and laid hold on me, and said I must go with him before the justice. He pulled out a paper and read it to me, wherein was an order that no person should preach in the churchyard, which was the property of the people of the harbour. When I came before the justice, he said he sent for me, to warn me not to preach in the churchyard. I told him if anyone would let me have a house to preach in, I would not. He asked me by what authority I went about preaching? I took out my Bible and told him my commission was in that book. He did not insist upon seeing it, but told me he could not hinder me from preaching in any house, or out of doors on Rider's Hill, or anywhere else about

the harbour, so I did not cause any riots. I said I did not cause any riots, but endeavoured to promote peace and goodwill amongst men. He said he advised me for my own safety to keep myself out of danger; for there were some sailors, and other rude fellows, who purposed to abuse me; and as he was a justice of the peace, he must endeavour to prevent riots, or any disorder in the harbour. He also said he would have punished the men that abused me so on board the ship last year, if I had complained to him. The constable and he then went out of doors, and I followed them, and came away without any hurt.

In the afternoon a man came to me and asked me to go home with him, and told me I should be welcome to preach in his house. Accordingly I preached that evening to a small congregation, who behaved very devout and attentive all the time, and expressed a desire to hear again. I therefore preached on Monday evening, when they came again, and several of their neighbours with them. We had a comfortable meeting, and the power of God was present. I believe the word sunk into many hearts. The next evening I preached again, and (as I understood afterwards) soon after I began the house was beset with sailors and others. But I continued speaking, and finished in great peace.

I now beg to hear of the progress of the gospel in London, and how the work in general goes on; which will be an encouragement to the little flock here, and, reverend and dear sir, to

Your unworthy son in the gospel,

John Hoskins

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 8 (1785): 24–27, 85–88, 143–44, 194–96.

From Rev. Dr. Thomas Coke

Newport [Isle of Wight]  
October 23, 1781

Honoured and Dear Sir,

Last Wednesday, at 1:00 in the afternoon, I preached out of doors at West Cowes. During the time of preaching a man whose name is John Grose, alias Groves, came up to me and offered me two-pence; or rather, pretended to offer it, for he did it with a sneer. Mr. Shaw,<sup>1</sup> who was apprehensive from something the man had said before—that he would pull me off the chair on which I stood—lifted up his arm between me and Grose; on which Grose, who is a very strong man, took hold of him, and shuffled him, and squeezed him in a very rough manner indeed. Mr. Shaw, in endeavouring to get loose from him, tore Grose's shirt, as Grose himself says. However, after preaching was over (for Grose only made a noise during the remainder of the sermon) he (Grose) pursued Mr. Shaw, and came behind him unexpectedly, and beat him on the back of his head, on his face, his breast, ribs, etc., in a most unmerciful manner; while one William Foote kept off the people and encouraged Grose as much as possible. Mr. Shaw made no return either by word or action, but many expected that Grose would murder him. And after Mr. Shaw was brought into the inn, we were some time in doubt whether he was not mortally wounded, especially by the blows he received on the back of his head. These two men, John Grose (or Groves) and William Foote, belong to the excise cutter stationed on this coast, and we think (with submission) it would be highly expedient for you to make a representation of this matter to the Board of Excise, that we may have quietness and peace in the island.

I am, dear sir,

Your dutiful son,

Thomas Coke

P.S. Mr. Shaw is, blessed be God, almost recovered. He has still a pain in his breast, and sometimes a little pain on the back of his head.

The Board, if you represent this affair to it and the commissioners think proper to interfere, will probably write to the collector of excise for this district and desire him to make inquiry. Now the collector is our friend, and if called upon will give them their true character, for he himself told me he would. And the interference of the Board would probably have considerable influence in stopping persecution in all the seaport towns in the island. We have had a warrant to apprehend him (John Grose), but he has been on board his cutter ever since. But the collector promised me just now that he would send orders to the captain to deliver him up. One Mr. Speden, the victualler of the transports, an officer under the commissary, has opened his house to us at West Cowes, and I am to preach there this evening.

We are just arrived at Cowes and find they have procured the dissenting meeting-house for me; which I do not like, but must comply. At East Cowes one Mr. Mallet Shipwright has opened his house to us, and one Mr. Mackenzie, storekeeper to his Majesty, has given us the use of one of the storehouses. There is likelihood of doing good in that place.

My congregations have been crowded at Newport. Three have been added to the society who appear to have a sincere desire of saving their souls. The morning congregations have not been bad.

I hope to make a visit or two at Yarmouth before I leave the island.

I am, dear sir,

Your dutiful,

T. C.

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas Shaw (fl. 1780s) was admitted 'on trial' as an itinerant in 1780 (see *Works*, 10:496). He was assigned to the Sarum circuit (which included Isle of Wight) at Conference in Aug. 1781. Shaw was still listed in the 1791 *Minutes* (see *ibid.*, 749), but then disappears. He may be the same Thomas Shaw admitted on trial (again) in 1796, who died in 1801.



*Address:* 'To / The Revd. Mr. Wesley / ~~in London~~ / To be sent to him immediately'.

*Postmark:* '23/OC'. *Charge:* '4' /

*Annotation:* by JW, 'Dr. Coke Oct 23 1781 / I go'.

*Source:* holograph; Duke, Rubenstion, George Story Papers.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Transcription published in *WHS* 38 (1971): 56–59; Vickers, *Letters of Coke*, 29–31.

William Smith to Joseph Benson<sup>1</sup>

Newcastle  
November 7, 1781

My Dear Friend,

I received your very acceptable letter by Mr. [Christopher] Hopper, and had begun acknowledging the receipt thereof when I received the account of Mrs. [Mary] Wesley's death. Within two hours after, my wife [Jane] and I set out for London, where we arrived the day after she was buried.<sup>2</sup> I was sorry Mr. [John] Wesley did not see her. I greatly wished they might be reconciled to each other before their death. But this I am afraid was not the case. Indeed, those who were with her in her last moments say she died very happy, in great peace. I am much inclined to hope the best, yet there are some circumstances that look unfavourable—as her desiring Mr. Wesley, if he came to the house, might not be permitted to see her.

Likewise, her resentment of her daughter [Jeanne] I am afraid was carried too far. Two years ago when we [were] at London she was vastly displeased at my wife for her attachment to the Methodists and the respect she showed to Mr. Wesley. Her displeasure was discovered by her making a new will a few days after we left London, leaving her daughter £20, and all her fortune (except a few legacies) she left to her son.<sup>3</sup> To Mr. Wesley she left a ring in token she died in peace with him. This partiality respecting her children I do not wonder at. It is what I always expected. But I was sorry for her own sake to find she had carried her resentment so far as two or three days before her death to order that all her clothes should be divided between two of her relations, and not the least notice taken of her daughter—never mentioning her name, nor the children's, all the time of her sickness.

Mr. Wesley is now freed from a heavy cross. I wish he may make good use of his liberty. Some of his friends are apprehensive he may marry again, and indeed I am not without my fears in this matter. Though I confess I had rather see him go to his grave than see him take a step that would give his enemies such advantage against him.

Our journey was very fatiguing to my wife, yet upon the whole she seems no worse for it. We arrived safe at home and found our little family pretty well.<sup>4</sup> We have since been very sorry we did not return by Leeds, as we deprived ourselves of the pleasure of seeing some of our best friends. But it was owing to a blunder I committed in taking our places in the *York Diligence*. Yet when we were in York we had thoughts of visiting you, only the fatigue my wife laboured under inclined her to make the shortest way home. I was glad to hear by Mr. Hopper that you and your dear family were well.<sup>5</sup> My best wishes always attend you. We are at present in tolerable health, only Polly is threatened with some return of her disorder, though not confined. They join with me in kindest respects to you and Mrs. Benson. Remember us affectionately to Mr. and Mrs. [Ann] Hopper.

I am, my dear sir,

Yours most affectionately,

Wm. Smith

*Address:* 'Mr Benson / Methodist Preaching house / Leeds'.

*Source:* holograph; MARC, PLP 99/8/8.

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<sup>1</sup>While not to JW, this letter provides insight into family dynamics at the time. William Smith (1736–1824) married Jeanne (Vazeille) Matthews, JW's widowed step-daughter in Feb. 1767.

<sup>2</sup>Mary (Goldhawk / Vazeille) Wesley died in London on Oct. 8, 1781 and was buried on Oct. 13.

<sup>3</sup>Mary's will, dated Sept. 4, 1779, and proved Oct. 11, 1781, left Jeanne only £20, with the bulk of her estate going to her son, Noah Vazeille (1747–1809). See National Archives, PROB 11/1083/92.

<sup>4</sup>The Smiths had two daughters: Mary ('Polly'; 1769–94) and Jane Vazeille (1770–1849).

<sup>5</sup>Joseph Benson married Sarah Thompson (1757–1810) in Leeds, Jan. 28, 1780. Their son Joseph had been born on Dec. 24 1780.

From Ann Bolton

Witney  
December 27, 178[1]<sup>1</sup>

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Your letter was as a rich cordial to my spirits, which needed such a revival. I acknowledge it as a peculiar favour that I have friends who care for my state, and frequently console myself with a hope of being helped by their prayers.

I view my present situation in the light you do, as something permitted to raise and advance my soul in holiness. Nothing that happens to me can be the effect of chance. It is, it must be, the will of him that is infinitely good and wise—and this, heartily subscribed to,

Lays the rough paths of peevish nature even,  
And opens in the breast a constant heaven.<sup>2</sup>

I am, through grace, enabled to receive evil as well as good at the hand of my gracious benefactor with a degree of gratitude, believing one as well as the other is designed to promote my present and eternal felicity. Sometimes my afflictions are so heavy, and of such a nature, that I am exposed to temptation either to faint or fret. But he who knows my soul in adversity, relieves me in the trying moment, and suffers not my faith to fail, nor my foot to be moved. I cry to him in my distress, and he hears me out of his holy hill, and sends me help in the needful time of trouble. His word is indeed as a light unto my feet, and a lamp in my path. I cannot fully set forth his mercy in this respect, by so seasonably helping me and so suitably succouring my afflicted soul.

I have been learning in the school of adversity to humble myself under the mighty hand of God; and have endeavoured to adopt a language like that of David, saying, 'If I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me out of those oppressive troubles and show me rest and peace in my habitation; if not, behold here I am, let him do with me as seemeth him good.'<sup>3</sup> At present I am called to have no choice, neither can I determine anything respecting my future life. But I know, while I thus give myself into the hand of God, he will order all things well. I am, dear sir,

Your affectionate child and obliged servant,

A. B.

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 667–68.

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<sup>1</sup>The letter is dated 1782 in *AM*, but fits well as a reply to JW's letter of Dec. 2, 1781, *Works*, 29:704–05. More to the point, it makes little sense that Bolton would write JW on Dec. 28, 1782, and again so soon as Jan. 3, 1783; nor that (if she had) JW would reply on Jan. 5 to her letter of Jan. 3 saying: 'I thought it long since I heard from my dear Nancy.'

<sup>2</sup>Matthew Prior, 'Paraphrase of 1 Corinthians 13', st. 2, as included by JW in *MSP* (1744), 1:88.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. 2 Sam. 15:25–26.

From John Francis Valton

[Birstall<sup>4</sup>]

January 1, 1782

Reverend and dear Sir,

Enclosed I transmit to you a quarterly plan of this circuit. A fortnight's interruption of my labour, through illness, has rendered it not so complete as I could wish. Bands have been made, classes divided and reduced, and the societies regulated. I make the [General] Rules of the Society my rules and hope by next Conference to have the circuit prepared, like Manchester, for a blessed work the ensuing year. Two or three weeks ago the Lord gave me the assurance of a revival in this circuit, and I am looking for his gracious word.

I have the pleasure to inform you, that on receiving Dr. [Thomas] Coke's letter concerning a fast, I gave notice of it through the circuit, fixing 5:00, 9:00, 1:00, and half past 7:00 as the general hours of prayer.<sup>5</sup> I believe many fasted till evening and found it a blessed day to their souls. Thanks be to God, my dear people love King George, and I endeavour to promote it.

I have fixed twice a year to meet all the local preachers in the circuit at Daw Green. We had our first meeting last Wednesday, when we spent some hours together. I proposed to their consideration: 1) The necessity, nature, means of attaining, and the time when we receive justification and its fruits following. 2) The same respecting sanctification. We were all of one mind and heart. Then, after giving them an exhortation, we parted like giants refreshed with wine.

I must now desire you, dear sir, if you can possibly do it, let two wives be sent next year into this circuit that can handle a class. It is an inconceivable good to have useful women, under a preacher that will encourage them. I remain, reverend and dear sir,

Your most affectionate, though unworthy son in the gospel,

J. V.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 105–06.

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<sup>4</sup>JW had recently moved Valton to the Birstall circuit; see JW to Valton, Sept. 15, 1781.

<sup>5</sup>Coke had surely written on behalf of JW, who wanted to insure the participation of his people in the day of fasting and prayer for King George on Dec. 21, 1781; see *Journal, Works*, 23:228.

From the Rev. Thomas Davenport<sup>1</sup>

January 4, 1782

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Having already (though imperfectly) described to you my case,<sup>2</sup> I know you will easily excuse my freedom.

Though I am forbidden to trust in an arm of flesh, yet I believe and see that God works by instruments, agents, and second causes.

I sometimes find a greater liberty of praying and believing, even to a degree of rejoicing. But at intervals the burden is grievous indeed. Flaming justice looks stern, and displays a horrid scene of complicated guilt.

The terms of justification are too clear to be doubted; but the apprehension of having out-lived the day of acceptance after calls and warnings, is a powerful weapon in the hand of the enemy.

Fear is a strong human passion. But I apprehend there is a stronger [passion], more than human (for which my soul pants) that is able to 'cast it out'.<sup>3</sup>

I have been lately advised to peruse attentively a book written by Mr. Walter Marshall, entitled *The Gospel Mystery of Sanctification Opened*.<sup>4</sup> Your opinion of the work will have great weight with me, and therefore I humbly beg it.

In prayer and thanksgiving let me be still remembered by you and the society, all of whom I can never forget in my poor intercessions, so long as I am in the body—during which space I desire to remain, reverend and dear sir,

Your most affectionate brother,

T. D.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 106–07.

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<sup>1</sup>Rev. Thomas Davenport (1722–95), originally of Marton, Cheshire, married Margaret Lancelot of Leek, Staffordshire in 1749 and settled for a time near Wednesbury. He apparently met JW there in 1764 and been prodded to renewed spiritual commitment (see his next letter, dated Jan. 15, 1782). This led to Davenport becoming vicar of Radcliffe on Trent, Notts. in 1771 (through 1790), and added the living at Wysall in 1774, which he held until his death. It is possible Davenport reached out to support Methodist work in neighbouring communities like Allexton, Leicestershire in the early 1780s (see JW to Davenport, Aug. 14, 1782).

<sup>2</sup>Davenport's initial letters to JW, describing his case, are not known to survive; but see JW's reply of Dec. 2, 1781. Davenport is replying in turn.

<sup>3</sup>I.e., perfect love; see 1 John 4:18.

<sup>4</sup>(London: Thomas Parkhurst, 1692). See the letter JW printed in his *Journal* (Nov. 20, 1767; *Works*, 22:110–11) warning that this book contained 'much poison mixed with food'.

From Hester Ann Roe

[Macclesfield]  
January 6, 1782

My very Dear and Honoured Sir,

I have still good news to tell you. Glory be to God, he is working graciously among us. Cousin Robert has been the instrument of four persons believing and receiving sanctification since I wrote last.<sup>1</sup> One of them is a class leader, and in all who now profess this salvation, the change is very evident. They walk and follow after God as dear children, who truly love him with all their heare. On the watch-night a young woman who experienced this salvation some years ago, but had lost it, received it again as Mr. L[eech] was saying,<sup>2</sup> 'Come by faith alone, if you have no worthiness, no fitness, believe only, and love shall make all things new. Delay not a moment. Come now, and God will now destroy your inbred sin, etc.'

Mr. L[eech]'s word is made a blessing to very many. Several backsliders are restored; many convinced of sin; some converted, and a number longing to love God with an undivided heart. O! how I love thus to see the prosperity of Zion! I feel indeed a sweet assurance, through grace, that if all around me were careless and lukewarm, my soul would cleave to its only centre with all its powers and affections. But how much more does it animate and enliven my spirit! How increase my joy! Yea, how does it strengthen my hands to see my dear brethren rejoicing and glorying in the same precious salvation, and living as it becomes the redeemed of the Lord! There are person besides those I have mentioned, who can say they feel nothing contrary to love, and are kept in perfect peace, but dare not yet profess that they are cleansed from all sin. I now meet two bands: and blessed be God, we do not meet in vain. My soul dwells truly in a present heaven. The eternal Trinity is my God and my all. Every power and faculty is swallowed up in him.

I nothing want beneath, above,  
Happy in his perfect love.<sup>3</sup>

I was surprised to hear that you had been at Chester and Wrexham. But I trust, if you did not come to preach a funeral sermon for a friend, you came to shake Satan's kingdom.

We had a precious love feast. Some people tell me I always have precious times, and therefore judge others have so too. But I believe most that were present are agreed in this, that we have had no love feast like the last for many years. The select band is very lively. I have just been there since I began my letter, and find another soul has received the warmth of sanctification under Mr. L[eech] this morning. I know you will join me to praise a God of love. Glory be to his dear name.

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Roe (1754–82), Hester's cousin, had been a student at Brasnose College, Oxford, studying to be a priest. While in Macclesfield for a visit, he had been converted to Methodism. This proved a block to his ordination, and alienated his father. Robert returned to Macclesfield, living with his aunt (Hester's mother), and served as a local preacher. See the extracts from his journal in a letter of Hester to JW below, dated Sept. 28, 1782; and Dorothy Bentley Smith, *A Georgian Gent & Co: The Life and Times of Charles Roe* (Ashbourne: Landmark Publishing, 2005), *passim*.

<sup>2</sup>John Leech c. 1736–1810) served several years as a local preacher, before joining the itinerant ministry in 1773 (see *Works*, 10:415). He continued to serve as an itinerant until 1803, when he retired to Rochdale and offered occasional service until his death. See *Minutes* (post-Wesley, 1810), 3:132. He was currently assigned to the Macclesfield circuit.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. CW, Psalm 131, st. 4, *CPH* (1743), 95.

Our days of praise shall ne'er be past,  
While life and thought and being last,  
Or immortality endures.<sup>4</sup>

In a day or two after I wrote to you, the pain in my head and face was suddenly removed in answer to prayer; and I have hardly felt it since. Till then I had not liberty to pray for its removal. But hearing that my bands never met during my confinement, and that several neglected to meet in the select band whom I persuaded to go before; I said, 'Lord if thy unworthiest servant can be a blessing to their precious souls, remove this affliction', it is enough; 'and I will praise thee.' And the prayer was heard. In ten thousand instances I thus prove him a God that heareth, and answereth prayer. I am filled with his goodness. I know not where to begin that praise that never shall end. I remain, dear and ever honoured sir,  
Your unworthiest child in bonds of divine love.

H. A. R.

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 107–09.

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<sup>4</sup>Isaac Watts, Psalm 146, st. 1; as in *CPH* (1737), p. 9.

From Samuel Bardsley

Inverness  
Thursday, January 10, 1782

Reverend and Very Dear Sir,

May Jacob's God, whose you are and who you serve, bless you in the latter stages of your pilgrimage for Christ's sake, Amen.

I esteem it a great privilege that I am permitted to write to you, and that I am favoured with your advice, and I doubt not with a share in your prayers.

Thank God, since I came into Scotland I have had my health, and he has been frequently very good to my soul. While I was at Aberdeen I had an agreeable time. Our congregations were increased and we had several new members added to the society.

We have a few kind people here and our congregations are pretty good on the Sabbath. I often find my soul much blest in speaking to them. I like Scotland much better than I expected I should, because our people are very kind and far more teachable than I expected to find them. I believe you have some as warm steady friends in this kingdom as in any part of England. There is much need of the Methodist preachers in this kingdom, for Satan keeps his seat here as well as in England. The players have much encouragement in most of the large towns.<sup>1</sup> They have been in Inverness, and have got a deal of money from the people.

Considering, honoured sir, how iniquity abounds, it is no wonder that our armies are fallen into the enemy's hand, and that our fleets are so frequently flying before them. If we do not lay these things to heart, I fear our present calamities will only be the beginning of sorrows, because we sin against more light than either the French or Spanish nation. May the Lord remember us in mercy for Christ's sake, Amen. May you be enabled to cry aloud and spare not.

I hope, dear sir, you will favour us with a visit in the beginning of summer. Our friends at Aberdeen would be very glad to see you, and so would our little affectionate society here.

My fellow labourers are pretty well, and I hope useful. Brother Mill is lately married; he tells me that he consulted you upon that subject.<sup>2</sup>

I would desire it as a particular favour that you will please to think of a proper Assistant for Sheffield the next year.<sup>3</sup> You know, honoured sir, they will require a person who has some authority. I think if you would please to send them my worthy friend Mr. [John] Pawson, he will be very kindly received, and I hope made a great blessing to that place. I hope the Lord will direct you in this affair.

I wish you a happy New Year. If it please the Lord, I hope he will spare you to us for a while longer, and give you to see Jerusalem in greater prosperity than ever!

Please to continue to watch over me in love. Reprove, rebuke, exhort me as you shall see occasion; and the Lord assisting, I will endeavour to take your advice. I trust the Lord's work is carrying on in my soul. I have had many comfortable seasons since I came into Scotland.

Pray favour me with a few lines. Direct to me at Mr. McComie's in Inverness, North Britain.

The Lord be with your spirit. I am, reverend and very dear sir,

Your ever obliged and dutiful son and servant,

S. Bardley

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

*Source:* manuscript copy for records; MARC, PLP 5/6/41.

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<sup>1</sup>Players is likely used in the sense of gamblers; see *OED* (2nd edn.), meaning #3.

<sup>2</sup>Peter Mill (1751–1806) was admitted on trial as an itinerant preacher in 1774 (see *Works*, 10:427), but located for a while, achieving full standing only in 1778 (10:473), and serving until poor health forced him to retire in Hull in 1804. See *Minutes* (post-Wesley), 2:324.

<sup>3</sup>Bardsley has served Sheffield the prior year, before being moved to Scotland.



From Elizabeth Ritchie

[Otley]  
January 10, 1782

Sometime ago I took up my pen to write to my dear and reverend father. Why I was withheld, I knew not. But now I think the cause appears—my gracious Lord knew if I waited a little he would enable me to tell you such good news as I am sure will rejoice your heart. He is sweetly working amongst us here. Sister [Ann] Clapham has been with me a little while, and the Lord has made her very useful amongst our people. For some time as a society we have lived in such peace and love. Some particular souls were very lively, but we wanted a stirring up amongst the people in general. For this our spirits prayed, and glory be unto God, he has answered to the joy of our hearts.

On Wednesday, the 2nd instant, while sister Clapham met my class, the power of the Lord was present in a peculiar manner. One who had long been seeking the Lord was justified, and dear Mrs. Horner (a person you drank tea with at Liverpool last summer, but who by various interpositions of providence is now brought to reside amongst us) was clearly delivered from the remains of sin. She broke out in prayer and praise; the glory of the Lord filled our hearts. I think, for my own part, I never felt more nor even so much of the presence of my Lord. My soul was penetrated with the love of Jesus. I beheld him our priest before the throne, and felt him more willing to receive returning sinners. Every soul present seemed much affected, and some that night so deeply felt their wants that they never rested afterward until the Lord proclaimed liberty in their souls. One dear woman in particular went home and wrestled with the Lord until he said, 'I will, be thou clean'.<sup>1</sup> She believed and according unto her faith it was done unto her.

This was a means of stirring many up, and on the Sabbath we had a blessed day. And on Monday, after a public prayer meeting, a few of us solemnly renewed our covenant with God. This was a time to be remembered indeed. He showed himself well pleased by meeting us and filling our hearts with his presence. My soul felt all within me heartily joined in thus covenanting with God. He shall choose my work and my station. I am wholly his and all my happy hours I consecrate to him alone. O my dear sir, help me to praise my dearest saviour. His goodness is beyond what my pen can describe. I deserve no mercy, and yet he fills me with his love, and every soul that is brought nearer unto him lays me under fresh obligation to adore his boundless love.

Last night we had another precious meeting. One dear soul broke out into praise and told the Lord [that] though she had long been a trifler, she praised him that he had kept her in the way, and lately stirred her up to see the need of being made wholly clean. 'And glory be unto thee O Lord, thou has this night set me fully free. Let none doubt of thy love, oh my God, since thou has thus loved and saved me.' She then feelingly prayed for some particular souls that were laid on her mind. We continued wrestling with the Lord for some time. Our meeting lasted between two and three hours, and when we rose from our knees, dear Miss M. and another person declared the Lord had blessed them greatly.

Help us, my dear sir, by your faith and prayer. For though we have seen great things, yet we expect to see greater. And while our God strengthens the stakes of our Zion, we are expecting him to lengthen her cords and enlarge her borders. Our good assistant has not been here since the Lord thus revived his work amongst us else I am sure his heart would have rejoiced with us, for I think we never had a preacher who had his master's work more at heart than brother Brown.<sup>2</sup> He is indeed a precious man. All that love our adorable saviour must love him, for he has much of his spirit and feelingly thirsts for more. I suppose by this time our dear friends Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher<sup>3</sup> have reached Madeley. They

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<sup>1</sup>Matt. 8:3 and parallels.

<sup>2</sup>Isaac Brown was assigned to the Keighley circuit at the 1781 Conference (see 10:509).

<sup>3</sup>Mary Bosanquet and Rev. John Fletcher were married on Nov. 12, 1781, in Batley, Yorkshire.

were to leave Cross Hall on New Year's day. May the Lord bless them greatly. I hope he will.

Sister Clapham gives me a pleasing account of our dear brother Rhodes's death.<sup>4</sup> His health has gradually declined ever since Conference and on Christmas Eve the Lord sweetly permitted him to fall asleep on his bosom. He was happy all his illness and often praised the Lord with his whole heart. Frequently in the night season he would with a loud voice have cried out, 'Sing praises unto our God, sing praises unto our King', and call on those who were attending him to help him to praise his blessed God who dealt so bountifully with him. Sister Clapham was with him when he died and the last words she could distinctly hear him speak were, 'No strife, Lord, no strife between thee and me. It is not so with the wicked and the ungodly.' In his will his executors are ordered to pay out of his effects all his bankrupt debts to the full. A few weeks before his death he said the Lord had tenderly shown him where he had missed his way in not doing this sooner. But he was glad it was not too late, and immediately altered his will that others for him might do what he would then have been glad to have done himself.

May that God whose you are and whom you serve ever keep you by his almighty power and fill you with life and peace through believing in the hearty prayer of, my dear sir,

Your ever affectionate, though unworthy, daughter,

E. R.

*Annotation:* another hand, '35th'.

*Source:* manuscript draft, kept for records; Duke, Rubenstein, Frank Baker Collection of Wesleyana, Elizabeth Ritchie papers (Box CO 6). Cf. JW's published extract; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 161–63.

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<sup>4</sup>James Rhodes, who hosted Methodist preachers in Leeds, was buried on Dec. 28, 1781.

From the Rev. Thomas Davenport

January 15, 1782

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Though I would not trespass upon your precious time, I am desirous to show my gratitude and thankfulness to God for you.

Your letters have been a means of administering comfort to my soul. I am happy in finding your approbation of Mr. Marshall's treatise now in my hands.<sup>1</sup> The Holy Bible, the *Christian Pattern*,<sup>2</sup> four volumes of your *Sermons*, and this *Gospel Mystery of Sanctification* will, I think, make the substance of my library, whilst in the body.

Seventeen years ago, an eminent servant of God uttered these words to me in the little vestry-room at Wednesbury, 'Go, and fear nothing but sin.'<sup>3</sup> I went; but neglected to pray for *power* to practice that wholesome counsel.

I trust the phrase will hold good in my awful case: 'Better late than never.' Oh the bitterness of reflection! To hear you say, 'Mr. Fletcher's Address does indeed belong to *me*' is matter of comfort.<sup>4</sup>

I am now in the sixtieth year, a great part of which space 'other lords have had dominion over me'.<sup>5</sup> Whether I shall ever see you more in the flesh is a doubt; but though absent in body, I have good assurance that I shall be remembered in your prayers. May these be a daily increase of jewels to your crown!

The love I feel to *every soul* is not to be expressed by words. May I remain, dear sir,

Your truly affectionate, and obedient servant,

T. Davenport

*Source*: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 163–64.

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<sup>1</sup>JW apparently replied to Davenport's letter of Jan. 4, 1782; this letter is not known to survive. But see JW's further reply on Jan. 19, 1782.

<sup>2</sup>JW's abridgment of Thomas à Kempis, *Imitation of Christ*.

<sup>3</sup>Davenport is apparently referring to JW's visit to Wednesbury, Sat.–Sun, Mar. 24–25, 1764; see *Journal, Works*, 21:446–47.

<sup>4</sup>JW likely commended for Davenport's consideration one of the four 'Addresses' with which Fletcher concluded his *Last Check to Antinomianism* (London: Hawes, 1775), 223–324

<sup>5</sup>Isa. 26:13.

From Sarah (Ward) Nind

[Ramsbury Park]  
January 26, 1782

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Through the tender mercy of God my strength is in some measure restored, and for some days past I have been able to go about more than for several months; so that I am in great hopes I shall ere long be capable of family business. In this affliction the Lord hath been to me a good Physician, and while he probed to the bottom of the wound, supported me with cordials and assurances that when it had answered the end he designed, it should be removed. He hath showed me that his ways are equal; that he is good when he gives, nor less so when he denies. And I have had the clearest conviction that though we (who are his people) go on frowardly in the way of our hearts

His every act pure blessing is,  
His path unsullied light.<sup>1</sup>

And while I have trembled at his justice, I have adored his love. What I now wish for myself is that every thought may be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ; and that I may be more abundantly devoted to him than I have ever yet been.

Our friends at Tewksbury wish to have you spend a night here in your way to Worcester. And Mr. [James] Nind begs you would be so kind as to come before dinner, and he will send a person to meet you, as our house is a little out of the road. The hope of seeing you then, and conversing with you, makes me omit the painful and pleasing experiences which I had during my affliction.

As my strength returns, I hope I shall devote it to the service of God. But I have many fears that I shall not glorify him as I ought. For on former deliverances I was too much like Hezekiah, and did not according to the benefit done unto me. I beg your prayers for an increase of strength, both of body and soul, and am, with great respect,

Your very unworthy sister,

S. Nind

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 164–65.

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. JW's translation of a German hymn by Paul Gerhard, which JW titled 'Trust in Providence', st. 7, *HSP* (1739), 142.

From Ann Loxdale

[Shrewsbury]  
January 28, 1782

Dear Sir,

The mercy of my Lord is great to me the most unworthy of his children. In the reading of your precious letter he was pleased to restore to me the blessing my soul longed for, of having my mind constantly staid upon him.<sup>1</sup> But it is not *now* as in times past. *Then* neither business, nor the company with which I was surrounded; no nor the conversation of serious people whom I much loved, could interrupt, for a moment the deep communion I enjoyed, or draw my thoughts from the central point of bliss. But now I find at times it would be an easy matter, and that I am only safe while calling on the Lord for strength, and watching unto prayer.

What you said respecting the manifestations of God to his dear children was particularly blessed to my soul. I daily experience that I cannot bear them even in that *small* degree I have been favoured with. But my will in this respect is, I trust, *wholly* resigned. I seek nothing but an entire devotedness of soul to God—to sink into nothingness, and feel God all in all. I want to speak, act, and think as in his immediate presence. I do not know anything in my soul that is not given up to God. And I have the clearest evidence, which neither man nor devil have been able to shake, that I love him with my whole heart. Yet I am sensible I live greatly beneath my privileges. But I hunger and thirst after righteousness, and my soul unceasingly pants for God. Glory be to his dear name, I seek nothing else, I desire nothing else.

Nothing will I know beside;  
My Lord, my Love is crucified.<sup>2</sup>

When I had the happiness of being with dear Mr. [John] Fletcher, he spoke to me of the deep things of God. He told me what was the fullness of the *present dispensation*, and what it was my privilege to enjoy. The Lord applied what he said, giving me wisdom to receive it with gladness. Since then, these precious texts have been constantly applied: 'All things are possible ....'<sup>3</sup> 'Whatsoever ye ask in my name *believing*, ye *shall* receive.'<sup>4</sup> 'Ask and receive that your joy may be full ....'<sup>5</sup> I often feel *strong* after the *inward man*, and have *believed* God was *then* ready to give me a *fullness* of the salvation, which has purchased for *me* with his precious blood.

I have, when in this happy frame, thrown myself down at the feet of my God. I could ask in faith, feeling the power of God resting on me. But before I have been on my knees two minutes, I am seized with such a violent sickness that I cannot utter a word. This is not only now and then, but constantly five or six times a day. I cannot bear the *very least* exertion. Either joy, grief, praying, singing, reading, or sometimes speaking, affects me more or less in the same manner. You will therefore see, my dear sir, that *patience* and *resignation* are the graces I most need, and which are most exercised: and may I speak it with the deepest humility, giving all the glory to God!

At such times my heart praises him for that dispensation, and my inmost soul cries out 'Lord thy will be done', and even these times of pain are made sweet seasons to me. I sometimes think, unless it was the will of my dear Lord to remove my complaint and strengthen my poor, weak, feeble body, I am unable to love him with that intense, ardent, burning affection my soul longs for. Christ says, love one

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<sup>1</sup>See JW to Loxdale, Jan. 18, 1782.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. CW, 'Desiring to Love', st. 4, *HSP* (1742), 27.

<sup>3</sup>Mark 9:23.

<sup>4</sup>Matt. 21:22.

<sup>5</sup>John 16:24.

another, as *I* have loved you. So amazing is the love of Jesus to sinners, even unto me, that I feel incapable to comprehend it. Then I think, if I am to love all the children of God with such a great degree of love; how ought I to love Christ himself! As far above them as my obligations are superior. O my dearest God fill, fill my desiring soul with such love! Well, in eternity I shall have no hindrances, but be enabled to love my God, so as tongue cannot tell or thought conceive. I am often led to consider this, and rejoice in hope of the glory which shall be revealed with joy unspeakable. My sister (I bless the Lord goes on well, and I hope we shall be helpers to each other in the faith.<sup>6</sup> She desires her Christian love to you.

I write to you with the greatest freedom, from the simplicity of my heart. I have, from the time I was under convictions, felt as great a love for you, as if I had been personally acquainted with you. 'Love is of God ....'<sup>7</sup> With the greatest respect, esteem and gratitude, I remain, dear sir,

Most affectionately yours,

A. Loxdale

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 216–19.

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<sup>6</sup>Ann's younger sister Sarah Loxdale (1760–1847); her older sister, Mary Loxdale (1754–85), had married Rev. Thomas Eden in Aug. 1778. JW would have seen Sarah on Mar. 27, 1781, when he preached in Shrewsbury (but missed seeing Ann).

<sup>7</sup>See 1 John 4:7.

From John Pawson

c. February 1782

Ann Watson was brought to the knowledge of God when she was about fourscore. She was then remarkably happy in her soul, but very feeble in body. As she had a son who lived at Wetherby (a town about six miles from Thorner), weak as she was, she determined to go and talk to him about the salvation of his soul. Accordingly she set out on foot in February 1762. After she had been there two or three days, she set out again for her own home, one Thursday morning. Towards night, she had got within less than a mile of the town. But having a small brook to cross, over which there was only a very narrow wooden bridge without a handrail, and as the wind was exceeding high, she durst not attempt to go over, for fear of falling into the water. She therefore turned back, in order to take the high road, which was but at a small distance. Having a wood to pass through, she lost her way, and wandered about till all her strength was gone. And as the night was coming on, she lay down under a hedge, quite upon the top of a hill. On Friday several persons went in search of her; but supposing that she had fallen into the brook, they only searched there, and of course did not find her. So she lay out all that day and night. On Saturday many went and searched the brook again, and also the adjoining wood. They found part of her clothes which she had lost, but did not come near the place where she was. So she lay out till Sunday morning. Out of pity to her poor distressed husband (for as to her, everybody had given her up for lost), most of the congregation left the preaching, and went in search of her. At last, to their no small astonishment, they found her alive and well—only extremely weak. She had lain in one place all the time; and said she saw several persons at a small distance, but was so weak that she could not call them. All this time she had taken no kind of nourishment. For though she had a halfpenny cake in her pocket, she was so weak that, when she had got her hand into her pocket, she could not draw it out again. All the time she lay there the weather was as cold as I ever remember it to have been; so that one would have thought even the most healthy person alive could not have survived one night where she lay. Yet she, weak as she was, having a firm confidence that God would send her relief, and that she should not die there, was preserved during two whole days and three nights, without ever moving from the place where she first lay down, without the least shelter from the weather, or the least nourishment of any sort whatsoever. Indeed had she not been found when she was, she would have been buried alive very soon. For there fell such a snow that day as I believe the oldest person living could not remember. When she was got home, she was put into a warm bed, and proper care being taken of her, in a few days she was as well as usual, and lived several years after.

John Pawson

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 184–85.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>JW had been soliciting spiritual autobiographies from his lay preachers for a couple of years, to publish in the *Arminian Magazine*. In 1781 he began to include short stories meant to demonstrate the remarkable providence of God. The first ones came from published sources, but preachers like Pawson soon began to send in accounts they happened upon. This account, when published in *AM*, was titled: ‘An Account of a very extraordinary Deliverance, which happened to Ann Watson, of Thorner, near Leeds, in Yorkshire’.

From John Pawson

February 5, 1782

When she was about six years old, she was something awakened by hearing one of our sisters instruct her own children. Soon after, she was taken ill of a white swelling, and was then more deeply awakened. In this state she was visited by our people, and soon found a sense of the pardoning love of God. I saw her about two months after this. She was then exceeding weak, and in constant pain. I asked her, 'Do you find your soul happy?' With great seriousness, she answered, 'Yes, I bless the Lord, my Beloved often visits my soul.' I asked, 'Can you bear your affliction with patience?' She replied, 'O yes! if my affliction was greater I could bear it. I have reason to bless the Lord that I ever was afflicted, for before I was afflicted I went astray; but he has laid this affliction upon me to bring me to himself.' She added, 'But what is this pain which I feel to what my Jesus felt for me, when he bore my sins in his own body upon the tree! O how willing is Jesus to be found of them that seek him!' Then looking up to her mother she said, with great earnestness, 'O mammy! you must seek Jesus. Indeed you must. He says, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."<sup>2</sup> No mammy! No unclean "thing can enter within the gates of the New Jerusalem".<sup>3</sup> I then asked her, 'Are you afraid to die *now*?' She smiled and said, 'O no, if it was the Lord's will, I could now meet death with pleasure.' She then added, 'O that I had wings like a dove, for then would I flee away and be at rest!'<sup>4</sup> One night, being exceeding ill, her mother said, 'You must be very patient, and then, in a little time, you will go to heaven and be an angel there.' The child answered, 'O no mammy! That I never shall. An angel had never flesh and bones like me. But I shall be a saint.' This is all I can remember of this most extraordinary child.

John Pawson

*Source*: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 183–84.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>John 3:3.

<sup>3</sup>Rev. 21:27.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Ps. 55:6.

<sup>5</sup>Titled: 'An Account of a very remarkable Child, who died some years ago, at Stockton upon Tees'.



From Dorothy (Furly) Downes

Leeds  
February 12, 1782

Ann Hall was a little awakened when she was about fourteen years of age. Having been from home a short time, on her return, she observed a great change in her mother, who had been awakened during her absence, which made her think more seriously of her own state and condition. That text made a deep impression on her mind, 'Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.'<sup>1</sup>

When she was about seventeen years of age, she found the Lord, and was so happy, and walked so circumspectly, that she was a pattern to all that knew her. Soon after, she fell into a decline; but was miraculously raised again for a while. After this she lived [as a] servant with Mrs. C—; where, though at times she could rejoice in the Lord, she was often overcome with violent passion, which was a great grief and discouragement to her mistress, who thought she had lost ground by coming into her family. However, she ceased not to cry unto the Lord both for her and with her. She also prayed earnestly herself for deliverance from it, as it was so great a hurt to her own soul, and also brought a reproach on the cause of God. One day as her mistress and a friend were at prayer with her, crying to God that he would then bring complete deliverance into her soul, it pleased him who answers the prayer of faith to set her soul at liberty. She suddenly burst out into praises, saying, 'Lord, thou hast heard, thou hast delivered, and I shall never thus offend thee more.'

Mrs. C— says all the time she lived with her after she never saw her the least moved to anger. After she married, she was a pattern to all that knew her. But her old complaint returned, and continued more than a twelvemonth: but there was nothing but praise and resignation heard from her. The nearer she came to her end, the clearer views she had of her approaching glory, and sometimes said she saw the blessed spirits above she was going to join, and Jesus smiling and assuring her he would soon send for her. She frequently heard such delightful music as was beyond all description, and as plain as she heard any of our voices. She would sometimes say, 'If I had but strength, I could talk all the day and all the night, of the love of Jesus to my soul.' I have often gone and found her weeping. And once I asked, if she wanted anything? She answered, 'No. Blessed be the Lord I want nothing, but am overcome with the consideration of the love of Jesus.' While Mrs. C— and I were at prayer with her, the day she died it seemed as if heaven was come down to earth: the presence of the Lord so filled the place. Several who sat up with her said, the Lord was always so present, that the nights seemed but as so many hours.

Glory be to the Lord, her husband was as much a living as she was a dying witness of the power and faithfulness of God. During the course of her illness, he was a pattern of tenderness, faith, resignation, and industry. Sometimes they were both ill together, yet their faith never failed. They followed the advice of the apostle, in everything making their request known to the Lord, with prayer and thanksgiving;<sup>2</sup> and so were without carefulness. And the Lord abundantly rewarded them, in never suffering them to want what was necessary for their bodies, any more than for their souls.

D. D.

*Source: published transcription; Arminian Magazine 5 (1782): 244–45.*<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Eccles. 12:1.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Phil. 4:6.

<sup>3</sup>Titled: 'A short Account of Mrs. Ann Hall'. Like his brother CW, JW considered account of a victorious death as a witness to the gospel, and gladly published those sent to him.

From Thomas Simpson

[Kingswood]  
February 12, 1782

Reverend and Dear Sir,

For some weeks past I have found a gradual deliverance from those painful reasonings of mind, and buffetings of Satan, whereby my soul was well nigh ready to sink within me. Since Wednesday last I have enjoyed an almost uninterrupted peace, with such confidence in God, through Christ, who is truly precious to my soul that I am ready to conclude, 'The winter is past, the rain is over and gone; for the flowers appear on the earth.'<sup>4</sup> Never did I better understand those words of David, Psalm 23:3, 'He restoreth my soul', than at this present time. I can now lay me down in peace. I am refreshed in my sleep, both in body and mind. I arise with thankfulness, for my duty is my delight.

When again and again you encouraged me, or I may say endeavoured to encourage me, by telling me that by this visitation God was about to deepen his work in my soul, I could hardly believe it. For, with Jacob, I was almost continually saying, 'All these things are against me.'<sup>5</sup> But now, I feel some of those peaceable fruits of righteousness, which always are either the attendants or consequences of sanctified afflictions. I may now say my greatest concern is that I may not lose any of those useful lessons which the Lord intends I should learn by my late painful exercises. If my future life should be according to my present resolutions, I firmly believe I shall never again pass through such deep waters. For though the Lord has wonderfully supported and delivered me, yet I cannot think he has any pleasure in afflicting his children when they listen to the milder whispers of his love. But the duties of my calling prevent me from writing long letters, otherwise at present I would go on to justify the ways of God to man. For I still will say, 'Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.'<sup>6</sup>

With my earnest prayers for your prosperity, I remain, reverend and dear sir,

Your obliged servant and son in the gospel,

T. Simpson

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 219–20.

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<sup>4</sup>Song of Sol. 2:11.

<sup>5</sup>Gen. 42:36.

<sup>6</sup>Ps. 119:75.

From 'A Respectful Reader'

February 13, 1782

Reverend Sir,

I am, as you are, an Arminian. I am well acquainted with your religious tenets, and have read most, if not all of your works. And though I do not entirely fall in with you in *every* article of your creed, yet I have much respect to your character, great reverence for your principles in general, and an entire affection for your person. Depending upon the acknowledged candour of your disposition, and your uniform zeal for the truth, I expect your attention and answers to the following questions:

Is it your wish that the people called Methodists should be, or become, a body entirely separate from the Church [of England]?

If not, where (that is, how often), and where (I mean, upon what description of teachers, of the establishment) are they to attend?

More particularly, if the fall, the corruption, and natural impotence of man, his free and full redemption in Christ Jesus, through faith working by love, should be taught and inculcated, and offered to the attention of *all*, at the Church of the parish where they reside, are they *then* in your opinion bound in conscience *to hear*, or may they, at their own option, *forbear*?

Or if they are at liberty to absent themselves, are they at liberty—that is, have they a *Christian privilege*—to censure this doctrine in the gross, to condemn such teachers, and boldly to pronounce them 'blind leaders of the blind'?<sup>1</sup>

Lastly, whenever this happens, is it through prejudice or rational piety? Is it through bigotry or a catholic spirit? Is it consistent with Christian charity? Is it compatible with a state of justification? Or is it even allowable in the high habit of evangelical perfection?

Your unequivocal answers to these interesting queries, in the *Arminian Magazine*,<sup>2</sup> will oblige, reverend sir,

A Respectful Reader

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 374–75.

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<sup>1</sup>Matt. 15:14.

<sup>2</sup>JW published this letter, with his replies (dated Feb. 23, 1782) interspersed with each question.

From James Barry<sup>1</sup>

[Epworth]  
c. February 15, 1782

For several years some of our brethren have been crying to God to revive his work in this remarkably dead place. Three months ago there seemed to be some answer. A little before Christmas, one was set at liberty; another on New Year's Day. Soon after, several of Robert Leister's children.<sup>2</sup> About this time several meetings of prayer were appointed in several parts of the town. At almost every meeting (which were almost every night in the week) one or more found peace with God; and at one meeting between thirty and forty, great part of whom were children. In six weeks we have joined eighty three members, near thirty of whom are young men, about twenty young women; and several backsliders who are now happier than ever they were.

[James Barry]

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 7 (1784): 45–46.

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<sup>1</sup>Barry was currently the Assistant for the Epworth circuit. In *AM* JW prefaced this extract with: 'The first account which I received of the revival of the work of God at Epworth, in Lincolnshire, which began in 1781, was as follows'; and ended it with 'thus far James Barry'.

<sup>2</sup>See next letter.

From Joseph Benson<sup>1</sup>

(a series completed c. February 18, 1782<sup>2</sup>)

Letter I

Reverend Sir,

[1.] When I informed you I had been looking over Mr. Madan's treatise on marriage and polygamy, I had no intention of making any remarks upon it. But as you seem to desire I should, I have put down a few brief remarks thereon.

2. The two grand points Mr. Madan labours to prove are: first, that marriage consists 'solely in the union of the man and woman, in the *carnal* knowledge of each other'; and secondly, that it is lawful for a man to have, at one and the same time, as many wives as he pleases.

3. As I could not think Mr. Madan mercenary in his views, I could not devise, for some time, what his end could be in swelling his subject into so great a bulk, as I am convinced it might have been comprehended in eighty or a hundred pages. But I now see that this diffuse manner of writing is not adopted without a cause. Had his argument been comprised in a little compass, it would have easily appeared to be a mere cobweb. But being spread abroad as wide as possible, its flimsy nature is not discerned.

4. The foundation on which he builds his scheme is this. Polygamy was practised of old by great and good men. Moses never once blames them for it, but on the other hand takes it for granted that it would still be in use. Therefore it must be right in all nations and ages. Therefore Christ neither *did* nor *could* forbid it. To suppose that he did is *unreasonable*, *absurd*, and *blasphemous*. Therefore those texts in the New Testament which have been considered as prohibiting polygamy, have been misunderstood. It follows that the Christian world is indebted to this author for freeing them from the shackles wherewith prejudice and priestcraft have restrained their freedom, and for laying open to their enjoyment all the sweets of Mohammedan liberty. Thus the whole matter terminates in the liberty of men, and in the glory of this *great man*, who has blessed the world with so happy a discovery.

5. Thus he spreads a snare to entangle all sorts of readers, even the *holy* as well as the *profane*. As to the *latter*, there could be no doubt of *their* embracing it, because it is according to their heart's desire. And although, as to the disciples of the self-denying Jesus, it does not seem so well calculated for their reception, yet in this case too he has an expedient: 'It is the Bible plan, adopted by patriarchs and prophets, and countenanced by the particular blessing of God. Samuel, Solomon, and even Christ himself being the fruit of polygamous connexions. Besides, it is the *only way* to prevent the ruin of women. For if a man who defiled a virgin was obliged to keep her as his wife, this would be laying the ax to the root' (as he expressed it) and effectually and entirely abolish the dreadful crimes of whoredom and fornication.

6. But lest you should think, sir, that this is mere declamation, I shall produce quotations out of different parts of his books, to show that it is his very plan. But it will be impossible for me to begin with the *beginning* of his book and go regularly forward to the end, unless I were to begin with the *middle* or *end* of my subject and write *backwards*. Hence it is that I may seek for quotations to prove every part of this charge, from every part of his book, turning the whole over to find out his sentiments.

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<sup>1</sup>Titled: 'An Answer to Mr. Madan's Treatise, on Polygamy and Marriage: in a Series of Letters, to the Rev. Mr. Wesley'. In his letter to Benson of May 21, 1781 (*Works*, 29:646–47) JW encouraged Benson's proposal to write an extended reply to Martin Madan's *Thelyphthora; or, A treatise on female ruin ...; considered on the basis of the divine law*, 2 vols. (London: J. Dodsley, 1780–81). The work had quickly became notorious, as it defended the legality (by divine law) of polygamy.

<sup>2</sup>Benson fashioned his critique of Madan as a series of letters to JW, but seems to have sent them as a set, which JW acknowledged receiving in his letter of Feb. 22, 1782 (*Works*, 30:16–17). As JW had promised Benson in May 1781, he published this critique in *AM*, in twenty-four installments over two years. We present it here as a single document, at the time the last letter was likely completed.

7. Mr. Madan rests the whole matter upon the authority of the Scriptures alone. So Introduction, p. 15, 'I will examine the subjects proposed, singly on the authority of God's word.' In the Preface, p. 11, he says, 'The subjects of the following treatise, being of the utmost importance, have been considered with the most serious attention, and are laid before the reader on the highest authority, that is to say, on the authority of the holy Scriptures. Nothing less than this ought or can determine on the points herein treated.' Though the reason why Mr. Madan rejects the authority of men is too obvious to need mentioning, yet I cannot be sorry that he has chosen to let the decision of the points remain with the Scriptures alone; seeing by this means, he has brought the argument into little compass, and has saved me abundance of trouble.

8. On this foundation then, Mr. Madan considers two points: first, marriage; and secondly, polygamy.

1. With regard to marriage, he says, p. 18, 'This consists in the union of the man and woman in a personal knowledge of each other'; which he says, 'is the only marriage ordinance that we find revealed in the Scriptures. Whenever this union came to pass, though two distinct and independent persons before, they were to become as one. "They shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2:24), and so indissolubly one as to be inseparable: what God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.' Again, p. 19, 'The whole is made to rest *simply* and *only* in the personal union of the man and woman. It is this alone which makes them one flesh.' And yet again, p. 24, 'The business of marriage was left' (when God gave the law) 'as at first ordained, to one simple act of union. A conclusive proof this that nothing else is of divine institution; consequently that nothing else is essential to constitute a marriage in the sight of God; but that this is.'

2. Mr. Madan partly proves, and partly illustrates his doctrine by learned criticisms on the Hebrew and Greek phrases used by Adam, in Genesis, and by our Lord in Matthew, to signify the affection a man should have for his wife, which we translate, 'He shall cleave to his wife.' But this translation he finds great fault with, as falling far below the force and meaning of the original Hebrew דבק בצרתו and the Greek προσκολληθήσεται πρὸς τὴν γυναῖκα,<sup>3</sup> and he would have the expression rendered by the Latin *adhaerebit* *in uxore suā*, 'He shall cleave or be cemented *in* his wife.' Vol. 1, p. 20, 130. Vol. 2, p. 144.

3. But he brings another proof, p. 19, from 1 Corinthians 6:15–16, 'that this oneness arose from this *act of union*, and from the command consequent upon it, that they should be *one flesh*. "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them the members of a harlot? God forbid! What, know ye not that he which is JOINED to a harlot is ONE BODY, for two, saith he, shall be ONE FLESH.'" On this he argues thus: 'This question of the apostle, "Know ye not that he which is joined to a harlot is one body?" and what follows, being taken together, have a plain reference to what Adam said, Genesis 2:23–24' (observe *before* he had had this personal union with his wife, which our author speaks of), "'This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh," and seems very fully to determine not only the strictness of the marriage union, but that which constitutes it in the sight of God. In all which' (that is, in the account here given of union with a harlot) 'there is not the least hint, or the most distant allusion to any outward rite or ceremony administered by any person whatsoever, but the whole is made to rest simply and only in the personal union of the man and woman. It is this alone, which according to the apostle, makes them *one flesh*.'

4. Thus this gentleman has found out a new use of the apostle's words. He has endeavoured to prove first, that every harlot is strictly and properly married to the man she has criminal intercourse with, and that by 'the only ordinance which God ever instituted'. He has laboured to prove secondly, that as in this account which the apostle gives of a man's marriage to a harlot, 'there is not the least hint of any outward rite, but the whole is made to rest simply in the personal union of the man and woman', therefore marriage consists *in this alone*. That the whole matter between a man and a harlot should 'rest only in this carnal union'; that they should not trouble themselves with anything further, whether outward ceremony or inward affection, any more than the male or female brutes, it is not difficult to believe. But that the

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<sup>3</sup>Gen. 2:24 and Mark 10:7.

case should be the same between a man and his wife is not easy to conceive. Many will think there must be a difference, and that a man must be married to a wife with more solemnity, and upon a better authority, than a libertine can be joined to a harlot.

5. But that we may see the whole strength of this argument, let us throw it into the syllogistic form, which, although Mr. Madan may despise, under the idea of 'the jargon of the schools', yet it may give him a clearer view than he has yet had of the *solidity* and *force* of his own reasoning.

'A man shall leave father and mother', (says the Lord by Adam), and 'shall cleave to his wife', and 'they two shall be one flesh'.

But the apostle, in describing the union of a man with a harlot, uses the same form of expression, and says, 'he that is joined to a harlot is one body'.

Therefore the union in both cases is the same, and every man is properly married to a harlot with whom he has had connexion. If so, the woman of Samaria and our Lord were both mistaken, in saying the man she had then was 'not her husband'; because it is plain, according to Mr. Madan's reasoning, he *was* her husband, properly married to her by God's only ordinance: he was joined to her in one body, and therefore, though she might be called a *harlot*, she was really and truly his *married wife*. Again, no outward ceremony has place in the union of a man with a harlot; but the union of a man and a harlot is proper marriage. Therefore no outward ceremony is necessary to constitute a marriage.

Mr. Madan, I hope, will not be offended with me for bringing to light that link of the chain which he had left under some obscurity; I mean, 'that the union of a man and a harlot is a proper marriage'.

6. And yet, upon reading a little further, I find he has not left his meaning in such obscurity as I imagined. 'If the licentious and temporary union with a harlot makes a man become *one body* and *one flesh* with her, we may suppose that the sin of fornication' (sin of fornication! what has this to do here? Can a man commit fornication by engaging in the one only ordinance of marriage?) 'receives no small share of its malignity from the abuse thereby committed of the ordinance of marriage' (the apostle would say of *their own bodies*) 'as established by God, as entering into it' (that is, into the ordinance of marriage) 'without any intention of abiding by it, but merely to gratify a transient lust, and that with a woman who departs from one to another, as gain or evil desire may lead her. Nevertheless' (N.B.) 'the apostle on the authority of Genesis 2:23–24 says, that he "which is joined to a harlot is one body and one flesh" with her, by being engaged in that ordinance' (of marriage, viz.) 'of which these things are declared to be the inevitable consequence.' So that you see this paradoxical genius supposes the man and his whore to be strictly and properly married to each other, and yet calls her a *harlot*, and charges them both with *fornication*, which is falling himself into the same error he derides in the ancient fathers—viz., that a man may commit fornication with his own wife!

7. As to what Mr. Madan says, about 'entering into this ordinance' (of marriage) 'without an intention of *abiding by it*', I hardly know what he means; especially as he speaks of the *man*. If he had spoke of the *woman*, I should have thought he meant to blame her for not abiding with the man who had first taken her. But as he speaks of the *man*, and it is his avowed doctrine that a man may take as many women as he pleases, one after another, and if not publicly divorce, yet privately put away from bed and board a former wife, it is hard to say what he means. But let him mean what he will, neither *this* circumstance, nor their coming together 'to gratify a transient lust', nor anything else of the kind, can make God's only ordinance (as he calls it) to be *fornication*; because if it could, it would follow that this *alone* is not *marriage*, but that something else is essentially necessary to constitute it, and so his whole scheme would fall to the ground. These circumstances therefore do not alter the case at all. For if 'this personal union' be marriage, and this *alone*, 'nothing else is of divine institution'; if 'nothing else is essential to constitute a marriage in the sight of God, but that this is'; it follows by undeniable consequence that the man and his whore commit no fornication at all, but only do what is quite lawful, as being *strictly* and *properly* man and wife.

8. If it be objected, that Mr. Madan supposes another circumstance—viz., 'that she departs from one to another', and that *therefore* she may be called a harlot, and the man who has connexion with her may be said to commit *fornication*; I answer, she may indeed, according to *his* doctrine, on this account be termed an *adulteress*, and the crime committed with her, after she has departed from the man to whom

she first gave her person, may be called *adultery*. But as for *whoredom* and *fornication*, they are quite out of the question. Nor upon his scheme can any such crimes be committed. Therefore, though he spends a whole chapter in treating on these crimes, as distinguished from adultery (which he considers by itself in another chapter), and shows how heinous they are before God, yet all this is mere finesse and only calculated to throw dust in the reader's eyes, that he may not discern the true nature of this pernicious doctrine and its dreadful consequences. For if, as he affirms (p. 47), 'Where a man and a woman become personally united to each other, they are one flesh, and are forbidden to put each other away'; if 'this is the ordinance of marriage, and the *only one* revealed in the Scripture, and therefore the only one which God ever ordained', it will follow wherever *this* has taken place, from whatever motive, whether with or without 'an intention of abiding by it', the parties are really and truly married, and are strictly and properly *man* and *wife*. Now this woman being thus married, is (according to the apostle) bound by the law to her husband, as long as he liveth. So that, if while her husband liveth she depart to another man, she shall be called (not a *harlot*, but) an *adulteress*; and the man that has any criminal conversation with her, is not a *fornicator*, but an *adulterer*, as having defiled another man's wife. Such are all the men and women in the world who have any prohibited intercourse with each other, they are strictly and properly *adulterers* and *adulteresses*. As for the man, married or unmarried, who first entices and defiles a *virgin*, and the virgin who yields to him, and 'delivers up her person' (as he expresses it) 'to the man of her choice', they do no harm at all, they only *marry*, which it is not only lawful, but as our author shows at large, very *commendable* to do. But if this same woman should after this be enticed and overcome by *another* man, then indeed he and she both do wrong. They commit adultery, and are by the law of God worthy of death.

9. I do not wonder that our author should introduce his treatise by telling us, 'He was going to call in question the truth of long-received opinions', and to attack principles which have the sanction of ancient custom, and even of laws themselves. For you see, reverend sir, he has the honour of introducing a system entirely new into the world, a system which, as he expresses himself, 'lays the ax to the root' with a witness, and cuts down at one stroke all the whoredom and fornication which ever has been, is, or shall be committed. He annihilates the whole. The greatest part he dignifies with the title of marriage, which is honourable in all. And the rest he resolves into *adultery*, so that he does not leave so much as a single trace of any such crime in the world. His scheme looks both backward and forward. It not only blesses the present generation, but the generations that are past and those that are to come. It shows not only that there is no fornication committed *now*, but that there never has been any committed—no, nor can be. The first act of the kind that has been called by that name on the *woman's* side is marriage. She only 'delivers up her person to the man of her choice', which she has an undoubted right to do. And the first, second, or third on the man's side, if committed with so many virgins, or women not engaged with other men, is also *marriage*. And all the rest is not *fornication*, but *adultery*.

10. It follows therefore, according to this doctrine (as our ingenious author has intimated, not obscurely, in various parts of his two vols.) that the whole world, in all ages has been under an entire mistake. For they have all supposed that there is such a thing as whoredom or fornication, as distinguished from adultery. Whereas it plainly appears, from the clear reasoning of this incomparable author, that there is no such thing, and that though *adultery* may be committed, *fornication* cannot. It follows, secondly, that all the languages which ever have been, or are now spoken upon the face of the earth, as also all the books that have been written (except Mr. Madan's treatise) ought to be corrected, for they all make a distinction in this case without a difference, and mention fornication as though it were a different thing from adultery; whereas it is precisely the same thing, so far as it has any existence. All this one might make a shift to bear. But then it follows thirdly, from this doctrine, that the Bible itself needs to be corrected: because innumerable passages, partly in express terms, and partly by manifest allusions, represent *adultery* as one thing, and *fornication* or *whoredom* as another; whereas Mr. Madan has proved that they do not differ at all, and that in the common acceptation of the word, as distinguished from adultery, there never was, nor can be such a crime as fornication committed!

11. What a pity it is, sir, that Shechem, the son of Hamor the Hivite, did not understand our author's doctrine! If he had, he might not only have saved himself much unnecessary trouble, but



probably have preserved his own life, the lives of his father and relations, and of all the men of the place.<sup>4</sup> He had only to say, 'The damsel delivered herself into my possession, as the man of her choice.' 'The primary institution hath therefore taken place' (p. 25), 'and we are become *one flesh*, and what God hath joined together, by pronouncing them *one flesh*, man cannot put asunder.' I do not therefore desire you to give me her to wife, for we are already strictly and properly married, and that by the one only ordinance of marriage which God ever ordained. And for you to attempt to take her from me would be at once a *vain* and a *wicked* attempt: *vain*, because I am a prince in the country, and stronger than you; and *wicked*, because it would imply an endeavour to make void the ordinance of God, trample upon the laws of heaven, and violate the rights of mankind? Had but this new doctrine been known in those days, and Shechem pressed his point in this manner, he would doubtless have carried it, not only with good old Jacob, who feared God, but also with his sons, who as they would not have been *able*, so they would not have been *inclined* to make any opposition to the prince's inclination (whose 'soul clave unto Dinah', and who would probably have made her a good husband) had they supposed their sister legally married. But in those days, much the same sentiments were entertained on these subjects with those that prevail now: namely, that for a man, though unmarried, to entice and defile a virgin was deemed not *marriage*, but *whoredom*.

12. And so it was ages after, when that very law was given by Moses, to which he constantly appeals for the truth of his doctrine. According to Deuteronomy 22:20–21, if a man took a wife and found her not to be a virgin, she was to be brought out to the door of her father's house and stoned with stones by the men of the city till she died, 'Because she had wrought folly in Israel to play the whore in her father's house.' It is added, 'so shalt thou put away evil from among you.' Here now is another clear proof that Mr. Madan's 'only ordinance of marriage, to which', he says, 'nothing can be added, in the place of which nothing can be substituted, and upon which the laws of man can have no more effect than upon the rising of the sun or the flowing of the tide', if not preceded by other circumstances and solemnities (be they what they will), is in the judgment of Moses, and therefore of God, no better than an *act of whoredom*, and a crime worthy of death.

13. Indeed our author takes notice of this remarkable passage in the chapter wherein he treats of fornication (p. 50). 'We find', says he, 'that if a virgin gave her person to *one man*, and afterwards to *another*, though for the purpose of marriage with the second, she thereby stamped whoredom on such an action, and was to be stoned to death, Deuteronomy 20:21.' Does Mr. Madan mean that by going to another for the purpose of marriage after she was defiled, she stamped whoredom on the *first* action whereby she was defiled; or the second, whereby she intended marriage? If (he says) he means the *first*, I answer, if according to his doctrine *this* was strictly and properly *marriage*, no future deed of hers, whether good or bad, could make it whoredom, or indeed anything else but what it was. If he means the *second*, *this* as it happened after a previous marriage (as he calls it) could not be *whoredom*, which as he himself defines it, consists 'in the defilement of a married woman'. So that either way he is entirely wrong, overthrows his own exposition, and leaves this passage in full force against him.

14. Indeed as to the subject of whoredom or fornication (the former of which expression he thinks signifies the *woman's* share in the offence, and the latter that of the *man*), this gentleman is sadly perplexed, as he is also on the subject of *concubinage*. And in spite of all his efforts, the truth shows itself through the veil he labours to throw over it. He is vastly at a loss for a definition of *whoredom* (as well he may), but at length gives us one which, inadequate as it is, entirely overthrows his whole plan of doctrine. 'I would define זונה or whoredom', says he, p. 50, 'to be a woman's giving her person to a man without any intent of marriage, but either for the mere gratification of lust, or for gain, or hire; and departing from that man to others for the same purposes.' I say first, this definition is *inadequate*. It does not comprehend the whole of the subject defined. It expresses only that species of whoredom which we call *prostitution*. According to this account none could be properly called *whores* but *common prostitutes*. Whereas it appears from the instances last mentioned, I mean the case of Dinah, and that supposed by Moses, that a

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<sup>4</sup>See Gen. 34:3–21.

woman may be charged with whoredom for that very act which Mr. Madan terms marriage, though *never repeated*; that is, for delivering up her person to a man to whom she had not been *solemnly* and *formally* given in marriage, whatever might be her motive for so doing. Nay, this appears from the very passage (Genesis 38) respecting Tamar to which he refers us for the propriety of this definition. For about three months after Judah had defiled her, when it was discovered that she was with child (before it was known with whom she had any connexion), 'It was told Judah, saying, Tamar thy daughter-in-law hath played the harlot; and also behold, she is with child by whoredom. And Judah said, Bring her forth and let her be burned.' From which it is manifest that they did not in those days think it at all essential to the character of a harlot that she should 'depart from the man to whom she had first given her person to another', and that for 'the mere gratification of lust or for hire'; but that a woman merited that appellation merely for suffering herself to be defiled by a man to whom she had not been previously and formally married.

15. But secondly, inadequate as his definition is, it entirely overthrows his whole scheme. For if, as he here says, it is not *marriage* but *whoredom*, where the woman 'does not intend marriage', but 'the mere gratification of lust, or gain', and afterwards 'departs from that man to others for the same purposes'; then it is not true that (p. 24) 'the business of marriage consists in the one simple act of union'; that 'nothing else is of divine institution'; and that 'nothing else is essential to constitute a marriage in the sight of God'. Because by his own account where this has taken place, 'where a man and woman are become personally united to each other, and therefore' (as he everywhere teaches) 'are become one flesh, and are forbidden to put each other away', still if the woman 'did not intend marriage', but was induced to give up her person to this man by a desire 'to gratify lust', or if she should hereafter depart to another man, it is after all, no other than whoredom.

16. Indeed as to that circumstance, 'not intending marriage', I rather wonder Mr. Madan should suppose *it*. Because if, as he declares so often, the whole business of marriage lies 'in the union of the man and woman', a woman who gives up her person to a man certainly intends *this*, if she intends anything. If Mr. Madan thinks otherwise, I wish he would inform us what he intends. So that all the pains our author has taken to wash harlots white, after fifteen years labour and toil to prove them properly married to the men who first defiled them, after 'laying the ax to the root' in the most valiant manner and hewing down all the whoredom and fornication that had been, is, or shall be committed upon the face of the earth, has by one unlucky backstroke, given in an evil hour, demolished all he had erected and left our brothels as full of harlots, and our streets as much crowded with prostitutes as ever. So true is the old proverb, 'Truth is great and will prevail.' For in spite of all his efforts to keep it under, it emerges into light; and to the confusion of this novel system, forbids the *whore* to put herself upon a level with the *married wife*.

17. It is in perfect consistency with his scheme that Mr. Madan finds great fault with Dr. [Samuel] Johnson (p. 53) for marking in his *Dictionary* a concubine to signify 'a woman kept in fornication, a whore, a strumpet'; and is confident no such meaning of the word is to be found in the sacred Scriptures. On the contrary (he thinks) they were looked upon as *wives*, though in some respect of an inferior rank. Indeed according to his general doctrine (which he contradicts only *now* and *then*), he cannot look upon them in any other light than that of *proper wives*. For they are as truly and properly married to the men that take them, as any wives can be; and that 'by the one simple divine ordinance' (Vol. 2, p. 144), 'the obligation resulting from which is indissoluble'. Accordingly our author, in many places, finds great fault with the word *wife*, as being a redundancy of expression not to be found in the ancient languages, and recommends instead of it the simple word, *woman*—which form of expression will doubtless suit the *concubine* full as well as the *married wife*. But the misfortune is, the Scriptures, even the Hebrew Scriptures (which Mr. Madan has engaged to prove everything by), make a distinction here (as in the former case they distinguish between whoredom and adultery), and this puzzles and perplexes our ingenious and learned author not a little. In so much, that after much reasoning to and fro, he is at last obliged to confess himself 'not master enough of the subject, to define exactly, the difference between אשה a *wife*, and פילגש a *concubine* in all respects'. 'This' (only) he 'is certain' of, 'that no mark of disapprobation is set upon concubinage in the sacred Scriptures, though they speak so severely against whoredom'; and of consequence, against his whole scheme of marriage, which I have already shown to be

whoredom all over—or if not, that there neither is, nor can be, any whoredom, as distinguished from adultery.

18. And now sir, I might stop here and proceed to consider the other part of his book, which is of still worse tendency. I mean concerning polygamy, only that he has found in the books of Moses two passages which he lays particular stress upon, and makes the two pillars of his scheme. He quotes them perhaps a hundred times (if not oftener) in the course of this work, and considers them as infallible proofs of the two points he has so much at heart to establish. The one is Exodus 22:16–17, 'If a man entice a maid that is not betrothed and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife. If her father utterly refuse to give her unto him, he shall pay money according to the dowry of virgins.' The other is Deuteronomy 22:28–29, 'If a man find a damsel that is a virgin who is not betrothed and lay hold on her and lie with her and they be found, the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty shekels of silver and she shall be his wife; because he hath humbled her, he may not put her away all his days.' Now Mr. Madan, confounding the idea of *marriage* with the *remedy* that was ordained by the law of God to prevent the abuse and ruin of the sex—and not seeing the difference between the man who is *compelled* to *marry* the woman whom he hath *unlawfully* enjoyed, and the man who first *marries* her that he may *lawfully* enjoy her—considers these passage[s] as demonstrative proofs: 1) that the 'business of marriage', as he expresses himself, 'consists in *the one simple act of union* between the male and female'; and 2) as they make no exceptions in the case of a married man, that polygamy is not only *allowed*, but in some cases *commanded*. As to the first of these points (the point we are now considering), these texts I think are so far from proving it, that they prove the direct contrary. They show, indeed, what is quite agreeable to reason and nature, and what it would be well if our laws enjoined, that if a man (unmarried) should defile a maid, it was his indispensable duty to marry her, unless her father utterly refused to give her to him to be his wife; in which case he was to pay the usual sum of money given to the damsel's father as the dowry of virgins, as a small recompense for the injury he had done her. But they do not show that this 'simple act of union' (as he calls it) was to all intents and purposes a proper marriage. On the contrary, they suppose that after this union had taken place, and the virgin was really defiled, still she was not his wife, but was afterwards to be made such. For instead of saying, 'He *has* married her, she *is* his wife', it is said in Exodus, 'He shall *endow* her *to be* his wife'; and in Deuteronomy, 'The man that lay with her, shall give unto the damsel's father, fifty shekels, and she *shall* be his wife.' Which expressions plainly imply that she was not *yet* considered as his wife, but that a certain, particular ceremony was to be performed, and then afterwards he was to receive her as such—that is, supposing her father consented. For the former passage manifestly puts it into the father's power, after all that had been done, to put a negative upon it and refuse to give the man his daughter to wife, which certainly would not, *could not* have been the case, if 'the business of marriage, as at first ordained, and as left by Moses, consisted in this one simple act of union'. For how can it be supposed that God would give the damsel's father, or any man living authority to set aside his own ordinance; 'an ordinance upon which', he tells us, 'human laws have no more effect than upon the rising of the sun or the flowing of the tide'.

19. Mr. Madan indeed, is fully sensible of this difficulty, and therefore to remove it, proposes an amendment of the translation. But with what propriety, I leave the learned to judge. 'The text', he says, 'does not say, *If* the father utterly refuse to give her unto him, such marriage shall be null and void, but *though* the father utterly refuse to give her unto him, he shall pay money according to the dowry of virgins.' Thus contrary to the acknowledged meaning, and almost constant use of the word, he takes the liberty of rendering the Hebrew particle *אם* by *Though* instead of *If* (*though* her father utterly refuse), and that upon no authority at all. For though he quotes three passages (found with some difficulty in the whole Bible) where it is translated, yet even in those passages (Judges 13:16, Isaiah 10:22, Lamentations 3:32) it might with equal propriety be rendered *If*, which is its almost constant meaning in the Old Testament. But allowing him to translate the passage as he has done, still it makes nothing for his doctrine, but plainly overthrows it. 'If a man entice a maid that is not betrothed and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife'; and then it follows, 'if' or (as he would have it) 'though her father utterly refuse to give her unto him.' What? He shall take her by force? No certainly, but 'he shall', nevertheless, 'pay money according to the dowry of virgins'—viz., as a recompense for the injury he had

done her. But as to the point of *marriage*, since her father refused, he was to *drop that*.

20. But I have not yet done with these scriptures: Mr. Madan thinks them full proofs that ‘the business of marriage was left by Moses as’, he says, ‘it was first ordained, to the one simple act of union.’ That consequently ‘nothing else, no form or ceremony whatsoever, is of divine institution’. That ‘nothing else is essential to constitute a marriage in the sight of God; but that this is’ (p. 24). Now I am so far from being of his mind that I think them full proofs of the contrary. What marriage was at its first institution I shall consider by and by. At present I shall observe that these very passages, on which he lays so much stress, and makes the pillars of his scheme, not only suppose that after the simple act he speaks of had taken place the parties were still unmarried, not yet *man* and *wife* but they both expressly enjoy (as he himself allows, Vol. 2, pp. 56–57) a particular *form* or *ceremony*. For they command in express words, that the man who had defiled the virgin (as in Exodus) should *endow her*; or (as in Deuteronomy) should give unto the damsel’s father fifty shekels of silver, and this in order to his having her as a wife (לו לאשה *sibi in uxorem*, for a wife to him). Now in the former passage he is commanded to pay money ‘according to the dowry of virgins’, and as in the latter passage the sum is specified, fifty shekels of silver, it appears, by comparing the two passages together (as Mr. Madan himself says) that this was the usual dowry of virgins. It follows therefore that this whole matter was a ceremony or form of marriage appointed for a wise end—viz., that a young couple might not huddle up a match on a sudden, much less go together like two brute beasts, but might proceed in a prudent and regular manner, giving the damsel’s parents notice of their design, and if she was under age, obtaining their consent and blessing. Or suppose the sum had not been fixed, and the dowry paid had been considered as the purchase of the virgin, still the law or custom enjoining it to be paid, and that as Mr. Madan thinks in the presence of witnesses, before they could lawfully go together, would prevent their proceeding in a clandestine manner, and would render their marriages as formal and serious as ours are. And that *custom* before, and *law* after the time of Moses did so enjoin, appears from the story of Dinah, and from the passages now under consideration, as well as from many others in the Old Testament.

21. Add to this that *betrothing* and *espousing* were usually practised by them in those days, and though we are not informed particularly with regard to the form whereby this was done, yet we have reason to believe it implied a mutual contract between the parties, entered into before witnesses, with promises and solemn engagements, whereby they bound themselves to each other. And if (as Mr. Madan tells us, p. 25) according to the *former*, the woman (suppose) bound herself to the man by *verba de futuro*, ‘I will take thee to my husband;’ and according to the *latter*, by *verba de presenti*, ‘I do take thee to my husband;’ I see not (as Mr. Madan acknowledges, Vol. 2, pp. 50–51) how this, especially the latter, *espousing*, differed materially from our marriages: only that if the woman, while in her father’s house, or under age, was espoused to a man, the father, if he pleased, might put a negative upon it, and so make the matter null and void. And as on the one hand, we may challenge Mr. Madan to show *one single instance* in the whole Bible where the union he speaks of *alone* (not preceded nor accompanied by any contract or ceremony) made a woman a man’s *wife*; so on the other, I can show him an instance where a woman is said to be a man’s *wife* merely by virtue of this previous contract, called *betrothing*, though no such *personal union* had taken place. So in Deuteronomy 22:22, we have the following passage: ‘If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto a husband, and a man find her in the city and lie with her, then shall ye bring them both into the gate of that city, and shall stone them with stones that they may die: the *damsel*, because she cried not, being in the city; and the *man*, because he hath humbled his *neighbour’s wife*.’ This passage I quote from Mr. Madan’s own book, p. 63; and he adds, ‘Such is the law of the Most High, against *adultery*, or the defilement of another *man’s wife*.’ Whence I conclude that Mr. Madan himself believes at times that this *union* is not absolutely essential to constitute a marriage, but that a woman may be strictly and properly married to a husband by a mere contract, and made his wife in such a sense that the defilement of her by another man shall be deemed proper *adultery*. This one passage is, I apprehend, a sufficient confutation of his whole system: even because it prefers a *contract* of marriage, of which he makes no account, before that *union*, which he makes the only ordinance; and where a woman was bound to a man by the former it pronounces her connexion with another man by the latter (I will not say *null* and *void*, but) so complete an adultery as to deserve to be punished with death.

Now if Mr. Madan's doctrine were true; if this carnal union were absolutely essential to marriage, and 'nothing else were essential to it' (p. 24), can it be supposed that God himself would set *this* entirely aside, merely because of a preceding contract? Can it be supposed that, where this had *not* taken place, he should declare a woman to be married; and where it *had* taken place, that he should sentence her to die for having *committed adultery*? So little reason has Mr. Madan to appeal to the Scripture respecting this subject!

22. I have already shown that according to one part of his doctrine a man could never know whether he *himself* was married or not. But another, according to this doctrine in every part, should be quite uncertain as to *others*, whether they are married. For there can be but two ways of knowing this: either: 1) the *word* or *oath* of one or both the parties must be taken; or, 2) men and women must go together like male and female brutes in open daylight, and before witnesses. If Mr. Madan is consistent with himself, he will adopt this latter mode of transacting the business, and it must be confessed it would sufficiently answer the end. Only that he has inadvertently forgot himself, and said something about *motives, ends, and intentions*, which will still render it an absolute uncertainty whether what we see with our eyes is marriage, or merely an act of whoredom. Because it seems if this woman who thus modestly yields up her person before witnesses 'does not intend marriage, but the mere gratification of lust, ...' or 'shall hereafter depart from him to another man', it is after all no better than whoredom.

23. But perhaps Mr. Madan may prefer the former method—viz., to refer the decision of the matter to the *word* or *oath* of one or both the parties. With regard to which, it is easy to see what a flood-gate it would open for lying, perjury, and a thousand other evils. For only suppose his system to take place, and marriage to be reduced to his 'only ordinance'; suppose all external rites and ceremonies, forms and contracts to be abolished or declared unnecessary, and this *union* alone to be deemed essential; and what would be the consequence? Why, that all restraints, whether of conscience or human laws, being taken off, many (who, influenced by these principles, now keep themselves chaste, in a single life, or make prudent matches) in the hours of temptation would marry (that is, would commit fornication) most rashly and imprudently; not only to the great grief of their parents, but to their own present and everlasting undoing. Men, whether married or single it matters not, whom the fear of God or a fear of shame now restrains, would entice unthinking virgins, and they knowing it quite lawful to marry 'the men of their own choice', would yield to their desires, whence marriages innumerable would spring up (like mushrooms) in a night, and as short-lived as they. For as there would be no witnesses of the fact, they would only have to keep it secret, if it was not convenient to avow or continue their connexion. Or if one of the parties (the woman suppose) should conceive a dislike to the other, or should think the match not good enough, or for any other reason should change her mind, she has only to swear, when he gives out he has married her, that it is false and that she has had nothing to do with him, and the matter is at an end. And should she prove with child, she may then take a second oath, and swear that my Lord —, or Sir —, married her by God's only ordinance at such a time and place, and behold she commences a wife or a lady at once, and my lord, to his great surprise, finds himself in possession of a wife and a child too. It avails not for him to protest the woman is an entire stranger to him, and that he never saw her with his eyes. The law enjoins that her oath shall be deemed evidence sufficient. And hence, whether he will or no, he must acknowledge, and maintain as a wife, the woman for whom he has no affection, and must receive another man's child as the heir of all his estate. Hence it appears that this is a most pernicious doctrine, and pregnant with the greatest evil, temporal and eternal, as having a manifest tendency to remove the only remaining checks of licentiousness, the fear of God and human laws, and to open a door for lying, perjury, and all secret abominations. As sure therefore as decency, sobriety, and truth are from God, and not brutality, confusion, and falsehood, so sure is our author's doctrine not from God, but from Beelzebub, Belial, or some unclean devil who abhors the small remains of purity and order yet found among men, and longs to make the whole earth a scene of villainy and confusion, a mere brothel or common stew.

The only account that we have of the first institution of marriage is contained in the second chapter of the book of Genesis. 'And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone, I will make a helpmeet for him. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he

slept; and he took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh instead thereof, and of the rib made he a woman, and *brought her unto the man*. And Adam said, *This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh*. She shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man. *Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh*, or (as our Lord expresses it, Matthew 19), 'they twain shall be one flesh'; where he also adds, 'what God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.'

Here we have a true and full account of the first marriage that ever was made, and the only account of it extant in any language under heaven. And will Mr. Madan say that 'here is no hint or most distant allusion to any outward rite or ceremony administered by any person whatsoever'? Then I ask what he makes of the following words, 'The Lord God', the only father of the woman, 'brought her unto the man?' Is there no most distant allusion to any outward form or ceremony in this? Does it no way resemble what the apostle speaks of, the *fathers giving their daughters in marriage*?

Again, was Adam *married* or *unmarried* when he said, 'This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh?' If he says he was *unmarried*, then I demand how he came to use those words which Mr. Madan declares so often are peculiar to the marriage union? If he says he was *married*, then I insist upon it he was married before he had that union with his wife, which Mr. Madan makes the only marriage ordinance. For he is represented by Moses as uttering those words immediately upon Eve's being brought to him by his Creator, before he could have any such union with her.

But that expression, 'A man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife,' Mr. Madan is confident means this union. With regard to which I observe, I am quite of another mind. First, because this is expressed more properly (if it is expressed at all) in the next clause, 'They two shall be one flesh', and in writing so concise a history Moses is not wont to mention the same thing twice over in one half sentence. Secondly, because this clause is brought in by way of antithesis (or opposition) to the preceding, 'A man shall leave father and mother', can only imply the commencement of a new union, of a similar kind with, though superior to that which he had had with those near relations. And thirdly, because it was beneath the dignity and character of our Lord, and of Adam while in a state of innocency, to dwell so much as this author would make them on the lowest part of the marriage union, and in the meantime not so much as to mention what is more noble and exalted, as well as of much greater consequence to the happiness of a married couple, which is, a *rational, pure, and constant* affection; a cleaving to each other in mind and heart, all the days of their life. Add to this that the very same Hebrew phrase is used to signify 'cleaving to the Lord' (Deuteronomy 4:4 and Joshua 23:8) as the Greek phrase (Acts 5:36) is to express the 'being joined to' a leader. It is therefore certain that our learned gentleman's criticism is of no value, any further than as it is a curiosity and will afford matter of entertainment for the lewd and wanton.

24. But it is no wonder that Mr. Madan should make 'the whole business of marriage' to consist in what is merely carnal; for as to anything *rational* and *spiritual*, any union of hearts and interests (which is the soul of marriage, without which it differs from itself as a dead corpse differs from a living man) *that* is entirely precluded by his scheme of polygamy, which, wherever it takes place, must render every expectation of anything of that kind absurd and preposterous.<sup>5</sup>

But that he should press our first parent Adam, while yet in a state of innocency, and the holy and blessed Jesus into his party, and bring them in as countenancing the same beastly doctrine, is indeed to be wondered at. However I think any man who knows anything of conjugal love, whose heart is knit by an indissoluble tie of strong affection to the object of his choice, the woman he prefers to all others in the world, will hear these words of Adam and of Christ with very different emotions from those felt by this author. And when it is pronounced, 'For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and shall cleave to

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<sup>5</sup>Note in original: 'I am told the following lines were spoken extempore, by a mad woman in Bedlam, upon hearing of Mr. Madan's scheme of polygamy.

If John marry Mary and Mary *alone*, / It is a good *match* between Mary and John: / But if John marry more wives, what blows and what scratches? / 'Tis no longer a *match*, but a *bundle of matches*.

his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh,' he will no more understand merely *an union of bodies* by the expression, 'He shall cleave to his wife,' than he will understand *a separation of bodies* by the former expression, 'He shall leave father and mother,' or than he will infer the *lawfulness of polygamy* from the last clause, 'they *twain* shall be one flesh.' Such was marriage at its first institution, the most perfect friendship, the most intimate union, an union not of bodies merely, but of souls also and of interests. And so far as marriage, in this fallen state, is still calculated to add to the happiness of mankind, it must partake of its original nature, and retain so much of what is rational and spiritual, as not to degenerate into a mere carnal affair. Unless it be supposed that the pleasures of the body exceed those of the soul, and that the brute creatures are more happily married than the human race. *Married*, I say; for if (as he says, p. 21) 'marriage, as instituted by God simply consists in the union of the man and woman in one body'; if this alone constitutes a *proper marriage*; if no mutual choice, no previous *consent* or *contract* between the parties be at all necessary; I see no reason why *brute beasts* may not with as much propriety be said to be *married* as men and women. And then as polygamy is practised among them, an additional argument might be drawn from hence to prove that it may also be practised among us. This certainly follows upon his scheme, which in this respect verifies the words of Solomon, and leaves a 'man no preeminence above a beast'.<sup>6</sup>

Upon the whole it manifestly appears that the personal union of the male and female, in carnal knowledge of each other, does not constitute a proper marriage; but that there must be a previous contract entered into between the parties, and signified before witnesses who can attest it to the world. Accordingly Malachi 2:14, a man's wife is termed his companion (הברתך, *socia*) and the wife of *his covenant*; plainly implying a covenant or contract to have taken place between them. As to the particular *mode* or *form* whereby this is done, I apprehend that is of little signification. But some kind of form has been deemed necessary for the preservation of decency and order in all nations and ages, and has accordingly been established by law, among all who have pretended to any degree of civilization. Under the Old Testament, some forms were judged essential to an honourable alliance, by the patriarchs and saints, as appears from Ruth 4:10–13, compared with Tobit 7:13–14, and some other passages. Indeed Mr. Madan cannot help allowing that human ordinances have excellent use, and in this mixed state of things, are necessary to maintain order and decency (p. 40). Hence it will follow that all marriages which are made without some form or other, in this mixed state of things, are made without decency and order, and of consequence without God, to whom decency and order belong, and not brutality and confusion.

I am, reverend and dear sir,

Your servant in Christ,

J. B.

## Letter II

Reverend Sir,

1. Having considered the former part of Mr. Madan's treatise, concerning marriage, I proceed to the other, respecting polygamy.

2. 'By polygamy' (p. 75) our author means, what he says; 'the word literally imports *the having and cohabiting* with more than one wife at a time; whether taken together, or first one and then another'. It is true in a note he says, 'Polygamy, strictly speaking, is of two sorts; either when one woman promiscuously admits of more husbands than one, or when one man is at the same time joined in marriage to more than one woman.' But the former of these (he says) is too abhorrent from reason and Scripture to admit of a single argument in its favour. Yet it will not be easy to persuade women that they have not as good a right to have a plurality of husbands as men have to marry a plurality of wives. And were these also allowed, all order and decency would vanish from among men, and a promiscuous intercourse of the sexes take place, in as great a degree as among the beasts that perish.

3. But supposing this mutual breach of the conjugal tie not to take place, yet the system of our

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<sup>6</sup>Eccles. 3:19.

author manifestly tends to break the peace of families, to destroy all harmony between (not only the husband and his first wife but also) all the different members of a household, and to introduce anarchy and confusion wherever it is adopted. This was certainly the case of old in all the families where polygamy was practised. The most perfect harmony subsisted between the members of Abraham's family till, through an over-eagerness for a child, he was induced to take another wife, and then jealousy, strife, and contention took place. Jacob, who seems to have had no intention to have married more than one wife, being beguiled by Laban into polygamy, was a daily witness of the discord which the jealousy and envy of his wives and children occasioned. The same may be affirmed concerning Elkanah, David, Solomon, and perhaps every polygamist mentioned in the Scriptures. They all suffered severely for their folly, in not adhering to the simplicity of the divine ordinance. And I doubt, whoever shall be disposed, in consequence of our author's arguments, to imitate their example, will have no cause to thank him for his doctrine.

4. I do not mean to rest the weight of my arguments against polygamy on the representations above given of its consequences, though I believe them perfectly just. But they are a sufficient answer to the display which Mr. Madan gives of the advantages of his scheme. There is a passage of scripture which intimates the same mischievous effects of polygamy, and seems to ground a prohibition of this practice on one of those effects. The marginal reading of Leviticus 18:18 is, 'Thou shalt not take one wife to another, to vex her in her lifetime.' This translation is quite as proper as that which our translators have put into the text, 'Thou shalt not take a wife to her sister'—as the learned reader may see by consulting the following passages in the original, Genesis 26:31, Exodus 26:3, Ezekiel 1:9 and 3:13, and Joel 2:8. And the reason of the prohibition holds equally good in both cases, or rather it concludes more strongly in the former than in the latter; as it is probable two sisters would live together upon better terms than two entire strangers. This sense of the passage seems to be confirmed by the Chaldee paraphrast, who comments as follows on Ruth 4:6, 'It is out of my power to redeem it, because I have a wife already, nor is it lawful for me to marry another, lest *strife* should arise in my family, and my possessions be injured. Do thou therefore redeem it since thou hast no wife. I am unable to redeem it.' [John] Selden's *Uxor Heb[raica]*.

5. As to what Mr. Madan says, that to render the passage thus 'would entirely disunite the 18th verse from the preceding to which it belongs', it is a mere begging of the question. Because he cannot show that this verse belongs to the preceding without first establishing the meaning of the original to be as it is rendered by our translators. For anything that he can show to the contrary, the subject respecting the unlawfulness of marrying within certain degrees of consanguinity, may be quite finished at the 17th verse, and the 18th may treat of another matter, as the marginal reading supposes, and as it is certain all the following verses do, to the end of the chapter. If it be objected that it is hardly to be supposed so express a prohibition of polygamy should be given in the books of Moses, which in many places seem to allow it; I answer, Moses as a faithful historian has not only recorded many things concerning the ancient patriarchs which are worthy of praise, but also many that deserve blame, and polygamy among the rest. And I will venture to affirm there is not in the whole law of Moses any one express allowance of it.

6. Yes (says Mr. Madan) Deuteronomy 21:15ff. is an express demonstration of God's allowance of polygamy, 'If a man have two wives, one beloved and another hated, and they have borne him children, both the beloved and the hated'. In answer to this, permit me to ask Mr. Madan whether he does not think that Deuteronomy 24:1 contains an express allowance of divorce for every cause? 'When a man hath taken a wife and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, then let him write her a bill of divorcement and put it into her hand, and send her out of his house.' He will say, 'No. The passage is wrong translated, it is hypothetical only, and introductory to that law mentioned [in] ver. 4. It should be rendered thus, "If a man hath taken a wife, or a woman, and married her; and if he write her a bill of divorce ...."' Just so, I say *this passage* is hypothetical, and only introductory to the positive law contained in the 16th and 17th verses. It only supposes such a custom might exist among so hard-hearted and fickle a people as the Jews; and in case it should, it provides against some of its pernicious consequences.

7. Besides, let me ask Mr. Madan how he will prove that the hated wife was not dismissed by a



bill of divorcement, but still cohabited with the husband that hated her? It seems far more likely that he had sent her away, especially as he might do it very easily; or she, or both of them might be dead, and perhaps never lived together with the same husband, but were taken, first one and then the other, after her death or dismissal. For the passage may be translated, as it is by Montanus, 'If there should have been to a man two wives, one beloved, and the other hated.' So that this passage does not contain any proof at all of God's allowance of polygamy. And inasmuch as, by Mr. Madan's own confession it is the strongest passage for the purpose to be found in the Old Testament, if this does not amount to a proof of it, we may be sure none does.

8. But supposing Mr. Madan could prove that polygamy was expressly allowed in the law of Moses, as well as practised by some great and good men under that dispensation. Yet can he be ignorant that it is everywhere supposed throughout the Scriptures that this dispensation was imperfect and therefore temporary? For 'if it had been faultless, no place', as the apostle argues, 'would have been found for another.' I shall not therefore lose any time in examining the various passages he has quoted from the Old Testament in favour of his doctrine, though it might be easily shown that most of them are little to his purpose. But I shall set aside the whole by showing, in opposition to what he has asserted a hundred times over, that the Lord Jesus *is* the author of a new law, and has brought in another and more perfect dispensation. And thus I shall undermine his whole fabric, and lay it level with the ground. Mr. Madan seems to have been very apprehensive of an attack on this quarter, and conscious that it is his weak side, he has taken infinite pains to strengthen it by arguments fetched from all parts. But alas, to how little purpose! As I shall soon make appear.

9. Mr. Madan treats it everywhere as an absurd, and even blasphemous position that polygamy, though allowed under the law of Moses, is forbidden under the gospel. He asserts over and over again that Christ neither *did* nor *could* change the law of Moses, and spends a whole chapter, containing near a hundred pages, in labouring to prove that Christ is *not the author of a new law*. Indeed this is a point he dwells much upon in both his volumes. And if he leaves it for a while, he fails not to return to it again, and seems never tired of repeating the same things over and over concerning it. So that if I were to quote all he says on this head, I might transcribe almost half of what he has written. I shall therefore content myself with producing a few passages, which will be sufficient to show I neither mistake nor misrepresent him.

10. Mr. Madan first tells us what he means by the law (p. 69). 'By the book of the law I mean the Pentateuch, or five books of Moses. To this the great apostle evidently refers, Galatians 3:10, when he says, "Cursed is everyone who continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." Our Lord's forerunner, John the Baptist declared the law was given by Moses. There is therefore no law but that which was given by God to Moses, nor was any new law enacted after the canon of the Pentateuch was closed by the death of Moses. The distinction and difference of moral good and evil were then unalterably fixed, and the nature of both invariably to remain the same. "What God doth, it shall be forever. Nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it. And God doth it that men should fear before him." With regard to this law he affirms (p. 79), 'Christ, so far from altering, changing, or destroying the law delivered from God by Moses, enters a caveat against such a supposition, Matthew 5:17–18. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, not one jot or one tittle shall pass away from the law till all things be fulfilled." This not only stamps unchangeableness upon the law, but on its import, sense, and meaning, as one and the same throughout; as an invariable rule of life, for the members of God's visible church upon earth, even to the least jot and tittle.' (p. 73): 'God is one, and his will is one. Therefore this, no more than himself, can know any alteration, diminution or change. What was law at the beginning, will be law to the end.' (p. 127): 'The New Testament was not to introduce a new law, concerning this or anything else. Nothing is to be found there which was not in the Old Testament.' (p. 251): 'When therefore I hear of a doctrine as taught in the New Testament, I am certain if it be true it must accord with the scriptures of the Old Testament. Thither I carry it. If I find it does not exactly tally with what I find there, I am certain it is false, and must arise from some misconception, and of course some misinterpretation of the passage where it is supposed to be found. I am told sin is a transgression of the law. When I hear it asserted that

polygamy is sinful, I consult the law. If it be forbidden there, I agree to the sinfulness of it. If not forbidden there, but allowed, I find myself reduced to this dilemma: either the asserter of such a proposition (who says he takes it from the New Testament) is mistaken, which is probable, or the New Testament contradict the law, which is impossible. With respect to what is frequently urged among Christians against polygamy, that though it was allowed by the law of Moses, it was forbidden by the law of Christ, by which Christ is made a repealer of the old and the giver of a new law: it so affects his character as the Messiah as to render him, if it be true, not the person which Moses and the prophets represent him, or what he represents himself to be. The discussion therefore of this horrid position requires and shall have a chapter by itself.'

Such, sir, is the foundation on which our author builds his scheme. That there are texts in the New Testament which forbid polygamy, he dare not deny. And that they have been understood as prohibiting it by all Christians in all ages, he often acknowledges. But then he contends they have been misunderstood, because polygamy was practised by good men of old, and was allowed in the law of Moses. And to suppose that the Lord Jesus or his apostles condemned it is to suppose they condemned a large generation of God's children, and changed the law of Moses, which to suppose is absurd and blasphemous. On this ground he sets himself to examine those passages, and after much toil and labour he at last forces a sense upon them which, however far fetched, will pass pretty well with those who incline from other motives to adopt his scheme.

You see, sir, the passages I have quoted are not mere assertions. They contain something like arguments here and there. But I venture to say if the arguments interwoven have any weight at all, they will prove that circumcision, the law of sacrifices, and every part of the Mosaic economy is still in force, and obligatory upon all nations and ages; insomuch that 'cursed is everyone' (for in this sense he over and over quotes those words) 'who continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them'. And thus do we return to the beggarly elements of the world, and take upon us a yoke which neither the Jews nor their fathers could bear.

11. To convince you, sir, that I do not in the least exaggerate matters, I will put two or three of Mr. Madan's assertions in the mouth of a Jew, and suppose him to be arguing for circumcision and the other ceremonies of the law of Moses.

'Ye Christians tell us that the Messiah is come already, and that it is in vain to look for another. But let me inform you, whether he be come or not, your Jesus is not the Messiah. For your Jesus hath taught you that circumcision and the whole ritual law of Moses is abolished, which is absurd and impossible. For, not to mention that the covenant of circumcision is expressly said (Genesis 17:7) to be an *everlasting* covenant, and the Aaronical priesthood to be an *unchangeable* priesthood, even one of your own authors can show you (p. 129) that "God's law is his will, and his will is his law, a change of one must infer a change in the other, and either of these a change in himself; an idea which is wholly irreconcilable with the scripture character of God, who hath said, 'I Jehovah change not.'"

'Let us (p. 249) carry what you say about your Jesus setting aside circumcision, and the other ceremonies of the law, to the Old Testament. "If it exactly tallies with that, we may be sure it is right, if otherwise it must be false, because the mind of God can never vary, disagree with, or contradict itself." When therefore (p. 251) a doctrine is taught by you, "I am certain, if it be true, it must accord with the scriptures of the Old Testament. Thither I carry it. If I find it does not exactly tally with what I find there, I am certain it is false." It is taught by you that Jesus of Nazareth is the true Messiah, and yet you affirm he hath abolished circumcision, and the law of sacrifices. Now if this were true, it would accord with the scriptures of the Old Testament. But does it accord with them? No certainly. It is expressly contrary to them. Whence it follows that your doctrine is false, and that Jesus is not the Messiah. "With respect to what is frequently urged" (p. 252) "against" circumcision "among Christians, that though it was enjoined by the law of Moses, it is forbidden by the law of Christ, by which" your Jesus "is made the repealer of the old, and the giver of a new law, it so affects his character as the Messiah, as to render him not the person which Moses and the prophets represent him to be." As for the Messiah, we expect (p. 361) he will no more "give a new law to mortals, than he will give a new law to angels."

16.<sup>7</sup> Now I refer it to any man of common sense, whether the Jew does not reason as fairly as Mr. Madan, and whether if these principles be allowed, it be not easy to prove that the New Testament is a lie and Christianity an imposture. If Mr. Madan contends that the case is not parallel, because polygamy belongs to the *moral* law, whereas circumcision is a mere ceremonial institution, I demand then *first* why, in asserting the *perpetuity* and *unchangeableness* of the law, he expressed himself in terms which comprehend *every part* of the Mosaic economy? And I undertake *secondly*, to give him an instance of a change made by Christ, in a matter which is at least as much a part of the moral law as polygamy, and that is *divorce*. This was certainly allowed for very trifling reasons under the Mosaic dispensation, at least as much as polygamy was allowed. For supposing we translate Deuteronomy 24:1–4 as Mr. Madan himself would have it translated, viz., ‘When a man hath taken a wife and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her, and he write her a bill of divorcement and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house, and she shall have departed out of his house, and she go and be another man’s wife, and the latter husband hate her and write her a bill of divorcement, her former husband may not take her again ....’ I say, supposing we translate the passage thus, yet still it contains a more express allowance of divorce for every cause than Deuteronomy 21:15–17, translated even as it is in our Bible, does of polygamy. And we have the authority of our Lord for believing that Moses (that is, the *law of Moses*) ‘suffered the Jews to put away their wives’, though from the beginning it was not so.

17. Mr. Madan indeed, would fain persuade us that Moses ‘gave this permission, as a *politician*’, independent of God, who he is confident never allowed it. And he lays much stress on the word *suffered*, found in the passage as recorded by St. Matthew; as if our Lord intended by using this word both to reprove the Pharisees for saying, ‘Moses *had commanded* to give a writing of divorcement,’ and also to signify that Moses had only *connived* at this practice, but never authorized it. Now to be convinced what a *partial* and *unfair* representation of the matter this is, we have only to turn to the gospel of St. Mark, where we read as follows: ‘The Pharisees came to him and asked, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? And he answered, What did Moses *command* you? And they said, Moses *suffered* him to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away: and Jesus said, for the hardness of your hearts, he wrote you this *precept*’, τὴν ἐντολὴν ταύτην, ‘*this command*.’ Here you see, reverend sir, the exact reverse of what we read in Matthew as to phraseology. The Pharisees use the word ἐπέτρεψε, *suffered* or *permitted*; and our Lord the words ἐνετείλατο, *commanded*, and ἐντολὴν, *command*. Whence it appears that the inspired writers, lay no such stress upon *words* as this author would make us believe, but regard rather the *sense* and *meaning* of what the Lord uttered. And in the passage before us they manifestly use the words ἐνετείλατο (*commanded*) and ἐπέτρεψε *suffered* indiscriminately for the very same idea.

18. Now to suppose that Moses *suffered*, *allowed*, or *commanded* the divorces in question from motives of policy, without the authority of God, is to suppose that some part of the law of Moses was given by *himself*, and some part of it by *God*. And if so, it is surely of deep importance to be able to distinguish properly on this head, lest we should confound *Moses* with his *Maker*, and the precepts which are *merely human* with those that are *wholly divine*. Mr. Madan therefore would do well to furnish us with a proper and infallible criterion whereby to judge in this case. The truth is, this notion of our author (of a piece with the rest of his book) is plainly repugnant to the whole Scriptures, which everywhere represent Moses as the servant of God, doing nothing of himself, but everything by divine authority, and in the execution of his trust as being ‘faithful in all his house’.<sup>8</sup> His laws therefore were not the laws of man, but *one* and *all* the laws of God.

With regard to the subject before us, I may further observe that it is very manifest from Isaiah 50:1 and Jeremiah 3:1, as well as many other passages in the Old Testament, that to ‘put away one’s wife’ for other causes than adultery was allowed under that dispensation, and accordingly very generally

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<sup>7</sup>The numbering jumps from ‘11’ to ‘16’. It appears that either JW (purposefully) or the printer (inadvertently) elided four sections of Benson’s manuscript.

<sup>8</sup>Heb. 3:5.

practised among the Jews even until the time of Christ. Nay, and our Lord's disciples were so possessed with an opinion of its lawfulness that they expressed the utmost astonishment at hearing him condemn it. 'If the case of a man', say they, 'be so with his wife' (that is, if he is not at liberty to put her away when he will), 'it is not good to marry'; which circumstance plainly shows what was the received opinion of the Jews, even of such as were pious, on the subject.

19. Here then is a law manifestly of a moral nature, expressly allowing a man to put away his wife for other causes than adultery. Now apply Mr. Madan's reasoning to this subject, and if it does not conclude as forcibly for this as the other, we may venture to give up the cause to him. Let us therefore make the trial, applying the very words, as far as the nature of the subject will admit, to *divorce*, which he has used in arguing for polygamy.

'By divorce' (p. 75) 'I would be understood to mean the putting away one's wife for any cause which may render her disagreeable.' 'It was this' (p. 76) 'which was allowed of God, Deuteronomy 24:1ff. consequently' (for who would cohabit with a woman he did not like?) 'practised by his people.' 'When a man hath taken a wife', says God, by Moses, 'and hath married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, then let him write' (or and he write) 'her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house.' It is true this was practised before, and that by holy men, as by Abraham, who put away his wife Hagar (and that after she had borne him a son) in obedience to the command of God, who said, 'Cast out the bondwoman and her son.' But it was not reduced into a law till now. But now being enjoined or tolerated by authority, and being so agreeable to the fickle and changeable mind of man, whom nothing can please long, we may be sure it would be practised by thousands, and that of all characters and ranks. It is true it seems to be condemned by Christ in the New Testament. 'But' (p. 77) 'if we interpret that passage, Matthew 19, as such an explanation of God's law from the beginning, as will serve to prove that all who put away their wives for any other cause than adultery cause them to commit adultery, we must condemn a large generation of God's dearest servants and children; and instead of believing that all these died in faith, we must say that many of them died in a state of disobedience and unbelief.' But indeed (p. 79), 'Christ so far from altering, changing or destroying the law, that he enters a caveat against such a supposition, Matthew 5:17, which not only stamps unchangeableness upon the law, but upon its import, sense, and meaning, as one and the same throughout all ages and generations, as an invariable rule of life for the members of God's visible church upon earth, even to the least jot or tittle.' As to the passage in Matthew, 'If it were meant to condemn the putting away one's wife for any cause it amounts so far to a contradiction, or rather repeal, of the old law which permitted it. And then more than a jot or tittle has passed from the law. If it means that it was always sinful and against the law of God, it condemns, as was before observed, all that ever practised it, and falls heavy' (no doubt) 'on some great saints, renowned for faith and holiness.' And now I appeal to any judicious person if Mr. Madan's reasoning concerning the unchangeableness of the law is of any weight, and proves that polygamy is still lawful (that is, supposing we allow it was permitted of old), whether it does not prove with equal evidence that it is still lawful to put away one's wife for any cause, especially as Mr. Madan has shown, pp. 182–83, 'that if a woman has a bad temper, or is refractory and disobedient, to separate from her and marry another, is a point of necessity which of consequence is under the control of no law'.

20. But Mr. Madan says, 'As to the divorces which Moses permitted' (Vol. 2, p. 23), 'it was a mere toleration to avoid worse consequences if those hard-hearted Jews had been forced to keep their hated wives. It was no repeal, or even suspension of God's positive law, but only operated as an exemption from the censure of the magistrate.' And as to Deuteronomy 24:1–4, he observes in a note on p. 87, Vol. 1, 'that the custom of putting away wives is in that place neither approved by Moses nor plainly condemned, but left, as it were, indifferent. And the observation of our Saviour, that this permission was given by Moses because of the hardness of their hearts, sufficiently makes it appear that the Mosaical indulgence doth not amount to an approbation, but signifies only a bare toleration, or connivance, exempting from civil punishment.' Now apply these observations to polygamy, and you have, at once, a true reason why it was connived at under that imperfect dispensation, and also a sufficient answer to every argument Mr. Madan has brought from the Old Testament in favour of it. 'It was only

tolerated to avoid worse consequences, if that fickle and lewd people had been confined to one wife each. There was no repeal or even suspension of God's law from the beginning, whereby one male was bound to one female; but only by an exception from the censure of the magistrate.' And as to Deuteronomy 21:15ff., the 'custom of marrying more wives than one is in that place neither approved by Moses, nor plainly condemned, but left, as it were, indifferent.' And the observation of our Saviour respecting divorce, which is equally true of polygamy, 'that this permission was given by Moses, because of the "hardness of their hearts", sufficiently intimates that the Mosaical indulgence doth not amount to an approbation, but signifies only a bare toleration, exempting from civil punishment'.

21. And now let Mr. Madan take the side he likes best. Let him either give up his whole argument from the law of Moses, in favour of polygamy, and allow us to believe (as he says of divorce, Vol. 2, p. 12), 'that these are things peculiar to the Jews at that time, and cannot concern us, because as we live under the general law against polygamy, delivered, Genesis 2:24, which equally binds all mankind. It is most assuredly unlawful for us to marry more wives than one.' Or let him allow us to plead for circumcision and divorce on the same footing. To this dilemma we tie him down, and defy him to avoid one side or the other of it. As to example, though I reverence in many things the character of Abraham, Jacob, David, Solomon, and some other polygamists mentioned in the Old Testament; and though I believe the two former of them Abraham and Jacob, were both led into polygamy undesignedly, when they intended nothing less (Abraham by his unthinking wife, through her overeager desire of a child, and Jacob by his crafty and idolatrous father-in-law, Laban, in whose country polygamy seems to have been customary, and who wished to have both his daughters married to this prosperous man); and though I think, they were all influenced by a desire of multiplying the holy seed, which rendered their case somewhat excusable; yet I believe they are not wholly to be defended in thus deviating from the original law of marriage; any more than some of them are to be defended in deviating from the original law of truth, decency, and love, in their equivocating, lying, acting the madman, or cursing their enemies, of which one might give several instances. But we have cause to be thankful that we live under a better dispensation, attended with clearer light and greater privileges, and pregnant with brighter examples; and may wonder Mr. Madan, a preacher of the gospel of Christ, should be so little acquainted with that economy of which he is a minister as not to know that though 'the law made nothing perfect, yet the bringing in of a better hope did';<sup>9</sup> and that gospel purity is by no means to be measured by Jewish attainments. What is it to us what Jacob, David, or Solomon did under their twilight dispensation? So far as they did right, it is our duty to follow them. But wherein they did wrong they are no examples to us.

22. As to the instances Mr. Madan produces of God's blessing some of these after-marriages as much as the first, and the second women being some of them chosen to be the ancestors of Christ, if this argument proves anything, it will prove too much. It will prove the lawfulness of incest, adultery, and murder. For it may be said on this ground Judah's incest with his daughter Tamar was so owned and approved by God, that she brought forth twins in consequence of that act, one of whom was the ancestor of Christ. And David's taking Bathsheba, though attended with the murder of Uriah, was so countenanced and blessed by God, that she was chosen in preference to all David's wives to be the mother of Solomon, both an eminent type and progenitor of Christ; and also, save in the matter of polygamy, the wisest king that ever lived. So that there would be no end of this way of arguing. It might be carried any length. Allowing then Mr. Madan to make the best of this argument, it will only prove that those who in that shadowy dispensation, influenced by custom (to which unhappy Lamech had given birth), practised it, did not *knowingly* and *wilfully* commit sin, and therefore [were] not rejected by God. But it will never prove that it is equally excusable, and may be practised with as little blame under a clearer and more perfect dispensation, wherein the law of marriage that was from the beginning, being fully explained by Christ, is better understood.

23. Inasmuch as the superior glory of the Christian dispensation above the Jewish is a subject of which our author has little or no knowledge; and inasmuch as his ignorance of it is at the bottom of all the

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<sup>9</sup>Heb. 7:19.

destructive errors maintained in these volumes; I beg your patience, sir, while I dwell a little upon it, referring those who desire further information, to Mr. [John] Fletcher's *Checks [on Antinomianism]*, and to your sermons and tracts on the subject.

As to the Mosaic dispensation, it is represented everywhere in the Scripture as imperfect. God declares by his prophet that 'he gave them statutes which were not good and judgments that were not righteous'.<sup>10</sup> St. Peter affirms, it 'was a yoke which neither they nor their fathers could bear'.<sup>11</sup> St. Paul affirms, 'it could not make the comers thereunto perfect, that it could not perfect the worshipper, as pertaining to the conscience, and that there was a disannulling of the commandment, going before, because of the unprofitableness of it,' for 'that the law made nothing perfect'.<sup>12</sup> He assures us that if 'the first covenant had been faultless, no place would have been found for a second, but finding fault with this, he says, Behold the day is come, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers, when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt'.<sup>13</sup> And referring to the time when this covenant should take place, the Lord declares by the prophet Zechariah, 'He that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David, and the house of David as God', (viz., conformed to God), 'as the angel of the Lord before them'.<sup>14</sup> And no wonder, for the 'Holy Ghost was not then', fully 'given', either as a Spirit of truth or of holiness, 'because Jesus was not then glorified'.<sup>15</sup> But as soon as the gospel dispensation was completed and the Spirit fully given, then, 'what the law of Moses could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God having sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in those who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit'.<sup>16</sup> And examples appeared, such as were not to be found in former times, men who could say in their measure, 'As he was so are we in this world';<sup>17</sup> and 'Be ye followers of us as we also are of Christ'.<sup>18</sup>

24. Therefore when he asserts, p. 327, and again p. 346, 'that the idea of Christ's setting up a more excellent law than that contained in the books of Moses is replete with folly and blasphemy'; and p. 328, that it 'goes beyond folly and borders on madness'; and p. 300 calls it, 'horrible blasphemy', it is plain he neither understands what he says, nor whereof he affirms. And it is well for him that blasphemy against the Son of man may be forgiven. Indeed the whole plan adopted by our author of explaining, not the Old Testament by the New (which has been the common method), but the New by the Old, as it is quite new and extraordinary, so it reflects a dishonour upon Christ and his apostles not to be endured by Christians. For it implies that instead of answering the character given of them as casting light upon a dark dispensation, by supplying what was wanting to complete the revelation of God's will to mankind, they 'darkened counsel by words without knowledge',<sup>19</sup> uttering nothing but what had need to be carried to the Old Testament for explanation. On this plan it may be asked, Whereto then serveth the gospel? What valuable end does this *second* and *after* part of divine revelation answer? It seems it neither teaches any new doctrine nor explains any formerly taught. What use then shall we make of it? Nay, but inasmuch as the New Testament was given *after* the Old, and was intended to be a *fuller* and *clearer*

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<sup>10</sup>Ezek. 20:25.

<sup>11</sup>Acts 15:10.

<sup>12</sup>Cf. Heb. 10:1–2, 7:18–19.

<sup>13</sup>Cf. Heb. 8:7–9.

<sup>14</sup>Zech. 12:8.

<sup>15</sup>John 7:39.

<sup>16</sup>Rom. 8:34.

<sup>17</sup>1 John 4:7.

<sup>18</sup>Cf. 1 Cor. 11:1.

<sup>19</sup>Job 38:2.

discovery of God's will to mankind, it would be much more consonant with reason and truth to retort our author's argument, and to say, 'Let us Christians carry what we hear from Mr. Madan concerning polygamy, to the New Testament. If it exactly tallies with that, we may be sure it is a right interpretation of the Old. If otherwise, it must be false. Because the mind of God can never vary, disagree with, or contradict itself.' This we shall accordingly do, by and by, and as we shall undoubtedly find it prohibited in the New Testament we may, according to our author's reasoning, conclude from thence that it is also forbidden in the Old.

25. As to what he affirms, p. 169, 'that David died as really a Christian believer as St. Paul did', I beg leave to dissent from him, and impute his assertion to his want of a better acquaintance with that gospel of which he is a minister. The truth is, David was not a Christian believer at all. He was a Jewish believer, and no more. He believed in a messiah to come, and like all the Old Testament saints, only saw the promises afar off, even the promise of Christ to come in the flesh, and the promise of the great effusion of the Holy Ghost. But the case is different with Christian believers. They believe in Christ already come, who hath loved them, and given himself for them. They have received the gift of the Holy Ghost. 'Christ liveth in them, and the life they live in the flesh, is by faith in the Son of God.'<sup>20</sup> Now if Mr. Madan will prove anything to the purpose by example, he must show us some of these practising polygamy. And if he can show us further that God approved of them in it, we will then, and not before, conclude ourselves to be at liberty to go and do likewise. As for the Old Testament saints, they are no examples to us in doubtful cases, nor can anything be proved to be lawful for *us* because *they* did it, till it is proved: *first*, that God approved of them in what they did, as acting according to the best light of their dispensation; and *secondly*, that our dispensation does not exceed theirs in light and glory. Till Mr. Madan therefore has proved these two points, I shall beg leave to dismiss his whole reasoning from their example as of no weight at all in this controversy.

I am, reverend sir,

Your servant in Christ,

J. Benson

### Letter III

Reverend Sir,

1. Having in the preceding letter overturned Mr. Madan's whole scheme from the very foundation, by showing that the law of Moses, containing 'statutes that' (comparatively speaking) 'were not good, and judgments that were not righteous', imposed as a yoke, till the time of reformation, and also that the imperfect examples of those who lived under that dispensation are too weak to support it; I proceed next to observe that the 'law of nature', independent of the law of Christ, has been always understood by the greatest and best of men, pagan as well as Christian, as prohibiting polygamy.

2. It is matter of fact, known and acknowledged in all nations and ages, that there is nearly an equality in the number of males and females born into the world, a very small excess only being observed on the part of the males, which is supposed to be designed by providence to make up for the extraordinary expense of men, more than of women, in war, at sea, and by labourious and dangerous employments. If any doubt of this fact, I refer them to the calculations that have been made in different parts of the world, and in different ages. It will be sufficient for my purpose at this time to produce one account, taken at one place, by Dr. [John] Arbuthnot, as recorded in the *Philosophical Transactions*, No. 328, p. 186.

<i>Anno</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>
1629	5218	4683
1630	4858	4457
1631	4422	4102

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<sup>20</sup>Cf. Gal. 2:20.

1632	4994	4590
1633	5158	4839
1634	5038	4220
1635	5106	4928
1636	4917	4605
1637	4703	4457
1638	5359	4952
1639	5366	4784
1640	5518	5332

The proportion is just the same till Anno 1700, and then it is as follows:

<i>Anno</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>
1701	8102	7514
1702	8031	7656
1703	7765	7683
1704	6113	5738
1705	8366	7779
1706	7952	7417
1707	8379	7687
1708	8239	7623
1709	7840	7380
1710	7640	7288

It appears from this account that the number of males is to that of females nearly in the proportion of thirteen to twelve, or twenty to eighteen. Now the doctor has demonstrated mathematically that this regularity in the births of both sexes could not happen, but through the providence of God continually superintending the propagation of mankind. And then it follows by way of scolium or inference, that polygamy is contrary to the law of nature and justice, and to the propagation of the human race. For when males and females are in equal numbers, if one man take twenty wives, nineteen must live in celibacy, which is repugnant to the design of nature. Nor is it probable that twenty women will be so fruitful if all married to one man, as if each was married to a husband.

3. Indeed (p. 102) though 'it be beside' our author's 'design to consider these subjects, on any other footing than that of the Scriptures, yet' he 'has so far departed from' his 'purpose, as to take notice of' this, which he terms 'a "popular argument" against polygamy; which', he says 'in the minds of some learned and considerate men, has been of such importance, as to outweigh all that could be said for it.' However, in his judgment, 'this argument, plausible as it may seem, wants one thing essential to its solidity, which is truth.' Observe, sir, with what *strong* reasons our author proves that the number of males and females is not equal or nearly in the proportion abovementioned! 'Dr. Foster', he says, 'in his *Observations, during a Voyage Round the World*, published in 1778, has candidly confessed he is not yet persuaded of the great and universal argument against polygamy, viz., the equal proportion of women to men; as, in his opinion, it is not clearly proved that this just proportion holds in all countries and climates. On the contrary, he is of opinion that the constitution of food and climate, and the prevailing custom of marrying many wives, have by length of time produced a considerable disparity between the numbers of men and women, so that now to one man several women are born.' One might ask the doctor, or his reverend interpreter, *where* this *disparity* he speaks of has been produced? Surely not in England, nor in Europe; since one cause of its production, it seems, is 'the prevailing custom of marrying many wives'. He goes on: 'This observation is really confirmed by *fact*' (he should have said *opinion*), 'for all the voyagers unanimously agree that among all the African nations, polygamy is customary. Nor has anyone observed that there are men among those nations without wives; for everyone is matched to one or more females.' In proof of this assertion (termed by a new figure of speech, a *fact*), the doctor refers to



Dr. Bosman's *Description of the Coast of Guinea*; who likewise, it seems, expressly declares, 'the number of women exceeds that of men'. But besides his own opinion, and that of Dr. Bosman, Dr. Foster produces the following argument: 'When a polygamous nation lives in the neighbourhood of monogamous nations, there is always a probability that the women necessary for so many men who have more than one wife, are obtained by stealth, force, or commerce, from the neighbouring nations. But in Africa all the nations are polygamous: every man is married and has more than one wife.' (Very extraordinary indeed! Might not one enquire how the doctor came to know this? Did he visit every individual village and family?) He cannot procure those wives from the neighbouring tribes where the same custom prevails. It is therefore, in his opinion, a clear and settled point that the women born among those nations must be more numerous than the men. — Perhaps, sir, this point may not appear to you to be so *clear* and *settled*. You may be inclined to think, notwithstanding what the doctor has said, that admitting the fact of there being more women than men in Africa, other causes may be assigned for this, among those savage nations, engaged in continual wars with one another, than that 'more women than men are born there'. But to proceed: 'Though the colonists at the Cape of Good Hope are monogamous, yet he observed in the various families of the town and country the number of females to prevail. It has been observed in Sweden too, that more females than males have been born during the latter part of this century. And it is reported in the kingdom of Bantam<sup>21</sup> even ten women are born to one man.'

4. Thus sir, I have laid before you the whole of what he has advanced on the subject. That he has not produced weightier arguments to disprove the fact in question, you must not blame him, as you see he has travelled round the Cape of Good Hope to find those he has brought. Indeed there may be another reason, besides his not being able to meet with them nearer home, for his travelling so far in search of them. A man may assert what he will concerning those who live eight or ten thousand miles off, and nobody can contradict him. However, though I shall not take upon me to gainsay what these gentlemen have asserted, yet I shall beg leave to doubt respecting the matter till they can produce some more convincing evidence of its truth than their opinions and conjectures. Meantime I shall observe, when these *opinions* and *conjectures* are ripened into *facts*, and it is proved that there are more females among the Blacks and Hottentots of Africa, and in the kingdom of Bantam, then will we allow this reverend author to go over to those countries as a *missionary*, to preach his doctrine of polygamy to them. Which yet it will be needless to do, because it seems they practise it already. But as long as the number of men and women are equal in Europe, if he persist to teach his doctrine here, we will rise against him as an enemy to his God and king, to reason and nature, and the rights of mankind, and make the island of Great Britain too hot for him.

5. But whatever weight there may be in those arguments with which the light of nature furnishes us on this subject, there is yet more in those which are drawn from the word of God. And among these, that which comes first in course, and is indeed the foundation of all the rest, is taken from the account which the Scripture gives us of the first institution of marriage. When God, in his infinite wisdom, saw that it was not good for man to be alone, and determined to make him a helpmeet, he created for him one wife and no more. Now, with regard to this, I observe, if ever there was a reason for one man to have a plurality of wives, it was when mankind were first created, when there were greater reasons for their speedy propagation than have ever existed since; and when the body of our first parent possessed a degree of strength and vigour which has not fallen to the lot of any of his sons. When I consider that Adam was to be the means of peopling the whole world, and hear God say to him, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth',<sup>22</sup> and yet see that he is confined to one wife; when I observe him in possession of a body so healthy and strong that it lives nine hundred and thirty years, and yet find him, when fallen as we are, circumscribing his passions within the bounds fixed by his Creator, and contenting himself with that one woman whom he had given him; I cannot entertain any doubt concerning the will of God in this matter. I believe, had polygamy been agreeable to the divine will, and for the comfort of mankind, it

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<sup>21</sup>Name of the Dutch colony in Java.

<sup>22</sup>Gen. 1:28.

would have taken place, and received the sanction of the divine authority, when there were greater reasons for it than have ever existed since, or can exist till time shall be no more. I say again, if God allowed Adam no more than one wife, when it was his will the world should be filled with people as fast as possible, can we suppose he will allow more to us, when it is now full? And if Adam possessed of such *health, strength, and vigour*, was satisfied with one wife for upwards of nine hundred years, shall not his *sickly and feeble* sons, be each content with one for the short space of thirty or forty?

6. But let us hear what our author has to say on this head. 'As to the notion', says he, p. 143, 'expressed by commentators, that because God created but one man and one woman at the first, therefore he intended that no man should have more than one wife at a time ever after, I do humbly conceive that if God had meant so, he would somewhere have said so.' Permit me to tell this gentleman he has said so, and that both by word and deed. He himself marries Adam, his firstborn son, to one wife, and then pronounces, on that occasion, the following remarkable words, 'A man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife' (not wives), 'and they' (*twain*, as Christ explains it) 'shall be one flesh.' Now does this fact, and these words uttered in consequence of it, sufficiently declare the will of God respecting this matter? I think it does, and Mr. Madan would have thought so too, had polygamy on the woman's side been in dispute, and the same form of expression been used respecting her. He would have thought the words implied a prohibition of polygamy on her side, had it been said, 'A woman shall leave father and mother and shall cleave to her husband, and they two shall be one flesh.' He would have supposed there was some reason for using the singular instead of the plural here, and that it signified a woman should have but one husband at a time. And he would have judged it no unfair conclusion to infer from the word *two*, mentioned by our Lord, that *two* and *no more*, one male and one female, should be joined in this intimate union.

7. But as our author has taken notice of this argument, we will attend to the reply he makes to it. 'Some may argue', says he, p. 144, 'that because it was said, a man shall cleave to his *wife*, not *wives*, therefore it is unlawful for a man to have two or more wives in succession, and can only have one as long as he lives, because Adam had but one!' Here, sir, you have one proof, among a hundred which might be given, of the unfairness of this writer. The question is, whether these words allow a man to have two or more wives *at a time*. This and this alone is the matter in dispute. But this is artfully passed over, the question is shifted, and a matter brought upon the carpet concerning which nobody has any doubt. Our author then sets himself to confute this notion of his own forming, and makes it quite clear that, notwithstanding these words uttered at the first institution of marriage, a man may have two or more wives in *succession*. But further: 'If we take upon ourselves', says he, 'to interpret this or any act of God, we take upon us what does not belong to us.' But I apprehend, if any act of God interprets itself, or is so plain that it needs no interpretation, or if God graciously condescends to interpret it for us, then we may judge without 'taking upon us to intrude into those secret things which do not belong to us'. Now this is the case with regard to the matter before us. God's creating only one man and one woman is an act that interprets itself, as much as his creating males and females. As it is plain from God's creating mankind male and female, that he intended they should propagate their species, so is it manifest from his creating only *one man* and *one woman*, that he intended *two*, and *no more*, should be joined together in the marriage union: especially as he himself has put this meaning upon this act, declaring, 'a man shall cleave to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.'

8. Mr. Madan however is of a different opinion. 'That God might have created ten thousand men and as many women', says he, p. 149, 'is certain. Why he did not, he hath nowhere told us, any more than why he created only one man and one woman. This and all things else are to be resolved into his good pleasure, and the counsel of his own will. Our attempting to account for any of his holy acts and dispensations, any further than the revelation of his will authorizes us, is to be wise above what is written, and to involve ourselves in endless mazes of error.' Would you have supposed, sir, that after this, this same gentleman himself would have undertook to account for this very act? 'One weighty reason', says he, 'for the creation of only one man and one woman at first, may be gathered from Acts 17:26, where it is said, "He hath made of one blood all nations of men." Had more men and women than Adam and Eve been created at first, this strict affinity or relationship by blood could not have existed.' As to more *men*,

that does not come into the question at present. But surely had the all-wise Creator intended to authorize polygamy, and had therefore formed several women for Adam, supposing he had formed them all as he formed Eve—viz., out of the substance of Adam's body—still the same relationship by blood *would* have existed. So that this does not account for the fact in question at all.

9. But Mr. Madan 'presumes that God made the rest of the animal creation by pairs, the male and the female, and therefore that to draw arguments against polygamy from a similar creation of the human species, would, if pursued to the utmost, prove too much, and of course prove nothing'. In answer to this I ask, how is it proved that God made the rest of the animal creation by pairs? That he made two and no more, one male and female of each kind? I am inclined to think the expressions used by Moses, Genesis 1:20–25, rather intimate the contrary, that *great numbers* of every kind, both male and female were produced. For it is said, 'the waters brought them forth *abundantly after their kind*.' But supposing this could be proved, unless he could prove secondly, that man is upon a level with brute beasts, and as incapable as they are of relishing any higher pleasures than those which belong to mere animal nature, his argument is worth nothing. Because though God might intend that irrational creatures, not endowed with a moral sense, and therefore not accountable for their actions, should go together in a promiscuous manner; yet, he might intend that man, the noblest of his works here below, should walk by a higher rule, and partake of more pure and sublime pleasures, in that mutual love and friendship which is the chief part of matrimonial happiness, but which cannot possibly have any existence where polygamy takes place.

10. This I take to be an irrefragable argument against polygamy—viz., that it is inconsistent with that pure friendship, mutual love, and sweet endearment which ought in reason to subsist between a married couple, which were most certainly commanded of God when he said, 'A man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife.' The very same Hebrew phrase being used to signify 'cleaving to the Lord', Deuteronomy 4:4 and Joshua 23:8 (as has been observed), the meaning certainly is a man shall bear a stronger affection to his wife than he bears to his nearest and dearest relations; yea a stronger than he bears to any creature. He shall love her only less than God. Now I apprehend reason and experience agree to assure us that this matrimonial affection can have but one object. It cannot be bestowed upon several at the same time. One person and no more, a friend, a companion, a partner, a wife can be loved in this superlative manner. The human heart is too narrow to find room for two or more such affections. I draw therefore this infallible inference from these certain principles, that if God intended the peace and happiness of his creatures, if he intended husbands and wives to live in mutual love and harmony, he intended one man to be joined in matrimony to *one woman*, and *no more*. And I call upon Mr. Madan to produce one single instance, taken from sacred or profane history, ancient or modern, wherein a man loved and behaved in all respects as a husband to more than one wife. The idea is absurd and the fact impossible.

11. Mr. Madan allows, p. 146, that God's bringing the woman to the man, and that solemn denunciation, 'Therefore a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh', form a conclusive argument against divorce. It is granted that they do; and I think they form a more conclusive argument against polygamy. 'For how can *the two* be *one flesh*, when one of the parties hath the liberty of dividing, and subdividing himself amongst many? And how can the husband be said, with any degree of propriety, to cleave to his wife, when he hath more than one to share his attachment and duty as a husband?' Besides, if I am authorized to infer from the word *cleave* that a man ought not to put his wife away; or from that other expression 'they shall be one flesh' that they ought not to be separated; I am much more authorized by the word *wife*, which is singular, and can by no rule of grammar signify wives in the plural, and by the pronoun *two*, to conclude that, according to the primary institution of marriage, no man ought to take more than one wife.

12. But let us hear Mr. Madan respecting this matter. P. 147, he says, 'The first instance of polygamy which is recorded we find Genesis 4:19, "Lamech took unto him two wives ...." Here our commentators think they have found out the sin of polygamy.' They do, and Mr. Madan will not find it easy to show that they think wrong. 'It was one of the degenerate race of Cain, saith one, that first transgressed the law of marriage that two only should be one flesh. These are the words of Mr. [Matthew] Henry, and serve to show how far men will go to support a popular notion, even to the corrupting of the

Bible?’ But how does it appear that Mr. Henry corrupts the Bible? Why ‘there are no such words as *two only* in the law of marriage referred to.’ But there are words which amount to the same thing—viz., ‘a man shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be one flesh’, and pray is not a man and his wife *two only*? So our Lord thought, for in quoting these words he adds, ‘*They twain* shall be one flesh.’ Surely he will not say our Lord has corrupted the Bible! No, but ‘had the words *two only* been there, we should not have read so frequently of God’s countenancing, or of his saints practising polygamy.’ That God *countenanced* polygamy remains to be proved. And as to his ‘saints practising it’ through the imperfection of their dispensation, they practised other things too, which Mr. Madan, if he pleases, may write volumes to justify.

13. But though he will not directly say of our Lord, as he says of Mr. Henry, that he has corrupted the Bible, yet he seems not over-well pleased with his altering the phrase of Moses. ‘I must here take notice’, says he, ‘of our Lord’s introduction of the words οἱ δύο, *they twain*, or *the twain*.’ What a pity is it, that our Lord should throw this obstacle in the way of our author, thus retarding his progress in the great work of reformation! He adds, ‘which certainly was not done as an *addition* to the original words, or as an *interpolation*, but merely as a sort of paraphrase to explain their sense and meaning.’ I am entirely of Mr. Madan’s mind: they are merely an explanation of the original words, which therefore undoubtedly mean that two persons, one male and one female, and *no more*, according to the first institution of marriage, should be joined together in matrimony. But Mr. Madan goes on, ‘that a man and his wife’, (say rather, a man and his *wives*), ‘though before marriage, they were two’, what; a *man* and his *wives two*! Nay certainly they must be more than two, they may be two hundred, ‘that a man and his wife’, says he, ‘though before marriage they were *two*, that is, separate’. What does the word *two* mean here no more than *separate*? If so it will agree to a man and his *wives*; ‘a man shall cleave to his wives and they two shall be one flesh!’ ‘But the words οἱ δύο, the twain, are not to be taken in their numerical sense here’ (that is, in plain words, they do not mean two persons, but may include half a dozen or half a score), ‘for if they be, what follows, ver. 6, “so they are no more twain”, would not be true.’ Permit me to expose this fallacy. The word *two* does indeed sometimes, when in certain connexions, signify *distinct*, *separate*, *unconnected*, even as the word *one*, sometimes signifies *united*, *connected*. Yet its primary and general meaning is *numerically two*, two individual persons or things, and from hence the idea of *separation* is taken. Even as the primary and general meaning of *one* is one individual person or thing, and from hence the idea of *union* is taken. And when the word ‘two’ is to be understood in the second sense, it still implies so much of its primary and proper meaning as not to bear an application to more than two individual persons or things. For instance, when two boards are united to form a table, we say they are no longer *two*, but *one*. But we do not say so when three or four boards are joined together for that purpose. Or when two nations who had been at variance are joined in a league, we may say they are no more *two*, but *one*; but we cannot say the same, when three or four nations are united in peace and harmony. So that when the idea of *separation* is chiefly meant by the word *two*, even then the other idea of *numerically two*, *two only*, *two and no more* is implied, and so implied, that if it is left out, the expression is neither good English nor good sense.

I am, reverend sir,

Yours, etc.

J. Benson

#### Letter IV

Reverend Sir,

[1.] Having shown in the preceding letter that Mr. Madan’s system can be reconciled neither with the law of nature, nor the primitive institution of marriage, I proceed to consider what the law of Christ teaches respecting this matter.

There is a passage in the 19th chapter of St. Matthew which has given our author infinite trouble. I shall first consider its plain and genuine sense, and then consider the objections he makes to the true interpretation of it. ‘The Pharisees’, says the evangelist, ‘came unto him, tempting him, and saying, Is it

lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female? And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh. Wherefore they are no more twain but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why then did Moses command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so: and I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her who is put away, doth commit adultery.<sup>23</sup>

2. Now let any man who has read this passage with attention say whether it is not taken for granted through the whole of it, that a man can only have one wife at a time? All the expressions in it, from beginning to end, imply this; and are downright nonsense on supposition that polygamy is lawful. 'A man shall cleave to his wife.' 'They two shall be one flesh.' 'They are no more two, but one flesh.' 'Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another'. Nay, the words of the Pharisees, 'Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife?' 'Why did Moses command to give her a writing of divorcement and put her away?' are none of them intelligible on the footing of polygamy. But in particular, the last sentence in our Lord's answer is not only irreconcilable with it, but plainly condemns it as adultery. 'For whosoever', says he, 'shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery.' Now what is it that our Lord here condemns as *adultery* in the husband? Is it the putting away his former wife unjustly? No. For though this would be *injustice* and *cruelty* towards her, it could not be adultery. *Defiling the marriage bed*, that and that alone is adultery. It is therefore the *marrying another* that our Lord terms *adultery* here, as being done before the husband was free from the law of his first wife, whom he had indeed put away, but without sufficient cause, and therefore he was as truly bound to her as though he had not put her away. On the other hand, if she had been dead, or (according to our Lord) had dissolved the marriage obligation by committing adultery, in such a case, it would have been no adultery in the husband to have married another woman. And let Mr. Madan tell us how it could be *adultery* in him to marry another, or even another to that, while the first was living, though unjustly put away, supposing it were lawful for a man to marry as many wives as he pleased, whether he be loosed from his obligations to the former, or not. According to him, whether the former wife die or live, whether she dissolve the marriage obligation by an act of uncleanness or not, whether she be put away or retained, her husband commits no adultery by marrying another, supposing that other be not the wife of another man. In this case, can a man, married or single, commit adultery! 'But by putting his wife away unjustly he exposes her to the temptation of cohabiting with another man, and so of committing adultery.' True. But what has this to do with his committing adultery *himself*? It is this, and *this alone* that our Lord here speaks of. Indeed [in] Matthew 5:32, he speaks of the other: he there says, 'Whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery.' But then he says not one word there about *marrying another*, which is the thing he here terms *committing adultery*, and which he could with no propriety term so, on the principles of polygamists. So that this text is full in point against Mr. Madan's doctrine and overthrows it from the very foundation.

3. In St. Mark the words are yet more express. 'He committeth adultery against her'<sup>24</sup> (viz., against the woman he puts away), because before he is free from his obligations to her he marries another, and thereby instead of *cleaving to her*, as the law of God requires, he deprives her of that love and duty which is her due; and adding insult to wrong, bestows that very affection and benevolence upon another of which he has robbed her. To ascertain the sense still more, he adds, 'and if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another man, she committeth adultery'.<sup>25</sup> Now will Mr. Madan say this only means 'she causeth him' (that is, her former husband) 'to commit adultery'? Be it so, if he pleases. But

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<sup>23</sup>Matt. 19:3–9.

<sup>24</sup>Mark 10:11.

<sup>25</sup>Mark 10:12.

then let him remember it overthrows his whole scheme of polygamy. Because, according to this interpretation, it is adultery in a husband to cohabit with another woman while his wife is living, even supposing that wife has left him and married another man; and surely much more is it adultery in him, if she has not left him, but continues to be his faithful and obedient wife. Mr. Madan therefore shall adopt either mode of interpretation he likes best, either the *natural* and *true* one, or the *unnatural* and *false* one. They equally overthrow his doctrine and declare polygamy to be adultery, whether on the side of the man or the woman.

4. But let us see what he has to object to this. (p. 151): 'They who make Christ condemn polygamy as adultery, represent him as using the word *ἡρᾱ* *adultery* in an unauthorized unconformity to the Hebrew Scriptures.' But how does this appear? Why 'he doubtless spoke in Hebrew and the word in the Old Testament is *never* used save to signify the defilement of a married woman.' No? Is it never used to signify the defilement of a man or woman, married or single, by idolatry, or a defection from the love and service of God, which is spiritual adultery? If Mr. Madan thinks not, let him consult his Hebrew Bible, on Jeremiah 3:8–9 and Ezekiel 23:43. But how will Mr. Madan prove 1) that our Lord spoke in Hebrew on *this* occasion, or in general? And then how will he prove 2) that he used the very word in question, and that in a farther sense than the Jews had generally heard it used in; that is, that he now termed that adultery which the Jews had not been accustomed to term so? When he has proved these two points, it will after all amount only to this, that our Lord was a teacher sent from God, who had authority to declare what was *ἡρᾱ* *adultery*, and what not. 'But our Lord constantly appealed to the Hebrew Scriptures for the truth of what he delivered.' No, he did not. He did not appeal to the Hebrew Scriptures *particularly* at all, any more than to the Greek Scriptures. He has not said one word in favour of the *original*, any more than of any *translation* then used. Nay he frequently did not appeal to the Scriptures in any sense, but spoke as one having authority, saying, 'Ye have heard, that it hath been said by them of old time, If a man shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement. But *I say unto you*, Whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery.'<sup>26</sup> 'But he can hardly be supposed to have advanced a doctrine so unsupported by them'. Why not? Has he advanced nothing but what is supported by them? If Mr. Madan thinks he has not, I demand by what passage in the Hebrew Scriptures he was supported when he said, 'Do this' (eat bread and drink wine) 'in remembrance of me?''<sup>27</sup> But whether our Lord is supported by the Hebrew Scriptures or not, he has certainly taught the doctrine in question, as I have clearly shown above.

5. 'But by making Christ declare polygamy to be adultery, they charge him with asserting a falsehood, both in point of law and fact.' This is extraordinary indeed! But I will ask Mr. Madan, does the *lawgiver* derive his authority from the *law*, or the *law* from the *lawgiver*? In other words, does God make the law, or does the law make God? Or is our Lord neither God nor lawgiver; but merely an ordinary teacher, having no authority, save to explain and enforce the law already given? If so, how does he differ, unless in being more holy, from the Rev. preacher at the Lock Hospital?<sup>28</sup> And then how are these *vile Socinians* wrong, against whom Mr. Madan has brought so many charges in this work? 'But' (p. 152) 'if an after-taken woman is not as much a man's wife who takes her as the first is, the scripture is false which testifies, 1 Samuel 25:42–43, Abigail became David's *wife*, and David also took Ahinoam, and they were both of them his wives.' But Mr. Madan here keeps out the main hinge on which the controversy turns, which is that allowing a man *might* have two or more wives under the imperfect dispensation, yet under the gospel he *cannot*. So whatever the Hebrew Scriptures say, 'it is true both in point of law and fact, that a man having one wife, and marrying another, committeth adultery.' And it is so far from being 'impossible Christ should ever say so', that it is certain he hath said so.

6. As an additional argument I shall observe further that the inference our Lord's disciples drew from it, and the reply he made to them, make it manifest we are not mistaken in our views of it. The

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<sup>26</sup>Cf. Matt. 5:32; Matt. 19:9.

<sup>27</sup>Luke 22:19.

<sup>28</sup>Rev. Martin Madan was chaplain at the Lock Hospital.

disciples say unto him ([Matthew 19] ver. 10), 'If the case of a man be so with his wife', that is, if he is not at liberty to put her away (save for adultery) and marry another, 'it is not good to marry. But he said, All men cannot receive this saying, save them to whom it is given. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.' Now I ask, what sense there is in all this on the principles of polygamy? Supposing they had been each of them at liberty to marry as many wives as they pleased, with what propriety could they have said, if a man is not allowed to put away his wife, except for adultery, and marry another, 'it is not good to marry'; seeing that if they had happened, any of them, to marry one or two or three that were disagreeable, they were still at liberty to try again, and add another and another, till they met with one that proved to be agreeable. And though they might not *entirely divorce*, yet they might separate from and neglect the former, which (with marrying another) Mr. Madan thinks would have a happy effect upon her temper and behaviour. On the contrary, the disciples taking it for granted that a man could only have one wife at a time, deplore it as an unhappiness that if she happened to be disagreeable he was not allowed to put her away and take another whom he might like better, but must either have her or none. And in this they agree entirely with our author, who (pp. 183–84) bewails the infelicity of those husbands, who having married without consideration, finding it needful to separate from their wives on account of their untoward dispositions and undutiful carriage, are not permitted by our laws to marry again, how great soever their necessity may be, while the former wife is living. Now if our Lord had allowed of polygamy, instead of replying, 'All men cannot receive this saying, but he that is able to receive it, let him receive it.'<sup>29</sup> It would have been more pertinent to have observed, if one of your wives be not agreeable, perhaps another may; or if any of you have but *one*, and she such as you cannot love, though you may not put her *entirely away*, yet you may separate from her, and marry another. So that you have no need to bewail your misery whether married or single.

7. Upon the whole, take the whole passage together, and it manifestly teaches the following things: 1) If a man can live single, he may: 'He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.' 2) If he marry, he is bound to cleave to his wife as long as he lives, unless she defile the marriage bed. 3) If he put her away, though she has not committed adultery, and marry another, he committeth adultery in so doing; because he takes another woman before he is free from his own wife. Whence it follows, 4) that polygamy, which permits a man to marry another woman, though his former wife has neither been divorced nor deserved to be, is prohibited by our Lord in this passage, and condemned as adultery.

8. [On] pp. 79–80 we read, 'The question put by the Pharisees is not whether it be lawful to marry two wives at a time, or to take one to another? But is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? The question concerns divorce and divorce only.' The question undoubtedly concerns *divorce*, but not divorce *only*. Because these Pharisees, when they had got quit of one wife, intended taking another in her place. So that Mr. Madan and the Pharisees do not differ, unless in one point, and that is this: The Pharisees were for divorcing the wife they disliked, *legally* and *publicly*, whereby the poor injured woman obtained liberty to marry again, and so was not exposed to ruin and prostitution. Whereas Mr. Madan is for putting her away *illegally* and *privately*, leaving the external bond in full force, so that the poor creature is not at liberty to marry again. Thus being put away from her husband's bed and table, and perhaps too deprived of a maintenance, and having the mortification of seeing another woman put into her place, she will be under dreadful temptations to abandon herself to vice and misery.

9. After quoting the passage at large he informs us, p. 81, 'This last' (ver. 9) 'is the verse which has made the difficulty.' And a difficulty it is, not to be solved on the principles of polygamy, which declare that 'an after-taken woman is as truly and properly a man's wife as the former'. However, this difficulty our author hopes to solve 'by attending to the peculiar circumstances of the persons spoken to, and the particular occasion on which the words were spoken'. He tells us, p. 82, 'There were several famous rabbis at that time who taught that the least reasons were sufficient to authorize a man to put away his wife: for example, if she does not dress his victuals well, or if he found any other woman he liked better.' Now in his opinion 'these Pharisees were deeply tainted with this position. Against this Christ

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<sup>29</sup>Matt. 19:11.

may be understood to level his answer.' He may, and of consequence he levels it against our author, as well as the Pharisees. For he is for putting away for divers reasons, from bed and board, the woman who is less beloved, in order to take in her place one who is loved better.

10. [On] p. 122 he says, 'The famous passage Matthew 19 which has been considered already, and will be considered more fully hereafter, certainly relates to divorce, and properly speaking not to polygamy.' Yes, it relates to both, as I have clearly shown. And though polygamy 'simply considered' may not come into the question which they asked, yet considered as *compounded* with putting away one's wife, it does come into the question. But whether it does or not, yet the answer given by our Lord is so expressed as to condemn it in all forms.

11. [On] p. 364, he takes this passage, with some others of a similar nature, into consideration again, and observes, 'that the security and protection of the weaker sex against the deceit, violence, and cruelty of the stronger, depend wholly on the law of God, is a truth which none who admit that God ever gave a law will deny'. I apprehend he is mistaken here. Many who believe that God hath given a law will nevertheless impute the security and protection of both sexes, rather to the overruling providence and grace of God; which partly deprive men of opportunities of injuring their fellow creatures, partly restrain them by a fear of human laws, and partly remove from them the very inclination to do evil, and fill them with a desire of doing good. But 'shall we suppose that Christ came into the world to weaken that security?' No; but to strengthen it, and that both by giving, in some cases, stricter laws, and in all, more power to fulfil every command of God; in particular by forbidding polygamy, and unlawful divorce. But 'the supposing Christ to introduce a new law, so contrary to that which was given by Moses, that men in some cases cannot obey the one without disobeying the other' (for instance, they cannot abstain from circumcision according to the law of Christ, but they must disobey the law of Moses which saith, let every male among you be circumcised), 'this', says he, 'is making Christ's acts like the threatenings of Rehoboam, "Whereas my father did load you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke."' <sup>30</sup> That is, whereas God by Moses imposed upon you a heavy yoke of ceremonies, I will add to your yoke, and forbid you the comfort of polygamy. Severe law indeed! 'But far, far be it from us', adds he, 'to impute such a proceeding to him.' That is, to suppose that he came to deny us the gratification of any fleshly lust! Surely he who was so compassionate and kind, could not do so *cruel* a thing! It follows, 'that no such thing is chargeable upon him' (he means, that he should add to our yoke like Rehoboam, by forbidding us polygamy) will appear still more plainly on our taking a nearer and more critical view of those passages of the gospel, in which Christ is supposed to condemn polygamy.

12. The first passage he <sup>31</sup> takes notice of is Matthew 5:31–32, 'It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement; but I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, save for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery.' With regard to this, he observes, 'Christ did not declare this as if it had been lawful under the Old Testament, and was now made unlawful by some new law of his, but on the footing of the primary institution of marriage.' Here we have truth and falsehood mingled together. It is certain it *was* allowed under the Old Testament for a man to put away his wife for other causes than adultery. It is certain also that Christ did expressly *forbid* this, and thereby made it unlawful. And yet it is true that he did this 'on the footing of the primary institution of marriage, from the very beginning'; which institution, however was never formed into a positive law till Christ did it, and explained it so as to condemn polygamy as well as unjust divorce.

13. Mr. Madan observes further, that when our Lord says, "'He causeth her to commit adultery'", by laying her under the temptation which may be supposed to be a little heightened by her resentment against her husband, who had first used her ill and then divorced her; especially where this was done for the sake of taking another woman whom he liked better.' Now apply this to his own doctrine. He allows, if not properly to divorce, yet to put away one's wife from bed and board for a bad temper, etc. Now suppose a married man conceives a liking to a virgin, whom he marries and brings home to his house.

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<sup>30</sup>1 Kgs. 12:11.

<sup>31</sup>Editor's note: 'Mr. Madan'.



Suppose he has reason to think that his present wife, being not persuaded of the lawfulness of such proceedings, will resent his conduct and make the house too hot for this young intruder. He therefore puts away his present wife, under the pretence of not being able to live with a woman of such a violent disposition, but in reality because his affections are set upon another. He sends his wife away with just a bare maintenance, and brings the other home to fill up her place. Now, I ask, in this case, whether I may not make use of Mr. Madan's own words and say this man causeth his wife, whom he hath put away, to commit adultery 'by laying her under a temptation to do it, which may be supposed to be not a little heightened by her resentment against her husband who had first used her ill' (by fixing his affections upon another woman) 'and then put her away; especially when this was done for the sake of taking the other whom he liked better'.

14. He proceeds next to Matthew 19:9, which after having 'considered, reconsidered, and considered more minutely', he now proposes to 'view more nearly and critically'! In doing this, he informs us our Lord's design was to reprobate the various abuses of divorces at that time practised among the Jews, and among the rest, the horrid traffic which the law of Moses condemned, that of divorcing their wives for every cause, and of course, that they might exchange them for a time and then take them back again. In answer to this, I observe, our Lord's design certainly was to reprobate the various abuses of divorce, by revoking the indulgence allowed by Moses, and to permit it for no cause but adultery. But as to the 'horrid traffic' of exchanging their wives for a time, and then taking their own back again, he does not bring the shadow of a proof that such a custom existed among the Jews. And there is every reason to think they could not fly thus directly in the face of Moses, or act in such direct opposition to the positive law of God.

15. I have observed Mr. Madan will make any supposition to serve his hypothesis. I do not read far before I meet with another instance of it. When he wanted to show (p. 122) that our Lord could not be supposed to condemn polygamy in Matthew 19 'because it did not come into the question', he said our Lord's hearers, so far from intending polygamy, meant nothing less. For they meant to have but one wife at a time—otherwise why were they for divorcing one, in order to take another? Their sin was this, not the taking and cohabiting with more than one at a time. They imagined themselves to be totally free from the first before they took a second. But now having an argument of a different kind in hand, he makes a quite contrary supposition. 'He was surrounded', says he (p. 373), 'at this time by a great multitude of people who, in principle, as living under the law of the Old Testament, were polygamists. And doubtless numbers of them were so in practice. Many there must have been among this great multitude of Jews who had either married two wives together, or having one, took another to her, and cohabited with both.' Now sir, which of these accounts are we to receive? The former, which declares 'they were far from intending polygamy. That they meant nothing less. That they meant to have but one wife at a time. That they did not take and cohabit with more than one at a time'? Or the latter, wherein he assures us, '*the whole multitude* were polygamists in principle, and numbers in practice?'

16. But 'had our Lord intended to condemn such practices' (that is, marrying two wives at a time, or taking first one and then another, and cohabiting with both) 'he would scarcely have made use of words that did *not* describe their situation, but of words that *did*.' I answer, our Lord *did* make use of words which described the exact situation of those who asked the question, and of numbers in Judea whose sin was (as Mr. Madan tells us, p. 122) not the taking and cohabiting with more wives than one at a time, but the unjustly divorcing one and marrying another. This practice was a kind of polygamy. And our Lord in condemning it condemns polygamy in all its forms. 'But it is very plain that' (the following words) "'He that putteth away his wife, by giving her a bill of divorcement", could have nothing to do with the man who took two wives together, or one to another, and cohabit alike with both.' True. But are these all the words which our Lord uses? No certainly. For he adds, 'Whosoever shall put away his wife, save for fornication, and marry another, committeth adultery.'

17. But after having considered Matthew 19 several times over, he proposes (p. 385) 'to consider it more closely, taking it in connexion with the subsequent explanation of it to the disciples in the house'. Now here we meet with abundance of criticisms upon the Greek, which have all one end—namely, to show (in defiance of all rules of right construction) that *αλλην* may be translated as though it were

αλλοτριαν; instead of signifying *another woman*, it may mean *another man's wife*.

18. This criticism proves nothing, save the ignorance or unfairness of its author. 'αλλην', he says, 'must agree with its antecedent γυναικα.' True, and what then? Why 'we render γυναικα by the word *wife*.' We render? Who renders? Surely not Mr. Madan. He has taken much pains in different places to show that in Greek and Hebrew there are no specific names for *husbands* and *wives*, and that it is an imperfection in our language to have such names; as it is a departure from the simplicity of the ancients, whose manner of speaking was a *man* and *his woman*, a *woman* and *her man*. Now I ask why Mr. Madan departs from his plan in translating this scripture? Why does he not say, If a man shall put away *his woman*, and marry *another woman*, he committeth adultery? Why? Because this would not have answered his end; but on the contrary, would have exposed his criticism to contempt. But it is proper the unlearned reader should know that this is the precise meaning of the word γυναικα, signifying indifferently *woman* or *wife*, according to the different connexion in which it stands. And [it] is properly rendered *wife* in the former clause of the sentence, because joined with the positive pronoun αὐτου, *his woman*, or *his wife*. But in the latter clause, where we allow it is understood (as Mr. Madan observes) to agree with αλλην, being joined in construction with no possessive pronoun but an adjective, it can only signify, and *shall marry another woman*.

19. But 'the word αλλην may be construed in the sense of αλλοτριαν, and then it will mean, another man's wife.' It may, by Mr. Madan, but I think it will not be so construed by any beside, who understand the Greek. 'But we find the word αλλης so used, 1 Corinthians 10:29, ὑπο αλλης συνειδησεως, which we rightly translate another man's conscience.' I answer, the case is not at all parallel, for if it be translated as it ought to be, *another conscience*, the sense is good, and the meaning the same. 'Conscience, *I say*, not thine own' (ουχι την εαυτου, not of the person's self, αλλα την του ετερου) 'but of the other; *for* why is my liberty judged of another's conscience?' But here the case is widely different. For if instead of *another woman* (the proper translation of the Greek) you render it *another man's wife*, you give a wrong translation of the words, and entirely alter the sense. Besides, in the parallel passage, Luke 16:18, the word ετεραν is used; and is this too 'to be construed in the sense of αλλοτριαν'?

20. 'But the learned [Johann] Wettstein takes αλλην in this sense in his note.' Perhaps so. But it seems not to his own satisfaction, as 'he mentions afterwards a difficulty he was under, from this interpretation of αλλην, as it seems to make the text say the same thing twice over.' Nay, it does not only *seem* to do this, but really *does* it. For to render the passage as follows, *Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another man's wife* (that is, as Mr. Madan explains it, another woman put away from her husband), *committeth adultery; and whosoever marrieth her that is put away, committeth adultery*, is making our Lord tell us twice in one breath that it is adultery to marry a woman put away from her husband. Now can anybody suppose that our Lord would use such unmeaning tautology? How is it that Mr. Madan does not solve this difficulty? How is it that he leaves this passage in Matthew without any attempt to justify this *tautological* translation, and flies away to the parallel passage in Mark, where a very different phraseology is used, and the last sentence, instead of saying, *Whosoever shall marry her that is put away, committeth adultery*, is: 'If a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another man she committeth adultery.' Now supposing we allow (p. 387) 'that a *man's putting away his wife* and marrying another divorced woman, and a *woman's putting away her husband*, and marrying another man, are different ideas' (and yet they are certainly implied in each other), yet this will by no means prove that the sense he puts upon the passage in Matthew implies two different ideas, because that says not one word concerning a woman's putting away her husband.

21. With regard to these different glosses which our author puts upon this passage, I would observe further, if the 11th verse means only, *Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another woman*, unjustly put away from her husband, *committeth adultery*; then, by parity of reason, the 12th verse means only: if a woman leave her husband, and be married to another man *deserted by his wife*, she committeth adultery; and thus she is left at liberty to marry a *single* man, even as the man who puts away his wife is by Mr. Madan left at liberty to marry a single woman. Or according to the other sense he has devised for it, if the former verse only means that the husband *causeth her* (whom he puts away) *to commit adultery*, then the latter only means, that the wife *causeth him* (whom she leaves) to

commit adultery, and thus she may marry another husband and be a polygamist as well as the man. For the very same form of expression being used in both cases, they ought to be interpreted the same way. Unless that *ἐπ' αὐτήν*, *against her*, found in the clause that respects the man, without a similar phrase (as *ἐπ' αὐτίον*, *against him*) in the latter clause respecting the woman, strengthens the expression on the man's side, and so confines it that it cannot admit of the interpretation last mentioned. For what nonsense would it be to say, Whosoever shall put away his wife ... *causeth her* to commit adultery *against her*! So that Mr. Madan is again left to his choice. Let him fix upon either interpretation, only let him go through with it, and interpret both verses in the same way. Or if he must make a difference where the Holy Ghost makes none, and explain differently two sentences following each other, and expressed in the very same manner, let him assign some more plausible reasons for so doing than to serve as wretched an hypothesis as ever gained footing among men.

I am, reverend sir,

Your obedient servant in Christ,

J. B.

#### Letter V

Reverend Sir,

1. Having considered at large that famous passage in the gospels which has been understood by Christians in all ages as condemning polygamy, I proceed to another, in the epistles, which has been looked upon in the same light.

The apostle having shown the Corinthians the evil of fornication, and exhorted them to flee from it in the latter part of the sixth chapter of his first epistle, proceeds in the beginning of the next to furnish them with a remedy against it, which is *marriage*; recommending, nevertheless, a single life to such as were able to receive it. 'Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me', says he, 'It is good for a man not to touch a woman,' that is, to remain single: 'Nevertheless', as all men cannot receive this saying, 'to avoid fornication let every man have his own wife, and every woman her own husband.' For if a man does not find *one wife*, and a woman *one husband*, a remedy against fornication, neither would each party be satisfied with several. But then, ver. 3, 'Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence' (οφειλομενην ευνοϊαν, the conjugal debt), 'and likewise also the wife unto the husband.' For with respect to this, 'the wife hath not power over her own body, but the husband.' In like manner, 'the husband hath not power over his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other' of this duty of marriage, 'unless it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves unto fasting, *and* come together again that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.'<sup>32</sup>

2. In these verses the apostle: 1) Recommends a single life, 'It is good for a man not to touch a woman.' But as this might not be expedient for all, or even for most 2) he allows marriage. But only between one male and one female, 'To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife' (not wives) 'and every woman her own husband.' 3) Because otherwise marriage would be no remedy against fornication, nor answer its main end, therefore he enjoins married persons to render to *each other* the conjugal debt—which he declares they cannot withhold from each other (much less can they give it to others) without injustice, because having entered into a solemn covenant, given their bodies to each other, and being made *one flesh*, they have neither of them power over their own bodies, so as to deny the use of them to each other; much less to bestow the use of them upon others. 4) With regard to this, according to the apostle there is *no difference* between the husband and the wife. Their claims are *reciprocal* and in the *same degree*. The husband is bound to his wife by the *same law* whereby she is bound to her husband, and she has the *very same* power over his body that he has over hers. So that, 5) if the apostle's words leave the husband at liberty not only to *defraud his wife* of the duty of marriage, and that without her consent either asked or obtained, and without any view to fasting and prayer, or any such holy purpose,

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<sup>32</sup>1 Cor. 7:1–5.

but also to bestow that duty upon another whom he has taken to be his wife, against the will of his former wife, and in defiance of the law that bound him to her, and gave her power over his body, exclusive of all other women; then do the same words leave the wife at liberty to do the same, viz. to withhold her body from her husband, and give the use of it to any man, married or single, as she may think proper.

3. Come we now to consider what our author makes of this. As to a *single life*, he declares himself an utter enemy to it, ridiculing it throughout his books, and solemnly avowing (p. 173) that he ‘cannot conceive any man’s conscience to be more taken captive by the devil, than *his* is who is brought under a persuasion that celibacy is more pure and holy, and much more acceptable to God than marriage.’<sup>33</sup> Such a one’, he says, ‘who under this persuasion abstains from marriage, lives in perpetual opposition to that command which was given with a blessing from God, “Increase and multiply and replenish the earth.”’<sup>34</sup> Nay, he tells us afterwards, ‘They who prefer a life of solitude to matrimonial connexions, as holier and better’, sin in the next degree to murder. ‘For this command for the propagation of the species stands, Genesis 9:7, in direct connexion, and immediately following the positive law against murder. As *privation* of life is a sin against this, *prevention* of life is something very like it, and therefore placed near it in the sacred code.’ Before I proceed, permit me to say sir, I really think I can conceive what our ingenious author says he cannot conceive. I can conceive a man’s conscience to be more taken captive by the devil than his is who prefers a *single* to a *married* life—even the conscience of the author of *female ruin*,<sup>35</sup> who believes and teaches, in opposition to Scripture and reason, that marriage consists wholly and solely in the carnal union of the male and female, and that it is quite as lawful to marry two or three, or half a dozen wives, as to marry one. ‘Such a one who under this persuasion’ disregards all previous contracts and instituted forms, and takes possession of a woman, though a virgin, commits no less a sin (as has been shown) than *fornication*, if he is a single man, or if married, *adultery*. He lives therefore in perpetual opposition to the seventh command, as Christ hath explained it—which to violate (if I may reason like Mr. Madan) as it follows the sixth, is to sin in the next degree to murder.

4. But how comes Mr. Madan to fall so foul upon celibacy? What relation had this to the subject of his book? Oh, a near relation! For if in his great zeal for polygamy he can hardly excuse a man who only marries *one wife*, how should he bear those who marry none? Besides, as he shows (p. 181) that ‘many things may happen after marriage which may be very reasonable and indeed unavoidable causes of separation between a man and his wife, so that the husband may be reduced to the situation of an unmarried man, harassed by the same desires, subject to the same temptations’; he takes care to add to this (p. 184) a long and circumstantial account of the sin and folly of ‘the unnatural plan of celibacy’, with all its dreadful consequences and mischievous effects. Which, however (it seems, p. 177) ‘are too many to enumerate, too horrid to particularize’. By this means, you see sir, he is furnished with an argument in favour of polygamy. For if celibacy is a sin and folly, and attended with such bad consequences, and if a man who has but one wife may easily be reduced, by various means, to the condition of an *unmarried man*, it will follow that it is *wise* and *virtuous* to marry two or three wives, and thus to provide in time against the inconveniencies and miseries one might suffer in case of a separation from one’s present wife—it being so *intolerable* and *dreadful* an evil to be without the comforts of matrimony, and there being far less danger of being deprived of these with *many* wives than with *one*.

As for those who have the gift of continency, he thinks (p. 179) ‘they are very few’. As for those who have it not, ‘it is antisciptural and absurd to exhort them to pray for it’, even suppose they are married men, and removed by the providence of God to a distance from their partners, or deprived for a time of their society.

5. ‘That there may however be situations, and particular circumstances, under which it is not only lawful but a duty to pray for continence’ our author has no doubt. ‘As where our natural desires would

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<sup>33</sup>Among those whom Madan would have in view in this regard is JW; cf. his *Thoughts on Marriage and the Single Life* (1743), and *Thoughts on a Single Life* (1764), both in *Works*, vol. 15.

<sup>34</sup>Gen. 1:28.

<sup>35</sup>I.e., Madan, author of *Thelyphthora; or, A treatise on female ruin* ....

lead us to forbidden enjoyment.' He means in the case of a married woman, for he adds, 'but we must judge of this by the Scripture, and not by the prejudice, folly, and superstition of men.' And according to him, the Scriptures forbid no man, whether *married* or *single*, to desire or enjoy any woman whatsoever that is not engaged to a husband. Nor does a virgin (Vol. 2, p. 173) 'who delivers up her person to the man of her choice, without any previous contract, or ceremony taking place, sin in so doing'. In perfect consistency with this doctrine (p. 123, explaining Matthew 5:28, 'Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart'), he tells us, 'This must mean such a woman as adultery would be committed with, supposing the thought brought forth into act.' And p. 332 explains it of *another man's wife*, quoting the Greek word *γυναῖκα*, as if it properly signified not a *woman* simply, but a *wife* (thus imposing upon the unlearned reader). And in a long and curious note on p. 123 he takes a deal of pains to show us that it certainly means a woman related to a man, either espoused or that hath cohabited with her husband, for (adds he) with no other can adultery be committed. 'For want of considering this', he thinks, 'some commentators, by letting their own imaginations loose, have filled those of their readers with matter of sore distress, and bondage of conscience, as if the desire of any female whatsoever' (he should have said, as if a married man's desiring a virgin or two) 'came within what they call the *spiritual meaning* of the seventh commandment.'

6. His next step is to undermine the authority of that passage in Job, 'I have made a covenant with my eyes, why then should I think upon a maid?'<sup>36</sup> For this purpose he informs us of a 'sect, who were called Talpe or Moles, because they walked about with their eyes shut, lest they should behold a woman'. Now he assures us the above-mentioned text is supposed to be the ground of this *talpean* austerity. And therefore, that he might leave no foundation for so dreadful an evil, he put a new sense to the passage. The word בתולה, maid or virgin, he says, may here be taken for a *betrotthed* or *espoused* virgin. Therefore he inclines to favour the very liberal translation of Solenor Tarchi, 'I have made a covenant that I would have no knowledge of any man's wife.' A very liberal translation truly, and such as is quite consistent with the doctrine of *Thelyphthora*.

7. Thus you see sir, according to this doctrine, if even married men look on and lust after never so many single women—nay if the matter go so far that they take possession of their persons—still they are not to suppose they commit any sin.

8. But to return to 1 Corinthians 7, he allows that the learned [Hugo] Grotius considers this passage as full in point against polygamy. But according to his superior judgment, 'The strength of the whole argument drawn from this passage consists in a sort of quibble on the word *wife*: that, as well as the word *husband*, being in the singular number; *wife*, not *wives*.' But I say, the strength of the argument lies in the construction of the whole sentence, and in the connection in which it stands, as well as in the several words of which it is composed. The Corinthians had put some questions to the apostle respecting *marriage*: how far it was expedient, what were its advantages and disadvantages, and by what rules married and single persons ought to conduct themselves? In answer to these questions the apostle says, 'Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me, it is good for a man not to touch a woman', that is, not to marry. Nevertheless, as all men cannot receive this saying, 'to avoid fornication let every man have his own wife, and every woman her own husband'. Now I ask, does the argument drawn from hence consist in a sort of quibble? Does not the apostle declare first, that it was better to have no intercourse with the other sex at all, not even in the lawful way of marriage? But secondly, as this might expose them to temptation, and they might hereby fall into fornication, to avoid *this* they might marry—but each man only *one wife*, and each woman *one husband*. The form of the expression is the same in both cases, and he no more allows a man to marry a plurality of wives than a woman to marry several husbands.

9. But, p. 215, as this text has been, and is looked upon as a direct proof of the unlawfulness of polygamy amongst Christians, he [Madan] proposes to give it a thorough consideration. In the first place he finds fault with our translators for having introduced something that is not in the original. 'The word

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<sup>36</sup>Job 31:1.

*avoid*, he says, 'is not in the text. It is simply δια δε τας πορνειας.'<sup>37</sup> It is granted the word *avoid* is not in the text. But nevertheless our translators have not misrepresented the apostle's meaning in supplying it. For if a word of a similar import is not supplied, it is impossible to make sense of the passage. 'It is good', says the apostle, 'for a man not to touch a woman', δια δε τας πορνειας, literally, 'but on account of fornication'. 'Let every man have his own wife, on account of fornication'? What? In order to *commit* it? No certainly; but to *avoid* it. The translation therefore cannot be mended. Yes, says Mr. Madan, the preposition δια may be rendered, *for*, or *with respect to*, or *as to*, or *with regard to*. I answer, it may if it be confounded with περι, the word used in the preceding clause. But who gave Mr. Madan authority thus to alter the signification of words at pleasure? Will he be so kind as to point out one instance in the New Testament where it bears the sense he would force upon it? As to the 26th verse of this chapter, where δια is translated *for*, *it is good for the present distress*, the meaning is plainly not *with respect to*, or *as to*, but *on account of*. *It is good, on account of the present distress* to remain unmarried. So that this instance is nothing at all to his purpose, but directly against it.

10. But why does Mr. Madan contend for this sense to be put upon the particle δια? Why, that he may make way for a conjecture on which he means to build an entirely new exposition of the passage. 'The context', he says, p. 216, 'shows very plainly, that what the apostle says is in answer to some questions put to him by letter.' It does, and what then? Why, 'If we may judge of the questions by the answer, they probably concerned a very infamous but common practice, that of married men *lending out*, and even *marrying* their wives to other people.' And can Mr. Madan suppose that the Christians at Corinth were in doubt about the lawfulness of such a practice? Then I think he must have a very low opinion of their knowledge. Now if they had no doubt at all, it is not to be conceived they should ask the apostle any question about it. But the truth is, Mr. Madan only *supposes* that there was such a custom at Corinth. He brings no proof of any such thing. Till therefore he proves, first, that there was such a custom at Corinth; and secondly, that the Christians there were so ignorant as to be in doubt whether it was lawful; and therefore, thirdly, that they consulted the apostle on the head; we may fairly set aside the argument he has built on this precarious foundation.

11. But there are two more words to which he gives a new sense. The first is εχω, which he would render as though it were κατεχω, and implied not *present tenure* and possession, but *retaining* or *continuing* the possession of: 'Let every man *retain* or *continue* the possession of his own wife, and not marry or lend her out to other men?' With regard to this, I observe first that translation of εχω is improper. The word means simply to *have* or *possess* at the time *present*, as John 14:2. The compound word κατεχω signifies to continue the possession of; see Luke 8:15. However we will allow him to give the word this meaning, if he will translate the *same word* the *same way* in the *very next* clause of the *same sentence*. This he cannot for shame avoid, as it concerns the counter part of the very same subject, and no possible reason can be assigned why it should be rendered differently. Let us then read it; 'And let every woman *retain* or *continue* the possession of her own husband, and not marry or lend him out to other women.' Now what becomes of his whole system of polygamy? It is overturned by a criticism of his own devising! Oh, but he renders this latter clause, 'And let every woman *keep* to her own husband'. He does so, because the doctrine of *female ruin* required it; and this makes a mere *nose of wax*<sup>38</sup> of the Scriptures. By this translation too he makes the apostle say precisely the same thing twice over: for if the husband is to *retain* his wife, how can she avoid keeping to him, or be transferred to another?

12. But he has found out 'that there is a remarkable difference in the original here, εαυτου being used in the former clause την εαυτου γυνεικα, and ιδιον in the latter, τον ιδιον ανδρα. And he thinks, there must be some weighty reason for this difference, in giving the epithet ιδιον to the husband, with respect to the wife; and not to the wife, with respect to the husband. I doubt not but Mr. Madan may find some *weighty reason* why this apostle uses the same word twice over in the fourth verse, 'the woman hath not power over her own body, and the man hath not power over his own body,' του ιδιου σωματος in both

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<sup>37</sup>1 Cor. 7:2.

<sup>38</sup>I.e., something easily distorted.

places. But let us bring this criticism to the text. 'Let every woman have her own husband.' Here he says, 'the word *ἰδίου* is used, and denotes the husband's exclusive property in the wife; but not the wife's exclusive property in the husband. She could not have another husband, but he might have another wife.' Just so 'the woman hath not power over her own body,' says the apostle. Here, I say, the word *ἰδίου* is used, and it denotes the body's exclusive property in the woman; but not the woman's exclusive property in the body. The body might have another woman (another soul), but the soul could not have another body. The body was *appropriated* to the soul, exclusively of all other bodies; but the soul was not appropriated to the body, exclusively of all other souls. No, as the husband might marry other wives, so the body might be joined to other souls. What egregious trifling is this! But what will this gentleman say when I tell him that the *same* apostle, speaking of the same subject (the body) in the epistle to the Ephesians 5:28, uses the other word, *εαυτῶν* (which he supposes to have a meaning so different from *ἰδίου*), and says, husbands should love their wives as their own (*εαυτῶν*) bodies. The truth is, the words (*εαυτοῦ* and *ἰδίου*) are used indiscriminately by the sacred writers to express precisely the same idea—as Matthew 25:14, compared with Revelation 10:7; Romans 4:19, compared with 1 Corinthians 6:18; 1 Corinthians 7:4, with Ephesians 5:28; 1 Corinthians 4:12 and 11:5; etc.

13. But nothing can expose our author's false reasoning on this passage better than the unnatural comment he puts upon it. 'The passage', he says, 'may be thus paraphrased: "Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me", I say first, in general, that "it is good", *καλον*, useful profitable, ver. 8, and 26, "for a man not to touch a woman"; to have no dealings with the other sex. But with *respect to the fornicators* you mention, and concerning which you desire to know my sentiment, I answer, "Let every man have *his* own wife," *την γυνεϊκα εαυτου*, the woman that belongs to him, and not lend her out, or suffer her to marry another man; nor let him take a woman who is not, *γυνη εαυτου*, his wife, but another man's to himself. So also, let every married woman have her own husband, *τον ιδιον ανδρα*, the man appropriated to her, exclusively of all other men upon the face of the earth, and not depart or suffer herself to be lent or given to any other man.'

14. Now this paraphrase absolutely overthrows the foundation on which it is built, as well as the system he strives to reconcile the words unto. He supposes the Corinthians had consulted the apostle, respecting an infamous practice common at Corinth, and yet brings him in as answering them as though their question had related to an entirely different thing. 'Concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me', says he, 'I say first, in general, It is good for a man not to touch a woman.' That is, says Mr. Madan, to have no dealings with the other sex, and refers us to Matthew 19:12, where our Lord recommends a single life, and says, 'he that can receive it' (that can live single) 'let him receive it.' Now I want to know first, what relation this answer had to the question respecting the lawfulness of lending out their wives to other men? I want to know secondly, what connexion this *general* answer, as he terms it, has with the particular one which immediately follows? 'In answer to what you ask, I say first in general, live single if you can, and touch not a woman; but with respect to fornications, let every man keep his own wife.' What nonsense is this! According to this paraphrase, *married* men enquire of the apostle whether they might lend out their wives, and the apostle in answer advises them to live single, and 'not to touch a woman', and then by a sudden leap to another subject, bids them keep their own wives and use them as they had occasion! Again, this comment overthrows the system it is meant to support. For if, as he says, every man is to have his *own wife*, and is not to take a woman who is not his wife, then he is not to take possession of the person of a virgin, any more than a married wife. And if every woman is to have her own proper husband, *τον ιδιον ανδρα*, the man appropriated to her, then this man, *appropriated* to this woman, is not at liberty to give himself to another—especially as the apostle declares, 'he hath not power over his own body; but his wife.'

15. I have just said, sir, Mr. Madan supposes the apostle to be giving directions to *married* men. You shall see I am not mistaken. p. 233: 'Those', says he, 'who represent the apostle as addressing himself to single persons, and advising them to marry to avoid fornication, make him guilty of evident tautology. For the 8th verse is expressly addressed to the unmarried, and to widows.' The apostle therefore, in his opinion, is directing his discourse to *married* men here. And to these he says, in *general*, it is good for them not to touch a woman; or as he explains it, 'to have no dealings with the other sex'.

No, not even with their own wives! 'But to suppose the apostle to be addressing himself to single persons is to make him guilty of tautology.' And pray do not those who represent him as addressing himself to *married* persons, and advising them first to have no dealings with each other (ver. 1) and then to keep to each other (ver. 2–4) make him guilty of self-contradiction and tautology both, since in the 10th and 11th verses he expressly addresses himself to those who are married? 'Those that are married I command, and yet not I, but the Lord, let not the wife depart from her husband.' The truth is, the apostle having spoken first to single persons (ver. 1–2) and advised them to live single, if they had the gift of continence, and if not, to marry; and then, secondly, to those that were married, and enjoined them (ver. 3–4) to render to each other the conjugal debt; addresses them both again in plainer words from ver. 8–12: a kind of tautology this, very common with writers, who have it at heart to be understood, and with none more so than our author.

16. But Mr. Madan brings another argument to convince us that the apostle is addressing not *single*, but *married* persons in the first and second verses of this chapter. p. 234: 'If we understand the words *ἐκάστος*, every man, and *ἐκάστη*, every woman, to relate here to any but married people, it may seem to make the apostle command *everyone* to marry whether they choose it or not.' A shrewd observation truly! And one that might have done our author singular service had he thought on it when he was so vehement in his zeal against celibacy! Had he been wise enough to allow, what everybody takes for granted, that the apostle *did* speak this to single persons, he might have shown it to be a damnable sin to live unmarried, as being a manifest violation of a divine law, given at the creation, repeated after the deluge, and confirmed by the apostle under the gospel. But as the matter stands he has cut himself off from this argument, having applied it quite another way.

17. But 'the word *ἐκάστος*', he says, 'is relative, and must agree with some masculine substantive understood, which can be no other than *ἀνὴρ*.' Yes it can. It agrees with *ἀνθρώπος*, the substantive that precedes it, and not with *ἀνὴρ* that follows it. 'And the same of *ἐκάστη*, it also agrees with *γυνή*.' True, but not the *γυνή* found in the second, but that found in the first verse, as any school boy that has learned his grammar can tell. But let us hear what he will make of this. Why, '*ἀνὴρ* is here rendered *husband* and *γυνή*, *wife*, and therefore the passage means, Let every *husband* have (or keep) his wife, and every wife her husband.' And now sir, I appeal to yourself whether ever you read an author who attempted to criticize upon the original languages so *profoundly ignorant*, or if not, so *shockingly unfair*. Indeed all things considered, he cannot be ignorant as to the particular here specified, having in so many parts of his book informed us that there are no specific names for *husbands* and *wives* in the Hebrew and Greek languages, but only *men* and their *women*. It is therefore to the latter principle, the unfairness and disingenuity of our author, we owe this shameless criticism, which cannot possibly be designed for any other end than to impose upon the credulity of the unlearned reader—who if he sees a great many words in a book, in a strange character, though he understands not one letter of them, immediately concludes the author is a man of great learning and must be in the right!

But let Mr. Madan have it his own way. Let him translate *ἐκάστος* *every husband*, and *ἐκάστη* *every wife*. Inasmuch as they are *relatives* (as he tells us) and do most certainly agree with the masculine substantives which *go before*, and not with those which *follow after*, even *ἀνθρώπος* and *γυνή*, found in the first verse; it brings the matter to the same point to which we have brought it twice already—viz., that the apostle teaches, 'It is good for a husband not to touch his wife', a doctrine which (I think) Mr. Madan will not be very fond of.

18. I shall only take notice of one particular more in Mr. Madan's comment upon this passage. 'The wife has not power over her own body', says the apostle, 'but the husband, and in like manner' (*ὁμοίως δέ*) 'the husband has not power over his own body, but the wife.' Thus making the claims of the husband and wife *reciprocal* and in the *same degree*, giving the wife the *very same right* to her husband's body as he has to hers.

But Mr. Madan would make this mean only that 'the husband and wife have neither of them a right to withdraw *entirely* from the conjugal intercourse', not that the husband has not power to give his body to two, ten, or twenty more if he thinks proper. With regard to which I shall only say, if it leaves the husband at full liberty to do this, and only obliges him not to withdraw himself from his wife *forever*, it



most certainly leaves her at liberty to do the same, as it gives her the *very same* power, and in the *same degree* it gives him. 'In like manner, the husband hath not power over his own body, but the wife.'

To give a show of probability to the gloss he puts on ver. 4, he supposes that 'false apostles, had (by saying, all marriage was of the devil) sadly distressed the consciences of weak people, and led them to think, as marriage was sinful, all conjugal intercourse between married people must be sinful too'. Hence it was that they were in doubt whether it was lawful for them to have any intercourse with their own wives. And to remove these doubts, he thinks, was the sole end of the apostle when he required married persons to 'render to each other the conjugal debt'. Thus those very persons who, as he supposes, were in *doubt* whether they might not lend their wives to *others*, were also, it seems, in doubt whether they might use them themselves! But what proof does he bring of this? Why, not any at all.

19. But Mr. Madan has found one text in the New Testament which justifies his doctrine. It is that passage wherein the apostle directs bishops and deacons to be *each the husband of one wife*. His reasoning on this is as follows, p. 192, 'The practice of polygamy amongst the first Christians was probably very frequent. If not, why did St. Paul (1 Timothy 2:2 and Titus 1:6) recommend the choice of bishops and deacons from among them who had but one wife? What occasion for this caution, if none had more than one wife.'

'That the election was to be made from among Christian believers, there can be no doubt; that is, of such as had been admitted to baptism and the Lord's Supper, and were enrolled as members of the Christian church. To suppose that none of these had more than one wife is to suppose the apostle giving a needless rule in the election of bishops and deacons. To suppose that any who had more than one wife should be admitted to baptism and the Lord's Supper, if Christ had forbidden polygamy as *adultery*, is to suppose a greater absurdity still, and that the great apostle of the Gentiles was less faithful to his trust than those Jesuits who refused to admit the King of Tonquin<sup>39</sup> into the Christian church unless he would put away all his wives but one.'

20. In answer to this, permit me to apply our author's words to one or two more of the particulars, condemned by the apostle in this same passage, and to observe that the practice of *striking*, *brawling*, and *drunkenness* was probably very frequent among the first Christians. If not, why did St. Paul recommend the choice of bishops and deacons from amongst those who were not *strikers*, *brawlers*, or *given to wine*? What occasion for this caution of the apostle, if none were accustomed to these vices? That the election was to be made from among Christian believers, there can be no doubt—that is to say, of such as had been admitted to baptism and the Lord's Supper, and were enrolled as members of the Christian church. To suppose that none of these were brawlers and drunkards is to suppose the apostle giving a needless rule in the election of bishops and deacons. To suppose that any who were strikers, brawlers and drunkards, should be admitted to baptism and the Lord's Supper, if Christ had forbidden striking, brawling and drunkenness, is to suppose a greater absurdity still. Now if this is a bad argument in favour of *striking*, *brawling* and *drunkenness*, Mr. Madan's argument is equally bad in favour of polygamy. The truth is, that argument is against striking, brawling, drunkenness, and polygamy too.

21. And the apostle's meaning is exactly the same where he directs the choice of widows to be made from among such as had been *each the wife of one husband*; that is, married to only *one husband* at a time. For though Mr. Madan says, p. 200, such a thing was hardly ever heard of among the heathens themselves, yet in p. 217 he supposes that it was very frequently practised. For on what ground could the apostle refuse widows who had been *twice* married, any more than those who had been only *once* married? Do not many women lose their husbands before they have been married to them a year or two? Is it not hard in such a case to deny them the privilege of marrying again? Or to put any stigma upon them for so doing? Which would have been the case had they been objected to on the death of their second husband.

As to what Mr. Madan says about the form of expression being different in the two cases—it being in the present time in the case of the man, 'If any man *be* the husband of one wife'; and in the past

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<sup>39</sup>Orig., 'Jonquin'; an apparent misprint. 'Tonquin' was the current name for Vietnam.

time, in the case of the woman, '*Having been* the wife of one husband'—this proves nothing at all. Because as the apostle was speaking of *widows*, he could not speak of their husbands, unless in the time *past*. He could not say, 'if any widow *is* the wife of one husband'. If the apostle had had occasion to speak of *married women* being chosen into any office, he might have expressed himself precisely as he has done respecting men, and have said *εἰ τις ἐστὶν* ..., <sup>40</sup> 'If any woman is the wife of one husband'.

And now sir we have, as Mr. Madan desired, laid the Bible before us and examined this doctrine, on the ground of the sacred Scriptures. We have seen that the passages of the law of Moses, together with the imperfect examples of some who lived under that dark dispensation, are insufficient for the task; and that there are many other passages, both in the Old and New Testament, illustrated by greater and better examples which entirely condemn it. We have seen it to be repugnant to the law of nature and the rights of mankind; and contrary to the first institution of marriage. We have seen Mr. Madan labour in vain to reconcile his system with the doctrine taught by Christ and St. Paul, and make an unsuccessful attempt to recommend it by the example of the first Christians. We have seen it inconsistent with matrimonial love and family quiet, destructive of all peace and comfort in private life, and opposite to the rules and interests of every well-ordered society.

And now I might put a period to this unpleasing work ... only, as he has declaimed so much, on the *ruin* and *prostitution* of women, which he would persuade us can only be prevented by adopting his plan, I must beg your permission to trouble you with one letter more, in answer to what he has advanced on that head.

I am, reverend sir,

Your obedient servant in Christ,

J. B.

#### Letter VI

Reverend Sir,

1. If we believe Mr. Madan, his grand motive for setting himself in opposition to the whole Christian world was to prevent the ruin of women. Like another [Don] Quixote he stands forth singly, as the champion of the fair sex, and undertakes to defend them from ruin and prostitution. 'Our brothels', says he, p. 6, 'are filled with harlots, our streets with prostitutes, and our land with impurity. Magdalenes, and all the kind interposition of public charity, are inadequate to the cure of so crying an evil. A tree is not to be destroyed by plucking off a few leaves, or by cutting away here and there a branch. Nor can so general an evil be reformed by so partial, so precarious a remedy. No, the axe must be laid to the root.' Now to do this, to lay the axe to the root *effectually*, and hew down all these dreadful evils, is what our author attempts in the volumes before us. 'A work which', he says, 'must surely recommend itself to the most serious consideration of every well-wisher to the peace, good order, comfort, and welfare of society.' And 'though he pretends not to be a prophet' (p. 209), yet comparing himself with Luther, and the opposition he is boldly making to the superstition of the times (which forbids polygamy to the laity) to the stand which that reformer made to the superstition of that day (which enjoined celibacy to the clergy), 'he entertains not the least doubt that a century hence the world may either wonder at the man who had wildness enough to attack the present system of things concerning marriage, or that there were found people who were absurd enough to abuse him for it.' Take we care then that we do not abuse this extraordinary man, engaged thus in perfecting the great work of reformation, lest within a hundred years, our absurdity and folly should become the world's wonder! In the meantime (abuse apart) we may be permitted to see this wonderful phenomenon, and observe the manner in which our enterprising genius applies himself to the accomplishment of his benevolent design.

2. 'While our laws', says he (Vol. 2, p. 313), 'are what they are, and suffer men to take virgins into their possession, and then put them away, not all the devices of human wisdom can have any greater

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<sup>40</sup>Cf. Titus 1:6.

effect on the mischiefs which they would remedy than a few buckets of water taken out of a river would have upon the stream. The water would soon unite again, and flow on with the same apparent fulness. If an expedient could be found to dry up its source, and thus stop it at the fountain head, the stream must cease and the bed of the river become dry ground.' An admirable thought indeed! This would surely do the business effectually! Now thought I, as the source of the evils complained of is certainly in those *fleshly lusts* which war in the members of fallen man, our author has doubtless some medicine to recommend which he has found effectual for the cure of *these*; and inasmuch as no medicine can be more effectual for any disorder of the human soul than *divine grace*, he has surely some infallible directions to give us respecting the way of attaining and improving it for this glorious end. Among other things (the Lord Jesus having said, 'Ask and it shall be given you'<sup>41</sup>), he will surely urge us to *pray*, that receiving grace from above, by the help of this, 'we may mortify the deeds of the body, crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts',<sup>42</sup> and so strike an effectual blow at the root of this disorder.

3. But how grievously am I mistaken! How different are Mr. Madan's thoughts from my thoughts! As to *prayer*, he gives us his sentiments in the words following (Vol. 1, p. 185), 'As it would be the highest presumption—nay, even the madness of enthusiasm—for any man to pray that the natural appetites of hunger and thirst might cease, and that for the future he might live not on meat and drink but solely by respiration of air, so to pray to him whose command is "Be fruitful and multiply" that the natural desire which is to lead to this may be annihilated, is to petition against the divine wisdom, to arraign the divine holiness, and to remonstrate, in effect, against having any share in an obedience to the divine command.' Again (p. 186), 'When we pray against what God has commanded, we tempt him to deliver us up to the delusions of our own minds, and our own end will be according to our works.' Yet again (p. 187), 'For a man to pray he might never again feel the appetites of *hunger* and *thirst* would be deservedly reckoned madness. So if a man takes it into his head that those other desires, which God hath implanted in our nature are sinful, and on that footing prays against them, he is under a sad delusion, and every petition he utters is no less than an arraignment of the wisdom and holiness of the great Creator.' In this way does Mr. Madan dry up the sources of fornication, adultery, and uncleanness!

4. What is most extraordinary, all this is directed not to single but to married men, who are supposed to have separated from their wives for various reasons, and who are urged in this way to embrace his scheme of polygamy, and that not in principle but in practice. To urge them the more to this, he lays before them many evil consequences of our superstition on the subject of polygamy, one of which is the utter extinction of families. 'Among us, if a man be married to a barren woman, he cannot take another while she lives, but must content himself with letting his nobility, titles, honours and family be annihilated and his estates escheat to the crown.' 'This foolish superstition' he compares 'to that of the Jews in the days of Mattathias, who suffered themselves to be slaughtered by the enemy, without any resistance, because it was the Sabbath-day' (p. 139).<sup>43</sup>

[5.] To help us over all our scruples, and make our way as smooth as possible for the reception of his doctrine, this gentle casuist reminds us (Vol. 2, p. 174) that 'sin is the transgression of the law, that where there is no law there is no transgression, and that sin is not imputed where there is no law'. 'But', adds he, 'if superstition binds heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and lays them upon men's shoulders, the conscience must groan under the pressure till the weary and heavy laden are released by the friendly and beneficent hand of divine truth.' Behold oh ye weary and heavy laden, *married* or *single*, who have distressed yourselves with needless fears, as though you had committed sin and offended God by lusting after, enticing, and defiling the virgins you loved; and ye once *virgins*, but now *married wives*, who blame yourselves without cause and weep because in the hour of temptation you yielded to their will, and surrendered up your persons to be enjoyed by them. Behold, I say, that friendly and beneficent hand reached out to release you from your burden, and heal your wounded mind in the very next sentence. 'To

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<sup>41</sup>Matt. 7:7.

<sup>42</sup>Gal. 5:24.

<sup>43</sup>Referring to the Maccabean revolt, 168–164 BCE.

say that *a virgin*, who delivers herself into the possession of the man of her choice, sins in so doing, unless an outward ceremony of man's device be first performed, is to say what the Bible has nowhere said. All that God says in such a case is that they shall be one flesh, that she shall be the man's wife, that he may not put her away all his days. And all the contrivances which answer the operation of this law are only so many snares laid for the conscience, which may enthrall and bring it into subjection.' 'For' (p. 174) 'where is the authority from Scripture to stamp the *infamy* of *whoredom* on the exercise of that right with which every woman is invested by the God of nature, for the propagation and continuance of the human species. I mean that of bestowing her person on the man of her choice.' 'Tamar indeed said, when defiled by Amnon, "And I, whither shall I cause my shame to go?"<sup>44</sup> But then that was only because Amnon was her brother. It does not imply it would have been any shame, or sin either, to have been defiled by another, who did not stand in so near a relation to her.' 'We have no more *scripture authority*' (p. 175) 'to call such a one a whore, or to stamp the *least infamy* upon her, than the pious people at Bourdeaux had for stoning a certain young lady of quality to death for being suspected to have fasted on a Sunday.'

6. In this way does our author comfort distressed consciences. And such is the scheme of doctrine he has devised to prevent the ruin of women, 'to dry up the source of this evil, and stop prostitution in its most apparent causes' (Vol. 2, p. 314). 'A woman's person', says he (Vol. 1, p. 39), 'cannot be separated from herself. Wherever she bestows the one, the other is bestowed also. And when she delivers up her person, and consequently herself, into the possession of a man, she is by that act inseparably united to him, so that she cannot leave him, nor may he put her away all his days. If these truths', adds he, 'were received, millions of women would be saved from ruin.'

Perhaps it is worth our while to spend a page or two in enquiring, whether it is likely that such an effect would follow, supposing his doctrine were universally received.

7. It is supposed by Mr. Madan, and may be allowed, that the ruin of women is not primarily from *themselves*, but must be imputed to the other sex, who *entice* and *seduce* them, and then leave them exposed to temptation, by which being overcome they abandon themselves to all manner of vice. Now if we would learn whether Mr. Madan's doctrine be calculated to prevent this, we must consider two things: 1) What effect it will have upon *men*, married or single? Whether it will *abate* or *influence* their carnal desires? As also whether it will make it more *difficult* or more *easy* for them to get their desires accomplished? And then, 2) We must enquire what effect it will probably have upon women? Whether it is likely to render them *more* or *less* liable to be enticed and seduced?

8. Enquire we first what influence our author's doctrine would probably have upon unmarried young men? Would it induce them to *flee* youthful desires to believe that they are as innocent as *hunger* and *thirst*, and that it is the same folly and madness to resist their desires *after women* as their desires *after meat* and *drink*? Would they find it more difficult to get their wishes accomplished upon those women who believed they had an undoubted right to deliver their persons to the men of their choice when they pleased, and that without any previous contract, form, or ceremony whatsoever, than upon *those* who were fully persuaded they could not thus yield themselves up without sin and shame? Mr. Madan will say, 'Nay. This one consideration, that a man cannot take possession of the person of a virgin, but by that act by which he makes her *his wife*, would effectually restrain him, or if not, it would preserve the woman from abandoning herself to prostitution and ruin.' In answer to this I say, perhaps with prudent men it would, if Mr. Madan could assure us that, upon his scheme taking place, none of *these marriages* would be made in secret places, and under cover of the dark night; but all in broad daylight, and before witnesses who could attest the fact before a magistrate. Otherwise, both parties might have reasons for *concealing* or *denying* the fact (if charged with it) and might think it as prudent to separate, and each choose another partner. Or if the woman was inclined to avow the connexion, yet if the man denied it, what must be done? Whose word must be taken? Whose oath?

9. Again, is there any reason to think our author's scheme would have a better effect upon

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<sup>44</sup>2 Sam. 13:13.

married men? As things are now, if a married man finds desires after another woman, he strangles them in their birth. Or if he should fall into sin, he is ashamed before God and man, and a mark of reproach attends him to the day of his death. But according to our author's plan a very different scene takes place. The desires which arise after another woman are quite innocent. He may gratify them whenever he pleases, and in so doing he commits no sin; only he makes the woman his wife.

But this is not all. According to the principles now entertained it is judged *infamous* for a married man to address a young woman on the subject of love and marriage. And therefore if any are vile enough to do such a thing, they are rejected with abhorrence by those women who are not quite abandoned. And hence, the generality of married men content *themselves* with *one wife* each. But what an alteration would take place on the establishment of Mr. Madan's scheme! Married men, bound by no principle of conscience, would be as much at liberty to fix their affections on other women as single men are. And young women would be no more restrained in the case of married men than of others; but if they were so disposed, would have free liberty to encourage the addresses of one who has already perhaps three or four wives, as much as though he was a single man. And if on their return from the playhouse, the assembly, or the masquerade, when their blood is inflamed with wine, and unchaste desires are excited in their minds by the things they have seen and heard, they find an inclination to yield up their persons to the embraces of such, they are not to suspect that inclination to be evil, or to imagine they commit any sin, if they obey it. And yet this is the doctrine which is to prevent the ruin of women!

10. From what has been said, it appears that this doctrine would fall exceeding heavy upon *single women*. For it disarms them of every defence, whether of *conscience*, *law*, or *shame*, and leaves them exposed to all the attacks of deceit and treachery. Even now, Mr. Madan complains 'that whole hecatombs of ruined females pass through the fire of men's lusts to Moloch, and are offered at the shrine of prostitution'! What then might we not expect if all these obstacles were removed?

11. But heavy as this doctrine would fall on single women, it would fall heavier still upon such as were married. These it would not only lay under dreadful temptations to commit adultery, but torture their minds with continual jealousy, and expose them to the cruel insults of those scornful females, who have stole away the affections of their husbands. Ye newly married wives, who have lately given your hands and hearts to the man of your choice, and are now happy in the sweet endearments of mutual love; say, what would your feelings be on such an occasion?

12. But would the case be any better with you, ye matrons who have been married to a husband for the space of twenty or thirty years, to whom you have borne six or more fine children, who are now grown up and promise fair to be the comfort and stay of your declining years? How could you bear to find your husband, now in his old age, fallen in love with a young virgin, whom he proposes to marry and bring home to his house? Would it be a matter of mere indifference to you to see him happy in the embraces of this sweet and pretty creature? And to find a new race of sons and daughters growing up who, because of the ascendancy their mother has gained over your husband, are to be preferred before your children? Alas! What care and anxiety about your children, resentment against your husband, envy towards his new wife, and above all jealousy, cruel as the grave, would prey upon your inmost soul, and prompt you from day to day to take revenge? The only thing you could do in such a case would be to separate from your husband. But then observe, you must remain unmarried; otherwise you become an adulteress and subject yourself to the sentence of death. And if this sentence is not executed upon you it will not be Mr. Madan's fault, as he has taken true pains to show that the law of the Most High has enjoined it, and has spent page after page in bewailing the apostate spirit of later ages which hath shown the sex more mercy in this particular.

13. But I have done. The true tendency of this doctrine is too visible to need a long detail of particulars to set it forth. It is manifestly *female ruin* from beginning to end, and as such will meet with the abhorrence it deserves from all who wish well to the sex. As for those abandoned wretches who take pleasure in their seduction, it is quite according to the desire of their heart. It gives their lewdness what is most wanted, the sanction of divine authority, and helps to wipe off all the little shame which still kept it under. It will therefore greatly facilitate their attempts wherever it gains credit. However we have reason to hope it is a doctrine which will gain little ground in this nation. I venture to foretell that it will never be

generally believed, much less will it be established by law in this or in any country professing Christianity. And if anything extraordinary happens within a hundred years it will be this: the world will wonder that any man could be so wild as to expect such a doctrine to be received in a civilized country—or if received, to be the means of preventing female ruin—which it is so manifestly calculated to promote.

I am, reverend sir,

Your obedient servant in Christ,

J. B.

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 37–40, 92–95, 144–49, 204–208, 262–64, 318–21, 372–75, 427–31, 489–92, 540–44, 598–602, 658–63; 7 (1784): 37–41, 96–101, 151–54, 205–209, 258–63, 319–22, 371–74, 426–31, 484–90, 539–45, 596–603, 650–52.

From Robert Leister<sup>1</sup>

[Epworth]  
c. February 20, 1782

I have known the goodness of God for near thirty years. But in spite of all my advice, my five sons and two daughters, all grown up, ran on in the broad road to destruction. This cost me many a prayer and tear, yet I saw no fruit of all my labour. In January last I dreamed the day of judgment was come. I saw the Judge on his great white throne. The holy angels sat round him in form of a half-moon, and all nations were gathered before him. I and my wife were on the right hand,<sup>2</sup> but I could not see any of my children. I said, 'I cannot bear this. I must go and seek them.' so I went to the left hand, and found them all seven standing together, tearing their hair, beating their breasts, and cursing the day that ever they were born. As soon as they saw me, they all caught hold of me and said, 'O father, we will never part more.' I said, 'My dear children, I am come to see if I can get you out of this dismal situation.' So I took them all with me. But when we were come within a bowshot of the Judge, I thought he cast an angry look and said, 'What do thy children with thee now? They would not take thy warning when upon earth. They shall not share the crown with thee. Depart ye cursed!' At these words I awoke, bathed in sweat and tears.

A while after, as we were all together on a Sunday night, I related my dream to them. No sooner did I begin but first one, then another, yea all of them burst into tears. And God fastened conviction on their hearts. Five of them are now rejoicing in God their Saviour. And I know God is at work with the other two, so that I doubt not but he will give them also to my prayers.

[Robert Leister<sup>3</sup>]

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 7 (1784): 46.

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Leister (1723–1806), a native of Epworth, became a pillar of the Methodist society there in his later years. See the brief account of his life in *MM* 31 (1808): 226–28.

<sup>2</sup>Leister married Elizabeth Maw, of Haxey, in 1746.

<sup>3</sup>JW prefaced: 'The account which Robert Leister gives of his children is as follows.'

From George Whitfield<sup>1</sup>

c. February 20, 1782

February 3, 1782, as Thomas Saxton, one of the leaders, was giving out a hymn at John Langton's, John Langton junior, was so affected, that he could hardly stand. They went to prayer, and he with two others were set at liberty.

On February 8 (the general fast day<sup>2</sup>) Ann Towris, Susannah Waterland, Hannah Richardson, Martha Story, Martha Wilkinson, and Ann Pepper found peace with God. As did six more the same evening, at John Langton's. Where on Sunday the 10th, several more found a sense of the pardoning love of God. Meantime two young women, Susannah Hatfield and Lucy Mawtson, came on purpose to make sport; but they were no sooner come into the house than they were cut to the heart, and before they left it both the one and the other could rejoice in God her Saviour.

On Monday, there was a remarkable outpouring of the Spirit at John Barker's house, where two persons were set at liberty and many deeply convinced of sin. On Thursday ten were set at liberty in a meeting for prayer. On Monday 18, seven or eight at Francis Ingham's found the peace of God. And so did Joseph and Sarah Story at five o'clock in the morning.

[George Whitfield<sup>3</sup>]

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 7 (1784): 47.

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<sup>1</sup>George Whitfield (1753–1832), while he shared a nearly identical name with the famous Calvinist Methodist preacher, had from a young age been part of Wesleyan Methodism and by 1779 was assisting at JW's book room in London. Whitfield was listed as an itinerant from at least 1784 (see *Works*, 10:552), but was typically appointed to London, taking over directing the book room in 1788, and assisting JW in other administrative roles. On his death he was buried at City Road Chapel. See Stevenson, *City Road*, 279, 516.

<sup>2</sup>The surrender of Gen. Cornwallis at Yorktown on Oct. 19, 1781 marked the end of a major British land force in North America. As news of the defeat reached England, George III progressively lost control of Parliament. In an attempt to rally support, he called for a public fast to be observed on Feb. 8, 1782, to beseech God to bless the British land and sea forces in the ongoing battle with the colonies.

<sup>3</sup>JW prefaced in *AM*: 'The following short account was taken by George Whitfield.'



From Ann Bolton

February 23, 1782

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Gratitude, respect, and duty forbid my longer delay in writing. My intention of coming hither increased my business in preparing to leave home, and gave me hope of leisure for so pleasing an employment when here. For some time before I determined my journey, I laid it before him 'From whom all good counsels, and all just works do proceed.'<sup>1</sup> And while I waited for inward discoveries and secret intimations of his will, was led to attend to the outward directions of his providence—and both concurring to point out his pleasure. On Tuesday, Feb. 12, I set out for Gloucester, where my dear friend N. A. met me.<sup>2</sup> We spent the evening there, much to my satisfaction, with a few of the Lord's flock. In order to make the best of the time, we formed a little class-meeting; and the Friend of sinners graced it with his presence. Wednesday I reached Chepstow, and Thursday morning this peaceful mansion, where, as we say, I find myself much at home.<sup>3</sup>

You know my present situation, and will at one glance see that I need great grace to enable me to act as becomes my profession. I am conscious I came here, not to do my own will, but his that sent me. I have need therefore every moment to have my eye fixed on him, and my ear open to his voice. I feel all the powers of my soul join ardently in that wish, 'to be useful', to show forth the praises of him that hath called me to his kingdom and glory. But oh how insufficient am I for these things! He to whom my heart darts forth its desire for help alone knows, and that he *does* know it is my joy and consolation. My prayer is that I may become wise to win souls, and in this point I need particular instruction. Some days since, when I was secretly breathing forth longings after it, the Almighty graciously condescended to remind me, that 'he that walketh with wise men, shall be wise'.<sup>4</sup> But more especially he that walketh in close communion with the God of wisdom, the source of all perfection, beauty, and harmony.

I am sometimes at a loss how to preserve a happy medium between a kind of severity and complacency; not to countenance some little things that don't quite merit my approbation, and yet to avoid giving disgust by appearing too strict in the condemning and disapproving way. I wish to become all things to all, so far as to give me a suitable ascendancy of their affections, by which I may be enabled to lead them to their divine Original. For which purpose I beseech your advice and your prayers. But more fully to explain myself, I will insert an instance. Miss [Sarah] James willing to oblige me, proposes reading in the evenings such books as I have not before read, or am likely to read. This is kindness, and pursuant to which she has begun *Sir Charles Grandison*.<sup>5</sup> At first my mind was dissatisfied. But the great character there delineated leads me to a much higher one, the meek, the noble, the dispassionate, the lovely Jesus. And these and such like remarks I have made to my friends; as also how many other worthy examples are given in the divine records. Besides, I meet with many beautiful sentiments in this book, that have not fell in my way, which may be useful to me as I pass through life. But after all I have said in favour of it, I beg your sentiments. I am, dear sir,

Your much obliged and affectionate

A. B.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 270–72.

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<sup>1</sup>BCP, Evening Prayer.

<sup>2</sup>Ann ('Nancy') Arundel, of Stroud; see John Banks, *'Nancy, Nancy'* (Wilmslow, Cheshire: Penwork, 1984), 70–71.

<sup>3</sup>From the address of his reply on Mar. 8 we know that Bolton was staying at the home in Caerleon, Gloucestershire, of Sarah James (previously of Bristol).

<sup>4</sup>Prov. 13:20

<sup>5</sup>Samuel Richardson (ed.) *A History of Sir Charles Grandison, in a series of letters*, 7 vols. (London: Richardson, 1754).

From Elizabeth (Nangle) Bradburn

Bradford  
February 24, 1782

Honoured and Very Dear Sir,

Since I received your last kind favour,<sup>1</sup> the Lord has been pleased to bring me through the furnace of affliction, O that I could say, I have come out seven times purified as gold!

For ten weeks past, I have laboured under a complaint of a very trying nature, indeed the most so that I ever suffered in my life. But my God, who is jealous to have my whole heart, did not see this chastisement sufficient for me; and therefore suffered me to be tried in a much severer manner than I could be from an affliction which concerned myself alone.

You may remember, dear sir, to have seen our little boy at Keighley; who was almost three years old, and just beginning to be a most engaging child, full of health and spirits.<sup>2</sup> He was taken a little poorly on Monday the eleventh, and continued to be so two or three days. We apprehended he was taking the small-pox. But not seeing any appearance of an eruption, though he continued to show symptoms of pain in his head, and sickness in his stomach, I was rather alarmed. Therefore his father went early on Friday morning for Mr. [John] Floyde who came immediately and told me I need be under no disagreeable apprehensions on his account. For though he thought it a fever, he would give him some powders which would, with the blessing of God, relieve his head and stomach. I believe they were of use, for he did not complain near so much the next day as he had done before.

On Saturday night when I went to bed, I left him (as I thought) much better. But this did not last long. For he began to be greatly agitated about two o'clock. And at 5:00 he fell into strong convulsions, the first of which lasted, without interruption, two hours; notwithstanding we got all the assistance we could for him from the doctors in Bradford. At 7:00 his poor father was obliged to leave me, with a heavy heart, as he had to preach at Eccleshill at 8:00, fearing he would never behold him alive any more. His fears were but too well grounded; for, at half past 9:00 he breathed his last.

I know, my dear sir, you are possessed of too much sensibility not to judge more justly what my feelings were on this distressing occasion than would be in my power to describe. His father was afflicted above measure, at his return, which was about 10:00, and has ever since been very ill, more so than I ever knew him to be since we were married. He again engaged in his labours yesterday, and is now in the circuit, having no person here to assist him in preaching. I am myself very poorly, and am not sure that I have quite five weeks to reckon.

I request, my dear sir, you will remember in your approaches to the throne of your heavenly Father (in whose sight I know you are precious) your weak distressed child, and help me by your fatherly admonitions. May I flatter myself that what I hear is true, that you intend visiting these parts this summer? If so, I need not tell you what pleasure your presence will give me, as I am persuaded you do not doubt either of the sincerity or strength of my love, or gratitude. But O! my dear sir, if the Lord should be pleased to spare me to have that privilege, I could wish to feel myself more what I know would give you satisfaction; I mean, to have more of the mind of Christ. I find, glory be to him, that I have a measure of it. But still I feel an aching void. I am not yet filled with his fullness. Lord help me to be all in earnest, for I see nothing less than striving and agonizing will do.

I am, honoured and very dear sir, with many prayers for your present and eternal happiness,

Your very affectionate, though unworthy child,

Eliza Bradburn

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 220–22.

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<sup>1</sup>This letter is not known to survive.

<sup>2</sup>This was Samuel and Elizabeth's first child, Ebenezer Bradburn (1779–82).

From Thomas Taylor<sup>1</sup>

Savannah, Georgia  
February 28, 1782

I received yours of June last from the Isle of Man only a few days ago.<sup>2</sup> I am not quite certain whether I have wrote to you since my unfortunate journey up the country last summer, the particulars of which I will therefore recapitulate.

About the beginning of April last (soon after the affair of Guildford [NC] which was generally believed to have settled the peace of the back country) I set off for Augusta, having previously sent off by water an assortment of medicines which I had just received and which cost me near £80 in London. Before I reached Augusta I was informed that a party of rebels had a few days before crossed the river and were spreading devastation all around. However I happily arrived in safety. Col. [Thomas] Brown, who commanded, had detached a considerable part of his force to escort several large boats then on their way from Savannah. The arrival of which he waited, before he thought it prudent to move out. In the meantime the rebel party, moving through the country without molestation, increased from 100 to 300, and then took post between him and the boats, so as to prevent a junction. Things were in this situation when Gen. [Nathanael] Green, having obliged Lord [Francis] Rawdon to retreat to Monks Corner and captured all the small forts on the Congaree and Santee rivers, found himself at liberty to detach Col. [Henry] Lee towards Augusta—who, arriving about the end of May, immediately took possession of the small post at Silver Bluff about 14 miles down the river, where the boats had been detained upwards of a fortnight. He there found a most seasonable supply for the rebel army, consisting of the very articles they were in the utmost want of—viz., arms, ammunition, rum, salt, saddles, blankets, medicines etc. Had Col. Brown had proper information of the state of things in Carolina he would certainly have destroyed the boats and brought up the small escort to Augusta, which could have been done with great ease by a night march. But there appears to have been an unhappy deficiency in this respect. Col. Lee, immediately after this success, appeared in force at Augusta, and having obliged Col. [James] Grierson who commanded the loyal militia to evacuate his post about half a mile from Col. Brown's, he laid close siege to that of the latter named Fort Cornwallis. In the abrupt retreat of Col. Grierson (in which we lost 16 men killed, several wounded, and about 40 prisoners) I had a very narrow escape indeed, for which I trust I shall always feel a proper sense of gratitude to my Master. After a close siege of 14 days, Col. Brown was obliged to surrender on the 5th of June. The whole garrison were to be sent prisoners on parole to Savannah. But the very next day at noon Col. Grierson was basely murdered in the very midst of the rebel troops. A sham pursuit was made for a few minutes after the murderer, but he was permitted to escape. Col. Lee indeed and his officers expressed abhorrence of the fact. But to my certain knowledge he refused to prevent it. For that very morning I went to see that gallant unfortunate man [Col. Grierson], and upon my carrying him a drink of water some of the miscreants about bestowed on us both the bitter curses. He told me that his life was threatened, and if not removed from the place where he then was he was certain the threat would be executed. He therefore begged me to represent the matter through Col. Brown to Col. Lee—which I did, but in vain. It would transcend belief were I to recount the murders committed by these wretches upon the unhappy Tories [or loyalists] all over the country. The patriots at home may exclaim, and with some justice, on the impropriety of employing Indians, but their cruelties in this part of the continent have been exceeded in number at least fourfold by those of the rebels. Putting a man to death in cold blood is very prettily nicknamed giving a 'Georgia parole'.

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<sup>1</sup>This is the Thomas Taylor (b. 1745), originally of Alnwick, now residing in Georgia (and soon in Florida). For more detailed annotation, see Robert S. Davis, 'A Georgia Loyalist's Perspective on the American Revolution', *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 81 (1997): 135–38.

<sup>2</sup>This letter is not known to survive.

It were needless for me to mention the disaster of York Town<sup>3</sup> and subsequent evacuation of Wilmington [NC], whereby many hundred families of active loyalists have been brought to utter ruin. Our situation in these two provinces is truly humiliating. Gen. [Alexander Leslie, with an army superior in numbers, is confined to Charleston Neck and James Island. And here in Georgia Col. [Allured] Clark, with 1000 regular Troops and 500 or 600 refugee militia, besides inhabitants and Indians and seamen, is blocked up by Gen. [Anthony] Wayne with about 300 men, partly militia. So great is our terror that we don't keep a bridge standing within a mile of the town that, though the planting season is at hand, there is no prospect of any except upon a few islands near the town. The country people, unless something is done soon, (must to avoid perishing) return and throw themselves upon the mercy of the rebels. Indeed we may truly say 'The glory is departed'.<sup>4</sup> I weep to think of our situation.

Perhaps they may yet be sensible at home of the importance of the southern colonies, which experience has shown may be effectually kept with half the force that lies idle at New York. Above all we want active indefatigable commanders that 'have the honour of the country and the good of the service' at heart; such as Lord Cornwallis, notwithstanding his misfortune (for I cannot think it was his fault), or particularly Lord Rawdon, the most promising officer that has been in this country.

But I am so carried away by public affairs as almost to forget private. About three months ago I was married to one to whom I had been engaged for some time past,<sup>5</sup> one who I doubt not will prove a helpmate for me. I am therefore more deeply interested in the fate of this country. May the Almighty soon disperse the cloud that at present looms over us and restore peace once more in Zion! But that I fear is not yet near. A good old Quaker up the country used often to say to me there can be no peace before these people are humbled, and truly less appearance of religion cannot well be in any country professing Christianity.

*Source:* holograph; Shelburne Papers, William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan.

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<sup>3</sup>Lord Charles Cornwallis surrendered his British army at Yorktown, Virginia on Oct. 19, 1781

<sup>4</sup>1 Sam. 4:21.

<sup>5</sup>Taylor married Bellamy Johnston on Dec. 6, 1781.

From William Ferguson (autobiography)

c. March 1782

1. My father and mother lived at Kelso, in Scotland, where they had five children. But when my mother was big of the sixth she could not be delivered, the child being dead within her. In a desperate case a desperate method was used; incision was made, and the child taken out of her side. And yet, by the blessing of God she survived, and recovered her health and strength. But the physician assured her, if she had another child, it could not be born, but she must infallibly die. However she was with child again. As the time of her delivery approached, expecting nothing but death, she cried to God day and night. But to the amazement of all, she was delivered with more ease, than she had ever been of any child before.

2. I was the child then born, on the 25th of March 1735. I was brought up a Presbyterian, and had very early impressions on my soul. When I was about six years old, I used to wonder I could not weep under sermons, as others did. I left off play and going into the fields, used to think of God, of the devil, of heaven and hell. I thought God loved me, and was willing to bring me to heaven. But I thought if the devil should get me to hell, I shall never get out. Yet I thought, Christ suffered for my sins, and thereby made a full atonement for them. But although I knew these great truths, yet my heart was unchanged; and I constantly went on in the follies of childhood, according to the devices of my own heart.

3. When I was ten years old, my parents removed to Eyemouth, eight miles north of Berwick. Hhere I grew thoughtful again, and began to pray much, wherein I found so great pleasure that I persuaded four boys I was acquainted with, to go with me, morning and evening, into a secret place in a timber-yard, between two stacks of deals, where we prayed one after the other. This we constantly did for two months. But a young gentleman lodged just by, whose window looked into the yard. Observing us to go thither constantly, he wanted to know the reason. And meeting me one day alone, after giving me many good words, he asked me why we met together between the stacks? I told him, but begged him not to tell anyone; which he faithfully promised. But notwithstanding he went immediately and told the children themselves, and their parents, and the people of the town—many of whom cried out that it was blasphemy for such young children to pretend to pray. The children were soon laughed out of their religion, and never rested till they made me like themselves; nay till they taught me to get drunk, which we did in that very place where we used to pray together.

4. Two years after, my parents removed to Holy Island, nine miles south of Berwick. The people of this place were mostly smugglers, and the children remarkably wicked. Of these I soon learned to curse and swear, and to glory in my shame. I learned to tell lies for sport, to play at cards, to dance, to work the greatest part of the Sabbath day, and to make a mock at all religious people, saying, they were all hypocrites. And in this deplorable condition I remained, till I was near twenty years old.

5. During this time I was twice in great danger of being drowned, going to Holy Island in very dark nights. It was also a flowing tide. I had lost my way, and the sea came in fast upon me. But both times I was brought safe to land. I was serious for a while after. But I then got into laughing, trifling company and my seriousness soon wore off. Another time being with a gang of smugglers, a king's officer clapped a pistol to my breast, and swore bitterly if I lifted a hand he would shoot me through the heart. The thought of instant death shocked me much. But this too I stifled by drinking and dancing.

6. So I continued fast asleep in the devil's arms, till one day as I was working in the shop with my father, my mind ran upon a match of drinking and dancing in which I was engaged to join in the evening. Suddenly I heard a voice as from heaven saying, 'What if thou shouldest drop down dead in the midst of the dance! Wouldest thou go to heaven?' I said, 'No: I am not fit for heaven.' Immediately I felt I had passed sentence upon myself; and that if I went not to heaven, hell was my portion. Light broke in. I was filled with horror. I saw myself hanging over the mouth of hell by the brittle thread of life!

7. My father looked me in the face and asked, 'What is the matter?' But I made no answer. He said, 'Certainly something is the matter. For you are sometimes red as scarlet, and in a moment white as chalk.' But still I spoke not one word. My mouth was stopped. I was guilty before God. Yet I was thankful that I was alive, and thought, 'O that God would let me live one day longer! In how different a

manner would I spend my time! Surely not in the ways of sin.' Soon after I sat down to dinner, but I could not swallow a morsel. My mother, observing this, was very angry at my father, thinking I was grieved at something he had said. But finding that was not the case, she was quite struck and, turning to me said, 'My dear, why do not you eat your dinner?' I made no answer. Indeed I could not, for my heart was fit to break.

8. In the evening my company came in, to carry me to the dancing. To their great surprise, they found me reading the Bible. They asked my father and mother, 'Are not you willing he should go with us?' They said, 'Yes; but we think he is not well.' They said, 'Come, we shall soon cure him. Lay hold. We will carry him.' 'Do', says another, 'and I will carry his fiddle.' I looked at them and said very mildly, 'If you do carry me, I shall be of no use to you. For a dance I will not dance this night. and a tune I will not play.' They stared and left me.

9. When our family went to rest, I durst not go to bed, for fear I should awake in hell. I tried to pray but could not. I stayed for some time, with my heart as hard as a stone. At last I fell upon my knees; and with a flood of tears cried out, 'Lord, be merciful to me, for I am a great sinner.' I found my mind a little eased, and went to bed and slept comfortably. But in the morning my trouble was as great as ever. When I went out about my business, many mocked me for my gravity. Others said, 'It is great pity, so fine a young man should lose the use of his reason.' But what grieved me more, was to see all the people, as I had been myself, fast asleep in the devil's arms.

10. On Sunday morning I rose early, and the tide being out, walked to Lonwick on the mainland,<sup>1</sup> and went to a Presbyterian meeting. The minister's text was, 'I will arise and go to my father.'<sup>2</sup> It was a word spoke in season. I thought he looked at *me* all the time. The people did indeed look at me; many of them knowing me well, and therefore wondering how I came there! When I came home, my mother begged me with tears to reveal what was upon my mind. She said, 'What is it you have done? Have you murdered anybody?' I said, 'No, mother; I have murdered nobody. But I have almost murdered my poor soul.'

11. As soon as the inhabitants of the island found that I would not drink, swear, or work on the Lord's day, they were violently angry. So that I could hardly walk the street, for the mob setting upon me. And my father and mother insisted on my working at my business on the Lord's day. But I told them, 'No; never more. I will sooner have the flesh torn off my bones.' My prayer now was to get out of this ungodly place, and a fortnight after, my parents consented. So I left them, not knowing whither I was going, but designing to follow my father's trade, provided I could find any master who would not require me to work on the Lord's day.

12. When I came to Newcastle upon Tyne, as I was going down Pilgrim Street, I saw abundance of people going along who seemed remarkably serious. I asked a man, 'Pray, who are all these?' He answered, these are all Wesleyites. They are coming from the preaching. This was the first time I saw or heard of them. The next day I went on to Sunderland, where I found out my father's brother and inquired if he knew any barber who did not work on a Sunday? 'Yes', said he, 'there is Tommy Parker.' So to him I went without delay.

13. To my great surprise, the sailors that came into our shop did not curse or swear at all. But several of them took my master by the hand, and said, 'How do you do, brother?' I asked, 'Pray, sir, are all these your brothers?' He said, 'We are all brethren in Christ.' When Sunday came, I got one to show me to the preaching house, where I saw my master in the pulpit! His text was, 'He shall bring forth the top stone with shouting, crying, Grace, grace unto it.'<sup>3</sup> I then told him the distress of my mind. He advised me to go to London, telling me I should there have all the means of grace, in the greatest abundance. I went to London, where my cousin Thomas Fryer soon got me into a shop. And not long after, on my

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<sup>1</sup>Perhaps an alternative name for Lamlash.

<sup>2</sup>Luke 15:18.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Zech. 4:7.

telling him I wanted to meet in a class, carried me to the Tabernacle.<sup>4</sup> I went into the vestry and told two gentlemen I found there, 'I should be glad to meet in a class, that I may speak my experience, and tell of the work of God which I have found upon my heart.' One of them said, 'What class shall we put him into?' The other answered, 'Indeed I cannot tell. Mr. Wesley's classes are far more strictly looked after than ours.' 'If you please then', said I, 'I will go and meet in one of his classes.' He looked at me and said, 'Really young man, I cannot blame you.' I went immediately to Mr. [John] Wesley, who after a little conversation gave me a note of admittance.

14. As I now prayed much, and heard many sermons, and abstained from all known sin, I began to be very easy, supposing myself to be a very good Christian. And one day in a house in Radcliffe Highway, I began talking as if I had gone a great way in religion. This an old gentlewoman observing, came and taking me by the hand said, 'Do you know your sins are pardoned?' I answered, 'I hope so.' She said, 'I fear not. For if they were, you would have the witness in yourself. Satan cares not how far we go in religion, if we will but stop short of this. I advise you, when you go home, pray earnestly to the Lord, to show you whether your sins are pardoned? If they are, to give you the witness of it. If they are not, never to let you rest without it.'

15. I was quite speechless, finding I had stopped short of the prize. I hastened home, praying all the way. I watched, I prayed, I waited in all the means of grace, longing for Christ to come into my heart. I could hardly eat any food till Sunday came, when I went to the Seven Dials,<sup>5</sup> to hear Mr. Wesley. I was much blessed under the word, expecting every moment to receive the blessing. On Monday, as I sat at work, I was thinking the sermon over again, when on a sudden my mind was whirled away, and filled with vain imaginations. After a time I cried out, 'Lord, what a wicked wretch am I? Wilt thou pardon this, with all my other sins?' In a moment the Lord said to my heart, 'My blood hath atoned not only for this, but for all the sins which thou hast ever committed. Thou art no more thy own. Thou art bought with a price, and I will give thee power to glorify me with thy body and thy spirit which are mine.'

16. In that moment my hell was turned into heaven. Joyful day, that ascertained the kingdom mine, just two years after the Lord had awakened me out of the sleep of death. I seemed now to be in another world. Everything was new. Everything about me was comfortable. For the Lord smiled upon my soul. For two days and two nights every breath I drew was praise and prayer, having a sweet intercourse opened between God and my soul. When Satan tempted, I said, 'Go to my Lord!' And the temptation died away. Whatever I wanted, I could make my request known to my reconciled Father for it, in the name of his well-beloved Son, and he granted my petition. I asked of him two temporal blessings: the one that he would give me a lawful calling, wherein I might not be so continually teased to work on the Sabbath-day; the other, that he would give me a helpmate. He answered me in both. He inclined the heart of a watchmaker to teach me his trade; who afterwards gave me his granddaughter to wife.<sup>6</sup> And from that time we have sweetly gone on hand in hand, towards our Father's kingdom.

17. Some time after, having a great desire to see my parents once more, I went with my wife to Holy Island. But now I was exposed to a danger I had not foreseen. I was employed in my trade by some of the first people in the country, and frequently invited to their houses; whereby pride and other unholy tempers began to revive in my soul. However, by the grace of God, I continued fighting against them—though sometimes conquering, sometimes yielding. Indeed I seemed like a door upon the hinges, turning backwards and forwards. This filled me with unspeakable grief. And though I still knew God was reconciled, yet I went mourning all the day long, because of inbred sin.

18. But about fourteen years ago, as I was one night sitting in my house at Alnwick, in

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<sup>4</sup>George Whitefield's preaching house in London.

<sup>5</sup>I.e., the West Street Chapel.

<sup>6</sup>Ferguson married Elizabeth Buckley in 1760 (this is a correction to fn. 77 in *Works*, 23:270. Cicely Godbehave was Ferguson's second wife, after Elizabeth died in 1793.

Northumberland, my family being all in bed, I began reading one of Mr. Walsh's sermons.<sup>7</sup> When I came to those words, 'Salvation is twofold, emptying us of evil, and filling us with good!' my heart was melted down, and I cried out, 'Lord, give me at least the former part of thy salvation. Empty me of evil!' In a moment I felt such a change as no tongue can express. I felt every kind and degree of anger and resentment quite taken out of my heart. My pride also was gone, and I was thoroughly content to be despised of all men. I was crucified to the world: to all its honours and profits, all its comforts and pleasures. The fear of man was clear gone, and so was all conformity to the world. I regarded neither the smiles nor the frowns of great men, being quite set at liberty, and finding nothing in my heart but pure love. Love free from dissimulation, abhorring that which is evil and cleaving to that which is good.

19. I cried out, 'What shall I render unto the Lord, for all the benefits he hath done unto me?'<sup>8</sup> The Lord said, 'Go work in my vineyard. As thou hast been a faithful advocate for the devil, be now a faithful labourer for me.' I shivered at the thought, knowing the littleness of my talents, and fearing I should dishonour his cause. Yet believing it was his will, I promised to go, though with my life in my hand.

20. When I declared what a blessing I had received, there was nobody that would believe me. And when I said I believed God had called me to preach, many were ready to swallow me up. I desired they would give me a fair trial. But it could not be. So I went to a little country town, where no Methodist had ever preached. I spoke to a serious, attentive congregation; in consequence of which, I was invited to four country towns near Alnwick. But the more I laboured, the more angry some of my brethren were, till the providence of God called me to London.

21. I came to London on Friday, nine years ago. The next day the men were hung in chains on Bow Common. On Sunday thousands of people came to gaze at them—to whom I preached on, 'What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul!'<sup>9</sup> Quickly after I was seized with a violent fever. But the consolations of God were not small with me, and made me large amends for all the pain I suffered. After the Lord had raised me up from my sick-bed, it pleased him to try me with poverty. We were brought so low as to have neither food to eat, nor raiment to put on. This was our case, while I served a severe master, for very small wages; who, nevertheless, was continually blaming me and threatening to turn me off.

22. At length, the Lord put it into the heart of my dear wife to advise me to try what I could do in Holland. I left England in the latter end of August. After a passage of ten days, I landed at Amsterdam. From whence I went to The Hague. It was at first very distressing to me that I did not understand the language. But the Lord moved the minds of the people wherever I was, to help me all they could. He raised me up real friends, who sent me from town to town, and recommended me from one to another, even to the first persons of the land. And after having disposed of my goods, I was brought home again in safety, after an absence of six months and three days.

23. I now thought my work abroad was done, and that I might spend the rest of my life in my own country. But to my surprise, I received abundance of letters earnestly pressing me to come back. Believing it was the call of God, on the eleventh of April, 1778, I embarked to Hellevoetsluis, and crossed over to The Hague, where my friends, with the utmost kindness, introduced me to the chief of the country, the Prince of Orange in particular. He asked me many questions concerning both my country and religion. I answered him with all simplicity, and he appeared well satisfied. Soon after, I was made burgher of the town. From thence I went to Leiden, Delft, Rotterdam, Dort, Haerlem, Amsterdam, Utrecht, and most of the other chief cities in the United Provinces. In my journeys I met with many persons, whom I believed to be the true children of God. But it was a grievous cross that we could speak only a very few words to each other. Having done my business, I returned by Hellevoetsluis to Harwich, and so to London.

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<sup>7</sup>Thomas Walsh, *A Collection of Sermons*, (London: Foundry, 1764).

<sup>8</sup>Cf. Ps. 116:12.

<sup>9</sup>Matt. 16:26.



24. On April 15, 1779, I embarked again for Holland, and went through the same places I did the last year. And now I could converse a little in the Dutch language. The first children of God that I found were in the city of Haerlem. They came to my shop and told me the goods were pretty,; but I must take care not to set my heart upon them. I told them my heart was in heaven, and that these pretty things were under my feet. One of them then invited me to his house, where I found a company assembled together. They received me with the utmost courtesy, and asked what religion I was of. I answered, 'Of that described in the 13th [chapter] of the First of Corinthians, from the fourth to the seventh verse.' Having read the words, they said, 'This is our religion too. We receive you as a brother.' They recommended me as such to all their acquaintance, so that I was kindly received wherever I came. And I found just the same liberty of spirit with these as with my brethren in England. From this time, I found all over the country persons that knew and lived the gospel. And after spending six months comfortably among them, I cheerfully returned to my family.

25. I went again the next spring, and was received with the same kindness as before. And having more of the language, I found out more and more of the children of God. I rejoiced to find among these some of the rich and great, who appeared to be as humble as the least of them. They were glad to hear that there was a people in England that loved and served God. And some of them had a great desire to settle a correspondence with their English brethren—which was soon after effected, and has continued ever since, to the no small comfort of both.

26. When I entered upon this trade, I had many discouragements. Most of my acquaintance either mocked or pitied me, saying I was the most improper person in the world to be concerned in such a business. And besides I had no money. I had indeed very little. But I believed God would bless that little. And he sent me help in time of need, so that money came just when it was wanted. One time I was shipping off a chest of goods, but had not money to pay the duty. I told my wife, 'God will provide.' Presently a gentleman I never saw before knocked at the door, and when he came in, told me he wanted a parcel of goods and would pay part of the money then. He did so, and it was as much as I wanted to pay the duty on my chest.

27. It is now about fourteen years since I began, according to my ability, to call sinners to repentance. And I bless God, though I have had many discouragements, I am not yet weary. I have not laboured in vain. God has given me to see a little fruit of my labours. Blessed be his name, he hath washed me from my sins. And I know he is able to keep me from falling, and to enable me to grow in grace, till he receives me into his glory.

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 292–97, 346–51.

From John Pawson

c. March 1782

I saw a remarkable instance of the power and goodness of God about five years ago, when in the Birstall circuit. One Joseph Taylor, a very old man who lived at Staincross, near Barnsley, had been for many years remarkably prejudiced against the Methodists, insomuch that when they preached abroad near where he lived, if he happened to come that way, he would not so much as look at them. He constantly attended the service of the Church [of England], and lived a very regular life, and built his hopes of salvation upon that scripture, 'Be steadfast, immovable, ...',<sup>1</sup> but went no farther. At last he was taken exceeding ill, and was expected to die very soon. A neighbour of his visited him, and took much pains to convince him of his lost and undone condition; but it seemed all lost labour. He then asked me to go to see him. I did so. But after hearing what kind of man he had been, I confess I had very little hopes of doing him any good. I spoke a little to him, and then we joined in prayer with him. After prayer, I said, 'You seem to be very near death, and you cannot die in peace without an interest in Christ. You know he says, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of heaven."<sup>2</sup> You have not a moment to spare. O cry to God that he may have mercy upon you!' When I left him, he began to think, 'It is all true that he says. I know that it is the word of God. And I am not born again that I know of.' He then was something distressed, and began to pray as well as he could. The more he prayed, the more he was distressed; till, either that night or the following, the Lord spoke peace to his soul. And what was very remarkable, his body was healed at the same time; so that he got up the next morning and went and told his neighbours what the Lord had done for him. They beheld him with no small degree of surprise, as everybody had expected his death. He lived several years after, happy in the love of God, and then died in great peace.

John Pawson

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 242–43.

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<sup>1</sup>1 Cor. 15:58.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. John 3:3.

From Richard Swanwick<sup>1</sup>

c. March 1782

On the 15th of December, 1781, I sailed from New York in the ship *Stephens*, with near two hundred sail of merchantmen, under convoy of *The Robust* man-of-war. On the 18th a most violent gale of wind came on from the northwest. In a very short time it separated the whole fleet, so that scarce two of them were left together. Continuing eight and forty hours, it damaged our ship so much that she took in much water by a general leak. However by keeping all our pumps constantly going, we made shift to clear the ship; and the weather abating, we comforted ourselves with the hopes of making our voyage. But on Christmas Day a gale of wind came on, more terrible than the former. Indeed it was such a one as few of our sailors had ever seen before. All our sails were in a short time torn to tatters. So that the ship being left to the mercy of the sea, and rolling every way, the sheathing was soon beaten off by the waves, the oakum washed out of the seams, and the bottom planks working fore and aft, we knew not what to do. When the gale abated, our danger was conspicuous. Death stared us in the face. And an old captain, a passenger, said to me, 'It is all over with us. Let us make what preparation we can. But say nothing to discourage the sailors from pumping, and doing what they can.'

In this deplorable situation we remained from Christmas to New Year's Day. On that day, the ship beginning to sink, we were obliged to have recourse to our boats. But the yawl was quickly dashed to pieces by the violence of the sea. The longboat only remained, which with great difficulty we got out of the ship, and three and twenty of us, men and boys, with much ado, jumped into it. But the difficulty now was to free ourselves from the sinking ship, with the ropes of which we were now entangled, that we expected to go down with it every moment. Before we could get clear, the bow of the boat was stove in, and the boat half filled with water.

We were now left to the mercy of the seas, which still ran mountain high. No ship was in sight. We had nothing in the boat, neither bread to eat, nor water to drink. Nothing but death was before us, without any visible hope or expectation of relief. I found myself afraid to die, and thought of Peter beginning to sink.<sup>2</sup> However I tried to trust in God, and had a faint hope he would deliver us.

In about four hours we saw a brig standing towards us. But the difficulty was how to get along her side? And how to do it without striking against her, in which case we must inevitably go down? At length a great sea hove us alongside of her. Just then I got hold of the main chains, and a man catching fast hold of my hair, drew me up into the vessel. Presently the boat struck against the brig, stove, and went down. Nevertheless everyone caught hold of something, and was taken in.

But still our danger was not over. It was a very small brig, and where were the water and provisions for three and twenty additional persons? As we were still five hundred leagues from England, had we had contrary winds, we must all have perished together. But we ran it in thirteen days; and when we came into Plymouth, had one piece of pork, two of beef, and a few biscuits left! O that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness, and for the wonders he doth for the children of men!

Richard Swanwick

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 355–57.

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<sup>1</sup>Richard Swanwick (fl. 1760–90) was a native of England who came to Pennsylvania about 1770, on or near an estate called Clifton Hall on the Schuylkill River. He was a British loyalist, and deprived of his property by a colonial court. The voyage he describes was for the purpose of petitioning in London for compensation for his lost estate. He appears to have lived the remainder of his life as a merchant in London. See Anne H. Cook, "A Tory 'Memorial'," *Tredyffrin Easttown History Quarterly* 27.4 (Oct. 1989): 123–30. Swanwick became a friend in particular of CW's daughter Sarah.

<sup>2</sup>See Matt. 14:30.

From Thomas Tattershall (?)<sup>1</sup>

[Epworth]  
c. March 1, 1782

Tuesday, February 19. Mr. Tattershall preached at John Watkin's house. But when he had done, very few of the congregation went away. As soon as the prayer meeting began, the power of God fell mightily upon them. A great number of people were cut to the heart, and cried aloud for mercy. But it was not long before a considerable number of them rejoiced abundantly in the God of their salvation. Among the rest, four children of Simon Kilham (the eldest sixteen, the youngest ten) as careless as brute beasts till that hour, were fully convinced of sin.<sup>2</sup> Two of them found the love of God that night; the two others not long after.

Another prayer meeting being appointed the next night at John Sampson's, the people flocked from every quarter. Immediately the spirit of grace and supplication was poured out as the night before. The cries of the people were so great that the voice of those who prayed for them could not be heard. About twelve cried aloud and would not be comforted, till the Lord turned their heaviness into joy. Before they parted, a famous young man, servant to a miller, eminent for boxing and all manner of wickedness, after listening a while at the door, ventured in, and soon fell down on his knees and cried for mercy. He found a strong hope that night, and in a day or two, a full sense of the pardoning love of God.

They now had a prayer meeting up the town every night, and another down the town (that is, at the lower end of it). And at both the one and the other, the work of God went on swiftly. Insomuch that in less than twenty days from February the third, a hundred and twelve persons found peace with God. And many of these, children as well as grown persons, experienced a farther deliverance: being fully persuaded, that God had circumcised their hearts and enabled them to love him with *all* their hearts and with *all* their soul.

Thursday [February] 21. As soon as they began praying at John Watkin's, the power of God began to work as usual, resting upon them in a wonderful manner. Many were deeply convinced of their lost estate. Many were greatly comforted, and several found redemption in the blood of Christ.

9. Friday [February] 22. There was preaching at the usual place, during which many were deeply wounded, and several found the power of the Lord present to heal. But one woman went away in great distress; and a while after, one of our brethren who was going home heard her cry, in a very uncommon manner, in the open field. When he came up to her, he found her on her knees (her husband being with her) crying so loud he thought she might be heard half a mile. He spoke strongly to her of the mercy of God. It sunk deep into her heart. And she and her husband went home, and spent the greatest part of the night in prayer and praising God. Her husband soon after found peace with God, and they have ever since gone on their way rejoicing.

Saturday [February] 23. They had a meeting at John Crosby's house, and with the usual blessing. The eldest of Simon Kilham's sons,<sup>3</sup> being abroad, had not been at any of these meetings before. Almost as soon as he came in he was struck to the heart, and the same night he knew all his sins were forgiven. Immediately he began to go from house to house, all round the neighbourhood, speaking to everyone he met of the things of God and exhorting them to flee from the wrath to come. But not content with this, he

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<sup>1</sup>JW does not name the source of this account. It was likely Thomas Tattershall (c. 1754–1822), who began assisting the preachers in the Norwich circuit in early 1781. He was formally admitted as a travelling preacher in Aug. of that year at Conference (see *Works*, 10:507) and assigned as a junior preacher under James Barry on the Epworth circuit. Alternatively, the account could be by Barry.

<sup>2</sup>Simon Kilham Sr. (1729–1802) and his wife Elizabeth (Ingham) Kilham (1728–85) were active members of the Methodist society in Epworth.

<sup>3</sup>Simon Kilham Jr. (1758–1836)

with two or three more young lads went to several of the neighbouring towns, and were the means of kindling the same fire in almost every place where they went.

Sunday [February] 24. We had a prayer meeting at John Sampson's, where several cried aloud for mercy; in particular, John Hackshaw and his wife.<sup>4</sup> He had many times before had convictions. But he continually stifled them with strong drink. To prevent this, God in a few days, laid his hand on his body. But before his soul was required of him, he had a clear manifestation of the love of God, and died rejoicing in God his Saviour.

Another night, while they were met at John Watkin's house, the power of God fell on young and old in a wonderful manner. One young woman cried mightily. Prayer was made for her, and God spoke peace to her soul. While we were at prayer for her, a lad about ten years old fell upon his knees and began to cry as loud as she did. Our brethren stood up and sung a verse of a hymn, but he continued on his knees till three little boys and two girls drew near, kneeled down round about him, and broke out into prayer for him in such a manner as astonished the old people. After this it was not uncommon for several children to break out into prayer, and sometimes artlessly enough. One of them prayed, 'Lord, keep the devil in hell, till all the people in Epworth are converted.' Another, 'Keep him in hell by himself, and let nobody go to him.'

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 7 (1784): 47–50.

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<sup>4</sup>John Hackshaw married Elisabeth Emmerson in Epworth in 1758.

From Thomas Saxton<sup>1</sup>

[Epworth]  
April 1782 (?)<sup>2</sup>

As you desire an account of this great work of God, I will give it you according to the best of my memory.

On Christmas Day [1781] I went to Scotton, and we had a prayer meeting. It was here first that the power of God came upon us, in a manner I had never known before, and three persons were enabled to praise God for his pardoning love, as were two more at Scotter the same day. I related this to Mr. [Thomas] Tattershall on New Year's Day, at which he rejoiced exceedingly. A young girl coming in who had been convinced of sin some time before, we joined in prayer with her and for her, and the Lord answered to the joy of all our hearts.

Sunday, [January?<sup>3</sup>] 23. My brother came over to Epworth, and afterwards Mr. Tattershall. After preaching, I desired a few that were seeking the Lord to meet us at John Langton's in the evening. No sooner had we begun to pray than my sister began earnestly to cry for mercy. The Lord heard and sent an answer of peace. In a few minutes a lad, about seventeen, before quite unconcerned, began to cry unto God; and almost as soon as he cried, the answer was sent down. Three more, before the meeting broke up, were filled with peace and joy in believing.

Tuesday [January?] 25, I called on one who was deeply affected, both in body and mind. While I was talking to her, a boy about ten years old, appeared to be very deeply affected, and would not be comforted, till he found peace with God.

On Wednesday evening, while we were at James Stedmore's, a young girl came in, to whom Ann Field<sup>4</sup> immediately began to speak concerning the necessity of being born again, which Ann Towris received with all eagerness and showed a longing desire to experience. When they began to pray, she fell into a violent agony and could not avoid shrieking out. This she continued to do for above two hours, and then her mourning was turned into joy. After she had walked closely with God for about a fortnight, it pleased him to deepen his work and show her that he had not only forgiven her sins but also cleansed her from all unrighteousness. And from that time she has been enabled to pray without ceasing and in everything to give thanks.

On the national fast day,<sup>5</sup> while she was praying with a friend, a young woman who was in another room listened to her and was cut to the heart. At 12:00 we had a meeting for prayer. Ann Field, calling on Ann Towris, went to it with her. There they met the young woman, who was in deep distress, and with some others besought God in her behalf. The power of God so fell upon them that they knew not how to leave off, but sent a messenger begging me to come to them. When I came in, I was amazed. Some were crying for mercy, others mightily praising God—she in particular who was convinced in the morning, and two others who had been mourning for above a year, were enabled to rejoice in God their Saviour. This day nine persons were set at liberty, one of whom had been seeking the Lord for twenty years. At 4:00 in the afternoon on Saturday, Ann Towris was desired to visit one in deep distress

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas Saxton was baptized in Sept. 1762 in Belton (near Epworth), Lincolnshire. JW describes him as 'one of the leaders' in this revival.

<sup>2</sup>In light of Saxton's last paragraph, the date may be months later; but it is fitting for it to appear in close connection to the preceding letters.

<sup>3</sup>Orig., 'February'; but this is weeks after the national fast day mentioned later. In 1782 Feb. 23 was a Sat. and Jan. 23 was a Wed., so there are problems either way.

<sup>4</sup>The surname is spelled 'Fields' three times and 'Field' twice in the original. Baptism records support 'Ann Field', christened in Epworth in 1758. We have adopted this spelling in all cases.

<sup>5</sup>Feb. 8, 1782; see note on George Whitfield letter above, c. Feb. 20.

of soul, occasioned by the words of Susannah Waterland, the girl that was awakened and justified the day before. We joined in prayer a few minutes and she found peace to her soul; as a boy about thirteen years of age had done at our morning meeting.

We then thought of concluding, but immediately the power of the Lord came in such a manner as I never before experienced. The people began to fall down to the floor, on the right hand and the left. Some cried for mercy, others for a larger manifestation of the love of God. I then endeavoured to speak to them one by one, and asked what they wanted the Lord to do for them—telling them, if they had confidence in God, whatsoever they asked, he would do it. I desired those who were crying for mercy to come near together. And they came trembling and fell on their knees, weeping and mourning because they had sinned against God. We prayed, and the Lord heard and answered, insomuch that nine or ten persons more found redemption in his blood. And indeed the power of God was so sensibly present one would have thought every soul must have been convinced. One who was listening under the window was pricked to the heart, and the next day found peace with God.

The next evening we had two other meetings for prayer. My brother came to us at the downtown meeting. No sooner did he begin to speak than many stout-hearted sinners began to cry for mercy. The Lord heard their cry and, before we parted, answered them in the joy of their heart. And I think ten or eleven were savingly brought to the Lord. Many more were convinced, who since that time have found peace with God.

We have in Epworth three factories for spinning yarn and weaving course linen cloth. The children employed here, both boys and girls, were the most profligate in all the town. It was nine or ten days after this that some of the girls at the largest factory sent and desired me to come to them, but I did not go. They then went to Ann Towris and Ann Field, who went to them many times, and spared no pains in talking to them and praying with them, more or fewer at a time. A while after I went to the factory myself, and saw the fruit of their labour—all the children being greatly changed, and most of them rejoicing in God. There is a great change in two other factories also, many of the children having the saving knowledge of God.

In the meantime, I longed much that salvation might come also to my native town, Belton. I was much concerned for my old neighbours there, who were wholly ignorant of God. A few of us therefore agreed to go thither. At our very first meeting a brother and sister of mine knew their sins were forgiven; afterwards two or three more. And most of the people were melted into tears. We kneeled down to praise God for what he had done, and prayed that he would deepen his work in each of our souls. No sooner had we begun to pray than he seemed to open the windows of heaven, and to pour down his Spirit upon us in such a manner as we had scarce known before.

About this time Ann Field desired me to go with her to one who had sought the Lord for some time. Many went with us, and he met us there and gave his blessing to us and many more: four of whom were enabled to give thanks for a clear sense of his pardoning mercy. On Sunday morning some of us met at James Stedmore's, and one was enabled to testify that God has power not only to forgive sins but likewise to cleanse from all unrighteousness. The same day several others were made partakers of the same blessing. In the evening, as soon as a few of us kneeled down, the Lord came with a mighty, rushing wind and filled all the place with his presence, and added three more witnesses of his full salvation. And four at John Langton's were brought out of darkness into his marvellous light. On Monday one came to Ann Towris in deep distress, who prayed for her and she was set at liberty. The same night she and Ann Field visited one that was sorely afflicted both in body and soul. They prayed with her, and her convictions were much deepened; and in a few days she was savingly brought to God. A violent persecutor who heard their prayer was cut to the heart, and soon after healed. The next Sunday several persons came to the prayer meeting on purpose to make sport. But while one prayed, 'Lord, if any came hither to mock at thy word, smite them to the heart!' it was done, and the night following one of these very persons found peace with God—as did nineteen or twenty more.

At the time when God wrought in this wonderful manner I had no leisure to write, being taken up on Sundays from morning to night, and all my vacant hours on week days, in serving the people, either in public or private: particularly those who were groaning for redemption. And my memory will not serve

me now to give a full account of those strange occurrences. But even from this it may appear that God wrought here during that happy season in such a manner as has not often been seen since the days of the apostles.

I remain a lover of you and of the gospel you preach,

T. Saxton

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 7 (1784):103–07.



From Joseph Whittingham Salmon<sup>1</sup>

[Nantwich]  
March 16, 1782

My dear Sir,

May the divine unction of our adorable Saviour, who was this day crucified for the sins of the whole world, be abundantly with you! May this journey of love be blessed to the awakening, comforting, and building up of thousands! And, as 'The kingdom of God is (Mark 4:26) as if a man should cast seed into the ground ... and the seed doth spring and grow up, he knoweth not how, first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is ripe, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.' O may we, who profess that holy name, be fully ripe before the time of harvest come! For I sometimes think how terrible will that voice be, 'The harvest is come', to those who shall then be only in the blade, or in an imperfect ear! O that all of us may so cleave to God our Saviour, that he may vouchsafe to ripen his fruit himself; and render us worthy, through his own most precious blood, to be of that good grain, which is to be offered up to God as the fruit of eternity!

The Lord is deepening his blessed work in my soul. And I breathe for nothing but more of the pure nature of God. And even now am constrained to cry out, 'O for more of that inward fiery baptism of the Holy Ghost, which alone makes one spirit with the Lord, and causes true Christians to be of one heart and of one mind!' I write not this, dear sir, to you in the spirit of a master, which is expressly forbidden by St. James. But out of the abundance of my heart my pen has moved, as it were, insensibly along; intending principally by this to inform you that I cannot meet you at brother S—'s, being engaged to be in Shropshire at that time. But if you can come and spend an evening with us at Nantwich, we shall be glad to see you. My wife [Elizabeth] joins in Christian love to you, Mr. and Mrs. R., Miss R., etc. with, dear brother,

Yours very affectionately,

J. W. S.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 272–73.

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<sup>1</sup>See Salmon's previous letter to JW of Jan. 2, 1777.

From Thomas Carlill

Fakenham  
March 26, 1782

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Some time since, I wrote to you relative to [Kings] Lynn, of the good order among them, and hopes of more good being done there by strict discipline.

And when I came into these parts and found a willing people to hear, I was very much satisfied. But when I came to visit them I found things very disagreeable to my expectation—the chief upholders of the societies to live in open violation of the Sabbath and other evils. I began to tell them that these things were contrary to Christianity and Methodism; and told them that they must, by the grace of God, break off these evils or I could not in conscience give them tickets. And when they should have met me in giving the tickets, they did not come. So that as things are at present, I cannot send you a strict and proper account of the circuit. Neither could I comply with your request, by brother [George] Whitfield, of the last quarter—not being here, and brother [John] Prickard unable through sickness could not send you one. As they have not had the [General] Rules of the Societies yet (the more is the pity), I intend to get them and so to proceed accordingly. And I hope I shall give a good account the next midsummer quarter.

I intend to know fully of Mr. Mendham, Mrs. Parker, and Mrs. Proudfoot upon what foundation Mr. Wesley's preachers come, for there are some things which I take notice of require this.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, I desire always to be directed by you sir. Is it not strange that these things were not looked into before now? I cannot preach against sin in the pulpit, and connive at it when I come out! No! If it was in my George!<sup>2</sup> It is a great thing to be faithful.

Is it possible for any who have faith to live in open profanation of the Lord's day? Both buying and selling from morning to evening?

From your dutiful son and servant,

Thomas Carlill

P.S. Please to direct in [King's] Lynn.

*Address:* 'The Revd / Mr John Wesley / London'.

*Source:* holograph; MARC, MA 1977/610/35.

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<sup>1</sup>One of his concerns was likely that both Mary (Franklin) Parker, of Fakenahm, Norfolk, and Mrs. Proudfoot (fl. 1780–90) had both preached in public settings; see JW, *Journal*, Oct. 29, 1781, *Works*, 23:226 and Adam Clarke, *Life*, 1:216.

<sup>2</sup>The last word is written in large dramatized letters, leaving the transcription a little uncertain.

From [Katherine Eleanor (Hardy) Keysell]<sup>1</sup>

London  
March 28, 1782

Reverend and Dear Sir,

You will excuse my intruding on your time a few moments, to request an interest in your prayers, and to draw the esteemed favour of a line of instruction and exhortation from you. I bless the Lord, I feel it the one prevailing desire of my heart to be a devoted follower of Jesus. His ways, when the mind is rightly affected, are pleasantness; and his paths, though perhaps intermixed with briars and thorns, are peace.

I long more abundantly to feel the inward power of religion transforming my whole soul to love. Then would his yoke be easy, and every burden light. I meet with many things in life, from various quarters, of a painful nature. I have at times to do with some, with one in particular, a relation long well known to you, whom I do not find it possible to please. Her turn of mind is peculiar, and her retired way of living has, I believe, given the enemy advantage over her. But amidst all, I trust the Lord will carry on his work, and perfect the thing which concerneth me. O for power to be ever looking for a present salvation! O for grace to live as a stranger and pilgrim here below! That, being redeemed from all the vain things of earth, my loins may be girt, and my lamp burning, and I may be found ready whensoever the Lord shall call!

I oft have some gloomy ideas (though less than in times past) concerning the appendages of death:

The knell, the shroud, the mattock, and the grave;  
The deep damp vault, the darkness, and the worm.<sup>2</sup>

Though they are the bugbears of a winter's eve, yet they produce some feelings I wish to be divested of. I would live the present moment, and I see the enemy cares not by what means he entangles or weakens the mind, if he can but draw it from the right object. It is oft a grief to me that my life seems to be so great a blank. I wish it were filled up with what might glorify God. I see nothing else worth living for. I could sometimes adopt Mrs. Rowe's language and say, 'This world has nothing worth a *careless* thought.'<sup>3</sup> (Pity it should have any anxiously careful ones!) It is indeed a dull round, but as it is improved for God. Something so little, that one might well ask, 'To tread this earth why was a spirit bound?' My feelings on this subject I cannot well describe. They are at some seasons profitable, and at others uncomfortable. I feel an inward principle that gasps after a good unpossessed, that cannot rest short of its proper enjoyment of it. You will understand my heart, though my pen is inadequate to describe it. And you will not only understand but, I doubt not, you will also help me by your prayers. Do, dear sir, take me by the hand, and lead me forward. I would not be a halting Israelite, nor tarry in the plain any longer.

You have had much patience with me for many years; and though of late I have not been favoured with such frequent instances of your care over me; yet I indulge the pleasing hope that I am not forgotten by you. May the Lord abundantly reward you for all your labours of love towards me! Suffer me to entreat you, when time permits, to reprove, correct, and instruct me, that, in the Lord's hand, you may be an instrument of making my last days my best. That, however my morning sun was clouded by

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<sup>1</sup>She is identified in *AM* only as 'Mrs K. K.', But this is likely Katherine Eleanor (Hardy) Keysell (1736–1814; married John Keysell in 1771). JW's surviving portion of his diary covering Dec. 1782 to his death records several visits to sister Keysell of London (see *Works*, 24:622 for a list).

<sup>2</sup>Edward Young, *Night Thoughts*, Night 4, ll. 10–11.

<sup>3</sup>Elizabeth Singer Rowe, *Miscellaneous Works in Prose and Verse* (London: Hett & Dodsley, 1739), Soliloquy XXVII', l. 7 (1:222–23); included by JW in *MSP* (1744), 1:249.

various doubts, and fears, and perplexing sorrows; yet it may set, if not with triumphant lustre, yet calm and uneclipsed; and rise with meridian brightness in those upper regions, where day without night shall reign for ever.

I hope the Lord is making your labours abundantly useful wherever you go. May the good will of him that dwelt in the bush ever be with you, to guard, to guide, to comfort, and succeed in every arduous task! And while you are feeding others may your own soul feast on the hidden manna, and daily find an increasing sweetness in its taste! And, after many years have yet been added to the days of your pilgrimage, as a shock of corn fully ripe, may you be gathered into the garner! There, dear sir, with your many sons and daughters, may you shine with distinguished lustre; and

Where the full glories of the Lamb  
Adorn the heavenly plains;  
Bright Seraphs learn Immanuel's name,  
And try their choicest strains;

O may I bear some humble part,  
In that immortal song;  
Wonder and joy shall tune my heart,  
And love command my tongue.<sup>4</sup>

In the mean time, dear sir, I remain  
Your very affectionate

K. K.

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 274–76.

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<sup>4</sup>Cf. Isaac Watts, 'God Glorious and Sinners Saved', sts. 6–7; including by JW in *CPH* (1738), 28.

From [William Collins]

c. April 1782

John Warrick was born the 10th of October, 1768.<sup>1</sup> From the first dawns of reason he discovered a sedateness of mind, and a genius adapted for study. After some time spent in learning his mother tongue he was put to learn Latin, in which he made a considerable improvement. Whilst thus employed he showed a great love to divine things, by constantly attending the preaching, and meeting with the children in their class. One time when the preacher did not come, and the children were met, he would not let them go without first dropping something of a religious nature, and praying with them. One of the society who listened at the door confessed herself astonished.

He kept from the company of wicked boys, and used to reprove them when he heard them swear or take the name of God in vain.

He was very fond of singing, and seemed to sing with the spirit and with the understanding also.

In the year 1778, he began to show evident marks of a declining state of health, which some judged to be owing to his diligence in learning and a too frequent practice of singing.

His mother was ready to indulge flattering expectations of him till March 2, 1779, when she found he had a hectic fever, of which he grew worse and worse, till at the end of eight days he took his bed.

During that interval, she one day asked him what ideas he had of God. (His little brother who stood by, answering according to the gross idea which children usually entertain of the deity, having a corporeal form) he answered he could not form any. No insignificant proof this of the spirituality of his mind, and of his having reflected with attention on the subject.

About two o'clock the first night after he had taken to his bed, he appeared to be in great distress. His sins were set in array before him. He cried mightily to the Lord, and repeated many times over with inexpressible vehemence, 'For Jesus' sake! For Jesus' sake! Have mercy upon me!'

His mother, being alarmed by his agonies, arose and desired I. J. to go to prayer with him; from which time his mind enjoyed a calm, and his mourning was turned into joy.

His conversation now ran continually upon the things of God. He spoke with rapture of the glorious doctrine of redemption, praising and blessing God for sending his Son into the world to die for such unworthy sinners as we are.

He had such views of hell that he said if he went there himself, he would not wish the vilest wretch upon earth to go likewise.

One day J. A. coming to see him, he said, 'John, I hear you are in the society, I am very glad of it. I hope you intend to be a good man. Do you ever swear now?' To which the other answered, no! 'And do you ever pray to God?' To which the other answered, yes. But said he, 'It is not enough to pray morning and night, but likewise at noonday, and we must pray from the heart too.'

Miss O. coming to see him, he spoke to her in an affecting manner. He said, 'Dear miss, I hope to see you in heaven. O pray! Pray to God.' She answered, 'I do my dear.' He said, 'Beg of him to pardon your sins. Repent and live to God, that you may be found at his right hand.' His speeches made a deep impression on her mind. She left the room in an agony, and for several days seemed under much concern. May it not pass away like the morning dew!

He spoke affectionately of Christ and his salvation to all that came near him, warning the careless to flee from the wrath to come, begging those who made a profession of religion to pray for him, and expressed his joyful assurance of seeing them above.

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<sup>1</sup>This is apparently the John Warrick baptized at the Castle Gate Independent meeting-house in Nottingham on Nov. 4, 1768. This would fit with William Collins being the Assistant for the Nottingham circuit at this time.

To Polly B. he said, 'Well Polly, I hope to see you in heaven. Do not slight the means of grace, but improve every opportunity.' He was often praying for his dear father, mother, and brother, that they might meet him in glory. He expressed his gratitude to God for giving him parents who instructed him in the good way, and said that sometimes when he disobeyed them he was so uneasy all night that he scarce durst sleep for fear of waking in hell.

One day when he saw his mother weeping on his account, he said, 'Dear mammy, do not fret. Never mind. If God will permit me, I will come on earth to see you, and when you lie on a bed of affliction, I will be the first that shall take wing to carry you up; and Jesus Christ will stand at heaven's gates with open arms to receive you. Yes, I will come and fetch my daddy, you, and my brother. But I can only carry Tommy.' And then tapping his mother on the cheek (who lay on the bed by him), he said with a heavenly smile, 'But God can put strength into me.'

He was frequently rejoicing in the anticipation of that employment he trusted to have in the heavenly world. He said to some of the singers, 'There will be no striking a wrong string, no singing a wrong note. There we shall play on a ten-stringed instrument. O that will be brave!' He frequently called for his little brother, that he might instruct him in the way to heaven. He begged that he would not play with wicked boys, but mind his book and learn to pray and love God from his heart. Begging of his mother and grandmother to have a particular care of him, for he had a wide world to go through.

Mr. [William] Collins coming to see him, he said, 'Sir, I shall not live to be a preacher.' It was answered, 'My dear, you are a preacher now.' But he said, 'You know I cannot preach and pray as men do.' His heart overflowed with love and gratitude to all who did anything for him. He returned the kindness with exhortations and prayers. He often spoke till he had no strength left. When his mother begged him to forbear, he said, 'Dear mammy, I cannot help talking of God. It does not hurt me. I cannot refrain if I might have all the world.' His uncle, who is a joiner, coming in, he spoke to him with the greatest cheerfulness, and asked him whether he could not make him a coffin?

At first he was very desirous of seeing his father. But when his mother told him that if he were to be sent for, he would probably ride so fast as to throw himself into a fever and kill his horse, he appeared to be resigned, and said, 'Then do not send for him. I would not have my dear daddy or his horse hurt on any account.' Notwithstanding the severity of his affliction, he bore it with a lamb-like patience, and often observed that Jesus suffered more for him.

He continued in this happy frame till the eighteenth, when the Lord was pleased to bereave him of his senses. But even his incoherent speeches demonstrated that his heart was going out after him whom his soul loved. On the twenty-third, in the afternoon, he said with a loud voice, 'I am going home! God be with you!' He lay with his eyes fixed and motionless, till betwixt 2:00 and 3:00 in the morning, when his mother wetting his lips, he looked at her with a smile, and said, 'Thank you mammy!' Which were his last words. He continued till the twenty-fourth instant, and then resigned his soul to God.

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 468–72.

From John Furz (autobiography)<sup>1</sup>

c. April 1782

1. I was born in the year 1717,<sup>2</sup> at Wilton, near Sarum. My parents were honest, but ignorant of true religion. My father never went to church; my mother and her children did. When I was about ten I began to be afraid of death and hell, and prayed to God to have mercy upon me. At eleven I durst not keep company with boys that cursed and swore. I gave myself to reading, and went constantly to church. Yet I was more and more uneasy, and had sometimes no sleep in the night, through the dread that was upon my spirits. At fifteen I became a constant communicant. At seventeen, wherever I was, in bed, within the house or without, I had something speaking within me, 'One thing is wanting.' I read more, and prayed more; but so much the more did this cry echo within me. In this state I continued two years, having no kind shepherd to guide me. I was one day standing in the house, when this inward voice was repeated oftener than usual. I looked up, and said, 'O God what is this one thing?' It was instantly answered, 'Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ'.

2. I was astonished, for I thought I had always believed. However I thought, I will read over all the Bible, and try whether I believe or not? I took my Bible and opened it on those words: 'The devils believe and tremble.'<sup>3</sup> I thought with myself, they tremble, and so do I for the same cause: I too am afraid of the judgment of the great day. I took my Bible again, and read, 'We know thee, who thou art, the Holy One of God.'<sup>4</sup> I laid it down again and thought, the devils know him and tremble; I tremble, but I do not know him. Now I saw that I was without God in the world, and the sorrows of my heart were enlarged. I had read, 'He that believeth hath the witness in himself.'<sup>5</sup> But I knew I had not the witness. I reasoned much concerning this, wishing I could find some man that could tell me, what it is to believe?

3. One Sunday morning the minister's text was, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not, shall be damned.'<sup>6</sup> I stood up and looked as earnestly at his mouth as ever a hungry man looked for food, expecting every moment, that he would tell me what it was to believe? He did say something about faith, but I did not understand it. I now thought, 'I do not believe. I shall surely be damned.' When I came to the church door I could not restrain myself any longer, but burst into a flood of tears and cried aloud. The people came about me, and asked me, why I wept? I said, 'I shall go to hell, for I do not believe.' They answered, 'Young man, if you go to hell, no one in the town will go to heaven.'

4. From this time for near two years, I was in despair. My sleep in great measure departed from me. My appetite was gone. My flesh wasted away, and I grew exceeding weak. My mother, observing it, came to me and said, 'My dear child, can I do anything for you?' I said, 'Yes, carry me to Mr. Smith' (a Dissenter, to whom many that were in trouble came for advice). She carried me to him without delay. He asked what ailed me? I said, 'Let my mother and the men that brought me go out, and I will tell you.' They went out, and I said, 'I believe I shall die soon, and I am afraid of going to hell.' He answered, 'You are melancholy: you must seek for some merry company.' I was shocked, and called aloud for my mother

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<sup>1</sup>John Furz (c. 1712–1800) penned this autobiographical account as health deterioration led him to step aside from full-time itinerating in 1781.

<sup>2</sup>This birth year must be questioned (and no baptismal records have been found). By Furz's account he was around 20 when the events in §17 occur, which had to be prior to the death of the 8th Earl of Pembroke in Jan. 1733. A birth year c. 1712 would fit.

<sup>3</sup>James 2:19.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Mark 1:24; Luke 4:34.

<sup>5</sup>1 John 5:10.

<sup>6</sup>Mark 16:16.

(who stood without) to come and carry me home, which she did. As I sat down in the street without the door, three young men passing by looked at me, and said they were sorry to see me look so bad. They stayed some time with me, talking merrily and jocosely. When they parted from me, I thought myself something better. They called on me again. I was pleased with their conversation, and endeavoured to stifle my convictions. I recovered my strength daily. And one evening, as I was walking with them, I asked, 'Where did you get all these merry jests?' They said out of such and such books, which they named. I said, 'If it please God, I will go in the morning to the stationer's, and buy one of the best of them.'

5. As soon as I left my companions I went home. But I had but just sat down in a chair when a divine conviction seized me, and I thought, 'Lord what have I been doing?' I dropped to the earth utterly senseless. About midnight my senses returned, and I found my mother weeping at my bedside, attended by some of her kind neighbours. I now found such a spirit of prayer as I never found before. My heart cried, 'Lord, spare me a little, before I go hence and am no more seen.' For I clearly saw, if I died in my present state I must perish forever.

6. But it was not long before my new companions visited me and expressed a sorrow for my late affliction. I was soon persuaded to walk with them, and in a while began to be pleased again with their company and conversation. But one Sunday morning, as I was in bed, it seemed to me as if one gripped me by the arm. At the same moment a voice went through my heart, saying, 'Go to the meeting.' I was much surprised, and felt much pain in my arm. However it being very early I composed myself to sleep again. But I had not lain long when I heard the same voice as before. I rose and walked in the garden, but still found something within me saying, 'Go to the meeting.' I knew not what to do. I had ever been a zealous member of the Established Church, and thought it not right to go to a Presbyterian meeting. I seemed resolved not to go. But the impression on my mind was such that I could have no rest unless I went. When I came in, the minister was in his sermon. I had no sooner sat down than he uttered those words, 'Remember the promises you made to God on a sick bed.' I thought he spoke to *me*. I remembered how earnestly I had prayed to God to spare me a little longer. I returned home in deep distress, thinking, 'I am still the same unhappy creature, lost to all sense of good. All my resolves are come to nought, my promises broken, and I am left a poor guilty sinner.'

7. All my former works did now indeed appear to me no better than filthy rags. I said, 'I have lied unto thee, O God, when I said, "My spirit doth rejoice in God my Saviour";'<sup>7</sup> and when I professed, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ,"<sup>8</sup> while I knew nothing about it.' A few days after, I saw an unusual number of people flocking together, and asked whither they were going? One answered, 'Mrs. Hall's son is come from Oxford, and is going to preach in the Presbyterian meeting.'<sup>9</sup> Will you go and hear him?' After some pause I went. While I was musing with myself, he pointed out with his finger, as though he pointed at *me*, and said vehemently, 'There are two witnesses that are dead and buried in the dust, that will rise in judgment against you.' He took up his Bible, and said, 'Here are the two witnesses that have been dead and buried in the dust upon your shelf, the Old Testament, and the New.' I felt what was spoken, I remembered my Bible was covered with dust, and that I had wrote my name with the point of my finger on the binding. Now I thought, I had signed my own damnation, on the back of the witnesses.

8. I went home, no one speaking to me on the way, or I should have wept aloud. I walked in the garden, but I was afraid the earth would open and swallow me up, or that infernal spirits would be permitted to drag me to the bottomless pit. I went to bed, but the terrors I felt in the night are beyond all that I can express. About midnight I sat up in bed and said, 'Lord, how will it be with me in hell?' Just

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<sup>7</sup>Luke 1:47.

<sup>8</sup>BCP, Apostle's Creed

<sup>9</sup>Rev. Westley Hall (1709–76), son of Thomas and Margaret (Westley) Hall of Salisbury, who had been a pupil of JW at Lincoln College and was now also his brother-in law, having married Martha Wesley in Sept. 1735. About 1741 Hall would return to Salisbury and set up a 'Methodist' chapel.



then a dog began howling under my window, and I thought, 'There shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth!'<sup>10</sup> Every joint now trembled. The terrors of the Lord seized my soul. The arrows of the Almighty stuck fast in me. I rose early in the morning, but did not attempt to pray, as I thought there was no mercy for me. As I walked in the garden, bewailing my misery and wishing I had never been born, God put a desire to pray into my heart, and those words into my mouth: 'Lord, are there no bowels of mercy for such a sinner as me?' I went and kneeled down at the feet of my bed. Instantly I felt as if cold water ran through every vein. I started up and ran into the garden and thought, 'God will not suffer me to pray. He has driven me from the throne of grace. There is no mercy for me.' I went a second time, but had no sooner kneeled down than I was surprised as before. I flew again. As soon as I came into the garden, I looked round, and said, 'Who will show me any good?' I walked weeping, till I saw a dead toad, and said, 'O that I had been a toad! Then I should have had no soul to lose.' I then felt a fresh desire to pray. I went again into my chamber and kneeled down. But I was more surprised than ever. I thought the earth moved under me. I leaped downstairs, and fell to the ground. But strong desire constrained me to ask, 'Are there no bowels of mercy for me?' Before I could utter it, I heard a small, still voice saying, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee.' What a change did I feel! My sorrow was turned into joy; my darkness into light! My soul was filled with love to God, for his unspeakable mercies. Now I did indeed draw water out of the wells of salvation. Yea, a fountain was opened in my heart, springing up into everlasting life. My tongue could not express the feelings of my heart. I was lost in speechless rapture. I now knew what it was to believe. I knew on whom I believed, even on him that justifieth the ungodly. Being justified by faith, I was at peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. My bands were broken in sunder, and my captive soul was set at liberty.

9. I that before was dead in trespasses and sins, was now made alive to God. I sat in heavenly places with Christ Jesus. I was as in a new world. If I walked out into the open field, everything showed forth the glory of God. If I looked at the sun, my heart said, my God made this, not for himself, but *us*. If I looked on the grass, the corn, the trees, I could not but stand and adore the goodness of God. My Bible also was become a new book. It was sweeter to my soul than honey to my tongue. I had near communion with God day and night. And oh how I longed for all the world to know what I knew! I longed also for a companion in the grace of God, to whom I could communicate what I felt. Yea, I thought I would tell the trees of the wood, if I could make them understand what God had done for my soul.

10. One day as I was going across the marketplace, I passed by a man at his labour. I felt all that was in me run out after him, in a manner I never felt before. I passed by him again and again, and it was still the same. I thought I can tell this man anything, though I only knew him by sight, and had often heard his father used to say, with his hand on his breast, 'I have Christ in my heart.' I asked him, 'Do you believe your father was a good man, and that he is gone to heaven?' He answered, 'I do. He died singing the hundredth psalm, just as he uttered those words, 'O enter ye his gates with praise!'<sup>11</sup> I asked again, 'Are you willing to live his life and to die his death?' He answered, the Lord knows that I am. 'But', said I, 'do you believe there is any such thing as knowing our sins forgiven now?' He looked at me and paused, and then said, 'I will tell you a fortnight hence.'

11. That day fortnight I went to his house, took him aside, and told him, 'Now you are to answer my question.' He said, 'I will. I do believe there is such a thing as knowing our sins forgiven now. I have been seeking it ever since I saw you. but I have not found it.' I desired him to walk with me to my house; I took him into my chamber. We sat down together, and I told him freely what troubles I had passed through, and how God had delivered me. Then I asked, 'Are you desirous of the same blessing?' He answered, 'The Lord knows that I am.' We kneeled down, and I earnestly prayed, that God would make him a partaker of it. When I had done, he started up, and went out of the room in haste, without speaking one word.

12. In the morning as I was looking out of my door, I heard one man say to another, 'Do you hear

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<sup>10</sup>Matt. 13:42

<sup>11</sup>Cf. Ps. 100:4.

that John Kirby is run mad?"<sup>12</sup> And about an hour after, I heard another asserting the same thing. In the evening he came to my house, looked earnestly at me, and said, 'I am undone.' He then instantly turned and went away, giving me no time to speak to him. The next evening he came in the same manner. I was sitting at a table reading. He struck the table with his hand, and said, 'I am undone to all eternity.' He then went out hastily. I followed him to his house, and found him sitting silent, looking with a look of deep sorrow. His wife sat looking at him. She said to me, 'O sir, our family is ruined.' I said, 'I hope not.' She said again, with a flood of tears, 'My husband is distracted. He neither eats, nor drinks, nor sleeps.' However I persuaded him to go to bed, and went home. But I had not been long in bed before he was knocking at the door, crying out, 'For Christ's sake, quickly, quickly.' I ran down undressed and let him in. He clasped me fast in his arms and said, 'I will never go home more unless you go with me.' I put on my clothes and led him home. As I went I advised him to pray. But he said, 'I cannot. If I attempt to pray in my chamber, I am affrighted; and so I am wherever I attempt it.' When I came to his house, I found a most distressed family: his wife, his son, and his daughters all weeping. I desired him to go to bed. He said he would never go into his chamber more, unless I would go with him. I did so, and saw him in bed, desiring his wife and children to go to bed also, and to be as still as possible. Then I returned home. But I had scarce been in bed ten minutes when he was knocking at the door with more earnestness than before. He again said, 'I will never go home, unless you go with me.' I went the third time. When I came to his house, the family was in bed. I heard his wife weeping. But he repeated, 'I will never go into the chamber again, unless you go with me.' I said, 'O, for shame! Your wife is in bed.' She cried aloud, 'For Christ's sake, do not mind *me*, but bring my husband upstairs.' She was sitting up in bed, in her nightgown, bewailing herself and her family. After seeing him in bed, I kneeled down by the bedside and commended him to God.

13. In the morning he came to my house again. But the whole form of his visage was changed. He walked to and fro with tears dropping from his eyes. I asked, 'How is it with you now?' He said, 'Glory be to God! all is peace.' I desired him to sit down and tell me how this change came. He said, 'As soon as you were gone, I looked up, and it appeared to me as if the roof of my house was taken away, so that I saw the firmament. While I was wondering at this, a dark cloud arose, which I thought was a thunder-cloud. The cloud was drawn aside, and left in view Jesus Christ, all besmeared with blood. He looked down upon me and said, 'I have loved *thee* and given myself for *thee*?' I felt the word in my heart, and all guilt and fear, and sorrow fled away. Now I know that I "have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is the propitiation for my sins".'<sup>13</sup> We wept together for joy, and praised God for his abundant mercies bestowed upon us.

14. From this time, as the souls of David and Jonathan were knit together, so were our souls knit together in God. We had close fellowship with each other, and sat together as in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Neither of us were content to eat his morsel alone, but what was imparted to one, the other must partake of. We gladly met together every evening, to pray with and for each other, and pour out our souls before God in thanksgivings for all his mercies. Meantime our hearts burned with desire, that all men might know this love of Christ that passeth knowledge. But how to impart what we had received to others we knew not, or which way to begin.

15. After a while I heard there was a company of Dissenters that met together at a private house every Sunday evening. I told my friend I was in hopes they were partakers of the same blessing that we were. I wrote a note, to desire leave for me and my friend to come and sit behind them. They sent word we were welcome to come. When we came, we found about ten of them sitting round a large table, on which were the Bible and the newspaper, with a decanter and glasses. They were quite complaisant. They all rose up, and desired us to sit in rank with them. But I refused, saying we will only sit in the place we named, that is, behind you. They then began their evening exercise. First, they ridiculed the vicar, particularly for his covetousness. Next, they drank one to another, and offered the glass to us. But we did

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<sup>12</sup>This is apparently the John Kerby (c. 1705–62) who married Mary Hoskins in Wilton in 1728.

<sup>13</sup>Cf. 1 John 2:1–2.

not drink. Then they related the faults of the churchwardens and the overseers of the poor. Till one read part of the newspaper, which gave occasion to discourse on the state of the nation. At last, one of them read a chapter in the Bible. Another, looking at his watch, said, 'Bless me! It is time to go home. It is past ten o'clock.' But, said one, we ought to go to prayer first. But they were not agreed which of them should pray. At last one of them stood up against the back of a chair, spoke a few words, and concluded. My friend and I were kneeling together. I was weary with forbearing, and began earnestly to pray that God would awaken them, and by his goodness lead them to repentance, that they might know the things which belonged to their everlasting peace. They turned about, and stared at me, as if I had been speaking Greek. However they told us, we should be welcome to come again the next Sunday evening.

16. The next Sunday evening we came again. But one of the company having told his neighbours, that I had preached, I suppose not less than a hundred persons were standing about the door. The man of the house asked them, 'What do you want?' And endeavoured to keep them out. But when he stood aside for me and my friend to come in, they poured in after us. At first he seemed displeased, but soon after called to his wife, and said, 'Bring me the Testament.' He opened it, sat with it in his hand some time; then starting up came to me, with the book open, saying, 'If you have a word of exhortation say on.' The first words presented to my view were Romans 8:1, 'There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.' I had had no thought of exhorting or preaching to this hour. But now the power of God came upon me, and enabled me to speak, from an experimental knowledge, of freedom from condemnation. Now I was able to testify, 'By grace I am saved through faith: not for anything that I have done: it is the gift of God.'<sup>14</sup> Many of them that stood before me felt the word and wept much. And from this time, by the help of God, I have continued to preach 'repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ'.<sup>15</sup>

17. This same gentleman in whose house I began to speak of the things of God, procured a license for his house, that none might molest me. I likewise preached in my own house, to all that came and heard me. Their number continually increased. Many were convinced of their evil ways. And about fourteen converted to God, who met with me daily, to spend some time in prayer. We loved as brethren, being partakers together of the same grace of God. And we began to suffer reproach together, to show us that 'the servant is not above his Lord.'<sup>16</sup> Mr. Conway, the vicar,<sup>17</sup> sent his footman to me with this message: 'My master bids me tell you, you have a soft place in your head.' I said, 'Be pleased to tell your master, the sheep when diseased do not run after the shepherd, but the shepherd after the sheep. Your master passes by my door almost every day. I wish he would call in, and search about my head; and find out what my disorder is, and prescribe a remedy.' About two hours after, I saw him coming. I opened the door and waited for him. But when he saw me, he drew farther off, and shook his cane at me, and passed by. He went straight to the Earl of Pembroke's (the old earl<sup>18</sup>) and told him, 'There is a young fellow in the town, who under a pretense of preaching, makes three riots every week, and disturbs all the inhabitants of the town from one end to the other.' The earl said, 'I will send for the young man and talk with him myself.'

18. But instead of sending for me, he sent for the mayor, with whom he used to converse frequently. He had heard me preach himself. Afterwards I learned what passed between the earl and him. 'The old priest has been here', said the earl, 'but I know not what he would have. He was at first a Dissenting minister. But he came to me and said his conscience constrained him to conform to the Church, and begged I would assist him to procure ordination. Then he begged me to give him a benefice which was vacant. I did so. He came again within the twelvemonth, complaining he could not live on it. I

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<sup>14</sup>Cf. Eph. 2:8.

<sup>15</sup>Acts 20:21.

<sup>16</sup>Matt. 10:24.

<sup>17</sup>Rev. George Conway (d. 1753) became vicar of Wilton in 1735.

<sup>18</sup>Thomas Herbert (1656–1733), 8th Earl of Pembroke.

gave him a second of two hundred a year. Still he followed me with the same complaint, till I gave him a third. And now he comes to me with a complaint about some young man that preaches. Pray, do you know the man?' He said, 'My lord, perfectly well. He lives but three doors from me.' His lordship said, 'I said at first, I would send for the man. But I have thought otherwise. Take Lord Herbert<sup>19</sup> and your son, who has taken his degrees at Oxford, and all the aldermen with you: and you will judge whether it is the preacher who makes the riot, or they that come to disturb him. Afterwards come all of you to dinner with me, and give me your cool judgment.'

19. I knew nothing of their coming, till they came. But according to my day, so was my strength. The people seeing the mayor coming from his own house, attended by Lord Herbert and the aldermen, called one upon another, saying, 'My lord, and the mayor, and aldermen, are gone to pull down the preaching-house.' The rabble ran from all quarters, to lend a helping hand. I was praying when they poured in upon us like a flood. They pushed down some that were on their knees, and trampled on them. Lord Herbert rose from his seat and said, 'I desire you will let me hear quietly.' But instead of regarding it, some of the mob gave him a very impertinent answer. The mayor then rose up, and with a loud voice, commanded the king's peace. I then said, 'My lord, and gentlemen, I and those that meet with me are members of the Established Church. We meet together every Sunday, before and after divine service, to make prayer and supplication with and for one another. And I read a portion of scripture and explain it as God enables me.' I paused. His lordship bowed his head, and I went on, 'I will preach now, as well as I can in this confused noise.' I then read, 'I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me, was not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.'<sup>20</sup> When I had ended, high and low went away, and I and my friends were left alone.

20. When the mayor and his brethren came to the earl's (I was informed in the evening), he asked if they had been at the preaching? The mayor said, 'Yes, my lord.' 'And what have you to say concerning the man that preaches?' The mayor replied, 'My lord, I have known him from a child. he has lived an exemplary life from the beginning.' The earl said, 'Now that we know the truth of the case, we know how to proceed. If I was mayor of the town, the next time that young man preaches, I would go and read the Riot Act.' The mayor promised he would; and the next time I preached, he came with the Riot Act in his hand. The mob gathering together, he bade them come near, and then read the Act. They quickly shrunk back. But one of them cursed the mayor, and said, he was a Methodist too. He looked upon me and said, 'John, you see, I have got a bad character too.' I said, 'I wish it was true.' He said, 'So do I. It would be better for me.' From this time we had peace.

21. This method not succeeding to his wish, the vicar thought good to try another. He procured the Rev. Mr. H[orler],<sup>21</sup> to preach before his lordship. And he did preach as extraordinary a sermon as ever was heard at Wilton. His text was, 'Take heed brethren, least there should be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.'<sup>22</sup> 'That is', said he, 'from the Church. For there is sprung up among us a new religion, called Methodism. It is like the plague. They that have it, infect whole families. Now in such a case, if one were to come and warn you to shut your door, and keep out the man and his distemper, would not you be thankful? I am now come to do you this kind office. I will describe the persons in three particulars. In the first place, they look just like toads, that are crept out from under a faggot pile. In the second place, they pretend to be led by the Spirit. And when they "are under his guidance" as they call it, they look like toads that are crept out of a dung heap, and croak just like

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<sup>19</sup>Henry Herbert (1693–1749) the eldest son and heir of Thomas Herbert, who was styled Lord Herbert from birth until he became 9th Earl of Pembroke in 1733.

<sup>20</sup>Gal. 1:11–12.

<sup>21</sup>Rev. Joseph Horler (c. 1701–59), a native of Salisbury, was now vicar of Stapleford, just west of Nottingham. Note that *AM* has 'Rev. Mr. Harles' at this point, but reads 'Joseph Horler' in next paragraph.

<sup>22</sup>Heb. 3:12.

them. In the third place, they look just like toads that are dragged from land's end to land's end under a harrow.' I was curious to observe what notice his lordship took of the preacher, who stood bowing at his side, as he went out of church. He passed by him without making the least motion, or taking any notice of him at all.

22. After he was got home, he sent a footman to tell the preacher, 'If you please, you may come and dine with his lordship.' When he came, and was sat down, the earl asked his name? He answered, 'My name is Joseph Horler.' His lordship then asked, 'Mr. Horler, what have you been doing?' He answered, 'Preaching, my lord.' 'What have you been preaching?' 'The gospel, my lord.' 'I deny that Mr. Horler. You have been preaching against the government.' He said, 'I ask your lordship's pardon. I do not know that I have.' 'Nay', said his lordship, 'have not the king, lords, and commons all agreed that every Englishman shall worship God according to his own conscience? And are there not licenses granted for this very purpose? But pray who are those toads who creep out of the dung heap? I hope they are not your neighbours! Let me hear of it, sir, no more. I *will* hear no more of it. I will send a note immediately to the vicar to let me know, when I am in the country, any day that you are to preach. And I will be sure not to be at church that day.'

23. Some time after, that honest man, John Haime, called upon me, and preached at my house. Here our acquaintance and mutual love began, which has continued to this day. He gave me an invitation to come to Shaftesbury. I often went, and found much life and love among the people. I was afterwards invited to Wincanton—Robert Brockway informing me that the Dissenting minister was a pious man, and had promised me the use of his pulpit. And notice was given on the market day that a Methodist was to preach there on Sunday. But when Robert Brockway reminded the minister of his promise, he said, 'My congregation is not willing.' I asked, 'Is there any among you that has courage to go through the town, and tell the people, there will be preaching on the common?' One answered, 'I will for one.' When we were there, a man brought me a table to stand on. Some of my friends from Shaftesbury were with me. After singing a hymn, and spending a little time in prayer, I gave out those words, 'Seeing that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?'<sup>23</sup> The people were as still as night, and gave good heed to what was spoken, till the minister of Brewham, with an attorney, and Mr. Ring, the town clerk, came to the outside of the congregation. Some then cried out, 'Make way, make way!' But the people stood closer and closer together, till I desired them to open to the right and left, and let the gentlemen come forward. Mr. Ring then read the Riot Act. I said, 'Sir, was there any appearance of a riot here, till you came?' He looked me in the face, and said with the utmost vehemence, 'Thou rascal!' Then the blood spouted out in a stream from both his nostrils. He dropped to the earth, crying aloud, 'They will say this is a judgment.' (No wonder if they did.) All possible means were used to stop the bleeding; but in vain. From that time he was lunatic. He was carried to Bath, and died soon after. In about a fortnight (I was informed) the minister of Brewham died also.

24. Some time after this, one of Mr. [George] Whitefield's preachers preached in the street at Wincanton. While he was preaching, a carrier came with a string of packhorses. The fore-horse had a strap of bells about his neck. The carrier took them off, and put them about his own neck. He then ran in among the people, jumping and dancing with all his might. While he was thus employed, the horse he took the bells from, dropped down. They went to him, but he was stone dead. So God, in judgment mixed with mercy, took the horse, but spared the man!

25. Some years before I was a travelling preacher,<sup>24</sup> I was invited to preach on Salisbury plain, near the New Inn. It being on a Sunday, a very great company was gathered together from the neighbouring villages on both sides the plain. Here I was met by John Haime, with a few of our friends from Shaftesbury. As soon as I began to preach, a man came straight forward and presented a gun at my face, swearing that he would blow my brains out if I spake another word. However I continued speaking,

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<sup>23</sup>Cf. 2 Pet. 3:11.

<sup>24</sup>Furz first appears in the Minutes as an itinerant preacher in 1755 (*Works*, 10:273).

and he continued swearing; sometimes putting the muzzle of the gun to my mouth, sometimes against my ear. While we were singing the last hymn, he got behind me, fired the gun and burned off part of my hair. But he did not lose his labour, for he was so soundly beat that he kept his bed for several weeks.

[26.] The occasion of my leaving Wilton was this. Hearing that Mr. [Westley] Hall, after all the good he had done, had brought a huge reproach upon the gospel and was removed from Sarum, I went to Mr. Marsh, to know the truth of it.<sup>25</sup> He said, 'He is gone. But he has not carried away with him what we have received.' We hid ourselves awhile. The world rejoiced, and we sorrowed. When the storm was a little over, I went often to Salisbury, and conversed and prayed with some of the poor people. After some time, I was desired to preach in Mr. Hall's chapel. More and more came, till we had a good congregation. Mr. Marsh then took part of the house adjoining to it, for me to live in, and to receive any of Mr. [John] Wesley's preachers that could find time to call. Here I continued about five years. But some of the people being afraid, lest I should follow Mr. Hall's example, I left the house and left off preaching; till being afflicted both in soul and body, and knowing it was the hand of the Lord upon me, I made my mind known to Mr. Wesley, who advised me to go into the west of Cornwall. I did so. I took up my cross, left my wife, and children, and went without delay. I was very kindly received by the people. My labours were blessed among them. My bodily strength returned. And great was the comfort that I felt in my soul.

[27.] Mr. Wesley sent me next into the York circuit. I went in the simplicity of the gospel, being only afraid lest I should not be useful. But it pleased God to give me some fruit here also; which engaged me to go on, and made me willing to spend and be spent for the souls of men. Afterwards I spent two years in Cheshire and Lancashire, where was the most rapid work of God that I ever saw. At a love-feast in Manchester we had eighteen persons justified in an hour. And many experienced a higher work of God, being cleansed from all sin. After deeply hungering and thirsting for righteousness, they were satisfied with it. Some of them agonizing in prayer, fell to the ground, and cried out, 'It is enough, Lord! My cup runs over! Withhold thy hand, or enlarge my heart.' Our leaders feeling the weightiness of his presence, and the exceeding greatness of his power, were filled with zeal for the glory of God and the good of souls. They dispersed themselves on Sundays, went into the country villages, sung and prayed, and exhorted the people to turn to God. Many came from those villages to hear the word, and great good was done.

[28.] A poor woman that lived about ten miles from Manchester, hearing some say, 'We have been there, and have found the Lord,' told it to a neighbour and said, 'I wish I could go to Manchester and find the Lord.' Her neighbour said, 'Then why do not you go?' She said, 'O dear child, I have no shoes.' Her neighbour said, 'I will lend you mine.' She said, 'Then I will go.' She came to Manchester on a Sunday, but knew not where to go. Seeing a gentleman walking in the marketplace, she went to him and asked, 'Where is it that people go to find the Lord?' He said, 'Among the Methodists, as far as I know.' She asked, 'Where are they?' He answered, 'Come, and I will show you.' He brought her to the passage that led to the preaching-house, and said, 'Go in there.' Thomas Woolfinden came to her, and asked what she wanted? She said, 'Is this the place where people find the Lord?' He went and called John Morris, one of the leaders, to whom she told all that had happened. He took her in and placed her near the middle of the room, and advised her to look at none but the preacher. She took his advice, and about the middle of the sermon cried out, 'Glory be to God, I have found the Lord!' Which she repeated over and over, being filled with joy unspeakable.

[29.] There was likewise a glorious work of God at Liverpool. Many were enabled to repent and believe the gospel. And many believed that the blood of Jesus Christ had cleansed them from all unrighteousness. The same flame broke out at Bolton, at Macclesfield, at Congleton, and at Burslem. One instance of the goodness of God at Congleton deserves a particular notice. Two men were there, pot-companions,<sup>26</sup> David and Samuel. David made it his business to stand in the street near the time of preaching, and swear at those that were going to it. About this time we had many remarkable conversions.

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<sup>25</sup>Hall left Salisbury in disgrace about 1745.

<sup>26</sup>I.e., drinking companions.

At this he seemed much perplexed, and asked his companion, 'What can this be? What the d[evi]l is it that they do to the people to convert them? I have a good mind to go and see.' Accordingly both of them came. But after they had sat about a quarter of an hour, David started up and said, 'I will stay here no longer.' He attempted to run, but quickly dropped down. However he rose, and with some difficulty got home. He went straight to his chamber, and got to bed. He turned himself a few times, then leaped up, saying, 'I will lie here no longer.' He ran into the fields, and then wandered up and down all the night. In the morning he came home, went into his shop, and thought he would go to work. He heated his iron in the forge, and lifted up his hammer over his head. But he imagined, the devil was just behind him, ready to carry him away. He let fall his hammer, ran out of the shop, and went to the fields, where he wandered all day. In the evening a farmer passing by said, 'David, why are you not at your work! I have been three times at your shop today, but you were not to be found.' David answered, 'I think I shall work no more.' The farmer asked, why so? He said, 'I am afraid I shall be converted.' It quickly spread throughout the town that David was going to be converted. But David protested he would not; he would go and get drunk directly. Accordingly he went into a public house, and with all speed drank two quarts of ale, with half a pint of brandy. Three men sitting by, one of them said, 'David, you will be converted for all this.' David said, 'I will convert thee', knocked him down, took him by the heels, and threw him out of the door. He did the same to the second and the third. Then he caught up the woman of the house, ran with her into the street, threw her into the kennel, saying, 'Lie thou there.' He went back to the house, tore down the door, broke it in pieces, and threw it into the street. Then he went home. But he was no sooner laid down in bed, than he thought, 'Now I am sure the devil will have me.' He leaped out of bed, took to the fields, and wandered about all the day. At last he went to his companion and told him, 'Ever since I heard that old fellow preach, I can neither eat nor sleep.' 'Then', said Sam, 'take it for a warning, or I will keep thy company no more; else the devil will have us both.' David said, 'Then what shall we do?' He answered, 'Whatever thou dost, I will join the society.' David fell a weeping, and said, 'If thou dost, so will I, if they will let me.' As soon as their design was known, many came running to me and desired I would not receive either of them. I said, 'If they come, I will act according to the best judgment I have.' A little before preaching they came. 'Sir', said Samuel, 'we are a couple of desperate wicked fellows. But we want to be better. And we beg you, for Christ's sake, to receive us into your society.' I said, 'Yes, for Christ's sake I will receive you.' They looked one at the other, with tears flowing from their eyes, and said, 'For Christ's sake receive us *now*, and let us come in at the love-feast.' I said, 'I do receive you now, for Christ's sake.' After preaching, one desired me to look at David. His body was writhed many ways, and his cries and groans were such as struck terror into those that were near him. I kneeled down and prayed. While I was praying, David started up, and cried aloud, 'Glory be to God! my sins are forgiven.' At the same time Samuel said, 'O precious Lamb of God! All in a gore of blood for *me*!' David then broke through the people and caught Sam in his arms, saying, 'Come, let us sing the Virgin Mary's song. I could never sing it before; but now my soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit doth rejoice in God my Saviour!'

Is anything too hard for thee,  
Almighty Lord of all?<sup>27</sup>

[30.] I married while I was at Wilton.<sup>28</sup> When I was young, I was frequently at the Earl of Pembroke's. Here I came acquainted with one of the house-maids. We met frequently, and always parted with prayers. She seemed very religious. But when we were married, I soon found my mistake. She was fond of dress, and loved to walk about for pleasure on the Lord's day. She refused to kneel down when I prayed, saying, 'I do not love such Presbyterian prayers.' I took a book in my hand, but prayed as I did before. Then she kneeled. One evening she was much affected, and rose early in the morning and

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<sup>27</sup>CW, 'A Prayer Against the Power of Sin', st. 5, *HSP* (1740), 80.

<sup>28</sup>John Furz married Anne Wadman in Salisbury in Apr. 1738.

searched the book to find the prayer. But she could not find it, and afterwards she would not kneel down, whether I had a book or not.

[31.] One Sunday morning, a little before church time, being about to go to the sacrament, I came down the stairs. She stood silent at the stair-foot, and then stepped down, struck me in the face, and beat out one of my teeth. She stepped back, sat down in a chair, and wept aloud, saying, 'Lord, I cannot help it. I am so tempted by the devil.' I went to her, put my tooth into her lap, and went into my chamber again without speaking. It was a sorrowful day with her. The next morning she rose before me. When I came down, I found her weeping. She said, 'Can you forgive me?' I made towards the door. She said, 'For God's sake, do not leave me.' I said, 'It is God against whom you have sinned.' She wept aloud. I went out, and walked in the fields three hours, praying for her. And when I returned home, I found God had spoke peace to her soul. Nothing would satisfy her but I must sit on her knees, and hear her praise God. I believe she never lost his love from that hour, but was daily growing in grace. When I set out as a travelling preacher, leaving my children to her care, she never once asked me when I should come home. But in all her letters said, 'I find difficulties, but let not that distress *you*. I am content. Go straight forward in the work God has called you to.'

[32.] When I was informed she was very ill, I rode seventy miles in one of the shortest days to see her. I found two young women with her, who came to see her at the beginning of her illness, and never left her after. One of them asked, if they should let her know that [I] was come? I said, no; and went in softly to her. She looked at me, and said, 'My dear husband, I am going to Abraham, to Isaac, and Jacob. I am going to all the prophets, and to the spirits of just men made perfect. I am going to my dear Jesus; and added,

Not a doubt can arise,  
To darken the skies,  
Or hide for a moment my Lord from my eyes.<sup>29</sup>

No, not for a moment!' She then paused awhile and said,

'Hark! hark how they shout  
All heaven throughout!<sup>30</sup>

Lord, let me come up!' And so departed.<sup>31</sup> I found her clothes had been sold to procure her necessities in time of affliction. So that naked as she came into the world, naked did she return.

[33.] As to my mother, I was her youngest son, and she was the kindest of mothers. Yet it was not till I had preached a whole year that she would come to hear me. After she had heard, she was all prayer, and soon found peace; which she enjoyed without the least interruption, to her life's end. Living and dying, she was possessed of that quietness of spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price. Her last dying words were, 'Lord Jesus, into thy hands I commend my spirit!'

[34.] Many years ago, when I was at Hornby in Yorkshire, I had a violent illness. None about me expected I should ever recover. When to all appearance I was near death, Mr. [Thomas] Olivers sent Mr. [William] Minethorp to Hornby with a letter, to inform me he would come and preach my funeral sermon, and rejoice over me. The good women that sat round my bed said, 'We never had a preacher died here before. We shall have a great company of people to hear the funeral sermon.' I heard one of them say, 'Now he is going.' Meantime the cry of my heart was, 'Lord sanctify me now or never.' In that

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<sup>29</sup>HSP (1749), 1:221, st. 5.

<sup>30</sup>A repeated refrain in an anonymous hymn that opens 'O come let us join, in music divine' which George Whitefield included in his 1753 *Collection of Hymns for Social Worship*.

<sup>31</sup>This apparently happened before 1769, as she never appears on the list of wives of married preachers receiving support.



instant I felt the mighty power of his sanctifying Spirit. It came down into my soul as a refining fire, purifying and cleansing from all unrighteousness. And from that instant I began to recover. But oh how slow of heart have I been to believe, and how hard to understand the deep things of God! Before my conversion I thought if I repented all my days, and was pardoned at last, it would be a great blessing. But when it pleased God to pardon me, I knew, '*Now* is the accepted time. *Now* is the day of salvation.'<sup>32</sup> But I had the same conceptions of sanctification that I had before of justification. I preached it as a slow, gradual work. And while I did so, I gained no ground: I was easily provoked, which made me fear lest after I had preached to others, I myself should be a castaway. But now, glory be to God, I feel no anger, no pride, no self-will. Old things are passed away. All things are become new. Now I know, he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God and God in him!

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 460–65, 515–19, 569–75, 632–39.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>2 Cor. 6:2.

<sup>33</sup>This account is reproduced in Jackson, *EMP*, 5:108–34; along with a note of Furz's death.

**From Christopher Watkins<sup>1</sup>**

[Cornwall]  
c. April 1782

The work of God propers among us here; I never saw anything equal to it. The last time I was at St. Just the leaders gave me an account of seventy persons who had found either pardon or perfect love within the last fortnight. And the night and morning I was there twenty more were delivered. One and twenty likewise were then added to the society, most of whom have found peace with God.

*Source:* published extract; JW, *Journal*, April 5, 1782 (*Works*, 23:235).

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<sup>1</sup>Christopher Watkins (1750–1805) was admitted on trial as a travelling preacher in 1768 (see *Works*, 10:353) and served until his death. See *Minutes* (post-Wesley, 1805), He was currently the Assistant for the western Cornwall circuit.

From Lady —

April 1, 1782

Reverend Sir,

You know that God is love, and I pant to prove him so to the uttermost degree that humanity will admit of. What I have hitherto experienced of his goodness, when compared with what I expect, and what he has promised to bestow upon me, appears very small—even as the morning star compared with the sun in his full meridian. Yet I dare not deny the goodness of the Lord. Since I wrote to you, unutterable peace has filled my soul, and heavenly serenity possessed my mind. My fellowship God has been deepened, and my intercourse with Jesus has proved inexpressibly sweet. I have more than ever experienced that God is the hearer of prayer, both for myself and others.

I am never so sensible of the poverty of language as when attempting to speak of the goodness of the Lord. Indeed at times it beggars all expression! But these sweet seasons are often interrupted, and succeeded by such a flood of inward temptations as causes the most acute distress and requires a great exertion of divine power to support the soul under them. In these very trying times, she feels stript of all but faith, and is left to fight alone with the powers of darkness. I sometimes regret my too great sensibility of temper, fearing it may preclude that degree of happiness in religion which I might other ways enjoy. But sovereign grace is surely sufficient to rectify every evil. That the Lord may fill you with all his fullness, and give you yet thousands for your crown of rejoicing in the great day of decision, is the prayer of, reverend and dear sir,

Your obliged humble servant,

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*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 273–74.

From Hester Ann Roe<sup>1</sup>

[Macclesfield]

April 7, 1782

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Glory be to him whom all glory is ever due. I find him an ocean of love without bottom or shore. He fills my happy soul with humble joy unknown. I *dwell* in his sacred presence; *he dwells* in my worthless heart, and all wrapped up in him I am.

Your last sermon on the Monday morning was made a peculiar blessing to very many precious souls, who say they are sure *God* directed you to speak just as you did. Some others indeed say you preached a new doctrine, which they never heard before except from cousin Robert Roe, respecting a *present* salvation; for they cannot believe a person can be justified or sanctified unless they have undergone a *long* preparation, etc. Nay, they have even affirmed that he or myself *desired* you to preach that sermon, and to mention the person who was convicted, justified, and sanctified in twelve hours.

Why should we wonder at these things? The remains of the carnal mind in myself would once have strongly opposed the simplicity of faith. But oh how precious do I now prove the experience of those words, 'I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who hath loved me, and given himself for me.'<sup>2</sup> How mistaken are those who say to speak much of living by faith, or of coming to be justified or sanctified by faith alone, is setting aside good works? For can there be a gospel faith, which does not work by love? And does not love work all holy obedience? Excuse me, my dear sir, I have been led to say more on this subject than I intended. My soul being peculiarly blessed since I began to write. Indeed I often find it so when I write to you. He makes you various ways an instrument of much good to my soul. How unworthy am I of his innumerable mercies? Praise the Lord, oh my soul, and all that is within me praise his holy name!

A dear young woman who received sanctification about three months ago (who has been a follower of God six years, and found his pardoning love at fourteen years old) is now to all appearance on the borders of eternity; and no pen can describe the holy triumphs of her soul. It is a blessing to be near her. On Tuesday last, as I was repeating and enforcing some of the passages in your last sermon, and a few parallel promises, another young woman, who has been seeking the blessing two years by works, was by faith brought into full liberty, and still retains the clear witness that she is cleansed from all sin. And while Mr. S— offered a present salvation, a young woman was justified.<sup>3</sup> J— S— writes word he has reason to praise God for his journey to Macclesfield, and is determined to preach an instantaneous present salvation from all sin. I trust your going to Chester will strengthen his hands.

I cannot tell you how much I am filled with a spirit of prayer for you, and a sweet assurance that God is about to use you as a more peculiar instrument of good than he has ever done. I look for an abundant out-pouring of the Spirit. Whenever I hear of souls being blessed, those words are applied, 'Ye shall see greater things than these.'<sup>4</sup> May the fullness of the Triune God ever fill your happy soul! And may you still help me to love him more, prays

Your most unworthy, but ever affectionate,

H. A. R.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 329–30.

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<sup>1</sup>JW was in Macclesfield from Good Friday (Mar. 29) through Easter Sunday (Mar. 31). His last sermon was on Monday, Apr. 1, in the morning, before he left town. See *Journal, Works*, 23:235–36.

<sup>2</sup>Gal. 2:20

<sup>3</sup>Likely Richard Seed, now supernumerary at Macclesfield.

<sup>4</sup>John 1:50.

From John Allen

[Manchester]  
April 24, 1782

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Since you were with us we have had a very remarkable occurrence, concerning which, I thought it proper to give you some information.<sup>1</sup>

A jeweller's wife in Manchester has been a person of very low spirits for some years, so that she could not enjoy company, or find any pleasure in the enjoyment of the world. She frequently went to Church, but returned home dissatisfied, as she could not meet with what she wanted (indeed she hardly knew what she did want) but frequently concluded that they did not show her the right way to eternal life.

Some months since, Mr. Smith of Ardwick Green, talked to her and her husband, and told them it was a 'pity they were jewellers, and yet strangers to the best jewel'. And wished they would read Mal. 3:17. And in short prevailed upon them to come to our preaching, of which the wife was glad as she wanted happiness but could not tell where to find it. I preached that evening from 'Behold I stand at the door and knock, ....'<sup>2</sup> She was well pleased with what she heard, and believed the truths that were delivered. From that time she has attended preaching whenever she could, and has been more in earnest, and is more full instructed in the way of salvation.

On Sunday, April 14, she was in great distress, but hoped she should be better when she got to the preaching in the evening. Yet she found no relief, but was as much distressed when she went home. As she was in great trouble, and appeared to be very ill, she wished to go early to bed. When her husband followed her, he found her in an agony of trouble, and bitterly weeping. After some time, I think they went to sleep, though not till he had talked a good deal to her concerning her taking a wrong method to be religious, etc.

Between four and five o'clock she waked in sore distress, and began to cry to God with the greatest earnestness. Her husband got up, and in a moment she appeared to be in a fit, and (as he supposed) dying. Her eyes were fixed and she lay motionless, only he could perceive she breathed. He strove to make her move, and to unfix her eyes, but in vain. After some time he heard her say, with a loud voice, 'Lord help me, Lord, save me, Lord pardon my sins.' In a few minutes she came to herself, in a transport of joy, and cried out, 'Glory be to God, he has pardoned all my sins, I can die as cheerfully as I can go to sleep', with a great many more expressions that indicated the happiness she felt in her soul.

While she lay insensible, and apparently like one that was dying, she says she had lost all sense of this world, and supposed that she had got into eternity. She thought she was at the mouth of hell, that the door was open, and she saw one stirring up a most dismal fire, in order to make it burn with the greater fierceness. As she was afraid every moment of dropping in, she turned her head to the right, and at a distance saw the Redeemer sitting on a throne of glory, surrounded with angels and archangels. She supposed she was too far from him to cry to him, and too vile and unworthy to go nearer to him. However she ventured to go a little nearer and fell upon her knees. But not thinking that posture humble enough, she fell upon her face, and cried, 'Lord, help me, Lord, save me, Lord, pardon all my sins, for thy name's sake.' No sooner had she thus cried, than she heard the Redeemer say, 'Woman thy sins are forgiven thee.' She then came in a moment to herself, and lost sight of the eternal world, and was more happy than words can express; and remains truly happy still, without a doubt of her acceptance, or a fear that torments her mind. Wishing you much peace and prosperity, I remain, reverend and dear sir,

Your affectionate son in the gospel,

J. A.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 331–32.

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<sup>1</sup>JW had been in Manchester Apr. 5–9; Allen was stationed on that circuit.

<sup>2</sup>Rev. 3:20.

From an Unidentified Correspondent

c. May 1782

1. In December 1781, many persons met at Gabriel Thomas's house, in St. Just's church town, in order to sing and pray. In a little time several began to cry aloud, and would not be comforted. And some struggled as in the agonies of death: one of whom fainted away. They continued in prayer till the preaching began at 5:00 in the morning: and six of the mourners found peace with God. Some were also deeply distressed for full salvation; but they were not yet set at liberty.

2. On Tuesday, December 25, many met at 3:00 in the morning, at Gabriel Thomas's to sing and pray. The power of God fell upon them, so that six were as in an agony; two of whom were soon filled with peace. At 7:00 they removed to the preaching house, where the same power was present. They continued in prayer till about 9:00. In that time four more found a sense of pardon. They met there again in the evening, and stayed till 1:00 or 2:00 in the morning, when four or five more were enabled to rejoice in God their Saviour.

3. Wednesday 26. They met at the preaching house about 7:00 in the evening. Very soon some began to cry for mercy. But two women who, though they had been long in the society, were not convinced of sin were much offended, saying, 'It is all hypocrisy.' In a short time the cries of the mourners were turned into praise. At this, they were still more offended. But in about two hours, they were both cut to the heart, and cried out as loud as any. About one o'clock, God put a new song in *their* mouths. About 7:00, the meeting broke up, but not before eleven more were enabled to declare that *their* sins were blotted out.

4. Friday 28. About 7:00 in the evening there was a prayer meeting at the village of Bosorne. After the meeting was over, several being much in distress, about twenty persons remained to pray with them. They continued wrestling with God till about midnight, and four were set at liberty.

5. In January a prayer meeting was held at the preaching house on Wednesday evening. After about an hour the bulk of the congregation went away. But many who were distressed for God kept crying to him. And forty or fifty persons stayed with them, and continued in prayer till about 12:00. Before they parted, nine found peace with God, and five believed he had cleansed them from all sin.

6. During all February the work of God went on with power—many being justified, and some sanctified. On Saturday, March 9, Mr. [Christopher] Watkins preached, and afterwards met the society. But the people would not go away, but first one prayed, then another, till it was past midnight. In the morning Mr. Watkins preached again, and some continued in prayer after him. In the night and morning twenty persons found remission of sins.

7. The following Wednesday evening there was a prayer meeting, as usual, at the preaching house. After it, about twenty persons met at Gabriel Thomas's and continued in prayer till 1:00 in the morning. During this meeting six found peace with God. It was about this time that fourscore persons were justified in one week.

8. Soon after there was a prayer meeting at the village of Trewellard, in which two persons were set at liberty, and many deeply convinced. Two of these were justified, during the prayer that followed. The same evening there was a prayer meeting in Bosorne. When this was ended, a few continued to pray for those who were under convictions. Four of these found peace; one of whom had been long in the society, and was about fourscore years of age. And one believed she was saved from all sin.

9. On Tuesday, March 20, Stephen Hervey was at a prayer meeting in the village of Bossvarges.<sup>1</sup> There was much of the presence of God in the first meeting, which continued about an hour. Then many went away. As Stephen Hervey was sitting down to rest him, a little child about seven years of age coming by him, he said, 'My dear, do you believe you shall die?' She said, 'Yes.' He said, 'Little children go to Christ when they die, if they are good; but if they are not good they cannot. Are you happy now?'

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<sup>1</sup>This is the spelling in *AM*; it likely refers to one of the hamlets like Bosworlas or Bosavern

She answered, 'No.' 'But do you believe that Christ can make you happy?' She said, 'Yes.' 'But can you believe, he will?' She answered, 'Yes, I can.' 'Then look to him now, and he will just now make you happy.' She burst out immediately into tears. But they were tears of joy. For she rejoiced with joy unspeakable, being fully assured that all her sins were forgiven. She had a sister between eight and nine years old who, seeing her happiness, began to be concerned for her own soul. And it was not long before she was happy too. A lad, twelve or fourteen years of age, was standing by, wild and utterly unconcerned. Stephen Hervey looking upon him, said, 'Well, what are you doing? If you do not repent, you will go to hell, as sure as you are alive.' He melted into tears, and earnestly asked, 'What must I do to be saved?' Being told, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved',<sup>2</sup> he began crying mightily to him, and did not cease till he was a witness of his salvation. In less than a quarter of an hour there were six witnesses of this. And before they parted, eighteen were praising God for a sense of his pardoning mercy.

10. In April, Gabriel Thomas went to Humphreys, a neighbouring village, to visit Charles Ellis, who once began to run well. He was earnestly crying for mercy, which he found during prayer, as did his wife, within a quarter of an hour after. A woman who was standing on the stairs listened attentively, and in about an hour knew that she was reconciled to God. Meantime another woman who was standing with her child in her arms at the window was pierced through as with a sword. The sick man was so strengthened that he dressed himself and came downstairs to praise God. Soon after Gabriel Thomas was gone home, the convinced woman followed, being distressed for God. Two or three joined in prayer, and in about an hour, God turned her heaviness into joy. An old man who occasionally came in was quickly a partaker of the same blessing.

11. Many of those who during all this time found peace with God were children from seven years old to fourteen. Forty-eight of these were at one time happy in God, and walked as unblameably as men or women. Fifty children met in class, and all of them but two could witness a good confession. But even at this time they were never met by the preachers! So that by degrees many of them were moved from their steadfastness.

12. Above forty of those who received remission of sins during these days of Pentecost had the witness in themselves that the blood of Christ had cleansed them from all sin. During this time also about ten of the children of God rested from their labour. And every one of them witnessed a good confession before they went hence. Many likewise who were not members of the society were, before they died, filled with peace and joy in believing.

13. What is peculiarly remarkable is that in this uncommon revival (as well as in that at Epworth, and that in Weardale some years since) the travelling preachers had very little share. They were the leaders whom it pleased God chiefly (indeed almost wholly) to use! So hath God chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things that are mighty! So does he send by whom he will send, that no flesh may glory in his sight.<sup>3</sup>

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 7 (1784): 211–13, 266–68.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Cf. Acts 16:30–31.

<sup>3</sup>This last section is almost certainly JW's editorial addition to the account he received.

<sup>4</sup>Titled: 'An Account of a Revival of the Work of God, at St. Just, in Cornwall'.

Gwennap

May 16, 1782

We have had many sudden deaths of notorious sinners in this neighbourhood lately, whose singular exit, in drunkenness, should be a warning to sinful survivors. One of these got drunk on a Sabbath morning and lay down on his bed, as usual, to sleep it away. His daughter, towards the evening, went to call him down to tea, when alas, the poor soul was gone into a world of spirits!

Another, a gentleman's gardener, an uncommon blasphemer, dreamed a few nights since two devils were come for him: a little one, and a great one. He seemed a match for the lesser; but while combatting with the other, he awoke. The next day he met with his pot-companions<sup>1</sup> again and drank down this warning, and joked away his dream, saying he would cheat the devil tomorrow by going to a feast. Some hours after he went into the hothouse, where they found him with his face on the fire: his nose burned off, his lips preserved, but his blasphemous tongue burned out of his mouth. And the next day his body was carried to the grave to be a feast for the worms.

Richard Williams

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 5 (1782): 581–82.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Drinking partners.

<sup>2</sup>Titled: 'Two Remarkable Deaths'.



From Ann Loxdale

[Shrewsbury]  
June 1, 1782

Reverend and Very Dear Sir,

I should not have deferred thanking you for your kind letter till this period,<sup>1</sup> had I not hoped ere this to have done it in person. But having been disappointed by various causes, I beg leave to take this method of saying something to you of the state of my soul.

From the time I received justification, I experienced nothing but the most unremitted love. Yet I knew there was a deeper work of grace to pass upon me, for I could never doubt that God was not only faithful and just to forgive me my sins, but to cleanse me from *all* unrighteousness. I therefore had not those hindrances which many have. I received the blessing near a year and half ago. But by the devices of Satan, and through my own inexperience, I very soon lost it. God, in great condescension, made me a partaker once more of this precious salvation, and I had a heaven upon earth, enjoying a *constant* communion with him. But I have long lost that *very close* and sweet intercourse. Sometimes I have thought it was owing to my weakness and indisposition of body, the overwhelming presence of God always overcoming me. But whether it is that, or my own unfaithfulness, I cannot say. I have always enjoyed the sweetest peace, and the fullest evidence that I possessed the blessing.

About last Christmas a friend, whose conversation, etc. had been always blessed to me in a particular manner, gave me a book which I eagerly read, as it set forth a much higher state of perfection. And my heart was full of gratitude to God for putting this book into my hands. I was now much tempted to think I had not enjoyed a state of sanctification before. But I could never give up that evidence. I read the book with much prayer, and was delighted while reading, but the contents made little impression on my memory. I now used abstinence, mortification, and self-denial, but I could not find delight in them. Hitherto I had *rejoiced under the cross*, but now I found it a real burden. It grieved me to think I loved myself better than my God. I spent much of my time in sighs and tears. But when I layed all my griefs and cares before my compassionate Lord, he filled me with his love; so that I had sweet seasons, and used to rejoice in the knowledge that I did love God. And I looked forward to that time when I should have the same experience which that book set forth.

After some months I thought I was just as before, and had made no progress in the paths of holiness. Nay, I thought I had gone back. About this time, I had heard many accounts of the friend before mentioned, which grieved and shocked me prodigiously. I knew if the things which I heard were true, he was not guided by the Spirit of God. I was told too he was a mystic, and I had heard mysticism exploded very much; but till now I did not know what it was, nor that I was one. I had undesignedly omitted reading another book of the same author for some time, and I soon found I was much happier in my soul. I now began to examine whether this doctrine was of God. I was ready to believe it was not, but thought it was owing to the difficulties I had to surmount. Again, I thought that the work of sanctification must be a work of God, as well as justification; and if so, God could effect it in a moment. And though I knew I could not do anything without the grace of God, yet I thought I was making myself in part a saviour with Christ, seeking the blessing by the works of the law, rather than by simple faith.

Two dear friends wrote to me at this time on the subject, which strengthened me in the belief that this doctrine was erroneous. I have, however, at times some doubts and fears on this head. You see, my dear sir, I have availed myself of the privilege you gave me of writing as if I was speaking to you.<sup>2</sup> And I believe you will regard the contents of this in too serious a light to think there needs an apology. And I now entreat you, my dear sir, as you value the peace and prosperity of the least of Jesus's followers, refuse me not an interest in your prayers, that God may be my wisdom and guide. I must add in respect to my present experience that I enjoy much peace, and can say with unshaken confidence I love my God

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<sup>1</sup>This is Loxdale's delayed response to JW's letter of Mar. 9, 1782.

<sup>2</sup>See, for example, JW to Loxdale, Mar. 27, 1781.

above all in earth or heaven. But I do not find that my *thoughts* are continually fixed upon him. Yet this in times past I did experience. I have at this time, and have had for this week, the most earnest desire to be wholly the Lord's; and to have every thought, word, and action brought into subjection to the will of God; and have found great power to wrestle with him. I feel a deep want of humility, and simplicity, and all the graces of the Spirit. I want to be a child in simplicity, and a mother in faith and love.

O my dear sir, excuse the liberty I take in praying you to help me forward. Oh do tell me how I can love Jesus, and live wholly to his glory! O for simple faith working by humble, burning love! Is it not my privilege to enjoy *constant* communion with God? Why do I not attain it? Search to the bottom of my heart, and tell me what are my hindrances? My very dear sir, I hope you will pardon my giving you so much trouble, and taking up so much of your precious time. With great respect and esteem, I beg leave to subscribe myself,

Your very affectionate and loving servant in a precious Christ,

A. L.

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 385–87.

From James Wood<sup>1</sup>

[Norwich]  
June 6, 1782

Reverend and Dear Sir,

In respect to the work at Thurlton I can give you only a brief account. In this, as in most revivals, a great deal of wild fire is mixed with the genuine; and it appears to me, and many others, that Satan has been permitted to work in an astonishing manner. On the second of May at Haddiscoe, three persons who had been convinced for some time were clearly set at liberty, who still rejoice in God their Saviour. A fourth professed the same, who on the Friday following fell into violent fits, shrieking out as if sometimes in heaven, at other times in hell—which continued all night, most of the next day, and the day after. Brother King and his wife from [Great] Yarmouth being then present,<sup>2</sup> and suspecting this was partly affected, laboured to check it, which, in a few moments he effected. I think four other persons were affected much in the same manner, whose experience I strongly suspect—not from their fainting, fits, etc., but from an inability to give any clear, rational account of their conviction or conversion. When this happened, I was laid up by sickness. But I advised brother T. to observe their motions, words, tempers, and conduct, as far as he could; and observed to him that it is our business, where there is any appearance of wildness, etc., mildly to check that which is wrong and cherish that which is of God.

As soon as I was able, I went to converse with those persons singly, and found their experience not at all satisfactory. But since that, the Lord has greatly displayed his goodness. On Sunday, May 13, at Thurlton, brother T. preached, and the Spirit was poured from on high. Three were clearly justified, and one convinced of sin. The Wednesday following, two at Wheatacre (near Thurlton) found peace, and one at Thurlton, perfect love. Sunday 20, I was at Loddon, where one found peace in time of preaching, another as she walked home. And the next evening at Thurlton, one received the second blessing. Sunday, May 27, brother T. was again in those parts, when four were set at liberty, three at Thurlton, and one at Beccles. The next evening, four more were enabled to declare that God had blotted out all their sins, and adopted them into his family.

Last night at [Long] Stratton (on the London road) four more found peace, and went home rejoicing. About a fortnight ago, four in Norwich were happily delivered from the burden of sin, and are happy in God their Saviour. One of these came to me one morning on the brink of despair. He had been for four years tempted to think he had committed the sin against the Holy Ghost. After I conversed and prayed with him, he began to feel a hope springing up, and that afternoon found peace with God. Others in divers places have been set at liberty within a few weeks. But what appears to me remarkable is that few outward hearers in these places have been convinced of sin. The work has been principally on those in society. But I trust this will follow, and that there will be a glorious harvest in these parts.

It really seems as if the Lord were gathering in the fullness of the Gentiles, and hastening the fulfilment of his promise, 'That all shall know him from the least unto the greatest.'<sup>3</sup> I am, reverend sir,

Your affectionate loving son in the gospel,

J. Wood

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 388–89.

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<sup>1</sup>James Wood (1751–1840) was admitted into itinerant ministry in 1773 and would serve for 53 years. Respected by his peers, he was twice elected President of Conference. See *Works*, 10:415; and *Minutes* (post-Wesley, 1845), 9:12–13. Wood was currently the Assistant for the Norwich circuit.

<sup>2</sup>Samuel King was a brazier in Great Yarmouth active in the Methodist society, serving at times as a local preacher. He married Sarah Jay in 1765. See A. Watmaugh, *A History of Methodism in the Town and Neighbourhood of Great Yarmouth* (London: Kershaw, 1826), 72–75.

<sup>3</sup>Jer. 31:34.

From John Baxter

Antigua  
June 10, 1782

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I take this opportunity, by a lady from Antigua, to inform you of the state of the society. The critical situation we have been in for some months past was very alarming, expecting daily to fall into the hands of our enemies. But our God has been gracious, and delivered us out of their hands. The fatal expedition of St. Kitt's was intended for Antigua, but the enemy were driven to leeward.<sup>4</sup> When that island was captured, we expected to be soon in the same situation. And every Sunday we expected it would be the last opportunity. But we are at present free from all apprehension from this quarter.

Mrs. Gilbert will write by the fleet.<sup>5</sup> We have reason to thank God for sending her amongst us, as it proves a peculiar blessing. We are much in want of leaders. It is dangerous to let too great a number meet with one. For, being ignorant of the word of God, they run into many superstitions—to prevent which Mrs. Gilbert and myself meet classes at all opportunities. The work is not deep, but very superficial in many. There is a great outward reformation among the Negroes, and a desire to be thought religious. I bless God, some know in whom they have believed and adorn the gospel. There is at St. John's Church near thirty coloured persons that receive the Lord's Supper, and their number increases. I shall not attempt to mend the [General] Rules of the Society, but endeavour to keep them. We have no bands at present. I have been so much employed in the King's service lately that I have not had time to settle matters as I could wish. I consult Mrs. Gilbert on all occasions.

We have now a prospect of building, but materials are very dear. I hope to send you a more full account soon. I have not one white man beside myself in connexion. I am at a loss to find trustees for our house. I shall be glad of your speedy direction how to proceed. The house we now have is a life estate of my wife's, so during her life I am not distressed. But I want to see a house of our own that the work may stand. As soon as this is accomplished, and we can maintain a preacher, I hope some of our brethren will come to our assistance.

If you think it expedient, I will come to Conference next year, if there is peace. I hope you will continue to pray for us. I still continue to travel, though I find it hard to the flesh to work all day and ride at night ten miles. I long to be holy. I labour to forget the things that are behind, and press forward to the things that are before. I know that God hears and answers prayer; and trust that he will spare your useful life, and permit me to see you once more in the body; or be found at your feet at that day when you will enter into the joy of your Lord. I am honoured and reverend sir,

Your unworthy son in the gospel,

John Baxter

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 439–40.

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<sup>4</sup>The Battle of Frigate's Bay, in late Jan. 1782, where the British fleet under Rear-Admiral Sir Samuel Hood was defeated by a superior French fleet under the Comte de Grasse.

<sup>5</sup>Mary (Walsh / Leadbetter) Gilbert had returned to Antigua in July 1781, after the death of her husband Francis, to assist in the work there. Her letter to JW is not known to survive.

From Hester Ann Roe

[Macclesfield]  
June 13, 1782

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I have been very ill, and my body brought very low since I saw you. But those sweet words continually applied caused me to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory—viz., ‘According to my earnest expectation, and my hope, that in nothing I shall be shamed, but with all boldness, as always, so *now also* Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be *by life* or *by death*, for to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.’<sup>1</sup> O my dear sir, I never dwelt so much in God as I have done of late. My whole soul has been swallowed up in communion with the eternal Trinity: and peculiarly, within this last fortnight, with the Holy Spirit. I have been led to pray in faith for a universal and Pentecostal outpouring of his divine fullness. And it surely will descend.

Being lately on a visit to Nantwich, the dear people there who knew me formerly flocked around me with eagerness, and I had a prayer meeting with twelve or fourteen of them, for which I believe we shall praise God through eternity. A poor backslider was restored, and all present were filled with humble love and joy. I left five or six earnestly crying for a clean heart, and determined to meet among themselves, for all the classes were broken up or torn by divisions. When I came to Congleton on my return home, I found a young man who lately withstood cousin Robert Roe to his face respecting sanctification by faith, now rejoicing in it and declaring it boldly to all around. I spoke with several who felt the need of holiness, and two of them are able to testify ‘the blood of Jesus cleanseth them from all sin.’<sup>2</sup>

In this place, those who enjoy Christian perfection have had much opposition from some of their brethren. Four or five met constantly together to revile cousin Robert and all who profess it. But one of them now has been truly humbled before God, and received it himself in the very way he so much reviled, even by simple faith. And another of them says in his class, and publicly to all, that if he had continued to revile them he believes he should have been damned for it; but he is now determined never to rest till he receives it himself. Since you were with us,<sup>3</sup> six or seven have been justified and four or five sanctified. Cousin Robert preached at Kettlesum, about eight miles off, where one was justified and another sanctified. At Burslem he found many thirsting for holiness, some enjoying it, and others stirred up to seek it.

The children who professed sanctification when you were here, stand steadfast and walk irreprovably, though they have much opposition from those who do not believe the doctrine. Indeed I believe it is a means of good to them, constraining them to walk and cleave so much the nearer to God, that he may give them wisdom and strength. For my own part, I find every trial or affliction has this blessed tendency. And as when a man is tossed in the sea, every boisterous wave sinks him lower; so when lost in the ocean of love, every severe trial, temptation, or afflictive dispensation serves to plunge me deeper into God. Still pray for me, dear sir, and believe me ever

Your most affectionate, though unworthy child,

H. A. R.

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 441–42.

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<sup>1</sup>Phil. 1:20–21.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. 1 John 1:7.

<sup>3</sup>JW had been in Macclesfield in late Mar. 1782.

From Freeborn Garrettson<sup>1</sup>

c. July 1782

Prudence Williams was born in the State of Delaware, near the sea-shore, on the 18th day of December 1762. Her parents taught her to read God's holy word, and several excellent books written by divines of the Church of England. From her education, she was more moral than many of the young women in her day. Nevertheless her fallen nature (as it is in all) evidently appeared, which demonstrated the necessity of a supernatural work of grace. Though she had in some sense the form of godliness, yet she was destitute of the knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of sin. She was educated in the religion of her father, which was to attend at church on the Lord's day and sometimes to say prayers at home, to pay his just debts, and to live an upright life in his family and among his neighbours. (Some are ready to say, 'God help the world, if such honest men as these are not saved'; not considering that our righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees.)

In the month of March 1779, it pleased Almighty God, of his great goodness, to send his servants (the Methodist preachers) into that part of his vineyard. Her father was one of the first that received them, for which his glad heart has ever since praised God. A glorious work then began, whilst many groaned for redemption in the blood of Christ, and were happily brought through the pangs of the new birth. On the 9th of April, under a sermon preached by Mr. G[arrettson] from Ezekiel 18:27, she was deeply and powerfully convinced that she bore the appellation of the wicked described in the sermon, and was determined to turn to that which is lawful and right. She returned home, sobbing and sighing, as if her very heart would break, and at the next preaching joined the society.

The enemy of souls was now in a particular manner engaged against her. He first strove to turn her back by his alluring insinuations—presenting the honours, and pleasures of the world—but all in vain. Then he endeavoured to settle her in a false peace. But she was determined not to rest till she had found a resting place in her soul for the God of Jacob. Whilst she was under deep exercise of mind, he suddenly and powerfully suggested, 'Ah! you are destined to eternal misery, and it is in vain to make any farther attempts. There is no mercy for you.' Oh with what power did this go home to her heart! She mourned and wept at the feet of Christ day and night, and sometimes was almost in despair. But God, who will not suffer the enemy to triumph, pointed her to the precious promises. She was fully persuaded in her mind that Jesus tasted death for every man, and was encouraged to look up, with a strong hope that he would have mercy upon her. Her friends say that during her distress they seldom could see a smile on her countenance. And indeed her words, and actions, indicated to all around the sadness of her heart. She frequently withdrew, in the course of the day, to pour out her complaints to God. And much of her time was spent in reading the holy scriptures. She rarely missed her class. Fasted once or twice in the week. Was a constant attendant on the word preached, and was frequently bathed in tears under the preaching. She laboured under her heavy burden till her health was much impaired. 'O!' said she, 'one, and another, on the right and left, are happily brought to know God; and I am left behind.' The enemy frequently told her there was no mercy for her. Oh how good the Lord was, who in all her distress, opened the precious promises and bore her up under all these grievous temptations!

She laboured under this heavy load till the middle of September, when one evening, in the time of prayer in her father's family, she was enabled to lift her heart in faith to heaven, and felt what her soul panted for. She then cried out aloud, 'Bless God, O my soul, and all that is within me praise his holy

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<sup>1</sup>This is the first known letter to JW by Freeborn Garrettson (1752–1857). Garrettson was born in the colony of Maryland, and drawn to Methodist ways through the preaching of Robert Strawbridge. He began itinerating in 1775, was admitted into the American Conference in 1776, and was ordained at the Christmas Conference in 1784. After ordination he served first in Canada and then particularly in New England. See Bangs, *Garrettson*; *DEB*, 428–29; and Robert Drew Simpson, *American Methodist Pioneer, The life and Journals of the Rev. Freeborn Garrettson* (Rutland, VT: Academy Books, 1984).

name! He has turned my darkness into day, and my hell to heaven! Now I know what it is to sing the song of the Virgin Mary: "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit doth rejoice in God my Saviour."<sup>2</sup> I know God, for Christ's sake, hath blotted out my sins. Jesus is the fairest among ten thousand, he is altogether lovely.'

She was a pattern of zeal, watchfulness, self-denial, and taking up the cross and bearing it after her despised Master. Her ancient parents often related (with tears of joy running down their cheeks) what a great comfort their daughter Prudence was to them; how ready, and obliging she always was. 'O!' said the good old man one day', what reason have I to bless and praise the name of God, that ever I saw the face of, or heard these despised people called Methodists! I a poor sinner, wrapped up in my own righteousness! What has the Lord done for me and my family, most of whom are now able to testify of the pardoning love of God to their souls!'

Prudence was much beloved by all the society who knew her. She had a great gift in prayer, and frequently exercised it in public. She used frequently to talk to and weep over her acquaintances who knew not God, and her labour of love was not in vain. If any of the friends missed their meetings (for she constantly attended on the means of grace), she wept over and admonished them. And they esteemed her as a simple, humble, teachable follower of the meek and lowly Jesus.

She was not content with past experience, but took the apostle's advice and, having put on Christ, so she walked in him; and was rarely long without the divine presence. She delighted in the company of God's people, and to sit under the sound of the word, and did not return without manna. The language of her heart was: The more I hear, and read, and pray, the greater beauty do I see in religion; and the more my soul feeds on the love of Jesus. She loved the servants of God, and thought their feet beautiful on the mountains.

On the 22d of August 1781, she married a pious young man who was a member of the society. In this, she did not act as many do who profess godliness. 1) She was determined to take the apostle's advice, 'Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers.'<sup>3</sup> 2) Being convinced of the importance of so solemn an ordinance as matrimony, she spread the cause before the great Jehovah, and looked up for divine direction. 3) She did not engage in this weighty matter without the advice and consent of her parents. The life of this young pair demonstrated to all around that they were joined together in the fear, and with the approbation of, Jehovah. And they seemed to walk blameless (as Zechariah and Elizabeth) before him.<sup>4</sup>

Her love and zeal for God did not in the least abate, but rather increased. She was a tender, loving wife, a helpmeet indeed, ready to every good work, either temporal or spiritual. She made it a point not to neglect family prayer in the absence of her husband (as he often went journeys from home) and frequently admonished those under her care. She had an earnest panting for complete sanctification, and the work of God was progressively deepened, and carried on in her soul. In the month of June 1782 (as the time of her lying-in drew near), she was taken exceeding poorly. It was strongly impressed on her mind that she would die in childbirth. She was therefore more than ever engaged for full redemption in the blood of Christ, and sweetly drawn out in her Master's service. She frequently spake to her Christian friends of the great need she saw of purity of heart, begging an interest in their prayers.

On the 23d of June she was delivered of a son, for which her glad heart magnified the Lord. From the time of her deliverance, she seemed to have a clearer foresight of death, and struggled for a preparation for it. Holiness was the language of her heart. 'Without this', said she, 'I cannot be saved. O Jesus, bestow this precious gift on my poor soul!' Many pious friends visited her from time to time, and many faithful prayers were put up on her behalf. One day, being asked by a pious sister if she was prepared to die, she replied, 'I want a witness that I am sanctified throughout soul and body.' The sister exhorted her to lift her heart to God, and receive the gift by faith. They then joined in prayer and, blessed be God, he visited her soul in a wonderful manner. She received the witness of perfect love, and began to

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<sup>2</sup>Luke 1:46–47.

<sup>3</sup>2 Cor. 6:14.

<sup>4</sup>See Luke 1:6.

praise God, saying, 'Now I have found what my soul has panted after, the perfect love of God. I have been, in a particular manner, engaged for this precious gift. But now I am a living witness of sanctification. Glory to God, I am all glorious within, like unto the king's daughter. My dear', said she to her husband, 'get the hymn-book and help me to praise God.' They sang,

My soul, come meditate the grace  
Of our high priest above;  
His heart is made of tenderness,  
His bowels melt with love.<sup>5</sup>

A precious joyful time they had, and oh how good was Jesus to the souls of his people who were present. 'O!' said she, 'I wish you would send for my parents, I want to tell them what great things God has done for my soul.' Shortly after, her elder brother came in and asked her how she did. 'My dear brother', said she, 'I am happy in God. He has cut short his work in righteousness, and saved me from all sin. I am like a ripe shock of corn. I am waiting for the coming of Jesus.' When he asked, 'Are you willing to die?' she looked in his face, with a smiling countenance, and said, 'Oh blessed be Jesus, he has destroyed the last enemy in so glorious a manner that I can triumph over death and hell! Glory to God, I am enabled to sing the saints' dying song: Oh death where is thy sting, ....<sup>6</sup> Now I know I have not followed cunningly devised fables. My dear brother, praise God for the great things he has done for my soul. Ere it be long this clog will drop off and my soul will fly to Jesus, where I shall rest from all my sorrows. I shall meet the glorified saints, to spend an eternity round the dazzling throne.'

The next day her father and mother came, and just as they entered the door she said, 'Oh mammy, I want to tell you how good God is to my soul. He has prepared me for himself. I am now waiting for his coming to take my soul to the mansions of eternal day.' When her father came to the bed, she said, 'Oh daddy, why did you stay so long?' When the dear old man, in a flood of tears, replied, 'I came as soon as I could'; she took the handkerchief out of his hand, and wiped away the tears, clasping him in her arms, and said, 'Don't weep, but rejoice. I am going to Jesus. Did you think your poor daughter was so near her heavenly Father's kingdom? Oh that all the lovers of Jesus would rejoice with me! My dear father, God has done great things for my soul. Oh Jesus, precious Jesus, how good he is to me! The fairest among ten thousand! He is altogether lovely!' She then earnestly exhorted her parents to seek the perfect love of God, adding, 'We must part for a season, but I hope to meet you where we shall part no more forever. You have been very kind and good to me, and I love you dearly.' When her father asked her why? 'Because', said she, 'you often bade me seek the Lord. I took your advice, and blessed be his dear name, I am now going to him!'

The sister now came in (who had prayed with her when she received the witness of the perfect love of God), to whom she said,

Oh sister, many days have we waded through hot and cold, wet and dry, to hear the blessed gospel of Jesus. And many hard trials have we met with. But now I am about to bid you farewell for a season. Be faithful unto death, and we shall meet where all our sorrows will be wiped away. The lovely arms of Jesus are open to receive his faithful pilgrims. Sister, we have had precious sweet seasons together. Oh be faithful a little longer, and there is a crown waiting for you! My warfare is almost ended. I am waiting my dissolution, and shortly I shall see him whom I love, without a dimming veil between. Glory to my God that ever he thought me worth the notice of his all-seeing eye!

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<sup>5</sup>Cf. Isaac Watts, 'Christ's Compassion to the Tempted', st. 1, included by JW in *CPH* (1737), 48.

<sup>6</sup>1 Cor. 15:55.



An old man coming into the room (who had ran well for a season, but had turned back), ‘Come’, said she, ‘and sit down by me, I want to talk to you. My dear old friend, why did you turn your back on the bleeding Saviour? What harm did he ever do you? Oh what a pity it is that you should turn in your old age from the bleeding Prince of Peace. Be persuaded by one that loves your immortal soul to fly back to Jesus again, before it is too late. Though you have grieved his Holy Spirit, trampled under foot his mercies, grieved his people, and wounded his cause, he will heal your backsliding and love you freely.’ The old man was cut to the heart, and went away weeping. When another poor hardened sinner came in, her father asked her if she knew who he was. She replied, ‘Poor swearing Thomas’, and began to exhort him to turn to God. Her words went to his heart, and he went away weeping bitterly.

She now grew exceeding weak, and it appeared that she was not long for this world. She was almost continually exhorting all around her, both saints and sinners, in such a manner as greatly astonished all present. She seemed (by her exhortations and admonitions) to know the state and condition of all present. And glory to God, her labour of love was not in vain.

On Saturday evening her soul seemed powerfully carried out with love to God, and to the Lord Jesus Christ. On Sunday morning she seemed to be almost spent, though perfectly in her senses. Her looks were angelical, and her words sweet. Few left the room but were bathed in tears, whilst a flame of love ran from heart to heart. As she was much respected, many came to see her, and thought it good to be there. The room seemed awful because of the presence of God. Two of her young brothers and a young sister came to her, to whom she said, ‘Oh my dear brothers, now is the time for you to seek the Lord, whilst in the bloom of youth. Regard the words of your dying sister. Shortly you must lie on a dying pillow, and how dreadful will it be, if you are not interested in the bleeding Prince of Peace! And you, my dear sister, I entreat to turn to the Lord. Let not the honours, pleasures, or fashions of the world keep you from serving so good a God. I want to meet you in heaven. On a dying pillow you will not say you turned to the Lord too soon. No, one moment in heaven will make amends for all the trouble we meet with in this world.’

To one of the members of the society, coming into the room (who had missed her meeting for a considerable time, and was thought to be waxing cold), she said, ‘O sister, why do you neglect that precious means of grace’ (class meeting) ‘that God has blest to the edification, and consolation of so many souls? I fear you are turning from the Lord. You did run well in times past, why should you be hindered? Remember the agonies and bloody sweat of our precious Redeemer, and let him not die for you in vain. A few months ago I was green and flourishing, but what am I now? Oh sister, double your diligence, and walk closely with God.’ It seemed as if the Lord spoke to her, and I trust she will remember it to eternity, for she wept bitterly and promised to set out afresh.

Many were waiting around in tears, hearing her words with great delight. It seemed as if she was immediately assisted, and the thread of life lengthened, that she might finish the work she had to do. She gave a general exhortation nearly as follows:

Oh my dear Christian friends and neighbours, how I love your souls! I long to meet you in heaven. The doctrine ye have heard, from time to time, is true: without holiness ye cannot enter the pearly gates of the New Jerusalem. This is attainable in this life. I know it from happy experience. Many of my dear Christian friends, with whom I took sweet counsel, I never expect to see in this world. Give my kind love to them. Beg of them to live near the Lord. I want to meet them in my Father’s kingdom. Oh how I love them, and long for their salvation! My dear friends, it is a blessing indeed to love the bleeding Lamb.

After speaking a considerable time to this effect, being almost spent, she commended them to the Lord, begging of them to keep close to the society; and added, ‘We shall have a society above that will never end.’

After a while, she called her husband, and said, ‘My dear, we have had but few, though happy days together. God gave me to you; give me up freely to go to my Jesus. Though you have been a kind,

indulgent husband to me, I can freely part with you for Jesus. Be faithful to the Lord, and we shall soon meet to part no more forever. When my son William grows up, tell him from me to serve the Lord, that I may meet him in heaven. My dear husband, there is one thing lies heavy on my mind' (your slaves). 'It is not the will of God that they should be kept in bondage. We are commanded to do as we would be done by; let the oppressed go free, and break off every yoke.' What she said on this subject proved a great blessing to the bystanders.

It appeared to those around that the Lord in a wonderful manner strengthened her to finish the work he had for her to do. It was an affecting scene to see her friends and relations around her bed, bathed in tears, whilst she was in full triumph of faith, praising God and commending them to the word of his grace. Her last request was, that Mr. G[arrettson] should preach her funeral sermon, from the fourth chapter of second Timothy, 7th and 8th verses. As her work seemed to be done, in the evening she began to sing praises to God, in a wonderful manner, with a cheerful, loud voice, and continued to sing the most part of the night. She seemed indeed to partake of the joys of the celestial world.

Though she was exceeding weak, she desired to pray with her friends, and did it to the astonishment of all present. Her voice was distinctly heard, and the words were so moving that a heart of stone must melt. Her countenance was still smiling and heavenly, and her eyes lifted up to the everlasting hills, till the morning, when, without a sigh or groan, she resigned her spirit into the hands of a merciful God, and sweetly fell asleep in the arms of her Saviour, whom she dearly loved.

F. G.

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 521–30.

From Mary (Bosanquet) Fletcher

Madeley  
July 7, 1782

Very Dear Sir,

As I shall probably not have the pleasure of seeing you, I find a desire of informing you how we go on, which I had not room for in my last.

The people you joined when here are, I trust, coming forward. The men I have not conversed with, but the women are more in number than at that time. Some have been clearly justified, I think five; and three or four restored to that communion with God which they had for some years lost. A few are athirst for a clean heart. And on the whole, there is a good increase of freedom and liberty in our class-meetings. We have now also a band, into which I gather the most lively—all that are newly blest, or that have any light into sanctification; and indeed we have much of the presence of God with us.

My dear Mr. [John] Fletcher spares no pains. I know not which is greatest, his earnest desire for souls, or patience in bearing with their infirmities and dullness. His preaching is exceeding lively. And our sacraments the most like those in the London chapels of any thing I have seen since I left it. Yet I find a great difference between the people here and those in Yorkshire. However, the Lord has little ones here also. And last Friday, after riding two hours in the rain, we came to a good congregation, where there was neither house nor church to cover us. But I have not seen more of the Yorkshire attention since I left that place; nor had a more solemn time, though we were under a wet cloud all the while, and our poor servant waiting for us, who brought us safe home by ten o'clock the same night.

This is one of the old congregations, which my husband has visited for years, and where he joined sixty persons. Next Friday we are to see them again, and he purposes to enquire into the state of those which remain. There are in many parts about here some serious hearers, and we wish them all to be brought into a regular discipline. My husband has been at near five hundred pounds expense to build a small preaching house, that if he should be removed they may have a fold to preserve them from being scattered. But were they joined *now*, it would be far more likely to answer the end. On this subject we wish to have a little conversation with you. I am

Your affectionate servant,

M. F.

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 390–91.

From Hester Ann Roe

[Macclesfield]  
July 7, 1782

My Dear and Honoured Sir,

Since my last I have been very ill, and thought I was on the borders of my heavenly country. Oh with what joy did I feel this feeble body fail! How did my soul exult in the glorious prospect of eternity! My *every* faculty expanded, and all my large desires *eagerly* gasping for immortality—for the full and immediate fruition of *my God*. When most afflicted with pain and violent heart-sickness, those words, '*my God*', filled me with unutterable delight. I felt all the force of those other words,

Jesus comes with my distress,  
And agony is heaven.<sup>1</sup>

O for a thousand tongues to praise him! O for a thousand lives to spend wholly for him! Yes, ardently as I long to see him as he is, I could be willing, if so poor a worm could bring glory to his dear name, to live a thousand years. Indeed, my dear sir, I love him with a love that cannot be expressed, and yet I long to love him more.

Plunged in the Godhead's deepest sea,  
And lost in his immensity.<sup>2</sup>

I see more and more lately into the extent of that promise, 'What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.'<sup>3</sup> I have proved it in a thousand instances, and never knew it to fail in one. 'If ye ask anything in my name, says, Jesus, I *will* do it.'<sup>4</sup> What an open field then lies before us? Blessed be God, the work still goes forward; though all who press holiness are strongly opposed, and their names cast out as evil. But we are enabled by grace to bear all things, and endure all things in a spirit of love. Cousin Robert [Roe], on entering his new house, had a meeting there, and it was a time much to be remembered. One received sanctification, and many were greatly established.

I have thoughts, if the Lord open a way, of going into Yorkshire. I leave myself in the Lord's hands, as I desire to spend and be spent for him alone. May he fill you with all his fullness. And in a particular manner, when you meet in Conference, may the unction from above fill yours and every heart! May all go forth with strength renewed, and a plenitude of the Spirit be poured out on all flesh! I am now and ever, dear sir,

Your unworthy but affectionate child,

H. A. R.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 497–98.

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<sup>1</sup>CW, Hymn 53, st. 3, *Family Hymns* (1767), 54.

<sup>2</sup>CW, 'Hymn to the Holy Ghost', st. 3, *HSP* (1739), 184.

<sup>3</sup>Mark 11:24.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. John 14:13.

From Mrs. Martha Ward

Passage [near Cork]  
July 15, 1782

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Since I last wrote to you<sup>1</sup> I have been exercised with very severe trials, and was so beset within and without that I could see no prospect of escape. My inward trial was a temptation that I was deceived myself, and then had deceived others, by professing to be justified and born again, and renewed by the all-powerful grace of God. Many others beset me on all sides. But I bless God I was not left in this sore conflict, for he enabled me to look still to him, to cleave to him, and to possess my soul in patience.

Having been for some time thus exercised, still sorrowful, still fighting, but though distressed, still conqueror; at last my spirit failed. I grew stupid and insensible. My spirits were depressed, and health forsook me. My physician was apprehensive of a consumption. For some days the symptoms were alarming, and my family was terrified. I discovered their terror, and saw by the physician's countenance that he thought me in danger. I then was roused from the stupor that had seized my senses, and asked myself what had been the subject of my prayer? It was that God would make a way for my escape. Now, said I, he is answering my petitions. He is perhaps about to remove me where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest. I love Jesus Christ. I shall behold him whom I have only seen by the eye of faith, and shall soon join the general assembly of the just made perfect.

The ideas of my children then came into my mind. I thought I might still be wanting and useful to them. But this thought was soon repressed. I considered them the creatures of God, who had shed his blood for them. I knew my love for them could not be compared to his, and I resigned them to him whose mercy is over all his works. Oh to tell of the glorious hope, and the sight of eternal things that then opened on my soul, is impossible! For two days I was full of such a sublime, calm, quiet blessedness, or a something which I cannot describe. After this I began to recover, and was ordered to the country, where I am now.

Blessed be God, I find my health returning, and am struck with awe and astonishment at his love to me. Oh how shall I glorify him who has done so much for me? I am here cut off from all means of grace except prayer, reading, and retirement. But the Lord even makes the wilderness to smile. May I still love and follow him who is the way, the truth, and the life!

What great and awful events are taking place! How idly do our boasted politicians talk! The Lord is King, and his hand appears in the government of this world. My mind is all expectation to see the end of these great events, which seem ready to break in upon the earth. How different are the thoughts of men from what they have been formerly! Religion was then the word. They pulled different ways, and different opinions were the subject of dispute. Now deism takes the place of bigotry and superstition, and men of all denominations begin to style themselves citizens of the world. The religion of Jesus has little part in this change. How will this end? Surely the Lord will direct even this great change, though we know not how, to his own glory. My dear sir, still continue to pray for

Your unworthy, though affectionate daughter,

M. Ward

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 442–44.

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<sup>1</sup>The previous surviving letter to JW from Ward was June 16, 1779.

From Thomas Bond<sup>1</sup>

Dublin  
July 29, 1782

Reverend Sir,

After so many changes in my spiritual life; after having so often warmly loved, and greatly disliked you, you cannot now think my return any acquisition to the society in Dublin. However, by way of apology, permit me to tell you that some time before your visit to us in the year 1775, the Lord raised me up out of a very low estate, both in temporals and spirituals. I was indeed low in the latter, though I knew it not, always imagining at the lowest that my heart was for God and against sin. But temporal distresses roused me out of that lethargy. And when I was brought to fear that I should want the bread that perisheth, the Lord supplied—not that only, but the other also, which endureth to everlasting life, in a most extraordinary and abundant manner.

When you came, I was getting up hill, and rejoiced greatly to see you, but was presently offended at a paragraph in one of your *Journals*, concerning your abridgment of Dr. Watts's *Treatise on the Passions*.<sup>2</sup> This produced an altercation in writing,<sup>3</sup> on my part, I believe rather too impertinent. I now see clearly the truth of what you then said to me that I am 'too captious, and too apt to be severe on the infirmities and mistakes of my brethren'; seeing things that perhaps never existed. Warm zeal often persuading me that my eye was single, when most probably it was evil.

However, at that time I increased in riches, inward and outward, and was as happy as I could well wish. My usual description of the believing heart was this: 'It is an heart that melts and breaks at the name, and with the love of Jesus.' I felt it within me, yet fear, all was not right. For in the midst of this my son (I might almost say, my only son) a lad about seventeen years old, very promising in many respects, took a putrid fever and died. Many a night I passed almost continually on my knees. But I, whose prayer the gracious Lord had sometimes answered almost instantaneously for the healing of others, had no power for him. The darkness of death sealed his eyes, and my soul was covered with a heavy cloud.

I now lost faith, health, spirits, sleep, and all. By a kind of necessity I was driven to seek relief from strong wine. This threw me into a nervous fever, which did not abate. Neither did my sleep return, till after having received the blessed sacrament one night in my bed chamber, I instantly found myself at home—that is, the Lord was with me. What shall I now say! Rest is only to be found at the feet of *Jesus*. The heart is dark, cold, and miserable where he is not. They only who believe in him do enter into rest. And they who believe in him continually, and with their whole heart, must comprehend that which I cannot describe, but which you most justly and truly hold up before us as *the mark of the prize of our high calling*.

Will you receive me into favour and forgiveness, after all that is passed? Can you accept the friendship of such a wandering heart? (Yet thank God, held, in all its wanderings, by the name of Jesus almost forty years.) May I presume to hope that I may subscribe myself your brother, and to assure you that I am, reverend sir, with the highest esteem, and most affectionate regard,

Your very obedient servant,

Thomas Bond

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 498–500.

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<sup>1</sup>This is the second time that Bond was writing JW to apologize for an earlier exchange of letters; see Thomas Bond to JW, Apr. 4, 1775.

<sup>2</sup>JW's comment on Watts criticized the length of the original and suggested his principal end in writing was to get money (while JW's was to do good); see *Journal*, Feb. 17, 1769, *Works*, 22:171. This extract of JW's *Journal* appeared in print first in late 1774.

<sup>3</sup>The letters referred to are not known to survive, though Bond give one excerpt from JW.

John Bredin for Adam Clarke<sup>1</sup>

Derry  
August 13, 1782

In Mr. Wesley's letter to me from Manchester, dated April 6, 1782, he desires me to send the bearer 'Adam Clarke to the London Conference, and he would send him immediately to Kingswood school'. Immediately I wrote to Mr. Wesley informing him the journey was great and the young man had little to bear his expenses,<sup>2</sup> upon which Mr. Wesley wrote this letter to me.<sup>3</sup>

The bearer has made some proficiency in the languages, and is now on his way to Kingswood school. He is a young man of *real piety*, and has good abilities for one of his age. I hope the preachers and Methodists where he comes may receive him as a brother. Which will greatly oblige,

Your affectionate brother in Christ,

J. Bredin

*Source:* holograph; Wesley House (Cambridge University), Archives, 9/8/5.

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<sup>1</sup>This letter is not addressed to JW. In fact, the recipient is not named. It is written on the address side of JW's letter to Bredin, dated July 8, 1782, and was apparently given to Adam Clarke to carry as a letter of introduction and endorsement as he headed to Kingswood.

<sup>2</sup>This letter is not known to survive.

<sup>3</sup>JW's letter to Bredin, July 8, 1782, on the reverse side.

From Elizabeth Ritchie<sup>1</sup>

Otley  
August 15, 1782

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Glory be unto my Lord, he still hold my soul in second life, and gives me daily to feel my treasure and my heart are in heaven.<sup>2</sup> My soul enjoys sweet communion with the Holy Trinity and, deeply humbled on account of its own unworthiness, is ready at times to enquire, 'Why such love to me?' But blessed be my adorable saviour, I see by faith the spring from whence my every blessing flows. They are all conveyed through the channel of his blood.

O for this love, let rocks and hills  
Their lasting silence break!  
And all harmonious human tongues  
The Saviour's praises speak.<sup>3</sup>

How good is our God! How large his grace! How vast his love! Mercies on every hand close me round, the prisoner of amaze, and leave me poor in nought but thanks. I rejoice in hope ere long of praising my God in nobler strains above; for I am not more dissatisfied with anything than my power to bring glory to his name. My capacity to comprehend the love of God seems so limited, and my spirit so imprisoned while confined in a tenement of clay, that I almost long for enlargement, when my freed soul shall, with unutterable delight, range the illimitable plains of Jehovah's kingdom, converse with kindred angels, and as a separate spirit adore and love. But still let my Father's will be done. I would not wish to burst the shell, and spring to life, a moment sooner than infinite Wisdom sees good. His will is my rest. May I improve my added moments as he means I should, and then life lengthened will be glory increased. Pray for your unworthy child, that your labour, through the goodness of God, may have its designed effect, and all my mercies answer the end intended. May the God of all grace cause you to abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost prays, may dear father,

Your unworthy child,

E. R.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 500–501.

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<sup>1</sup>Ritchie is replying to JW's letter of July 30, 1782.

<sup>2</sup>Ritchie was recovering from an illness. JW had written Ann Bolton on Aug. 3: 'Miss Ritchie is just alive; she is still hovering between life and death' (*Works*, 30:65).

<sup>3</sup>Isaac Watts, 'Praise to the Redeemer', st. 6, *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* (1709), 202.



From Mrs. M. L.<sup>1</sup>

[Bristol?]  
August 28, 1782

Reverend and Very Dear Sir,

I earnestly desire to be given up to God, body, soul, and spirit; to live to his glory; to be holy, as he who hath called me is holy; not to know anything save Jesus Christ and him crucified; and to adorn the gospel of God my Saviour by my words, works, and conversation. And as God has promised to fulfill the desires of them that fear him, I think he is carrying on his work in my soul. I have not indeed that overflowing joy which I used to look upon as the evidence of it. But as the trees in winter do not bud, blossom, and bring forth fruit as in summer, yet nevertheless grow in strength and stability; so I hope in a little time the fruit will abundantly appear to the honour, and praise, and glory of God.

I have at present matter of rejoicing, and great cause to be thankful, for I feel in my soul *continually* the fruits of the Spirit: *love, joy, peace, long-suffering, meekness*, etc.<sup>2</sup> In all my trials I find resignation to the will of my dearest Lord. And my soul rests upon this promise, 'All things shall work together for good, ....'<sup>3</sup> O how I long to come forth as gold out of the furnace, seven times purified; and for all the promises which are yea and amen in him we love to be accomplished in my waiting, expecting, and desiring soul. Yet I am not sufficiently earnest. I want that wrestling, agonizing faith which will cry out, 'I will not let thee go, unless thou bless me.'<sup>4</sup> I want to be brought to that *birth of desire*; or to feel and know that,

Restless, resign'd for God I wait;  
For God my vehement soul stands still.<sup>5</sup>

Oh! may I never be faint or weary in my mind. But forgetting the things that are behind, may I press ardently to those that are before, till by faith and patience I inherit the promises. I give glory to God the way of salvation is by believing. And I rejoice in hope (because I have proved my God a God of faithfulness and truth) that ere long 'He that *shall* come, will come, and will not long tarry.'<sup>6</sup> I *shall* receive the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, to abide with me *forever*; for the promise is unto me. I shall be made one with the Son, even as he is one with the Father. I shall be filled with God; yea dwell in God, and God in me. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly! I desire an interest in your prayers, and am, reverend and dear sir,

Your affectionate humble servant,

M. L.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 553–54.

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<sup>1</sup>Orig., 'Mr. M. L.'; but appears to be same person as 'Mrs. M. L.', Dec. 14, 1775.

<sup>2</sup>See Gal. 5:22.

<sup>3</sup>Rom. 8:28.

<sup>4</sup>Gen. 32:26.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. CW, 'The Just Shall Live by Faith', st. 19, *HSP* (1740), 164.

<sup>6</sup>Heb. 10:37.

From James Oddie<sup>1</sup>

[Yarm]  
c. September 1782

Mrs. Sarah Oddie was born at Bonsall, in Derbyshire, in the year 1717. Her maiden name was Holehouse. Before she was twenty she was married to Mr. Thomas Thompson, by whom she had eleven children. He died in the year 1756, leaving her with seven children.

In her youth she was of a lively temper, rather inclining to gaiety. Yet even then she was not destitute of the fear of God, and was a great lover of the service of the Church of England and other pious exercises.

But though she was free from vice, and abounded in acts of charity according to her power; though she was full of natural good qualities, sufficient to denominate her a saint of this world; yet God in the early parts of her life discovered to her that there must be something in religion that she had not then known. And though she lived in a dark place, she was led by an inward instructor to feel after what she had not, and was conscious she must have to make her happy on earth and fit for glory in heaven.

In due time it pleased God, who always looks with a favourable regard on the feeble efforts of his helpless creatures, and before whom the prayer and alms of Cornelius came up for a memorial, to send his servants into that part, to show her and others the way of God more perfectly. Like one prepared of the Lord, she heard, knew, and readily embraced the joyful sound. The word of truth, explaining the inward motions of the Spirit, brought her gradually to a deep conviction of her total *sinfulness*, *guilt*, and *helplessness*; of the absolute necessity of a *free* pardon for the sins that were past; of the necessity of being born again, and of being found not having her own righteousness but the righteousness which is of God by faith. Yea, so deeply was she convinced of her total depravity, and of deserving the wrath of God, that she was brought to the very brink of despair. In this state the free grace of God found her. It was, as I remember to have heard her say, on Ash Wednesday, when she was preparing to go to Church expecting to hear her condemnation in the commination read that day, but before she got there divine light broke in upon her mind, quick as the spark from the smitten steel. In a moment she was assured that, though she deserved hell, yet she was an heir of heaven. That all her sins were pardoned, and she was accepted through faith in the Beloved. She then found the service of the Church sweeter than ever. She liked it before, but now she found the prayers and praises, the collects and psalms, the very language of her newborn soul. And she continued a diligent attendant and a steady lover of the service of the Church to her dying day.

The suddenness and clearness of this manifestation of divinely free mercy, so strongly marked with her utter unworthiness, had a singular influence on all her afterlife, and was a great cause of her walking so humbly with her God. For though she was great in the practice of every Christian duty, and eminent for every Christ-like temper, yet there were none more dependent on free mercy, nor louder in its praise. Christ, his blood and righteousness, were the joyful subjects of her conversation, and were truly precious to her, even in the highest state of personal sanctification.

In the year 1756 it pleased God to leave her destitute of all other comfort and support but himself. Her husband and two other choice friends died that year. She was left with seven children, without any provision for them but what came through her hands. So it has seemed good to the Almighty to try his dearest children. The next morning after the burial of her husband, as she was walking in a little garden adjoining to her house, thinking sorrowfully on her desolate condition, but trusting in God her only helper, he spake that word to her heart, 'The Lord is thy shepherd, thou shalt not lack.'<sup>2</sup> And as it was then a great relief to her burdened mind, so it was amply fulfilled to her in her afterlife. She did never want. She often repeated this passage of her life with great joy and gratitude.

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<sup>1</sup>James Oddie married Sarah (Holehouse) Thompson in Matlock, Derbyshire, Sept. 24, 1761.

<sup>2</sup>Ps. 23:1.

The way providence had laid open for her, by which she provided bread for herself and family, was not the most helpful to piety. It was among the gay and dissipating scenes of pleasurable life. She was about twenty years housekeeper at Matlock Bath, in Derbyshire. But neither the hurry nor cares that attended her station, nor yet the amusements that surrounded her, could divert her steadfast mind from attending to the 'one thing needful'.<sup>3</sup> She was generally so assisted by divine grace as to be 'in busy multitudes alone'.<sup>4</sup> She had a great facility in uniting *courtesy* and *simplicity*, *good manners* and *godly sincerity*. She knew how to please men, even the unholy, without offending God by any sinful compliances. And though her station was but that of a servant, yet her influence was great in preventing vice and forwarding virtue.

It was in the year 1759 I first saw her. She was then earnestly pressing toward the prize of her high calling. She was deeply convinced of and bewailed her inward corruptions, and fervently desired to be renewed in love. Though she could rejoice in the favour of God, and the hope of his glory, yet she bitterly lamented that sin should have any place in her, and that she should not offer to God her whole heart. The day after I went to Matlock Bath, she went with me to see Mr. Thomas Lean, a gentleman I had known in Cornwall. As we were walking and conversing on the Christian life, suddenly it was spoken to her heart, 'I have showed thee how unable thou art of thyself to do anything. I will now show thee what I can do for thee. My love shall constrain thee to obey me, and my grace shall be sufficient for thee.' The residue of that day she spoke little; but felt great inward gladness, with floods of joyous tears, and great astonishment at the change she found in herself. Yet she did not know that what God had bestowed upon her was the blessing of *perfect love*. But the next morning, at her awaking out of sleep, it was made manifest to her by a superadded light from the Spirit shining upon his own work.

A man not under any prejudice against the doctrine of Christian perfection might have been convinced *then* of the depth and reality of this work of God by half an hour's converse with her. The whole of her tempers, words, and works for twenty years after was to me a farther confirmation of it. And her dying in the same profession, love, and assurance has put it out of all doubt.

I had the greatest opportunity of knowing the *tree by its fruits* of any man living. I was an observer of her works of faith, her patience of hope, and labours of love; of her solid, uniform holiness. This is the truest and highest evidence of the *reality* and *degree* of grace. And I am well persuaded all who knew her will concur with me in thinking that she had few superiors in this.

Her *faith* was clear, strong, and constant. It was large and comprehensive; taking in things past, present, and to come; exercised on Christ and his precious promises; respecting both his atonement, his promises of pardon, holiness, and heaven; and all his providential care and blessings. She beheld with open face as in a glass the glory of God, and saw him who is invisible.

And living by faith, she enjoyed uninterruptedly the *peace* of God and assurance of his favour. Often it flowed in her heart as a river, and she was never wholly deprived of it. Her *love to God* was fervent, and to men cordial, constant, and sincere. In every instance and expression of love she excelled. Her love to God was expressed by her supreme delight in him, and her incessant praising of him; in the high regard she had to his ordinances, laws, and sabbaths; to his people and to all his ways. To *men*, by an unextinguishable thirst for their salvation; by appearing daily at the throne of grace, as an intercessor for mankind. She particularly longed and laboured for the spiritual and temporal good of her children, acquaintance[s], and neighbours. She was an exquisite lover of the poor, and a never-failing friend to them, to the utmost of her power. Her heart devised liberal things. She was gentle and kind even to the evil and unthankful; as ready to *forgive* as to *give*. She was an affectionate mother, a loving wife, and a kind mistress. The law of love governed her heart, the law of kindness dwelt on her tongue, and her lips fed many.

She enjoyed the full assurance of hope for many years. And of consequence, a heartfelt joy in view of the glory of God. She was greatly favoured with divine views of heaven, and had large foretastes

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<sup>3</sup>Luke 10:42.

<sup>4</sup>CW, 'For a Believer, in Worldly Business', st. 3, *Redemption Hymns* (1747), 8.

of those pleasures which are at the right hand of God forever.

But if one grace of the Spirit shone in her with a greater lustre than another, it was that of *humility*. In this she shone with a peculiar brightness. She went as low in poverty of spirit as she rose in the image of God. She descended to ascend; and found in her own nothingness, the fullness of God. She showed the low and abasing thoughts she had of herself by her entire dependence on the mere mercy of God, and the blood and merits of Christ, for present and eternal salvation; by her willing subjection to her superiors; her easy and affable carriage to inferiors, and her truly preferring all before herself.

In her latter years, when she had more leisure from worldly business, she spent much time in reading. In the last three years of her life she read over, in order, the fifty volumes of Mr. John Wesley's *Christian Library*; the thirty-two volumes of his *Works*; the *Notes on the New Testament*, besides other books that came occasionally in the way. Yet her supreme delight was in reading the sacred Scriptures and meditating thereon, which she never failed to do daily. This furnished her with suitable matter for useful conversation, and expression in prayer; which last she mingled with everything, so that it might be truly said, her life was a life made up of prayer.

She managed a weak and delicate body with admirable prudence, and bore its pains and weakness with steady patience and true resignation to the will of God. She sustained her crosses with composure, and with consonant sweetness of temper.

She knew how to abound, as well as to suffer want. In the seasons of ease and prosperity, when providence smiled and all things invited to enjoyment, she was moderate in her use of them and turned what she tasted of this kind, into matter of great thankfulness. She rejoiced as though she rejoiced not, and used this world as not abusing it. Some natures can more easily bear pain than deny themselves offered pleasure—she was truly eminent in both.

For about three months before her death she grew exceedingly in every grace of the Spirit. She was visibly ripening for glory, which made some of her acquaintance think that she was soon to be removed hence. She took her illness on the fifteenth day of August 1782, which was a remitting fever, which had been common and fatal for some time in Yarm. She apprehended from the first attack of the disorder that it was to be unto death; but the messenger was welcome. Death had lost his sting. Her faith and hope stood firm. Yea, her *passive graces* shone with a distinguished brightness. Though her disorder was heavy, yet she not only retained a perfect patience but even her wonted thankfulness and sweetness of temper.

She was mostly praying and praising, or repeating to herself some favourite verses of hymns, and portions of Scripture that formerly were made a blessing to her. She did not speak much, except with me. She sometimes lamented when she came out of her short, uneasy slumbers that her fancy had roved about trifling things. But when I said to her, 'You are not accountable, my dear, for the wandering of your fancy, when asleep and in a fever', she returned to her wonted exercise of blessing and praising God.

I could not perceive that she had, for the six days she lay ill, any considerable temptations. The Lord guarded her in the time of need. Her heart was fixed in God and the enemy was not permitted to assault her.

The day before her death, I signified to her that I thought her end was approaching. She looked earnestly at me, with an affectionate smile, then closed her eyes and fell into inward praise. After that she seemed to regard little what was around her, but was wholly taken up with communion with God.

On Wednesday morning the 21st of August, she fell asleep in the Lord, and now rests with her Beloved.

James Oddie

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 247–49, 302–04, 355–57.

From Ann Bolton

[Witney]

September 9, 1782

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Many troubles and afflictions have interrupted the free communication of my mind to you. And perhaps my suffering it to be so may have made my burden the heavier. However, I now desire with freedom to inform you of the Lord's gracious work in my soul. You well know that the path infinite Wisdom hath chosen for me has been a very rough and thorny one, which required the utmost exertion of faith and hope to enable me to keep on my way. But I have no reason to complain. He that promised never to leave nor forsake me has fulfilled his word, and stood by me in every trying hour. The circumstances I have been in have proved to me the love and faithfulness of Jehovah. I know my acquaintance with him is increased there, and I rejoice in hope of being eternally the better for it.

I know the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, dwells in my heart and keeps it in peace in the midst of outward storms and tempests. I feel unspeakable blessedness in being permitted to come to him with all my troubles, as to a tender-hearted friend, always ready to hear my complaints and to administer suitable relief. He does not keep me at a distance, or discover himself strange toward me, but permits me to enjoy intimate communion and fellowship with him, and constantly assures me that all he has is mine.

The many instances he has given me of his truth and faithfulness in the fulfilment of his promises greatly encourages my soul to draw near and put my trust in him. Indeed it has often been with me as with St. Paul in his dangerous voyage: many difficulties and cross providences have come between the word and the accomplishment. And I have been ready to stagger and, with the disciples going to Emmaus, to say, I thought it would have been so and so, but now my expectation is ready to fail.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless 'In hope believing against hope',<sup>2</sup> I have seen the word of the Lord magnified, and my soul has greatly rejoiced in the manifestation of his truth.

Blessed be his holy name, I sensibly feel that I love him as the supreme object of my delight and desire. I long to advance his glory, and raise the honour of his name upon earth. As far as I know, I am wholly at his disposal, offered up to his will and pleasure, having no choice but to follow his. I think I never so perfectly understood, as within these few days, what it is to be crucified with Christ and to walk with him in newness of life. Glory be to my adorable Redeemer, unto me is the word of this salvation sent; and I feel all the powers of my soul stretch out after it. I see I am called to be more intimately one with Jesus, to partake more largely of his mind and spirit, and to be more than ever devoted to his service.

Earnestly praying that the God of all grace may abundantly visit your soul, I remain, dear sir,

Your obliged servant,

A. B.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 555–56.

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<sup>1</sup>See Luke 24:21.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Rom. 4:18.

From William Roberts<sup>1</sup>

[Tiverton]

September 16, 1782

Very Dear Sir,

You sat in judgment of me as long ago as Mr. Hindmarsh was here and condemned me unheard.<sup>2</sup> And though I then was and yet am conscious of my innocence in that respect, you still hold me guilty. And [you are] now inclined to treat, at least to esteem, [me] as a heathen man or a publican. Had you admitted me to answer in person, I could have given you satisfaction. But [I] shall not commit it to paper, which may perhaps come to another hand before yours. But that I am not 'laying up treasures upon earth', that I am not convinced of 'deep uncommon covetousness',<sup>3</sup> that I am convinced you have wronged me and are severe and uncharitable in your censure, I do and must inform you; for the truth of which I appeal to that righteous God who is both yours and mine. Where then is that charity that thinketh no evil? I am really grieved and not without cause. Four or five, if not seven years, you have thus treated

Your honest and generous, but injured, son in the gospel,

W. Roberts

*Source:* manuscript copy of his answer on JW's holograph of Sept. 12; Oxford, Lincoln College, Archive, MS/WES/A/2/1, p. 2.

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<sup>1</sup>Roberts is replying to JW's critical letter of Sept. 12, 1782 (*Works*, 30:76)

<sup>2</sup>James Hindmarsh served in the Devonshire circuit from mid-1773 to mid-1776.

<sup>3</sup>The quoted material comes from JW's letter.

From William Roberts<sup>1</sup>

[Tiverton]  
[c. September 23, 1782]

Reverend Sir,

In this respect I know nobody but you that condemns me. My heart, my God does not. I therefore need no justification.

I have already spoke and wrote, but to no avail. Therefore [I] desire to be silent till you can cast one glance of charity, at least of candour. Though I am not worthy of your address or subscription, I hope you will for this once admit the name of

Your once esteemed,

W. R.

*Source:* manuscript copy of his answer on JW's holograph of Sept. 19; Oxford, Lincoln College, Archive, MS/WES/A/2/2.

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<sup>1</sup>Roberts is responding to JW's reply of Sept. 19, 1782 (*Works*, 30:78).

From Hester Ann Roe  
about Robert Roe<sup>1</sup>

[Macclesfield]  
September 28, 1782

I was born February 26, 1754.<sup>2</sup> My mother had been brought up among the people in derision called Methodists; and though when married, she gave way so far to a tender husband as not to attend the means of grace among the people she loved, yet she was much devoted to God. She was a pattern of meekness, and all her manners were so strict and upright that many thought her righteous overmuch. In the latter part of her time she conversed with Mr. [John] Wesley, and became more deeply solicitous for eternal things. Her last illness was long and tedious; but the sting of death was taken away. She could rejoice in God her reconciled Father, and in Jesus Christ her Redeemer. 'Come Lord Jesus, for I am ready for thee!' was her cry. She was delivered of a child two months before her time, and in a few days after expired.<sup>3</sup>

My father [Charles], when in London, often heard the Methodists. And this, with my mother's exemplary life, was a cause of removing many prejudices, and induced him after her death to endeavour that a gospel minister might be fixed in the town—which he effected in Mr. [David] Simpson's being made curate at the Old Church.<sup>4</sup>

I was my mother's darling, and went under the general appellation of a pious, young man, which filled me with pride and carelessness. And though educated in rules of strict morality, I was at times guilty even of outward sin: such as prevarications to avoid correction, and sometimes taking the name of God in vain. Conscience however often did its part, in frequently urging me to repent, particularly in dreams. Once I thought the day of judgment was come. My sins were all brought in dreadful array before me! And I remained in a miserable suspense whether heaven or hell was to be my portion forever! This made some impression on me for a season. But though God followed me with conviction I was not willing to obey.

About the age of nineteen, in the Whitsun holidays, I came home from Manchester, where I had been at the grammar school for two years,<sup>5</sup> and was filled with grief and amazement to find that Mr. Simpson (as the cry was) had turned all things upside down. Every pleasure my heart was set upon was refused me by my father and his present wife, as being contrary to the will of God.<sup>6</sup> Our nightly dancings with the young people of the town were broken up. My sisters were as grave as old women. And my cousin [Hester Ann] Roe, formerly my chief companion, under strong convictions and greatly

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<sup>1</sup>While this account draws on the journal of her cousin Robert, it was compiled and supplemented by Hester Ann Roe, and sent to JW two weeks after Robert's death. Robert Roe (1754–82), was the son of Charles Roe (1715–81) and his second wife, Mary (Stockdale) Roe (1729–63). For more on the family, see Dorothy Bentley Smith, *A Georgian Gent & Co: The Life and Times of Charles Roe* (Ashbourne: Landmark Publishing, 2005).

<sup>2</sup>Orig., '1734'; a mistake.

<sup>3</sup>Mary's last child was Jane Roe, baptized July 5, 1763; Mary was buried on Aug. 5, 1763.

<sup>4</sup>Rev. David Simpson (1745–99), a graduate of St. John's College, Cambridge, was recruited by Charles Roe to become curate at St. Michael's, Macclesfield after the death by Hester's father Rev. James Roe (1711–65). Simpson's sympathy for Methodism led to conflict with his bishop, who eventually removed him from that curacy. In response, Charles Roe built at his own expense Christ Church, Macclesfield, and made Simpson its first incumbent (1779–99). See *DEB*, 1015–16.

<sup>5</sup>Robert entered Manchester Grammar School on Jan. 22, 1770. Whitsunday was May 30, 1773.

<sup>6</sup>After the death of Robert's mother, Charles Roe wed Rachael Harriott (1735–1819) in 1766.



persecuted.<sup>7</sup> This was more than I had resolution to bear. And being countenanced by many of my pretended friends, I abused Mr. Simpson, blamed my parents, argued with my cousin and sisters, and endeavoured with all my might to bring them over again to their wonted gaiety. Yet my conscience often constrained me to acknowledge Mr. Simpson to be a candid, pious man; one that desired to do what was right. Though my prejudices made me account him an enthusiast. My desire of following my pleasures however, fettered my reason and made me sin against light. I therefore put away reflection lest I should be constrained to part with what I desired to esteem innocent. The assembly night came, and I was invited by many to go, but my father would not suffer it. And when I behaved with sullenness on the occasion, he reproved me severely. Mr. Simpson, in a short contest I had with him about trifling amusements, mentioned my departed mother, and reasoned with me in the most kind and winning manner. This moved me, and I began to waver, though I would not own it.

When I returned to Manchester, I more deeply considered these things. And so great was the change in my outward conduct that my schoolfellows gave me the name of Methodist. I then thought, if they call *me* a Methodist for doing what I believe is right, the principles of these people may be better than I imagine. They may be the people whom God approves of, and their upright conduct may be the real cause of their being spoken against. Yet notwithstanding these workings of the Spirit, I was sometimes overcome by outward sin, which caused me deep repentance. On these occasions I became very unhappy, mourned in secret before God, and deserted my former companions. And all the pleasure I found was in private walks, meditation and prayer, or in attending the Church. At times religion grew tiresome, for my heart (alas!) was yet unchanged. My sins seemed to increase, the more I resisted them. And when I brought myself to the law and to the testimony, I saw it condemned me. But how to be delivered I knew not.

When I left Manchester to go to Oxford,<sup>8</sup> I was anxiously fearful of losing my serious impressions. And in some measure I did lose them. ‘When I return to Macclesfield’, thought I, ‘that will be the time to reform in good earnest’; not considering that the conversion of a sinner is the work of God. In the long vacation I came home, and my convictions were again deepened. I was very miserable. I wept. I prayed. I attended the Church constantly, but found my prayers attended with unusual deadness. This surprised me, and I was tempted to think all was a delusion and that I had best go on as other people did. But blessed be God! I could no longer taste any sweets in what were formerly my greatest pleasures. And I was convinced that, except I experienced a real inward change, I must perish forever. Though how this change must be wrought I yet knew not. I cried to the Lord, but was more and more miserable. Well may the world say we appear melancholy, when they see us in this state, sensible of the displeasure of God.

Amidst all these trials, by the grace of God, I persevered. And one night, in much trembling, I went to the class. When I heard the people wrestling with God in faith and prayer I thought them mad, and began to resolve I would come no more. And when a young man, a neighbour, began in the most elevated and heavenly manner to praise God, and declared he now felt his sins forgiven, I was in an agitation not to be described. Either this man is a fool, thought I, or I who never experienced the same am in the road to destruction.<sup>9</sup>

October 7, 1775, I wrote the following lines to my cousin [Hester]:

I earnestly desire you will be open and free with me. It is of moment. The state of my

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<sup>7</sup>Robert Roe’s account should be compared to parallel journal extracts of Hester Ann Roe, published in *The Experience of Mrs. H. A. [Roe] Rogers* (2nd edn.; Bristol: R. Edwards, 1796). This is particularly helpful because the manuscript Hester sent for publication in *AM* was jumbled or pages misplaced in sections; see the editor’s note on *AM* 7 (1784), 305.

<sup>8</sup>Roe matriculated at Brasenose College, Oxford, in May 1774. As he explains later in this account, he was not given an approval by the college when he completed his studies.

<sup>9</sup>Robert spend the summer of 1775 in Macclesfield, and was deeply troubled in late Aug. by a person (John Stafford) who committed suicide.

mind is so unhappy that surely, upon the knowledge of this, you will not refuse to give me all the relief in your power. Answer me then plainly the following questions. Are you *really* happy? Or are you deceived and filled with vain imaginations? If you are as happy as you profess, convince me of it, that I may be happy too. Have you received an express witness from God? Or does it arise from a consciousness of having done your duty? I am miserable beyond all expression, and in doubt whether I shall see happiness here or hereafter. If you can lead me in the way to it, you will make me your happiest cousin. ...<sup>10</sup>

In a short time after, I received the following answer:

I *know* I am not deceived. God in his word says, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.'<sup>11</sup> Glory be to his name, I have the faith which works by love. He first convinced me that I was a sinner, under condemnation; that if I did not obtain a pardon, I must die eternally; and that my evil heart *must* be changed.

My sins were a burden intolerable. That night I was afraid to go to bed, lest I should awake in eternal torments; and so I never closed my eyes to sleep. At four o'clock the next morning I arose and went downstairs. I prayed, but my heart seemed as hard as a stone, and my distress on this account was increased. I rose from my knees and walked and cried, 'Lord, what shall I do?' I then fell on my knees and prayed again. This I did many times. At last, when I had almost lost all hope, those words were deeply impressed on my mind, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.'<sup>12</sup> I cried out in an agony, '*What is believing?* What is real, scriptural faith? Lord teach me! I *know* nothing. I can *do* nothing. If thou savest me not, I perish.' It was then brought to my mind, 'Cast all thy care upon *him*.'<sup>13</sup> I cried, 'Lord, the burden of my sin is all my care! And may I cast *this* upon thee? Wilt thou receive such a sinner? I know thou art *able* to save me, and thy blood is sufficient to atone; but art thou indeed willing?' It came into my heart, 'Only believe.'<sup>14</sup> I felt a springing hope, and cried, 'I will.' But my sins stared me in the face, and I thought, O, it is impossible, my sins have been so secret, so complicated. It came to me again, 'Only believe.' I thought, O, it cannot be *now*. I must repent more, be more in earnest. It is impossible he should be so merciful to forgive all my sins *now*. It was applied a third time, 'Only believe.' I said, 'Lord help me to believe, and to cast my soul upon thy free mercy. Let me *know* that I am indeed born of thee; that I do believe to the saving of my soul. I have nothing to plead but, Jesus came to save sinners, even the *lost*. I am lost! Thou hast said, "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I *will* give you rest."<sup>15</sup> I am weary and heavy laden. I come; therefore the promise is for me.' Whilst I was thus pleading I was enabled to venture my soul upon the Redeemer, with an assured confidence in his promises. Then I was happy indeed. His love was shed abroad in my heart, and those precious words were applied, 'He that loveth is born of God.'<sup>16</sup> Now if I had had a thousand souls, I could have trusted him with them all. I found a real change in my heart. I was a new creature. I was a child of God, and I could rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

You ask if I trusted to a consciousness of having done my duty? No, no. I was convinced

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<sup>10</sup>See (Roe) Rogers, *Experience*, 21.

<sup>11</sup>Acts 16:31.

<sup>12</sup>Acts 16:31.

<sup>13</sup>Cf. 1 Pet. 5:7.

<sup>14</sup>Mark 5:36.

<sup>15</sup>Cf. Matt. 11:28.

<sup>16</sup>Cf. 1 John 4:7.

my just reward was eternal damnation. You ask if I am not deceived. How can I [be]? I was a year and half under conviction. I sincerely and earnestly desired to save my soul, and all this time I laboured to serve and love God, and make myself a new creature. It was in vain. I could not. Christ was my last refuge. I would gladly have done something to deserve God's favour. But I found my prayers, my tears, all my religious duties, and even my repentance and sorrow for sin, polluted. But now my burden was gone. The love of God was shed abroad in my heart. I had peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Could this be the work of any human power? Or could the enemy of souls do this? Could such a change as this be imagination only? Again, cannot we feel when we love God, as sensibly as we can feel we love an earthly friend?

October 17, 1775. After long striving in vain to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, my cousin [Hester] said, 'You cannot mend yourself; but one drop of Jesu's blood will wash you white as snow.' I said, 'But Christ will not accept me.' She said, 'That is a temptation. How do you know he will not? He has promised to cast no sinner out who comes unto him. Only make the trial. Go into private and pray.' I did so, and felt a reviving hope. I lifted up my heart and said, 'Lord I believe, help my unbelief.' Yet still I could not cast my soul upon the promises. I thought on my cousin's letter, and felt those words applied, 'Only believe.' And as I was at tea I felt a strange change in my mind, and a spring of love to God. These words were most sweetly applied to my soul, 'Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth.'<sup>17</sup> And I had such a sense of the enjoyment there is in praising God that I longed to join the heavenly choir. I was amazed suddenly to feel my burden gone, and all my fears and dread. I told my cousin and brother<sup>18</sup> what I felt, and they encouraged me to hold fast. I then threw myself upon God and his promises, and sweet peace filled my heart. I said, 'I know this cannot be a delusion, for I love God, and feel the fruits of his Spirit.' I then went with my brother to John Barber's,<sup>19</sup> and we rejoiced together with our dear friends.

Till Saturday 21, I was mostly happy. Yet Satan at times would suggest all is a delusion, and this night I gave way to a reasoning spirit and was tempted to give up my confidence. Sunday 22. As Mr. Simpson was reading the church service and a sermon in my father's dining room (for he was at this time hindered from preaching in the Old Church), my love to God increased and kindled into a flame. I longed for all present to experience the same. And indeed they were all much wrought upon. It was a solemn season. My cup ran over. I was filled with joy unspeakable, and exhorted all around, without fear of offending. I told my father at night, 'I am sure the Lord was with us this morning.' He said, 'I *hope* so.' I replied, 'I am *sure* of it, for I felt his presence, and never was so happy in my life.' He seemed struck with surprise at my freedom of speech, but gave me no answer. I talked to my [step-]mother and Miss J— without reserve, and thought I should soon be the *means* of converting all I conversed with; forgetting the strong prejudices I once had myself. While I remained at Macclesfield, I was much comforted and helped forward by the advice of Mr. Simpson, cousin [Hester Ann] Roe, and my brother [Charles], and by attending the class meetings, etc. But I soon began to meet with opposition from many. Some cast bitter and ill-natured expressions at me. Some jeered and pitied me as a poor, deluded creature. Others were struck and affected with the change. And all who loved God truly rejoiced with me. My father began to think I had lost my vivacity, etc. He seemed wishful to rebuke me, but was restrained. He believed I was in the right way to eternal salvation, but he feared the censures of the world.

When the time drew near of my appearing again in Oxford, it was a damp to my joy. I dreaded the meeting with my former acquaintance who had been snares to me before, lest I should again turn to folly. But the people of God joined often in prayer for me, and I was comforted. In the latter end of November I set out for Oxford, having had a refreshing season at Mr. Simpson's the night before, while

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<sup>17</sup>Isa. 6:3.

<sup>18</sup>Charles Roe Jr. (1759–91); see (Roe) Rogers, *Experience*, 18.

<sup>19</sup>John Barber (1756–1816) of nearby Hayfield, Derbyshire, had been converted to Methodism about 1777 and began acting as a local preacher. He would be admitted into the itinerant ministry in 1782 and serve until his death (twice as President of Conference). See *Minutes* (post-Wesley, 1816), 4:194–95.

joining with his family in prayer. But I felt much grief at parting with my dear Christian friends. Brother Joseph [Roe] went with me to Leek, and did all in his power to encourage me, and charged me to pray at every inn on the road, which I did. Brother Samuel went with me as far as Birmingham, and behaved very kind—there is something very noble and generous in his spirit.<sup>20</sup> On the road afterwards I had a sweet, calm peace, and a confidence that God would be my keeper. But when I arrived at Oxford, having rode all the night, my strength and spirits seemed spent, and I could not refrain from tears when I thought I was now separated from all my dear friends, and the means of grace, and knew nothing of anyone to whom I could open my mind. Yet still I had a secret trust in God. I greatly feared a quarrel with the D—'s family, and heard they were already offended at my not sending a note with my brother's presents. Therefore by the advice of Mr. H—, one of the fellows, I went over, and was surprised at being received very kindly. I now dreaded more from their civility than I did before from persecution, and cried to the Lord to keep the avenues of my heart. Once my s[ervito]r broke out into passion, and called the Methodists a parcel of cobblers and tinkers, etc. He said, 'What good will your college education do you, if you ramble after *them*? It is only spending your father's money to no purpose,' etc. But as I made no reply, all was soon calm again, and they were very friendly. After some time I wrote to my father for permission to go to London, and obtained his leave. I set off on Friday, December 29, and was kindly received by my aunt [Jane] Stockdale.<sup>21</sup>

January 1, 1776. I heard Mr. John Wesley preach from these words, 'Consider from whence thou art fallen.'<sup>22</sup> It was a joyful time to me; but I was much grieved at a temptation I had to laugh in the most serious part of his discourse. Sometime after, my aunt took me to see him, when he gave us a ticket for the covenant [renewal service] at Spitalfields. There was an amazing number of serious people, to whom he mentioned the propriety of the meeting, and gave an exhortation; after which, we sealed our engagements by prayer and the Lord's Supper.<sup>23</sup>

Monday [January] 15. In the morning my mind enjoyed a pleasing calm, and I had much confidence in God. But in the afternoon I was low, disinclined to prayer, and had no just or distinct ideas of anything. Lord help me, for I am a poor creature.

Wednesday [January] 17. I have been much refreshed by writing, and had much liberty in prayer. Yet being lightly spoken of, I found an inclination to take offence. O how unwilling is the carnal mind to suffer reproach! How do I long for a kind friend to converse with about heavenly things! I am like a lost sheep, separated from the rest of the flock. I cannot even retire in private here without giving offence.

Thursday [January] 18. I read Haliburton's *Life*.<sup>24</sup> I thought there was a resemblance between my experience and his. I felt a deeper sense than ever of my helplessness without Christ. This led me into a comfortable dependence on him, and all my soul was peace.

When I consider the goodness of God in preserving me from the influenza, which has infected so many all over the kingdom; and also, that I do not remember to have ever been confined four days to my bed; I am lost in wonder at his love and my own ingratitude. O the patience and tender mercy of God!

Friday [January] 19. I continue to feel an increasing happiness in God. I have had great pleasure in reading the 5th, 6th, and 7th chapters of the Epistle to the Romans. I find great power in prayer, and great love to God and all mankind. O that God may convert this family, and the poor flock of straying sheep in this place! As to myself, my prayer is,

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<sup>20</sup>Samuel Roe (1749–80) was the son of Charles Roe and his first wife Elizabeth (Lankford) Roe (1724–50).

<sup>21</sup>Jane Stockdale (1742–1804), who never married, was the youngest sister of Robert's mother Mary.

<sup>22</sup>Rev. 2:5.

<sup>23</sup>JW estimated the crowd to be 1800 persons; see *Journal*, Jan. 1, 1776, *Works*, 23:2.

<sup>24</sup>He likely read JW's abridged version: *An Abstract of the Life and Death of the Reverend Learned and Pious Mr. Thomas Haliburton* (1739).

Answer thy gracious end in me,  
For which thy precious life was giv'n;  
Redeem from all iniquity,  
Restore and make me meet for heav'n;  
Unless thou purge my ev'ry stain,  
Thy suff'ring and my faith is vain.<sup>25</sup>

Thursday [January] 25. I thank thee, O Lord, that thou hast heard the voice of my prayer. I had well-nigh slipped, but thou hast kept my feet from falling. I feel thy precious balm, thy healing love; and still I thirst for more. I feel a love for all men, and prayer is sweet indeed.

Monday [January] 31. The inward corruption of my nature appears more clearly to me than ever. Alas, what pride, anger, selfishness! What deadness in duties! What slothfulness, levity, fear, and unbelief, with every other hell-born temper, do I feel within! Yet God bears with me, and visits me with his love.

February 1 [1776]. I never was more sensible that my heart is my greatest enemy, and God my best friend. His grace has been manifested this day in a very clear manner, and I have a hope that he will destroy my inward evils. I long to declare the goodness of the Lord upon the housetop. February 2. Last night was a sweet season to my soul, and this morning he still keeps me in peace. I have liberty in prayer. O my God abide with me forever, for all things are sweet if thou art near. I long for the salvation of precious souls, and am grieved at the hardness of man's heart. February 3. I have been kept composed and resigned, desiring to be all that God would have me be. Sunday [February] 4. This is God's holy day. May I rejoice and be glad in it. I am grieved when I see it spent in a lifeless, trifling manner. But while I am condemning others, may I look to myself. Ever since my conversion I have felt earnest longings for the souls of my friends and relations; especially for my aged father and my dear sisters. O my poor friends! How can I restrain the trickling tear? O Lord, convince and convert them for Christ's sake! [February] 5th. My confidence in God is strengthened. I feel sweet peace and resignation. [February] 6th. I had a remarkable dream of the D—'s family, and awoke with horrible fears on their account. Lord have mercy on them I beseech thee! [February] 8th. I was much comforted last night in reading Mr. Wesley's *Account of the Moravians*;<sup>26</sup> and am very happy this morning. The Lord is more constantly with me of late. When I find any evils arise in my heart, I fly to Christ, who alone is able to subdue them, and feel a hope that they will one day be no more. [February] 17th. Glory be to God for a peace that passeth all understanding, and which can be found by faith. My Saviour and King, evermore give me this faith. Now the mists of unbelief and distrust are done away. Thou like the morning sun breakest in upon my soul. Where or how shall I find words to praise thee. [February] 21st. The Lord Almighty reigns, and blessed be the Rock of my salvation. I am happy in his love. Holy, holy, holy Lord God of hosts, I praise thee, I glorify thee, I acknowledge thee to be the Lord. [February] 28th. After a day of amazing darkness, stupidity, and melancholy, I find greater confidence towards God than I ever did before. O how good is the Lord!

March 18 [1776]. I am often beset with pride, lightness, and worldly-mindedness. O may they all be washed away by the blood of the Lamb! I seldom pass a Sabbath without finding it truly a day of rest to my soul. I never was more resigned. I can freely give up all my believing relatives whenever thou shalt call; but oh do not cut off the unprepared! This moment I have stole from company, and the Lord is very precious. O ye poor creatures, what is *your* happiness to *mine*? [March] 28th. I went to hear the prisoners tried. It reminded me of the time when even judges and kings must appear before God. I eyed the prisoners, observed the confidence and serenity of some, the guilty looks of others, and thought how great an emblem is this of the last day! I praised God that Satan and my own evil heart had never been

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<sup>25</sup>CW, 'Groaning for Redemption', Part IV, st. 2, *HSP* (1742), 80.

<sup>26</sup>*A Short View of the Difference Between the Moravian Brethren, lately in England, and the Rev. Mr. John and Charles Wesley* (1745), *Works*, 14:28–44.

permitted to bring me before such a tribunal as this. What made me to differ even from that horrid murderer? The grace of God alone. O may he ever keep me! What a dreadful account must the careless clergy give for neglecting souls until they grow hardened, and abandon themselves to vice without remorse! [March] 29th. A friend told me I was going into a consumption, and that all the college were agreed that if I abstained much longer from eating flesh I should soon be a dead man. I think I have rather been in an extreme. Lord teach me thy will! I find myself patient and resigned, and as I have no friend to open my mind to, God is always a present help. A person who this night was near being choked, thanked God for his escape by a great oath! [March] 30th. Blessed be God he is love indeed! O that I had a dear friend to whom I could communicate my thoughts! I long to be cleansed from all sin. O ye Calvinists, how can you be happy with indwelling sin? The love I have already for God, makes it misery not to love him with all my powers.

April 4 [1776]. I found much satisfaction in reading Howe on the blessedness of the righteous.<sup>27</sup> [April] 13th. As I went into the country, in search of a letter I expected, I met with an old woman and a child hoeing thistles. I talked a long time with them, and when I gave them a shilling, they said they were sure God sent me, for they had not a farthing. [April] 14th. I was so grievously tempted yesterday that I was for recalling every word I uttered in prayer. It was suggested that I had prayed for some curse, or against the Holy Ghost. And what I wrote in my journal, I was ready to blot out again as blasphemy. But I thought, I will still continue before the Lord in prayer, who delivered me from it. One Sabbath day I went from D— to Wallingford, to hear Mr. [John] Valton preach, whom I love much. When I came within a mile of Wallingford, I saw a woman who looked grave, and asked her what o'clock it was, saying I wished to be there by nine o'clock. She took the hint, and asked if I was going to the chapel; to which I replied yes. She then invited me to her house, and informed me it was the place in which the preachers exhorted, between the times of church service. In a little time Mr. H— called me to account for this journey, and told me it was contrary to the will of the college and of the Church of England. Others also I suppose will hear of it. But as I act from principle, I leave all to God. Soon after I set off for Macclesfield. When I arrived, I found all friends well. But alas! our family was much altered, and much less devoted to God, even in appearance, than when I left them. Charles [Roe Jr.] is light and trifling, yet says he is determined to lead a better life. Joe is much the same,<sup>28</sup> and my cousin [Hester Ann Roe] is so happy that I think she will not be here long. The dear people of God rejoiced to see me, and it is a pleasure to find all pressing after holiness.

August 1, 1776. For some days I have been sorely buffeted by Satan, and have felt so much of inbred sin, that I seem to have a hell within, and sometimes think I shall give all up, or grow distracted. I can truly say with Job, 'Behold, I am vile.'<sup>29</sup> Yet at times I can resign all into the hands of God, and rely on him; but am soon again ready to sink, and to believe I never was a child of God. How can I longer bear the sight of this wicked heart? How can I endure to love my God, and not my God alone? O that I knew where I might find him! I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments. I would know the words which he would answer me, etc. Will he plead against me with his great power? Nay, but he will put strength into me. Unto thee then I come, O thou dear Redeemer. Plead my cause, and wash me from all impurity, in the fountain of thy blood. I am become the scorn of men. But my trust is yet in thee. O show me all thou hast yet to discover, and deliver me from all these cursed idols; from these violent temptations, and lay sin and Satan beneath my feet.

August 2. I found this a day of calm peace, and earnest longings for full sanctification. I heard the joyful news that my sister Peggy was justified.<sup>30</sup> O that all this family may be the Lord's! My cousin Roe was so happy this afternoon that I thought she would have died. [August] the 3rd. I read Mr. Wesley's

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<sup>27</sup>John Howe, *The Blessedness of the Righteous Opened* (London: Sarah Griffin, 1668)

<sup>28</sup>Joseph Roe (1716–1820), see Hester Ann Roe to JW, Aug. 7, 1779.

<sup>29</sup>Job 40:4.

<sup>30</sup>I.e., Margaret Roe (b. 1761).

sermons on self-denial, the new birth, and evil-speaking, which so enlightened my mind and filled me with love that I could do nothing but praise God. This was a sweet preparation for the trial at hand. My sister advised with me about going to the meeting, but I left her to follow her own light. She called on cousin Roe to go with her, which I was sorry for, as I knew it would prejudice my father against her. When I came home, my father declared I should not come anymore into his house. He said my cousin had been the ruin of all his children. [August] the 11th. My father began a conversation about religion, forced me to answer him, and then fell into a violent passion for it. He abused the Methodists, and used me very unkindly. Alas what a change, since he was displeased with me for no other cause but refusing my assent to the very same truths he now opposes! I was much refreshed and comforted by conversing with some dear friends at John Barber's. I find a great love for poor sinners, and think I could freely lay down my life for the good of souls. [August] the 21st. We all went to hear S[amuel] B[radburn] preach, and I was greatly refreshed.<sup>31</sup> My [step-]mother behaves very well. May God reward her with his grace here, and glory hereafter! And oh may he reach my dear father's heart, and show him he is resisting the truth! [August] the 26th. I was very low yesterday, so that even my body was affected. But I am now very happy. God has in a particular manner been gracious to me in prayer. He has yet more to give. O may I press after it! [August] the 27th. I went with Charles to the chapel; and when we returned, Joe told us, we were turned out, and must not be admitted. Mrs. [Rachael] Roe, in being mediator between us, suffered much. She really acted like an own mother, only she wanted us to make concessions, which we durst not do for conscience sake. I find my mind amazingly supported, and very happy in God, so that heaven is more in my thoughts than all I do or suffer. Prayer is sweet, and I have great power to intercede for my dear father, and all the family. What an honour is it to suffer for Christ! May God direct me to do and suffer all his will! [August] the 29th. Mrs. Roe has prevailed with my father to let me go to London, instead of Oxford, and spend the long vacation with my aunt.<sup>32</sup> This day I was very happy in reading Mr. Wesley's sermons. I think my soul is happier in this time of trial than ever before.

September 4. My father is still angry and resolute. But the Lord is gracious to my soul. And I know if I am faithful unto death, he will give me a crown of life. [September] the 6th. I begged that the Lord would keep me from wicked dreams (which often harass me), and last night my dreams were sweet. I awaked this morning very happy. I have been the same all day, particularly at the prayer meeting. And I am surrounded with the goodness of God, as I write these lines. O Lord, thou hast done wonders for my soul! But thy promises show me this is but a drop out of thy immense, unfathomable ocean of love. May I drink, and thirst for more, till I arise satisfied with thy likeness! Stamp thy image upon me here, that I may appear before thee with joy in eternity! Amen. Since then I have had such conflicts with the enemy that I have been near giving all up for lost. A dear friend who was much distressed for me, prayed with me and begged I would pray also. When I told her I durst not, she almost compelled me to it. After this I was better.

September 8. I ventured this morning into my father's kitchen, the back way, and unexpectedly met him (the first time I have seen him these five days). We both stood motionless some time. At last I broke silence, and asked how he did? He said sternly, 'What have you to say for yourself?' I again asked him how he did? He answered, 'Pretty well.' I offered to ask his blessing but he turned away, saying, 'I have nothing to do with you.' I then looked to my *heavenly* Father, and sweet peace possessed my soul. And I could approach him with humble boldness at the altar. At noon he sent Charles to tell us we might dine with him. Accordingly we went. Restraint by degrees wore off, and all seemed well. But at half past ten at night he began to upbraid us, in severe language indeed. He said we were bringing his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave; that we had nothing more to expect from him; and that perhaps we should never see him more. He said I was to live on my own money in London henceforth, and take my chance, etc. I saw he expected me to ask pardon, but this I durst not do, as it would have been acknowledging that to be

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<sup>31</sup>Bradburn apparently passed through Macclesfield on his way from Conference in London to his new appointment in Ireland.

<sup>32</sup>Jane Stockdale.

wrong which I had done from a sense of duty.

September 9. I took leave of my father and mother, who set off for Liverpool, and was much affected. The 10th. I took leave of the dear, loving people of God, in Macclesfield. I was much grieved at parting with my cousin [Hester] Roe, perhaps for the last time. The 12th. I had a good journey, but was much fatigued with riding all night. I got to London about eight o'clock this evening, and my aunt [Stockdale] received me with much affection.

September 23. I have lately seen more into God's dealings with me than ever, and am convinced that all his dispensations are faithfulness and truth. I went to hear the people at West Street chapel speak their experiences. Many enjoy full sanctification. I was much stirred up. Lord, let me never rest till I am fully renewed in love. [September] the 25th. The blessing of sanctification was brought near; but the enemy suggested, 'If thou receivest it thou canst not keep it.'

[November – December 1776 at Oxford<sup>33</sup>]

[April 9, 1777<sup>34</sup>] When Mr. Wesley came to Macclesfield, I had a good time with him, and a number of preachers, at Mr. [John] Ryle's. I could have wept when he was going away. A few days after this, my [step-]mother came with a message from my father, desiring I would leave the town. I told her I had many reasons for not doing it. And when she was importunate, I said, 'I think my father is very unkind; for seeing he has cast me off, it is reasonable I should live where I most conveniently can.' [Robert then apparently went for a time to his aunt Stockdale's in London]

May 5, 1777. I had a great struggle this morning between nature and grace—one exciting all evil thoughts; the other discovering the will of God, that he waits to cleanse me from all sin. Grace got the victory, and glory be to God, I find power, and calm, steady peace. O may I go on from strength to strength. [May] the 7th. Being very happy this morning, I reasoned thus: St. John saith, 'He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, ....'<sup>35</sup> But I dwell in love; therefore I dwell in God, and God in me. Again, none but God can shed abroad love in my heart. But love is shed abroad in my heart; therefore it is the work of God. Satan used many efforts to trouble me, when I called upon the Lord, and was delivered from his suggestions, and my soul was kept undefiled. When I returned from London to Oxford, and came to my lonely room, without fire, without friend to converse with, and with enemies all around me and Satan seeking every occasion for my overthrow, my spirits were oppressed. I walked sometimes musing in the streets. Just in the same situation I was a year ago; even as a sparrow that sitteth alone upon the housetop. O for a religious friend to whom I could unbosom my soul! In private prayer my mind was brought into a sweet calm. Lord be my guide, and my portion forever!

June 1 [1777]. Of late I have been tossed to and fro. Sometimes I have been happy; at others, almost in despair. Trials from the world, temptations from the enemy, and above all the evils of my own heart, wearied out my spirits. Add to this the weak state of my nerves, which often render me incapable of recollection, so that I cannot pursue my business, or properly judge of the state of my soul. Satan always takes advantage of these seasons. And when I would lay hold on the promises, he tells me, 'They are not for thee. Thou art fallen from grace. Thou hast sinned away thy day of grace, and wilt be damned.' I have sunk into despair. Sometimes I would fast, and use all kinds of mortification, to keep under my corruption; but when I found them rise again with equal strength, I was ready to give up all. June 6. This day I am better than common. Something tells me I shall reap advantage from all my trials. They are indeed great, uncommon, and repeated; but I trust I shall be more than conqueror through Christ, to whom be glory forever! [June] the 10th. My father never writes. O how this grieves me! Blessed be God, I find a delight in him, and a love to his people. I am better informed how arduous a task the minsters and

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<sup>33</sup>See the letters written in Nov. and Dec. to Robert by Hester Ann Roe; *Spiritual letters*, by Mrs. H. A. Rogers (Bristol: R. Edwards, 1796), 7–10.

<sup>34</sup>In the published transcription this is with materials from 1778, but JW did not spend time in Macclesfield that year. The reference is most likely to JW's visit on Apr. 8, 1777, when he preached in the church Charles Roe had just built; see JW, *Journal, Works*, 23:46.

<sup>35</sup>1 John 4:16.



preachers of God's word undertake. And I perceive how thankful we ought to be for them, and how we ought to prize and esteem them for their works' sake. [June] the 13th. I forgot yesterday to call on the poor man who requested me. Lord forgive my sins of omission! I was very heavy and unfit for business this morning. I rode out, found Mr. [John] Valton, and was much comforted in him. He lent me a volume of his journals. I find his experience very much like mine.

July 3 [1777].<sup>36</sup> This has been a blessed day. I seem surrounded with mercies and loving kindnesses. I had much satisfaction in reading Mr. Wesley's *Predestination Calmly Considered*. When I went to Church to hear Handel's *Detingen Te Deum*, I found God very precious. He filled me with solemn peace and love, together with a spirit of prayer for the people present. I thought much of the judgment day. I went to Mr. Wesley, had a few comfortable moments with him, and then heard him preach.<sup>37</sup> I was filled with boldness and humble love. Instead of going to the theatre, I took a chaise with Mrs. M— and Miss J—, and we followed Mr. Wesley to Witney. We were all lovingly received, and heard him preach an excellent sermon out of doors. In our way home providence twice protected us, or we had been dashed in pieces. I think I never saw a more narrow escape. After Miss J— had recovered her faintness, we praised God and got safe home. Glory be to our kind protector forever and ever! He will hear the prayer; he will care for his people. I am all wonder at his mercy to us poor, unfaithful worms! While I write, he is present with me. O fill me with thy fulness Lord, and let all my heart be love and praise! When I took leave of the dear, venerable, good, old man [JW], 'Brother', said he, 'fear nothing but sin.' So be it, O my God!

[July] the 4th. Mrs. M— put me in a way of doing some charities, and the Lord has blessed me in it. I was grieved to hear of differences and narrowness of spirit among some of the children of God. I exhorted the young men to be diligent, and loving, etc., and have reason to think most of them found a blessing. Glory be to thee, O Lord! I had a kind letter from Mr. Simpson, but I find I cannot be received at home. I know not where to go without expense, and I have no money. But my greatest burden is, that I am not holy. I have pangs even as a woman in travail for this. Surely he who hath wrought this pleasing, painful, anxious longing, will give the thing I long for. Is it not he who hath enabled me to forsake my little all? Yes, glory be to my God! I have given up my earthly *all* freely, and I would give him my body, spirit and soul. With whom can I better entrust them, than with him from whom I received them? O may I still press forward! I have this day power over sin, and can take up my cross joyfully. And notwithstanding much unfaithfulness, I feel I gain ground. But I am distressed for money. I cannot live here without it. I cannot go home, and any other place would be expensive. But I will trust in the Lord. The world would say, 'You are ruined, and may thank yourself for it.' But it is a sacrifice well pleasing to God, who will help me. And I now possess a happiness unknown to all who love him not.

[July] the 9th. God deals graciously with me, but I am apt to seek that satisfaction in his people which I can only find in him. Few, alas, thirst after the whole image of God! I see an inconceivable carelessness about many of them. This night I find a loving, praying spirit, and believe the Lord heard me for myself and others. Now all things are pleasant. Trials come, but they do not hurt me. The power of God sensibly rests upon me, and I cannot doubt of his goodness. [July] the 13th. Mr. [John] Valton was at Mrs. B[radley]'s,<sup>38</sup> and I had some profitable conversation with him. As he took leave, and exhorted the society, I was filled with love and praise. Glory be to my merciful God! [July] the 16th. I see it is unbelief which keeps me low. I look at my vileness, not only in a proper, but an improper manner. Sin is of the devil, and whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; but this is the victory which overcometh, *even our faith*. I now feel it by experience. When I reason I have no power. When I act faith I have. And when temptations are offered, immediately faith repels them.

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<sup>36</sup>Text from here through the end of Sept. appeared in the published transcription following June 23, 1778. That it belongs here is clear from the references to meeting with JW.

<sup>37</sup>JW was in Oxford on July 2–3, 1776, and then went on to Witney; see *Journal, Works*, 23:58.

<sup>38</sup>JW wrote Valton at 'Mrs. Bradley's, in Pennyfarthing Street, Oxford' on Dec. 24, 1776.

[July] the 17th. This day, after a calm night, I have enjoyed much peace. Mercy surrounds me on every side, but my faith is not yet perfect. I cannot yet fully venture on the promises for sanctification. What is the cause? Lord show me! I have much cause for gratitude and praise, that in my seasons of reasonings, distress, and darkness, I did not fall into outward sin; yea, that I did not rush into the world, and wholly turn again to folly. Now indeed my outward circumstances are very trying. Where is my home? I have no earthly one. Where is my money? My expected fortune? Preferment? Friends? All gone! Yet amidst this I am truly happy, for God, and all with him is mine. Yet where shall I go? I yet know not, but I commit myself to thee without fear. [July] the 19th. A letter from my aunt [Stockdale], telling me I cannot come to her house at present, was a disappointment. Mr. G— the same. Where then shall I go? I cannot stay here. Everyone wants to know the reason, and many scoff at me. O Lord enable me to hold out! If I were to reason a moment I should be miserable. That passage in the eleventh<sup>39</sup> of Hebrews comforted me much: 'By faith Abraham when he was called to go out ... obeyed, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, ....'<sup>40</sup> 'Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house,'<sup>41</sup> said God! And he obeyed, and the Lord was Abraham's God. So also shall he be mine.

[July] the 23d. I praise God I have this day been calm and resigned. I went with some Christian friends to Mr. Smith's of Newnham, and we spent our time very profitably with Mr. Valton. Through the mercy of God I narrowly escaped breaking my leg. Others may attribute these things to chance; but I call it a gracious, interposing providence.

Being persuaded to go to the Bristol Conference,<sup>42</sup> I took coach for that purpose. When I got there, it was a most pleasing sight to see so many good men assembled to settle the temporal and spiritual affairs of the church of Christ, to consider each other's wants, to defend the faith from error, to fast and pray together, and to confirm and strengthen each other in the Lord.

After the Conference I set out for Bath, and called on Mr. F[letcher]r, at Mr. H[atton?]'s.<sup>43</sup> Mr. F[letcher] immediately came to me, and lifting up his hands and eyes, prayed God to unite me to himself, in a close and lasting union. I was detained a while at Bath, and God so blessed me that had my situation allowed I could gladly have continued there many months. But my time being come, I set out for Ramsbury Park, a sweet place, and agreeable family.<sup>44</sup> Here I am often called upon to pray with the family, and though I find it a cross, it is a great blessing.

August 24 [1777]. The Lord blessed me much this morning, particularly in reflecting on my late trials and the supporting grace of God. O what wisdom, power, and love hath he manifested in my behalf? Yet Satan would still sift me as wheat. But I trust I shall be more than conqueror through Christ. I often think I am unfit for the ministry. But how do I know whether I shall live to be a minister? God will prevent my being one if I am not called; but if I am, he will fit me for the work. [August] the 31st. I found it difficult this morning to think of my father and family without trouble. Lord endue me with patience and resignation!

September 7 [1777]. I cannot bear the sight of my own heart. It is entirely owing to God's mercy, that I am not in hell. O sin, how art thou diffused through all my powers! [September] the 21st. Through the tender mercy of God, I enjoyed a sweet night. This day also I am kept in peace. [September] the 24th.

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<sup>39</sup>Orig., 'twelfth'; an error.

<sup>40</sup>Cf. Heb. 11:8–9.

<sup>41</sup>Gen. 12:1.

<sup>42</sup>JW's annual Conference with his preachers was held in Bristol Aug. 5–10, 1777.

<sup>43</sup>Rev. Thomas Hatton (1735–1807), a graduate of Cambridge, was rector of Waters Upton. He was the sole Church of England clergyman near John Fletcher who was sympathetic to the Methodists. Fletcher was currently in Bath due to ailment.

<sup>44</sup>The home of James and Sarah (Ward) Nind.

In reading Mr. Wesley's sermons I found much light and life, and am convinced unbelief is the worst of all crimes. This morning, thanks be to God, I am kept in much peace, and am enabled to flee to the blood of sprinkling. And though pride, etc., thrust sore at me, I am more than conqueror. [September] the 25th. This morning, being dull and heavy, I searched into the cause and found I was leaning again on myself instead of hanging on Christ. [September] the 27th. I am in a trying situation, yet my hope is in God. In a little time this mortal shall put on immortality, and afflictions, trials, and death shall be swallowed up in victory. [September] the 30th. This day the Lord fills me with peace and love. I trust he will suddenly come to his temple. In the meantime, may I believe and obey, according to my present power, waiting each moment for a heart set free from sin.

Though for some time I had been greatly tempted concerning my examination at Oxford, yet I took coach to return thither. When I arrived, I waited on the proctor. He said he had been with the other proctor and the vice chancellor, that nothing was to be done for I could not swear to the Articles till the college passed my grace. Mr. — (who went with me) said, now Mr. Roe is your time to recant. Promise to forsake the Methodists, and you will be preferred immediately. I answered, 'While I have breath, and see things as I do, I never will.' We then left Oxford; and after much fatigue, and many trials from Mr. —, I arrived once more at —, and packed up my things. I then set out for home, and on coming to Nantwich, was kindly received by Mr. [Joseph] Salmon. After staying there a day or two I went on, but was very low at the thought of what reception I should meet with. However all I found at home were glad to see me. But as my father was abroad, I was very low at the thought of his return, lest he should behave unkindly. But he was affectionate beyond my expectation.

One morning I went to hear Mr. Shaw preach,<sup>45</sup> and was so much blessed that I expected some heavy trial. When I came home, my father had forbid my entering his house. However, I felt resignation and peace. My friends at John Barber's comforted me; and after we had prayed together, we went to Church. Mr. [David] Simpson made an excellent sermon. But though my body was so weak that I could scarce support myself, yet my soul was happy. I was not a little pleased to see the affection our whole family have for me. They came down to John Barber's, servants and all, and wept much on my account. I spent the evening at my aunt Roe's,<sup>46</sup> and dear Hester comforted me much.

Shortly after, I drank tea at Mrs. Clulow's; but was much tried when she desired me to lead the class.<sup>47</sup> However I had great liberty, and the people rejoiced. I now felt, without a doubt, I was called of God to preach, and cried, 'Thy will be done!' Presently after, I was greatly distressed. Mr. [John] Hallward told me he had endeavoured to mitigate my affairs with my father, but all in vain. My body was very ill. I fainted both *in* and *out* of the Church. Many came about me with tears; even those who were not Methodists. Mr. Hallward, and Mr. Henshaw,<sup>48</sup> seemed to feel much for me; and the latter at last softened my father, who intimated some affection for me, but desired I would leave the town.

October 2, 1777. This day I had a letter from my father, but durst not open it till I had prayed for patience and resignation, if it was a severe one. But to my surprise, it was the most kind of any I had received of late. My body is weak, but many of my temptations are gone. [October] the 12th. This day I rose very weak in body. But the mercy of God surrounds me. My faith is strong. I have a real sense of my weakness without Christ, and a sweet confidence in him. [October] the 24th. I was much entertained and profited while Mrs. [Sarah] Nind told me her experience, from her first setting out in religion. She is an amiable, pious woman, and often comforts me much. [October] the 28th. This day I am better in soul, but

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<sup>45</sup>John Shaw was currently the Assistant of the Methodist circuit based in Macclesfield.

<sup>46</sup>Elizabeth (Harper) Roe, Hester's mother.

<sup>47</sup>Elizabeth (Whitaker) Clulow (1731–93), wife of John Clulow (1734–90), was one of the first Methodist converts in Macclesfield, and a pillar of the society there. Her eldest son William Clulow (1757–1822), attended Kingswood school and became a lawyer in London, advising JW in his later years. Orig. spelling here: 'Clewlow'.

<sup>48</sup>Samuel Henshaw, an attorney at law, was a prominent Calvinist Methodist in Shrewsbury.

weak in body. I have received five letters. One from my mother grieves me. I find they misunderstand my letters and pervert them. The others comforted me, especially my cousin [Hester]'s and Joe's. Mrs. Nind is very kind and helps me much. [October] the 29th. This morning I was inclined to peevishness, but I cried to God and he helped me. But oh my unbelieving, sinful, stony heart, when shall I be freed from thee? When shall Christ be all in all? When shall I think, and act, and speak for God alone, and to his glory? While I write, I am much blessed. Glory be to thee O Lord!

November 1 [1777]. Having left Mr. [James] Nind's, I arrived at D—. My friends received me very kindly, and all things were better than I expected. [November] the 4th. I arrived at Oxford. Here also I found things better than expectation. My enemies are all still, my body better, and my mind happy. After this I passed through many scenes. At one time I had much expectation of the conversion of a young gentleman. But though he seemed sometimes truly in earnest and pious, yet at others he was so inconstant that it overcame my spirits. One night he got into bad company. They made him drunk, and were rioting over my head, so that I could not sleep. I betook myself to prayer, and in an agony of grief wrestled with God for him. I had no answer. He came to me quite unexpected and gave me a paper wherein he had written the most bitter things against himself, and seemed truly miserable. He said he had injured the best of friends, one who had been a father to him. Many were the resolutions he made, and begged my prayers. Yet he said he could not ask my farther acquaintance, as he did not wish to hurt me by his inconstancy. Thus he raised my hopes, and then hurled them down again.

December 20 [1777]. After all my pains in diligent study, and all my expense in a college education; and after examining me with applause, and in the strictest manner before a seniority; the principal and fellows have denied me my grace<sup>49</sup> (for which I sat three times), [or] to give me a *bene decessit* or *liceat migrare*.<sup>50</sup> A higher character they cannot give me than they did then, and do now. Yet they will show me no favour. For they not only deny my grace passing, but deprive me of entering into another college. I was summoned to appear before them very suddenly. But feeling the approbation of God, and being conscious of a single desire to please him, I went with a sweet, undaunted courage, resolving to speak plainly the truth, and nothing but the truth. The *Principal* began:<sup>51</sup> Mr. Roe, your grace was offered to be passed on Monday, and some persons objected to it, because you seem to have sentiments contrary to the doctrine and discipline of the Church [of England]. Not that they object to your morals or your conduct; these are unquestionable. But that you attend illicit conventicles. *Answer*. I do not attend illicit conventicles, or any other dissenting meetings. *Principal*. What comes to the same in *our* eyes is that you have, and do, frequent the meetings of the people called Methodists. *Answer*. I acknowledge I have. *Principal*. And do you not think this wrong, and inconsistent with the character you now assume? Is it not, think you, contrary to the statutes of this university? *Answer*. I do not think it wrong, because they are no dissenters from the Church, and their chapels are established by law. *Principal*. Do you think then episcopal ordination is unnecessary? *Answer*. I do not understand the force of the question. *Principal*. Do you think that laymen praying and expounding in private houses, or in public, is according to order and allowable? Here I told them I could not answer to their or my own satisfaction, without introducing unnecessary points of debate. But I told them that although I did not think a layman ought to assume the character of a minister, in administering the sacraments, yet I thought he might (if called of God) preach, exhort, and expound in public or private. *R. and C.* That is bad. *R.* Did you ever expound? *Answer*. Never, I assure you; though I well know you have heard such reports, which I now beg leave to say are groundless. *F—y.* But have you not been at Mrs. M—'s, and there expounded, or prayed, or done anything of the kind? *Answer*. Never but in a private way, as one friend with another. *F—y.* Are you sure? *Answer*. Quite certain. *P[incipal] and F.* But have you not been at a Mrs.

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<sup>49</sup>Approval for taking his BA degree; see *OED* (2nd edn.), def. 9.

<sup>50</sup>Letters affirming the student ended their time in good standing and have permission to transfer.

<sup>51</sup>The principal of Brasenose College from 1777–85 was Thomas Barker (1728–85).

Bateley's?<sup>52</sup> *Answer.* I know who you mean, but that is not the name. *Question.* Well, have you never exhorted or explained the scripture, or prayed there? *Answer.* I have been there at the time of others doing it. *P.* Well, Mr. Roe, permit me to ask, how you could thus demean yourself? Is it not beneath your character? Could you not consult your tutor, or any of us, to answer your scruples of conscience? The sum is this, sir, do you think it wrong, or do you think it your duty to attend? *Answer.* I really do think it my duty to attend. I cannot deny it. *C.* Very candid indeed. I think Mr. Roe has been very open and honest. *R.* Very candid, as much as we possibly could expect. N[uby?]. Yes, yes, quite so. I think Mr. Roe has proved that he values truth and a clear conscience. Has any gentleman a desire to ask farther questions? *P[principal], C., F., R.* No, no. We do not mean to perplex Mr. Roe. I then said, 'I have one request to make before I am dismissed: which is, that the gentlemen here present will not credit the many stories reported of me, that I speak disrespectfully of the gentlemen of this body.' They answered, one and all, 'We acquit you. Your behaviour has been unexceptionable. No one has been more regular or more polite than you, etc.'

Before my appearance I called upon God, and found strength, peace, and love. After this, the principal met me, and begged I would walk into the bursary with him. There he told me he was very much concerned to inform me my grace was suspended; and although the fellows could not but admire my openness, consciousness, and moral rectitude, yet they could not pass my grace; that he was sensibly grieved, and all the rest were so too; that my character and conduct were such as entitled me to esteem, and all the fellows acknowledged this. I then asked for a *bene decessit*; as then I could have gone to Worcester College, and should have done equally well, as Mr. H—d had promised to make the provost my friend. But he answered they could not grant it because it answered the end of a testimonial. As he mentioned my principles, I told him they were consonant to the doctrines of the Church. But he answered, as we give you a right of private judgment, you cannot refuse that liberty to us. He then took an affectionate leave of me. I met Mr. Nuby, who condoled with me on account of my disgrace, and said he was very sorry a gentleman so much approved should hold tenets pernicious to his interest. I went to see N—n, but could not find him; and then went to Mr. H—'s. He said he was very unhappy on my account, as was Mr. N[uby], then present; that he had foreseen this, etc. I asked if they could not testify by a paper given me that it was merely this one point, and not irregularity which led them thus to act, without giving a *bene decessit*. At first he thought it could be. But on consideration said the fellows would not, as it would let me into another college. However he went to the principal, and returned out of breath, to inform me the principal would not, nor grant me a *liceat migrare*, because it would be sufficient to admit me into another college. He told me that he had so high an opinion of me that he would, as a private person, write me the highest character he could paint, and that he believed the other fellows would do the same. But when I called, he asked what I designed to do with it? And being fearful I should use it to get into another college, he refused it, after promising. Are these thy teachers, O Israel? Are these the shepherds of the flock of Christ? Where is honour? Where is truth? Where is justice? Where is humanity? I have reason to praise my God for a clear conscience, a sense of his approbation, and a calm resignation to his will. To suffer thus is not misery, but an increase of happiness. My faith is strengthened, and I rest with much confidence in the Lord.

December 24. This has been a day of rejoicing to my soul. My faith is stronger and stronger. Truly the Spirit of glory and of Christ resteth upon me. In every sense the Lord doth more than I can ask or think. The 26th. I went over to D—. God was with me, and protected me on the road. They received me kindly, and told me their house was always at my service. [December] the 27th. I arrived safe at Oxford, and found all very civil; but what is above all, God is my friend. I find myself resigned, patient, thankful, and full of love. All are sorry to part with me, and no one jeers me. [December] the 29th. O blessed Lord, in thee is my trust! I commit myself to him in much patience. He greatly honours me. I glory in the cross, and rejoice in tribulation. [December] the 31st. This morning I thought I would lie in bed, merely to avoid thinking. But I was suddenly relieved from all my temptations, and now possess a

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<sup>52</sup>The woman intended was likely Mrs. Bradley.

calm peace.

January 2, 1778. This day I wrote to my father on the subject of my refusal at college. I found myself refreshed in reading over my cousin [Hester]'s letters.<sup>53</sup> And as I was reading Mr. Wesley's *Notes* on St. James,<sup>54</sup> all my bondage vanished, and the Lord spoke unusual peace. [January] the 3rd. This day also the peace of God holds me up under great trials. Waking and sleeping he is with me. [January] the 4th. We spent our time in singing and prayer, and the Lord was present, and wonderfully blessed me. I think a work of grace is now going on amongst us. [January] the 15th. I was taken very ill this afternoon, and unable to finish a letter to my father. [January] the 24th. I received a letter which says, my father is very poorly, and that the situation of my affairs will probably prove his death. O Lord, I am distressed; undertake for me! My body too is very ill. [January] the 25th. This day I had a peculiar answer to prayer. I found much love, peace, and power. [January] the 29th. This day I find patience in affliction and crosses, and much of the powers of the world to come. My soul is happy in God, and longing for full salvation.

February 7 [1778]. The Lord wonderfully supports me. I have been enabled to rest on him in calm peace. My father wishes me to go to Mr. Hatton's in Shropshire, to consult with him.<sup>55</sup> Lord direct me! [February] the 11th. After taking leave of the family at D—, I set out for London. I was much distressed, and my body was very ill. Indeed I find my health suffers greatly by the trials I have lately had. But the will of the Lord be done.<sup>56</sup> [February] the 17th. I set out for Birmingham, in my way to Waters Upton. [February] the 18th. I arrived at Mr. Hatton's. [February] the 24th. As I was writing at night, I was much fluttered at the unexpected arrival of Mr. [David] Simpson and my [step-]mother [Rachael]. [February] the 25th. Mr. Pugh came over,<sup>57</sup> and I was much tried by the importunities which he, Mr. Simpson, Mr. Hatton, and my mother used, to make me promise I would go no more to the Methodists. However I refused to promise. My father I find wants the bishop to force the college to give me a testimonial; and Mr. Hatton is to go with me to Oxford. I think if they refuse to give a testimonial in the *usual* form, they ought to testify that my attachment to the Methodists is the only cause of their refusal. But I fear I am to expect no favour, no, nor even justice.

March 1 [1778]. We set out for Oxford. I had many fears of Mr. Hatton drawing me into a snare, and promising for me what I am resolved never to promise, either to the bishop, the fellows, or anyone living. We found brother Samuel [Roe] at Birmingham. He was kind, but I saw he did not approve of my conduct. [March] the 3rd. We were much fatigued with our journey when we came to Oxford. After dinner we waited on the principal, and received shameful treatment. But as Mr. Hatton took down particulars, I omitted it.

[March] the 4th. We set out for London, and through the mercy of God arrived safe. My aunt [Stockdale] was much surprised to see us, but very kind. [March] the 5th. We sought the Bishop of Lincoln, but could not meet with him. [March] the 6th. We called on him again. He was civil, but said my case did not come before *him* as a visitatorial case, and could be determined by none but the college.<sup>58</sup> [March] the 14th. We set out for home again, having gone through much hurry and fatigue to no purpose at all. I was thankful however that we arrived safe. [March] the 25th. I arose happy, and found much benefit from reading Mr. Wesley's sermons. O Lord keep me still in the good old way. [March] the 31st. I

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<sup>53</sup>He would soon receive another letter from her, dated Jan. 9, 1778; see *Spiritual Letters*, 12–13.

<sup>54</sup>I.e., the section of *NT Notes* on the Epistle of James.

<sup>55</sup>Rev. Thomas Hatton (1735–1807), a graduate of Cambridge, and rector of Waters Upton. He was the sole Church of England clergyman near John Fletcher who was sympathetic to the Methodists.

<sup>56</sup>See the letter of Hester to Robert, Feb. 12, 1778; *Spiritual Letters*, 13–14.

<sup>57</sup>Rev. John Pugh (1742–99), a graduate of Hertford College, Oxford, was vicar of North and South Rauceby from 1771 till his death.

<sup>58</sup>See the letter of Hester Ann to Robert, Mar. 10, 1778; *Spiritual Letters*, 14–16.

found my soul very happy this morning, especially as I was reading Mr. Fletcher's *Appeal*.<sup>59</sup> Many and close trials this day are not able to move me. My body however is very weak.

April 9 [1778]. Mr. Hatton returned from Macclesfield, and brought me an affectionate letter from my father: I was thankful for this, but he gives terrible accounts of my cousin [Hester] and Charles. Surely *she* is falsely accused. I cannot believe all. I was much tried by Mr. Hatton too. I think my heart will break! O Lord help! [April] the 10th. I prayed much to the Lord, and though all things seem to be against me, yet is my trust in him. I meet with many upbraidings because I will not make promises. [April] the 13th. I rose in sweet peace. Christ was precious to my soul. O that I was all devoted to God!

May 7 [1778]. I have been very low and much tempted, but reading my Bible this afternoon was a great blessing. [May] the 8th. I was much blessed in conversing with Mr. Brown, of Whitchurch.<sup>60</sup> We were all much alarmed at the apprehension of an earthquake, hearing a loud, rumbling noise and, as we thought, feeling a shaking of the ground. I seemed to have a clearer sense of the present state of my soul than I have had for some time past. I plainly saw that I had been a sinner who deserved hell, but that God had forgiven me and enabled me to forsake all. That I had often forfeited his mercy, but that I had an Advocate with the Father. That I cannot have any dependence on my good works, to save me from inbred sin. That Christ is my only refuge. That there is still the flesh striving against the Spirit, and that I have need of a farther change. That notwithstanding, there is no condemnation to me while using justifying grace—that is, believing, and pressing forward to a full renewal in love. I had also some true sense of what a sanctified person must experience. They feel a clear sense of the remission of past sins. They are sensible sin did *reign* in a carnal state, that it *remains* in a justified state, but that now *Christ reigneth alone*. They see they are sanctified *in*, but not *of* themselves. Glory be to God! These views bring power and peace to my soul.<sup>61</sup>

June 3. I have passed through various and trying scenes the last month. This day we had a letter from Mr. [David] Simpson, in which my father desires we will go again to Oxford, that I may swear to the Articles and petition for restoration to college privileges. I do not approve of the scheme, but leave myself in the hands of God. I am sorely afflicted. I think it will kill my body. But Lord, my whole trust is in thee. O let patience have its perfect work! Plead thou my cause with the ungodly, which are a sword of thine!

June 20, 1778. I fear I have spoken incautiously of the absent, and have since felt a degree of condemnation. O, may I henceforth watch over every word, speak little, go little into company, and dwell much with God in solitude! This afternoon I felt a disinclination to retire, but I roused myself and determined to break through. Lord keep me from thus trifling with my soul! I do not wrestle with God in proportion to my manifold temptations, or I should not be thus depressed, or find this unwillingness to rigorous duties. I prayed long, but found little power, and was coming out of the room without what I asked for. But I recollected myself and turned back, and as my body was much wearied, I prayed standing. Then I thought, 'Slothful creature! Why do I seek ease? Surely I shall never prosper till I mortify all my senses more.' After some time I felt a degree of power and peace. But I had not left my room long before I felt anger, as I was reproving sin. I began in a meek and quiet spirit, but soon felt peevishness. I experienced much cunning and deceit from pretended friends. May God teach them better!

[June] the 21st. I was very miserable, and resolved to search out the cause, and the Lord showed me it was unbelief. O how good is it to trust in the Lord! I have enjoyed much peace this night, and a deep sense of the presence of God. [June] the 23rd. I found amazing benefit from Mr. Smith's trial. It has revived and encouraged me greatly; and discovered a bastard humility which I have been guilty of, in never pleading my own innocence when falsely accused. Ought I not to consider I am standing up for

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<sup>59</sup> John William Fletcher, *Appeal to Matter of Fact and Common Sense; or, A Rational Demonstration of Man's Corrupt and Lost Estate* (Bristol: W. Pine, 1772).

<sup>60</sup> Joseph Brown was the first Methodist class leader of Whitchurch; see W. Philips *Early Methodism in Shropshire* (Shrewsbury, 1896), 92.

<sup>61</sup> See the letter of Hester Ann to Robert, May 15, 1778; *Spiritual Letters*, 16–18.

God?

This day a letter from a dear friend was a great blessing.<sup>62</sup> O what a happy creature, carrying ever about her a sense of the presence of the eternal Trinity! All love, joy, and praise! Yet humbled to the dust before God, and giving all the glory to him! It refreshed me much, and I cried to God for the same blessing. But when it seemed near, the enemy came in as a flood, and reasoned me out of it. He suggested, 'Thou hast more troubles to expect than many others. Get through thy sufferings first, and then seek to be sanctified.' Afterwards I saw the folly of this temptation, but had not then the same power.

[June] the 24th. I have been very low and dull, and experience an aching void, which nothing can satisfy except God should fill me with himself. I have no one to converse with, and it makes me melancholy. Yet no creature can satisfy me. I see snares in all around me. What shall I do? I will fly to God, for he is all in all. I found myself much comforted this evening in reading the Acts of the Apostles. Their undaunted boldness surprised and shamed me. What instances of the power and grace of God were manifested in speedy conversions! Sometimes five thousand, other times three thousand in a day! And none were more than a few days seeking the Lord, before he was found of them. [June] the 26th. I received a kind letter from my mother, in which she tells me they shall be glad to see me at home, on condition I will keep from the Methodists. I have thoughts of dealing very plainly with them. Lord instruct and lead me aright!

Presently after,<sup>63</sup> I heard that Mr. [John] Pugh thought he could get the Bishop of Lincoln to ordain me, which softened my father much. Nothing temporal gives me greater pleasure than a manifestation of this. Not long after, I received a letter from Mr. Pugh, desiring me to come to Matlock, and if agreeable, to Rauceby in Lincolnshire. My father (to my great surprise) sent for me, and conversed kindly about it. I told him I intended to go to Matlock the beginning of the following week. He afterwards came to me at Mr. [David] Simpson's and asked if I thought of going to Rauceby? I told him I had no objection, if Mr. Pugh could get me ordained. He was much pleased and wished me a good night very kindly. On which I said, O Lord, let me go where thou seest best, only preserve me from evil!

After calling at Matlock, Derby, etc., I came to Rauceby, and praised God for my safe arrival. A day or two after, I went with Mr. Pugh to visit a sick woman, and was desired to speak to her and pray with her. This was a great cross to me, but I took it up, and found a blessing.

The following night I was very ill. But suddenly felt a kindred spirit, with dear [cousin Roe?]. The love of God, as soon as I thought of her, warmed my heart, and healed my sorrow. I thought it was impossible to feel such union with any who are in the body. I therefore concluded she was dead; and that her spirit acted as a guardian angel upon mine. I now rejoiced at the indisposition of my body, and the expectation of soon following her. The next morning I was tempted to reason. But in the afternoon I found a praying spirit for my dear friends, and the more I prayed and exercised faith on Jesus, the more I felt heaven opened in my heart.

November 2 [1778]. I could not bear to study, but I cast myself on God. O Lord, teach me to hang on thee at all times! I find my body a great hindrance to me, but my trust is in the Lord. [November] the 8th. I had a day of calm peace. Mr. Pugh and Mr. Leicester insisted at night that I should speak to the people. I did not expect this, and the thought of speaking extempore fluttered me much. But the Lord helped me. I was happy, and the people seemed all satisfied. At night Mr. Pugh again called upon me to speak to the people. I called on the Lord, and found strength to speak with some freedom, and afterwards was much blessed the whole night.

November 20. A letter from my father to Mr. Pugh informed us that he had been at college; that they will hear of nothing; that subscribing to articles, homilies, or discipline, will not satisfy, unless I go and reside there three years and forsake the Methodists. [November] the 24th. I was very ill and low, but was enabled to cast my care on God. Soon after this, I set out for London, in obedience to my father. When I arrived, I found him in town, and was kindly received by him. However, he pressed hard on me

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<sup>62</sup>Surely from Hester Ann (not known to survive).

<sup>63</sup>Apparently Sept. or Oct. 1778.



respecting the Bishop of Lincoln. I told him I never had any objection to signing the Articles, and would do all I could to oblige him, consistent with a pure conscience. The first time we called on the bishop he was in a hurry, but consented we should come again. We did so, and he was tolerably civil. My father pressed him much, and at last got him to examine me as to the 23rd Article.<sup>64</sup> When his lordship would have dismissed us, my father was still more strenuous, being anxious to have me ordained, and therefore pressed me (before the bishop) so close about Mr. Wesley and the Methodists that it led him to ask me many questions—which I hardly knew how to answer so as to please him, and leave my conscience undefiled. When his lordship went for a book, I plainly and boldly told my father, ‘Sir, I have, to oblige you, gone to the utmost stretch, so that I am scarcely satisfied with myself. I therefore insist upon it, you press me no farther, lest I make such answers as you and the bishop will not approve of. I am determined not to forsake Mr. Wesley or his people.’ At night I was low, and tempted lest the bishop should think I meant to comply with what I could not; and told my father plainly, I would in future go before no bishop but on my own plan—viz., that I would, and could with a safe conscience subscribe to the doctrines and discipline of the Church of England. But if any person, or bishop, take upon him to say that my rejection of the Methodists was contained in it, I would not subscribe to them. My father was greatly agitated. Sometimes he stormed; sometimes entreated; at others, reasoned, and then wept!

After this my father called three times on the bishop, but he was not to be seen, although it was by his appointment. At length my father sent him a severe letter, by Mr. G—, which brought his lordship to treat with them. They both say he behaved as a father: promised to write to the college; said he believed me to be a diligent, pious, young man; wished me in the Church, and would ordain me, if only two fellows and the principal would sign my testimonial; yea, and that he would hasten it, for it was a shame I should be obliged to stay three years more. My father was much pleased, and returned home taking a kind leave of me. In the midst of these trials the Lord supported me mightily. Nevertheless, through the weakness of my constitution, and the many temptations of Satan, I suffered, at times what cannot be uttered.<sup>65</sup> However, I yet stand a monument of mercy, and often find much peace and joy.

January 16, 1779. I received two letters from Mr. [John] Pugh, in which he pressed me to return to Rauceby and offered me two curacies, one of £58, which I was obliged to decline. He said the people wished my return, and that good had been done. To God alone the praise is due! After waiting a long time for an answer from the bishop, he wrote to my father that the principal feared I wished to mislead his lordship, that Mr. H—, when at Oxford, told him he could not reclaim me from my errors, after being so long as half a year under his tutorage.

February 3 [1779]. I had much comfort in hearing of my dear Macclesfield friends. I see plainly we are to come to God by simple faith, and expect grace when we want it, and use it when we have it, day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute. God will have us dependent; and if we are so, he will in every temptation make a way for our escape. I was very happy in these views. But in the evening seemed lost in reasoning and unbelief. O why am I thus changeable! [February] the 9th. Last night God blessed me much, but afterwards I gave way to temptation and was very ill in body and mind. At class I was relieved. I am astonished sometimes how ill and well I am in a moment. [February] the 10th. This day God clearly revealed his method of convincing and converting sinners, by showing me how incapable I am of thinking a good thought without him. After he had set all my sinfulness before me, he humbled me in the dust, taught me that means were only channels to convey grace and convince me of my unbelief. [February] the 11th. I feel this day the clear witness of God’s Spirit, that I am his, and at the same time I have a sense of inbred sin. [February] the 14th. Mr. Wesley preached a full, present, and free salvation, from 1 Corinthians 13, insisting that this holiness is the gift of God, through faith in the Son of his love. [February] the 21st. I was very low, and gave way to a reasoning spirit, which depressed both my body

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<sup>64</sup>Of only those properly called allowed to minister publicly in a congregation.

<sup>65</sup>See the letter he received from Hester Ann Roe, dated Dec. 18, 1778, *Spiritual Letters*, 19–21

and soul. Mr. Mortimer invited me home, and told me his experience, which comforted me much.<sup>66</sup> He said my greatest sin was unthankfulness, and convinced me I dishonoured God by it. [February] the 28th. I went to hear Captain [Thomas] Webb. But my body was very weak and ill, and the place being so hot, I found I should faint and just got out time enough to fall into M. T—y's arms. When I had taken a little water I was better; and though very weak, the power of God so rested upon me, that I was filled with love and joy. All night I was sweetly happy, though not in the same ecstasies of joy.

March 1 [1779]. I have been kept in solemn peace. And though Satan hath cast many fiery darts, they have no power. They cannot interrupt my happiness. [March] the 6th. These last few days I have been happy in my soul. I have lived by faith and all has gone well. But this morning, after reading in Saurin, I reasoned much, and was very ill.<sup>67</sup> I find nothing but hanging simply upon God by faith, moderate bodily exercise, and the conversation of lively Christians does me good. [March] the 8th. I began to read, and was falling into reasoning as before, when my aunt [Stockdale] suddenly asked me to visit a sick woman. I started and trembled at the thought, but I said, 'Lord! Thou canst help me', and forced myself to go. I was much blessed with her, and had liberty in prayer. [March] the 10th. God blessed me all night. I was enabled to act faith on Jesus. [March] the 17th. I arose very weak in body, but the Lord hath more abundantly blessed my soul this day than for years past. I began to reflect how is it that I am so often distressed through reasoning, and do not in everything honour God, nor enjoy uninterrupted peace with him? Others in a short time obtain what I have as great a claim to from the word of God, and yet I have sought it for years in vain. Is not unbelief the cause? Have I not suffered above two years by unbelief, except at a few intervals when faith has been in exercise? Am I not, when I give way to this spirit of unbelief, negligent, peevish, unhappy, and disposed continually to evil? And on the contrary, do I not abound most in good works when I believe most? If I now believe God loves me, do not I immediately love him? But can I know God loves me anyway but by faith?

March 23. My father's severe letter requiring, me to give up and forsake the Methodists, and go to Oxford, did not move me. But I rejoiced in God through faith, and saw his hand in it. [March] the 26th. I was very comfortable, till in placing my books I began to think they were bound too elegantly for a Christian, and so fell into reasoning. I had no sooner given way to this than Satan came in as a flood, and I was almost distracted. [March] the 29th. I was a little comforted. But beginning to reason about speaking, I was soon miserable. I then resolved to cry unto God, and take no thought about speaking. My temptations and misery were gone in a moment, and I had sweet peace and love. [March] the 30th. Brother Keeling was a help to me, as I walked and conversed with him in the park. But I now plainly see I must come to God for help, seeing man cannot deliver me. Accordingly I look to God for help as a child does to its mother, and while I do this I am supported.

April 19 [1779]. Since I wrote last, my experience and trials have been various. But this I ever find: when I yield to reasoning and unbelief, the enemy gets the advantage; but if I look to Jesus by faith, it brings present power, peace and love. [April] the 20th. I did not find overflowing joy. But nevertheless the Lord was near, and so stood by me in reproving sinners that they could not hurt me.

[April] the 21st. I was much tempted that I was indulging an antinomian faith. But in reading Mr. Wesley's *Appeal [to Men of Reason and Religion]* I was eased. Yet I thought, this will not suffice unless God himself shows me I am right. I then went to prayer and entreated the Lord that if I was in danger of leaning to a false faith, he would discover it. But if the way of coming to him by faith alone is what he approves of, he would convince me of it. I immediately felt peace, and sweetness unspeakable. I cried, 'Lord! this humbles me to the dust. I am nothing. Christ is all in all. This is the way. This is the way indeed! O let me hang on Jesus forever, like a little child who has all to learn!'

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<sup>66</sup>Harvey Waltlake Mortimer (1753–1819) was a gun-maker and member of the London stock exchange. In 1801, as a widower, he would marry Elizabeth Ritchie.

<sup>67</sup>Jacques Saurin (1677–1730) was a pastor and author of Huguenot upbringing; Reformed in theology.

May 3. A letter from sister Peggy [i.e., Margaret] informed me my father was much displeased at my letter. I had many trials, from various quarters. Yet the Lord supported me. Soon after this I grew very ill, and was pronounced by several to be in a deep decline. My nervous disorder made me often dull, stupid, and incapable of reflection. At other times I was seized with horrible fears, which I could give no reason for, but supposed them to arise from contracted guilt. The enemy in the times of my perplexity, lost no opportunity of distressing me with various and painful temptations. Once, when I thought I could hold out no longer, I was suddenly freed from a depth of misery by reading Mr. Wesley's sermon on justification. At another time, a letter from Hester Roe was a blessing.<sup>68</sup> And whenever I could cast myself by faith on Jesus, I found relief. In July, by order of my physicians, I set out for Scarborough, to see if sea-bathing would restore my health. I called at Leeds, and had much comfort from many of our friends there.<sup>69</sup>

[break due to illness]

January 1780. Being so enfeebled in body as to be incapable of writing my journal for some months, I found the inconvenience. But being a little better, I began once more to recount the dealings of a merciful God. Being at Leeds on New Year's Day, I renewed my covenant. It was a time of reasoning and temptation. But the day following was a time of love. I found my mind much quickened by our dear friends here. About this time I was addressed by a simple Quaker woman. I was pleased to find she had the root of the matter within; though our language differed a little. She asked if I had not 'gone through deep waters'. I answered, 'Yes.' She asked, 'Are they not abated?' I said, 'In a measure they are.' 'I had some travelling of mind', said she, 'for many in different places, who seemed waiting for the consolation of Israel. When I met thee, with another whom I knew, although thou wast a stranger to me, it was made known to me that thou wast one of these, and that thou shouldest see the salvation of God. I hope, as we may meet in heaven, thou art not displeased at my speaking to thee now.' I said, 'Quite otherwise. I thank you, etc.'<sup>70</sup>

[January] the 26th. This evening I was very poorly, but found the conversation of Miss [Eliabeth] Ritchie, Mrs. [Ann] Clapham, and Mrs. D— very profitable. It would be well, as they observe, if I made proper allowances for my complaint, and did not attribute to other things what proceeds from my disorder alone. [January] the 27th. I have had a trying time with my nervous complaint, and find a strong propensity to reason concerning my state when I am least capable. I spent most of the morning with Mrs. Clapham and Miss Ritchie, and have reason to bless God for their advice and help. They justly admire the kind providence of God in bringing me to Mr. and Mrs. H—n's. I desire to praise him for this also. They are very kind, and very pious.

January 29, 1780. I found myself much refreshed by walking to Woodhouse [Yorkshire]. And my temptations were removed by Mrs. [Sarah] Crosby telling me it was the best time she had known for many weeks; that several were blessed, and that she could not do so well without me, etc.

February 5 [1780]. I was tolerably well in body and soul. But oh how far from perfect love! [February] the 8th. I was much encouraged while conversing with that monument of God's love and sparing mercy, Ann Judah.

[February] the 18th. The Lord was pleased to bless me in a wonderful manner, as I was reading my cousin's letter to a simple young man.<sup>71</sup> He seemed to think if he was situated as I am, he could serve God more fully and be always happy. Glory be to God! I have great reason for gratitude. Yet few could bear my trials, with a body as weak as mine. Omnipotent grace keeps me, or I could not bear them; and I often think they will bring my body to the grave. [February] the 19th. B. W—, another monument of mercy, and a witness of full salvation, comforted me much. [February] the 23rd. Mr. [James] Rogers was

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<sup>68</sup>See her letter of Apr. 20, 1779, *Spiritual Letters*, 21–22.

<sup>69</sup>See Hester's letter to Robert of Aug. 12, 1779, *Spiritual Letters*, 23–25.

<sup>70</sup>See Hester's letter to Robert of Jan. 14, 1780, *Spiritual Letters*, 26–28.

<sup>71</sup>This letter of Hester Ann Roe is not known to survive.

excellent indeed in his description of holiness! Go on, thou servant of the Lord most high! Boldly testify for the best of masters his uttermost salvation, and thou shalt have a present and eternal reward.

[February] the 27th. This morning the Lord raised a standard against my unbelief, though Satan came with power, especially while I was at Church. I always observe unbelief, though ever so plausible and seemingly backed by reason and scripture, brings darkness, trouble, and unholy tempers; and hinders our hearts and lips from praising God. Whereas faith brings light, life, power, peace, love, and holy tempers.

April 1780. I had the pleasure of hearing Miss [Mary] Bosanquet meet the band at Mr. [John?] Smith's, in Leeds. Mrs. [Sarah] Crosby said the half had not been told me respecting her, for she was a wonder indeed! I answered, 'I came afraid of being disappointed when I heard so much of her. But I must confess she greatly exceeded my expectations: so much wisdom, dignity, and piety; joined to so much childlike simplicity, I never before saw.' After this I set out for Cross Hall.<sup>72</sup> The place did not strike me so much as I expected, after hearing such encomiums. But the rules of the house, the family, and conversation pleased and profited me greatly. Mr. Wesley did not know me at first, and his conduct was cause of much temptation.<sup>73</sup> But his kindness when he discovered who I was relieved and comforted me. At night he preached an excellent sermon. He particularly noted that God did not say, if thou *canst*; but 'if thou *wilt* believe thou shalt see the glory of God.'<sup>74</sup> Had he known all my heart, he could not have preached more to the purpose *for me*. And had I not thought some one had been telling him of me, I should have profited still more. O that God may write the precious truths then delivered forever on my heart!

I took leave, about this time, of Miss [Elizabeth] Ritchie, and suppose I shall see her no more. She told me she longed for the time of her departure, and was happy and resigned. Mr. H— went with me as far as Wakefield; after which, being alone, I could scarce refrain from weeping. Many were God's mercies to me on the road. But when I got to Sleaford, and heard the confusion all things were in on account of Mrs. Pugh being dangerously ill, my spirits quite sunk.<sup>75</sup> After staying a day at the inn, Mr. [John] Pugh sent a horse for me. He is very kind, and promises to do all in his power for me. I left Leeds in hopes of ordination and a curacy, which all my friends who wished me ordained urged me to seek after. The account of the person, terms, and place is just as I would have it. But I fear my ill state of health and a want of prerequisites for orders will be a hindrance.

My health is better since I came here [to Leeds], and the Lord has been pleased to make me useful. All glory be to him! Mrs. B—, who had been a seeker three years, when I pressed her to look for a present salvation by faith, was all in a maze. She said all the gospel ministers she had heard or conversed with had told her to wait the Lord's time, and he would bless her. At first she could not receive my words: but I continued to follow her with such exhortations as these: 'Come lost and undone to a Saviour.' 'Look up; cast away impatience, or hard thoughts of God.' 'He is *waiting* to be gracious, see how he loves you!' On this she felt a hope arise in her heart, and the day after, received pardon. She then came to me full of praise, saying, 'Surely the Lord hath sent you here on my account. I have, as you advised me, ventured my soul on the promises, and I feel I am right. I wonder I never found out this way before. It is not only a happy way, but it is an easy way. I find I have power over sin of all kinds, and can praise God continually.'

May 2 [1780]. I met the people and was enabled to deal plainly and faithfully with them all, and they seemed stirred up. Mrs. [Ann] Pugh is very ill. How transitory are the highest enjoyments of life! [May] the 3rd. The people being very desirous I should meet them, I complied, though ill in body, and the Lord gave me uncommon liberty. [May] the 5th. How good is the Lord! How has he preserved me in danger, comforted me in all my trials, eased me in pain, made a way before me when I saw no way, given

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<sup>72</sup>The farm and community gathered around Mary Bosanquet.

<sup>73</sup>JW was at Cross Hall on Apr. 11, 1780; see *Journal, Works*, 23:164.

<sup>74</sup>John 11:40.

<sup>75</sup>John Pugh had married Ann Heathcoate (c. 1740–80) in Sept. 1777.

me many kind and Christian friends, remarkable answers to prayer. And how amazingly does he now bless my word to others! O may I be humble and thankful, and improve all my talents to his glory. [May] the 6th. I was much cast down before meeting the people, and believed I should have nothing to say. But I cast myself upon God, and truly he was my helper. Many were in tears. Several rejoiced greatly. And all were stirred up. [May] the 10th. We breakfasted at Londonthorpe with Mr. Smith. I was very poorly. However I spoke to the people there, and Mr. Smith went in my place to Rauceby—but returned in haste to tell us Mrs. Pugh was dying.<sup>76</sup> [May] the 11th. I returned to Rauceby. When being myself very nervous, and seeing all around me in grief, it quite overcame my spirits. Every object, etc., Mr. [John] Pugh once viewed with delight, filled me with reflection. And a thousand thoughts crowded at once into my mind: Not all her excellencies could snatch her from the jaws of death. Not all the prayers and tears of her afflicted husband and friends. What is honour now to *her*? Though descended from a noble family, behold she is clay! What can riches or praise now profit her? Even the love of dear, Christian friends, and much more the love of the world can do her no good. But must I too leave all I love below? What, my *nearest, dearest* friends? Must I be screwed up in a coffin, while these are weeping around? Yes, I must. This my body must become like this pale corpse, like this cold clay, must be food for worms, must be turned to corruption! O then may I have treasure in heaven, where all is permanent; where friends shall meet to part no more.

[May] the 12th. I met the people at Little Rauceby. Again I was tempted to think I should have nothing to say, but I never had more liberty, and they all declared the word was with power. Yet I often fear that after I have preached to others, I should myself become a castaway. Being after this low and weak in body, I was unwilling to stay here alone, and went with Mr. Pugh to London. Many were the mercies of my God there. It pleased him to make me a blessing to Mr. Melville Horne.<sup>77</sup> I trust the root of bitterness is taken out of his heart.

July 2 [1780]. This has been a day of rest to my soul. I found much peace and freedom from temptation—my mind sweetly stayed upon God, and humbled at his dear feet. [July] the 8th. I went with Mr. [John] Pugh to Melton Mowbray, to meet Mr. Haweis<sup>78</sup> at Dr. [Thomas] Ford's. Our reception was very kind. God blessed me greatly under Mr. Hawes' two first sermons. The Lord enabled me to feel much love for our mistaken brethren, though I cannot see as they do.<sup>79</sup> I was much blessed by conversing with two young men whom Mr. Pugh and I met with in the churchyard. Their names I afterwards found to be Hollins. But thinking them at first to be Dr. Ford's people, I was amazed to hear them talk of being saved to the uttermost, and of the root of sin being destroyed. But hearing there was a Methodist society, and that they were in it, we soon became intimate, and they made me acquainted with the rest: a small, but lively company, one of whom had lately received that perfect love which casteth out all fear. I believe we were a blessing to each other. In speaking to them on the Tuesday night my faith was much increased. We scarce knew how to part. O that I could, as I now do, constantly hang upon Jesus. How happy should I be! My body was ill, yet my mind was carried above all. [July] the 27th. At last, and with some difficulty, I have got a prayer meeting formed here, and have set them rules to go by. I trust the Lord will make it a blessing. Our first meeting was on Saturday last. I was truly blessed. Many seemed refreshed, and one

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<sup>76</sup>Ann (Heathcoate) Pugh died on May 10, 1780.

<sup>77</sup>Melville Horne (c.1761–1841) was the son of an Antiguan barrister and planter and the nephew of Nathaniel Gilbert. Now in England, he would be accepted 'on trial' as an itinerant preacher in 1784. In 1786, with JW's recommendation, he was ordained in the Church of England and appointed a curate at John Fletcher's old parish of Madeley. Horne would go on to serve as vicar of Olney from 1796 to 1799 and succeed David Simpson at Christ Church Macclesfield. He remained supportive of Methodism until about 1809. See *DEB*, 572–73.

<sup>78</sup>Rev. Thomas Haweis (1734–1820), rector at All Saints in Aldwinkle, Northhampton, and a chaplain to Lady Huntingdon; orig., 'Hawes'.

<sup>79</sup>Both Ford and Haweis were Calvinists.

declared the Lord had pardoned his sins; nor can I doubt of it. By simple faith I now hang upon my God, and calmly repose on his bosom my every care, so that sin and Satan have no power.

August 3 [1780]. We arrived safe in London by the mercy of God. I find my friends well, and faithful to grace received. Sick and ill as I am, how many strong and healthy ones go before me! [August] the 5th. I went to see Billy Mackiever; he is still simple and loving. Also Mr. [Harvey] Mortimer, whose danger now is from prosperity but hitherto the Lord has helped him. Mr. Melville Horne drank tea with me. He seems happy and simple; yet from many of his expressions, does not seem clearly to distinguish between temptation and sin. Billy Mackiever was with me. I love him much, and he seemed quite oppressed at the thought of soon parting with me. [August] the 7th. I went in the evening to Mr. Golden, and was amazed to hear that my father was in town. I fear it will be a time of trial. Lord, be thou my helper!

[August] the 16th. We left London, and came to Reading. Mrs. Talbot was glad to see us. [August] the 17th. We came to Wallingford. Mr. and Mrs. Jaques rejoiced at our meeting once more in the body.<sup>80</sup> [August] the 18th. Through Abingdon we passed on to Mr. Clark's. [August] the 19th. Mr. Clark received us with the utmost kindness. I found him an open, sensible, well-disposed young man. A friend to the gospel; but an enemy to Calvinism. He promised me a title, in the most kind manner. And now I began to hope I should have a little rest after all my toil and suspense, and an opportunity of entering the Church, which I greatly desire, if I can do it with a safe conscience. But on [August] the 20th, hearing who the bishop was (viz., the Bishop of Oxford), all was given up again. I felt some pain at this, especially when more acquainted with Mr. Clark. But I resigned myself to God. [August] the 23d. I got safe to Bristol.

September 1 [1780]. I find my mind stayed on God, and sweetly happy. [September] the 4th. I went to hear Mr. Wesley. His sermon seemed as if for me alone. He observed, 'It is a blessing to have preventing, enlightening, or convicting grace; but this is not the salvation I am treating of. Unless we have the love of God shed abroad in our hearts we cannot be saved. It is well to make a beginning, but we must go forward, or perish everlastingly. We are both justified and sanctified by faith, and have a direct witness of the Spirit, without which neither can exist. Others judge us by our fruits: a calm, even, gentle, resigned, patient mind in all states and situations.' I went with him to Mr. Castleman's, and had a good time.<sup>81</sup> At night he said, 'It is a shame this poor, weak thing should go home tonight. Let him have my bed.' But I declined it. [September] the 5th. Glory be to God, it has been a blessed day! My soul was filled with much love, and joy, and peace in reading Mr. Wesley's sermon on the righteousness of faith, and that on justification. How clear! How strong! O for more such sermons as *his* are! I never read them but my heart is revived. [September] the 6th. Mr. [John] Pugh came to see me. He wishes me to go to Macclesfield; but for what end should I go? I must either quarrel afresh with my father, or be continually shut up under his eye, and kept from every conversing with my dearest friends. This I know my weak body and harassed spirits could not bear. [September] the 11th. I was blessed in reading Mr. Wesley's sermon on Satan's devices, and had a calm peace all this day. [September] the 12th. I have had a good day. My body is better, and my soul is alive to God. I find a spirit of prayer, and I feel, 'All things are possible to him that believeth.'<sup>82</sup> [September] the 18th. I drank tea at Miss [Ann] Chapman's with Miss [Elizabeth] Ritchie,

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<sup>80</sup>Orig., 'Jakes'. Greenaway Jaques Jr. (d. 1782) and his wife Mary (Wheeler) Jaques, of Wallingford, Berkshire. Around the time the younger Greenaway died, JW wrote his father, Greenaway Jaques, the elder (d. 1800), whom he described as 'barely a member of our society', seeking financial support; see JW to William Robarts, Aug. 3, 1783.

<sup>81</sup>John Castleman (d. 1801), a Bristol surgeon, and his wife Letitia (Fisher) Castleman were core members of Methodism in Bristol.

<sup>82</sup>Mark 9:23.

and told her Lady Mary Fitzgerald's character,<sup>83</sup> and begged she would call on her. [September] the 20th. Miss Ritchie came to see Lady Mary, and the free, affectionate manner in which that lady saluted her pleased me much. Miss Ritchie too was very free, and told more of her experience than I had heard before. She told me I had given a just description of Lady Mary, with whom she was greatly pleased. And Lady Mary was also much taken with Miss Ritchie, and said, 'The Calvinists cannot reach her case.'

On Sunday, October 1 [1780], I was uncommonly calm, happy and free from temptation. On Monday I was rejoiced at a letter from dear Hester Roe, but found by the contents my brother Samuel was given up by the physicians, and that my father was at the point of death. I was at a loss what to do. However asking counsel of God, I resolved to set out; and Mr. Bulgin, Mr. Brown, Mr. Willis, etc., offered me money.<sup>84</sup> I then packed up my clothes, and notwithstanding the affliction of my mind, my body was unaccountably supported. The next day I got to Birmingham, which is eighty-nine miles; and the next, about noon to Derby. I was then quite spent, fainted away, and was very ill for some time. Mrs. [Sarah] Crosby came with me in the morning of the following day to Matlock. How various, how tumultuous were my thoughts! Sometimes I had a pleasing hope of finding my father better, and of seeing my dear Christian friends at Matlock. Then it occurred to me, if he is recovered, perhaps I shall be kept a prisoner in a dreadful suspense, and not suffered to go near those I love, unless we have an open quarrel. Then again I thought, I shall find him dead; gone forever into a world of spirits! After inquiring at Matlock, and having no certain accounts, tired as I was, I set off for Chesterfield. As I could hear nothing from my father that night, I passed a heavy one at the inn. Though they were a long time before they durst tell him of my arrival, Mrs. Jebb did at last. But he was so agitated that they endeavoured to compose him by changing the subject. He declared he would not see me, asked what were my motives in coming, and said I wanted to kill him, etc. Mrs. Jebb took an opportunity, when she thought my father could bear it, to desire he would see me; saying nothing but love could influence me to come so far in so bad a state of health. 'Love', said he, 'I cannot believe it. But if I must see him, let it be *now*. I will give him an hour.' I went up in much agitation. He trembled exceedingly. I threw myself at his feet and asked his blessing. After we sat down, he began in his old way and endeavoured to show I had ruined myself; asked if I was determined still to act in the same way, or be obedient and regular? As my [step-]mother [Rachael] had begged I would not grieve him, and I saw his life in danger, I said little. When all the rest were going down to dinner, I offered to stay with him. First he said no, but presently called me back and was then more free and agreeable.

Mrs. [Jebb] and the family are very kind. But my father gave me pain by joking me about Miss [Jebb?], and seemed wishful I should approve of her as a wife. But what are ten thousand pounds to me without grace? I told him what sort of a wife I should expect, if I were to marry. He said, 'You are honest, but too nice Robert', and seemed half displeased. When he saw me wishful to go to Macclesfield, he would not consent. At last I told him (though with pain and grief) if he insisted on my not going, I would not ask him any more. O how hard! Yet the Lord supported me.

My father now recovered fast, so that all were amazed. I wrote to cousin [Hester] Roe, believing I should not be permitted to see her. But at last we all set off for Macclesfield—my father permitting me to go with them on condition that I would, as soon as possible, go with brother Samuel to Bristol and attend him there. When we arrived at home, I, with difficulty, got to see and converse an hour with dear Hester Roe, who was a blessing to me, and called on John and Betty Barber, J[ames] Lean, and Rachel Bower. The rest of my friends I could not see; my father behaving with such unkind authority, and they told me if

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<sup>83</sup>Lady Mary Hervey (1725–1815), sister of the 2nd Earl of Bristol, married George Fitzgerald (d. 1785) in 1745. She was Lady of the Bedchamber to Princess Amelia, George III's favourite daughter, and made contact with the Methodists through John Fletcher. She was active in the Foundery society and at City Road Chapel, where her remains were interred. See Stevenson, *City Road*, 330, 352–53.

<sup>84</sup>The first two were William Bulgin (1758–1831), a printer in Bristol, and one of the trustees of the New Room; and Abraham Brown (c. 1725–80), who apprenticed in the book trade under Felix Farley.

I grieved him now it would kill him. Charles came over unexpectedly and told me he was married,<sup>85</sup> and came to break the matter to my father. But he refused to see him. And when my mother contrived for him to come in, as if by accident, he bid him be gone about his business. I went only to see Mr. [Brian Bury] Collins at Mr. [David] Simpson's, and my father was much displeased. As also at another time when I was at aunt [Elizabeth] Roe's.

In November 1 [1780] I set off with my brother [Samuel] for Bristol. Strange behaviour to desire *me* to go *such* a journey—myself an invalid, and distressed in my circumstances—without giving me a farthing to defray my expenses! Yea, and at a time when it will effectually hinder my ordination. But the Lord is wise, therefore I cheerfully submit to *his will*. When we arrived at Bristol, Mr. B[ulgin?] was glad to see us, and I must say, 'Hitherto the Lord hath helped me.'

November 25. My brother is very ill, and I am much confined; but I am greatly comforted by a letter from Hester Roe.<sup>86</sup> My brother seems well pleased with my attendance, and I have much comfort in seeing him so penitent. On his asking me to pray for him, I told him I always did. But said he, 'Go to prayer *now*.' When I had done, he said, 'I thank you. I have much need of your prayers.' I said, 'I only do what is my bounden duty.' When he saw me reading the Bible, he said, 'Let me partake with you', and would make remarks on what I read, saying that is very fine; what chapter is it? He grew much worse after our removal to Bath. My father trying to divert him by mentioning the balls and assemblies beginning now at Macclesfield, he said, 'They will see the folly of those things by and by.'

When my brother William came to take him home, I determined to deliver my soul with respect to him. But first I prayed that God would give me an opportunity, and dispose him to bear with me. For I thought if he died on the road I should never forgive myself if I had not warned him to prepare for such an event. Accordingly I said, 'I hope you will excuse my freedom, for I would not offend you designedly. I wish you to prepare for the worst.' He replied, 'I am going to Macclesfield for that purpose, to see and consult with Mr. [David] Simpson,' etc. I said, 'I know you are. But a thousand things may happen on the road. It is well to be prepared against every exigence. I speak from the purest motives.' He said, 'I know your intentions, and that what you say is true. I wish I had considered them sooner. I have not redeemed my time as I wish I had done.' I said, 'God is willing to forgive.' He said, 'Pray for me', and then kissed me most affectionately.

My father having yielded to his importunity, who said he could not be happy if he did not go to Macclesfield, we all received the sacrament together before parting. And although my brother could scarce breathe, through kneeling all the ordinance, yet at parting he fell on his knees to ask a blessing of his father. Never, never shall I forget the grief and distress apparent in every person's face. I thought I could not have sustained it. And the thought of leaving an afflicted father, whose health was so precarious that I might never see him more; my dear sister Polly [i.e., Margaret] very ill; and that I was going to attend a dying brother; with other trials, and my own bad state of health—all this almost drank up my spirits. Had I not been supported by a hope in God, and a sweet assurance of my brother being saved, I think it would have brought me to the grave.

Before we set off, an odd thing called a bed machine was prepared for us, and my poor brother (amidst a crowd of people) was lifted up into this awful vehicle and laid at full length, while we sat at the feet. It was drawn by six horses, and would hold four besides the person in bed. The thoughts of soon being at home raised my brother's spirits exceedingly, so that he really seemed better on the road, and rejoiced greatly when he came to Leek. Mr. and Mrs. Daintry received us with a kindness and affection, which I hope ever to remember.<sup>87</sup> And when I took leave of my brother for the night, I did not think it would be the last farewell. But in the morning we were informed he was no more. I cannot describe what

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<sup>85</sup>Charles Roe Jr. had married Mary Rylands on July 17, 1780 in Liverpool.

<sup>86</sup>See the letter dated Nov. 2, 1780 in *Spiritual Letters*, 28–29.

<sup>87</sup>Michael Daintry (1732–1811) manufactured silk and buttons in Leek, and was a senior partner of a bank in Macclesfield. His (second) wife, wed in 1779, was Margaret (Nicholson) Daintry (1744–1816).



I felt at the time. But I had the strongest assurance of meeting him in glory. He died on Thursday, December 28, 1780. On Friday the 29th we accompanied his corpse to Macclesfield; and on Sunday the 31st, he was interred in the new vault.

I now felt the effects of my fatigue, and my body was very ill. Yet I often was happy in the love of God. Cousin [Hester] Roe was a great comfort to me. My father and mother did not return from Bath till April 1781, so we had many precious opportunities among the dear people of God. But my father was displeased at my staying here, though I have suffered so much to oblige him. Some near relations too behaved in a very insulting manner. But this only excited my pity for them.

When my father came home, his ill state of health made him very peevish. He compelled me to read to him so constantly that I was closely confined, and my health (which before he came was much recruited) suffered greatly.

Sunday, April 22 [1781]. I was very ill in body; but prayed, as well as I was able, for a day of rest to my soul: and at the new church, under Mr. [Brian Bury] Collins, my faith was strengthened, my heart enlarged, and I was delivered from various temptations. This evening my father was very ill, and we had a trying time. But I had such an inward testimony of a conscience void of offence, that I was sweetly supported to bear all my father's accusations. I believe much of my father's conduct proceeds from love to me, and from a false view of things, and if any dared to deal faithfully with him in these matters, all might be set right.

Monday [April] 23.<sup>88</sup> I reasoned much concerning my little love to God, and the propensity I felt to love the creature. Satan suggesting, 'Thou dost not only *feel* this sin, but inwardly, at least, givest way to it.' But in reading a sermon of Mr. Wesley's I had a full and clear view of sanctification. [April] the 27th. I was much oppressed by my nervous disorder, and a variety of thoughts concerning my father's danger, and felt too plainly the peevishness and corruption of my heart. O Lord, when shall I awake up after thy likeness! [April] the 28th. My father is worse. Sometimes my heart seems ready to break with grief; at others, it feels as hard as a stone. Lord save his soul for Christ's sake! [April] the 29th. My father is still worse. What earthly thing can comfort him now? Lord, how astonishing is it that we should be tied to anything here, seeing we are all passing away as fast as time can carry us. O my dear father! My soul longs for his salvation! I have much power with God for him.

Wednesday, May 2 [1781]. What distressing scenes have we passed through since I wrote last. My father being thought past all hope of recovery, we begged my cousin [Hester] Roe to inform my brother Joseph of it by an express. This displeased those who had selfish ends in view. O the treachery, the self-interestedness of pretended friends! The cruelty of near relatives. But Lord, thou wilt judge and defend the cause of the innocent.

On Thursday morning, May 3, my father departed this life, and I trust there was hope in his death. He called for *all* his children by name, but poor Joseph could not arrive in time. He declared he forgave them all. And he gave all present his blessing. When Charles came, he kissed him two or three times and wept saying, 'I forgive Charles.' Mr. [David] Simpson prayed with him several times, and he often got upon his knees in bed to pray. Joseph arrived the night after his death, having come two hundred miles in twenty-six hours. He was much oppressed with grief. So were we all. But cousin Roe sitting with us, was a comfort to us.

For some time our affairs were in great confusion, through my father's dying without a will. But my aunt [Jane] Stockdale (who is a mother to us all) coming over with the trustees, things were at last settled, though not without great difficulty. May God reward my dear aunt who suffered much on the occasion!

June 24 [1781]. I went to lodgings at James Broad's. But I found the situation inconvenient, and removed to John Barber's. But in the latter end of August Betty Barber had a putrid fever, so I removed to board with my aunt [Elizabeth] Roe. Here I have found much comfort, and believe the Lord is deepening his work in my soul.

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<sup>88</sup>Orig., '22' repeated; a mistake.

George Bradock,<sup>89</sup> a simple, pious follower of God, often desired me to lead his class, when the Lord was pleased to make me useful to many; especially to P. G—, to whom I became closely united in spirit and Christian friendship. I appointed to meet him and some other simple young men once a week, for the purpose of strengthening each other's hands in seeking after Christian perfection; to pray for a revival of the work of God in our whole society; to speak simply and freely of our temptations; and to bear each other's burdens. In a little time P. G—, was a great help to me, by his loving spirit and faithful friendship, in sharing and lightening my trials. Some however opposed our little meeting, which grieved me to the heart. I advised with cousin Roe about giving it up. But she said, 'By no means. The Lord *does* bless you together, and he *will* bless you. Therefore go forward in the name of the Lord.'

A little while ago I called on a young man who was greatly afflicted. He was entirely ignorant of God, and remarkably stupid and obstinate. I thought, I will ask God to make me useful to this poor, ignorant, dead soul, if I am called to preach. I did so. And soon after, while conversing with him, the Lord spoke conviction to his heart. He now begged I would call often and pray with him. In a little more than a month he experienced the pardon of all his sins, and rejoiced with joy unspeakable. I never heard a more clear, Christian account than his. For a fortnight he rejoiced, without doubt or fear. And though he has since been tempted, and various ways buffeted of Satan, yet he holds fast his confidence. This has indeed been a blessing to my soul. And by this also I have no doubt but God intends me to preach his gospel. The only scruple remaining is whether I am to do it in or out of the Church [of England]. But this also he will show me in due time.

**[An Account of Robert Roe's Death - added by Hester Ann Roe]**

[July–August 1782] The first day of my cousin's confinement his mind was peculiarly calm and composed. Some conversation he had with Mr. Brettel<sup>90</sup> and Mr. Percival<sup>91</sup> had been a blessing to him, and with peculiar earnestness he had encouraged both of them to preach, more than ever, a present salvation. The following words were this day brought with power to his mind, 'I will be with thee in the valley and the shadow of death.'<sup>92</sup> When he repeated them to *me*, I received a deep impression on my mind that this sickness would be unto death. These words also were made a blessing to him,

Though nature's strength decay,  
And earth and hell withstand,  
To Canaan's bounds I urge my way  
At his command:  
The wat'ry deep I pass,  
With Jesus in my view,  
And through the howling wilderness  
My way pursue.<sup>93</sup>

He repeated these lines with tears, and added, 'Yes, if the Lord spares me I will preach salvation by grace more boldly than ever, in spite of all the powers of hell.' His disorder (a nervous fever) increased every

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<sup>89</sup>George Bradock (1725–98) and his wife Elizabeth (Sparbrook) Bradock (1721–81) were active in the Methodist society of Macclesfield.

<sup>90</sup>Either John Brettel, currently stationed in Nottingham, or his brother Jeremiah Brettel, stationed in Liverpool.

<sup>91</sup>William Percival (1744–1803) was admitted 'on trial' as an itinerant in 1773 (see *Works*, 10:415). He would serve until his death nearly 30 years later; see *Minutes* (post-Wesley, 1803), 2:167. He was currently stationed in Sheffield.

<sup>92</sup>Cf. Ps. 23:4.

<sup>93</sup>Thomas Olivers, *An Hymn to the God of Abraham* (Nottingham: S. Crewell, 1771), st. 5 (p. 5).

day. At some seasons the enemy took advantage, and he was filled with fear. But he said, 'I do not know *what* I fear, nor *why* I fear. Yet I cannot help it.' At all times he was kept from murmuring and impatience, and would often say, 'I never felt myself so loose to earthly things, nor ever had such an entire dependence on God. Those which used to harass my mind, seem quite taken from me.' One night, about a week before his death, he was much harassed by the enemy, with fears that death would find him unholy; and the distress of his mind added strength to the fever. About midnight he was in agonies, and soon began to be delirious. It was impressed on my mind that treacle plasters on his feet would abate the fever; accordingly I applied them. In half an hour he fell into a composed sweet sleep, and lay above two hours, having had no natural sleep before for nine days and nights. When he awoke it was with a heavenly countenance, and cried,

Cousin Hetty, I have had a most delightful dream or vision. I have been in a room with many of the people of God, and conversed with them much to my satisfaction. I thought a beautiful angel, white and shining, and above the stature of a man, entered the room, and looked on me with such sweetness that I was filled with delight, so that it thrilled through all my veins. I thought he smiled with such a look of heavenly approbation as filled me with joy inexpressible and a full assurance of my being sanctified. At the thought of this, I was so overcome with love that I awoke. But still I feel the same. Before this I have had clear ideas, and could preach it to others. But now I *feel* it. And though the enemy suggests many things, I have such a hold of God that I cannot let it go. Now if the Lord spares me I shall be a new man indeed! I can boldly preach sanctification by faith, for I *feel* it.

He praised God, and spoke of his goodness to all around him that morning, till his strength was quite spent. In the afternoon he said, 'The devil would rob me of my confidence, but he cannot.'

The night but one before his death, being in an agony of body, he broke out in solemn prayer, expressing an unshaken confidence in God. In an hour afterwards he broke out again, saying, 'Glory be to thee, thou delivering God. Thou art *my* God, and *my* *all*! I am a poor helpless creature, I *have* nothing. I *am* nothing. But I am thine, and thou art mine! Glory be to thee that it is by grace, and through faith, that we are saved' (this he repeated many times). Glory be to thee that boasting is excluded, and that Christ is all in all! I shall praise thee for free grace to all eternity.'

He then prayed for all his relations and friends, and for all who had loved and attended him. He prayed for Mr. Wesley and all the ministers of God; for the church of God, and especially for this town. I never was more affected. I could not but weep all the time, in solemn, joyful grief. Then again he cried, 'Glory be to thee! I *know* I am fit to live, or fit to die! To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain!'<sup>94</sup> The last time we got him out of bed he would not return to it (though gasping for breath) till he had given us a short account of the Lord's dealings with him, from his first conversion. He said, 'God has been faithful in all things. He never failed me in a time of need. He enabled me to be a faithful witness for him to the loss of all temporal things, and he has restored them to me again, even in this life, and has given me *himself*, and I shall enjoy him to all eternity.' The last words he spoke respecting the state of his soul were, 'Now I am wholly resigned in all things. My will is lost in the will of God. I have given all things and every person into his hands, and let him do with me whatsoever pleaseth him.' After this he was never capable of speaking rationally for two minutes; except once when he thought he was giving a dying exhortation, and then he insisted on a present and a free salvation by faith, and had no sooner done, but rambled again. He knew no person but me, and would take his medicines from no other the two last days of his life. On Sunday morning, September 15, about half past five o'clock, he sweetly fell asleep without any struggle or groan, or even rattling in his breast; but with three short sighs fled to the arms of Jesus.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 521–24, 580–82, 638–41; 7 (1784): 19–22, 76–81, 132–37, 186–89, 244–48, 303–07, 358–62, 417–19, 469–73, 523–27, 582–87, 635–38.

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<sup>94</sup>Phil. 1:21.

From John Trembath

[St. Gennys, Cornwall]  
October 4, 1782

Reverend Sir,

According to my promise,<sup>1</sup> I once more write a few lines to him that I love as my own soul. May the eternal Jehovah always guide, protect, and keep you under the shadow of his almighty wings! O how justly might God cast me off for having so long grieved his Spirit, and sinned against the clearest light! 'It is of the Lord's mercies that I am not consumed, because his compassions fail not.'<sup>2</sup> O how can I sufficiently exalt his amazing goodness, his inexhaustible grace, his long-suffering mercy! 'Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who hath healed all thy backslidings, and loved thee freely.'<sup>3</sup>

But, though God hath forgiven me, yet I cannot forgive myself for the precious time I have wasted, the years I have lost, and the glorious harvest I have neglected—when I might have been employed in the Lord's vineyard, in that blessed work of saving souls. O the shocking reproach I have brought on the gospel of Christ! When instead of showing sinners the way to life and salvation, I have, by my vile example, led them in the direct path to hell. The thought of these things grieves my very soul. O that I may still abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes!

I can now thank God for afflictions. He has indeed visited my iniquities with a rod, and my backslidings with scourges. But I will bear with patience and thankfulness the chastening of the Lord, because I have sinned against him. The first step to my sad fall was the neglecting the means of grace. This took off the taste and relish for spiritual things, and by degrees the love of the world, and the desire of other things engrossed the whole man. Till the afflicting hand of God overtook me about four years past, and brought my numerous sins to my mind. I had then time for reflection, and could not but adore the hand that smote me, and acknowledge that his judgments were mixt with mercy, in not consigning me that instant to everlasting burnings.

My soul was in deep distress. Indeed the billows went over my head, and I was ready to perish in the deep waters. I concluded I had but a short time to live, and I was sensible I was not fit to die. The various agitations of my mind heightened my distress. And as a drowning man is ready to catch at any thing to save life, I strove to take refuge in my past experience, and the immutability and faithfulness of God. But all this yielded me no solid peace, for Christ was not formed in my heart. I was not *then* a new creature. Nay, I found the faithfulness of God was against me. I had 'forsaken righteousness and committed iniquity'.<sup>4</sup> I had only one resource left—namely, the wounds of Jesus, that fountain open for sin and uncleanness. In the midst of my distress he once more applied his healing balm to my wounded conscience, and showed me that God was reconciled after all that I had done. O that I may never forget the goodness of God towards me the vilest of sinners! Pray, dear sir, for

Your unworthy, but affectionate servant,

J. Trembath

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 556–58.

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<sup>1</sup>A native of St. Gennys, Cornwall, Trembath became one of JW's travelling preachers as early as 1743. But he drifted in and out of the itinerancy from 1750 onwards. On Sept. 3, 1782, JW happened to meet Trembath in St. Gennys, and requested this account; see *Journal, Works*, 23:250–51. According to Everett, *Sheffield*, 260–61, Trembath went to Ireland after this encounter, dying there about 1793.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Lam. 3:22.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Ps. 103:2–3.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Ezek. 18:24.

From Mrs. Martha Ward

Cork  
October 28, 1782

My Dear Sir,

Since I wrote last,<sup>1</sup> it pleased the Lord to send me close and sharp trials. I was so sorely beset with them that I was often constrained to cry, 'Lord save or I perish.'<sup>2</sup> In the midst of them Mr. [Richard] Boardman came to Cork. But before we had much time to profit by his ministry his death, sudden and unexpected, gave a loud call to us all.<sup>3</sup> It spoke louder than the strongest voice, 'Be ye also ready!'<sup>4</sup> God has been glorified by the death of his servant, as well as by his life. Like Sampson, he in dying fulfilled his mission. Cork has not known such a revival for many years as is now taking place in it.

The congregations on Sunday evenings are so large that they cannot find room within, and many are obliged to stand in the yard as far as the outer gate. The word is attended with power. Many old professors, who were grown lukewarm and settled on their lees, are stirred up. They hunger and thirst after righteousness, and are on stretch for purity of heart. Many who formerly partook of this blessing and lost their evidences are stirred up to seek it afresh, so that they cannot rest without it. Backsliders are restored, and new members adding to our number.

I believe there has been no select band here for these three years past, and I told one of our preachers the reason which I thought caused it to drop, and at the same time observed that the surest means of securing a prospect of lasting prosperity to our people was to revive it. For though it was harder to keep it up than the other means, yet they whose hearts were on stretch for a recovery of what they had lost, and they who were now alive to God by meeting together, would, after having known so much by dear-bought experience, be more steadfast and immovable. Besides, the work would spread itself from this centre (if I may so call it) to the rest of the people. I believe, through the blessing and assistance of God, it will soon be restored again.

Last night at the public bands I was enabled to witness a good confession, and to tell the people that through grace, I loved the Lord my God with all my heart, with all my soul, and with all my strength. The fire of his love constrained me to declare all that I experienced; that the efficacy of the Saviour's blood is powerful to cleanse from all unrighteousness. I find since that moment a settled, heavenly, uninterrupted peace, joy, and love. I found it indeed six months ago. But of late I find it deepening and enlarging in my heart. May the Almighty send us a man after his own heart, in whose hands his cause will prosper! I hope I shall have more good tidings to tell you in my next. Adieu, my dear sir, believe me, with tenderest affection,

Your unworthy daughter and servant,

M. W.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 609–10.

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<sup>1</sup>See Ward to JW, July 15, 1788.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Matt. 8:25.

<sup>3</sup>Boardman died Oct. 4, 1782, in Cork.

<sup>4</sup>Matt. 24:44.

From Thomas Taylor

St. John's River, East Florida  
November 1, 1782

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Since I wrote to you last,<sup>1</sup> the face of affairs in America is entirely changed. However reluctant Lord S—,<sup>2</sup> etc. may be to consent to the formal acknowledgment of American independence, I think it is by this time quite clear that it must inevitably take place. All I wish for, or expect, is, that they may make terms for the poor loyalists. And this they certainly will do, unless they mean to forfeit all claim to national honour and good faith.

Charles Fox, I see, was not content with bringing the empire to the brink of ruin by his virulent opposition to government, when out of place.<sup>3</sup> But he must needs strive to fix the doom of the unhappy refugees, by having independence declared unconditionally. Now I well know that the better sort among the rebels wish most sincerely for peace, upon the condition of restoring the loyalists to their estates. But this they will never be able to effect, in opposition to the blackguard set who are at present a majority, unless Britain makes it a condition.

I need not inform you that Savannah was evacuated in July last; in consequence of which several hundred families were obliged to remove to this province. Those possessed of large numbers of slaves went mostly to Jamaica. Charlestown is now sharing the same fate. Government furnishes the whole with three months provisions.

Those who are industrious may do very well in this province, though the lands in general are not comparable to those of Carolina and Georgia. The skirts of hammock (or oak and hickory) land upon the edges of the rivers and creeks produce indigo pretty well. And the climate admits of its being cut three or four times in a season, whereas in Georgia it is seldom more than twice. During the war the planters find naval stores by much the most profitable.

It is with great pleasure I can inform you that I have every reason to bless God for giving me such a wife;<sup>4</sup> one who is sincerely disposed to forward everything that is praiseworthy, or conducive to piety. She is still in Savannah with her relations. But I expect her here every day. I am, reverend and dear sir,

Yours most affectionately,

Thomas Taylor

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 610–11.

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<sup>1</sup>See Taylor to JW, Feb. 28, 1782.

<sup>2</sup>Likely referring to George Germain (1716–85), 1st Viscount Sackville, who was currently Secretary of State for the American Department.

<sup>3</sup>Charles James Fox (1749–1806) was a prominent British Whig statesman, a staunch opponent of George III, and a supporter of the revolting colonists in North America.

<sup>4</sup>Bellamy (Johnston) Taylor.

From Elizabeth Ritchie

[Otley]  
November 11, 1782

Will my dear and reverend father excuse my seeming neglect? Whilst I was from home, the multiplicity of my engagements amongst the people wherever I went left me little time for writing. But now that I am again settled in my peaceful dwelling, I will endeavour to give a little account of the many mercies bestowed on me and others during my late journey.

I found, as you observe, at Liverpool a new scene opened to me. For some years my lot has not been cast so much among worldly people as at this place. But blessed be God, he kept me separate in spirit from those that knew him not; and never did I feel more love and pity for those who were entangled in the allurements of this vain world, or more thankfulness to that God whose gracious love had set my spirit free. As to our own people there, they are very friendly and loving. Some few seemed a little stirred up to seek holiness of heart; and brother B[utton], who experiences it, will, I trust, prove an universal blessing to them.<sup>1</sup>

At Macclesfield I found a happy, lively people, and my soul was greatly refreshed amongst them. Many there bless God that they ever heard Mr. Robert Roe talk about simple faith, and his dying testimony seems to have added weight to the truths he taught.

I spent a few days with our dear friends at Portwood, at which place my soul was greatly humbled, and richly comforted.<sup>2</sup> The Stockport society love the whole truth. But as yet, few of them enjoy the full liberty of the gospel. At Bolton I had a good time, where the Lord blest me in my own soul, and gave his blessing to the people.

O that that love which is the fulfilling of the law may everywhere prevail! My soul rejoices in the prosperity of others. And blessed be God, I daily rejoice in him whose love is without measure or end. He enlarges my borders, increases my expectations, and fills me with ardent desire after all the fullness of his love. Never did I feel my spirit more disengaged from all beneath. And though at times I deeply feel how much more fully I might have improved all my mercies, yet I am kept from discouragement by the reviving presence of my Lord, who by his spirit points out and discovers this to me with inexpressible tenderness. I see such wisdom, such love in all his dealings with me, as sinks me into the dust, and fills my heart with grateful praise. Our God is rich in mercy thus to deal with worthless worms. But there is no end of his goodness. May I lose myself in this unfathomable depth, and never grieve that love, that mercy, with which I am surrounded. May all blessings be ever poured from on high on my dear and much loved father. And may he every moment feel all that Jesus has purchased and promised, communicated to his believing soul! I am, my dear sir,

Your truly affectionate, though unworthy child,

E. R.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 612–13.

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<sup>1</sup>George Button (1754–1822), a native of Rotherham, Yorkshire, was admitted in the itinerant ministry in 1779 (see *Works*, 10:484). He continued active in ministry until his death; see *Minutes* (post-Wesley, 1822), 5:294. He had been appointed to the Liverpool circuit at Conference in Aug. 1782.

<sup>2</sup>Matthew and Rachel (Hassles) Mayer of Portwood Hall, near Stockport.

From [Mrs. Martha Ward?]<sup>1</sup>

[Cork]  
c. November 15, 1782

Sunday, September 29, Mr. [Richard] Boardman, having been about eleven days at Cork, was going out to dinner when, as he was walking, he was suddenly struck blind, so that he could not find the way till one of our friends met him and took him by the hand. Soon after he seemed to recover himself, and sat down to dinner. But quickly after, he had a kind of fit, wherein he was deprived both of speech and of understanding, and had one of his sides strongly contracted.<sup>2</sup> Yet after a few hours he was pretty well. A physician was called in, who termed it a nervous distemper, and did not think there was any danger. On Monday he seemed to be perfectly well, and preached both on that and the following evenings. In the meantime his mind was calm and serene, and no way anxious about life or death. On Friday morning [Oct. 4] he appeared quite easy, and met the people at the hour of intercession—when it was observed that he had a very uncommon degree of freedom and power with God. After the intercession, he went about 3:00 in the afternoon to dine in Blarney Lane. As he was walking, his wife<sup>3</sup> observed him to falter in his speech, and desired him to return. But he would not comply. As soon as he came into the house, he sunk down insensible. He was brought home in a carriage, and two physicians were sent for. They both declared it was an apoplectic fit, and that there was no possibility of helping him. It continued till 9:00 in the evening. He then expired in the arms of two of his brethren, and in the presence of many, who commended him to God with sorrowful hearts and weeping eyes.

The Sunday morning before his death, he preached from, 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.'<sup>4</sup> It was a solemn meeting. A reverential awe filled the hearts of the congregation. In his last prayer on Friday, at the intercession, he prayed fervently for the people, and begged that if this was their last meeting in this world, they might have a happy meeting in the realms of light. When he was leaving Limerick, he told Mrs. Boardman that he should die in Cork. But he spoke it without the least concern, as knowing in whom he had believed. Mr. Yewdall<sup>5</sup> preached his funeral sermon, on 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.'<sup>6</sup> I think to as large a congregation as ever I saw in the room at Cork.

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 22–23.

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<sup>1</sup>The sender is not named, but is clearly someone who has been part of the society at Cork for some time. Martha Ward had mentioned Boardman's death briefly in her letter to JW of Oct. 28, 1782. It is likely that he wrote asking for more details.

<sup>2</sup>I.e., he suffered a stroke.

<sup>3</sup>Olive (Weatherby) Boardman.

<sup>4</sup>Job 13:15.

<sup>5</sup>Zachariah Yewdall (1751–1830) was raised a Quaker, and drawn to Methodism in his later teens. He joined the local Methodist society in 1771. He was accepted as a travelling preacher 'on trial' at the 1779 Conference (*Works*, 10:486). He would serve in that role for 32 years; see *Minutes* (post-Wesley, 1830), 6:553–54. He was presently the Assistant for the Cork circuit, serving with Boardman.

<sup>6</sup>Rev. 14:13.



From Joseph Benson<sup>1</sup>

Halifax  
November 16, 1782

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Though I have never been at Birstall since Conference, and have had no conversation with the parties concerned respecting the matter in debate, yet from what I could not avoid hearing concerning it, I most sincerely wish you had come down into Yorkshire yourself upon the business of that preaching house, instead of delegating Dr. [Thomas] Coke.<sup>2</sup> And then I am persuaded things would have been settled in an amicable manner. At least they would not have been carried to such a length. Alas, sir! It is not the part of inexperienced rashness, but of mature wisdom and prudent caution, to settle affairs like this wherein the passions of men are so much inflamed and their prejudices so rooted. For my part, I have all along declined intermeddling in this business, and have chosen to remain a silent spectator of the proceedings of both sides—not from any dislike to the plan of settlement exhibited in the *Minutes* and generally adopted, but from a love of peace and an unwillingness to meddle where I had no immediate concern. And I am inclined to think, had some of my brethren who were as little concerned as I am acted in the same manner, and stirred less in this fire, it would not have blazed so high. But be this as it will, as things are gone to such a length, as the fire is kindled and rages horribly, so as to threaten not only the entire ruin of Birstall society but the great damage of all the neighbouring societies; and as it is manifest if it be not extinguished the work of God throughout the west of Yorkshire will suffer an injury not to be repaired perhaps in your lifetime; I cannot stand by as an idle beholder any longer, but (with however little prospect of success) must lend an helping hand to quench the flames, or at least to stall their progress.

With this view I offer it to your consideration whether it will not be time enough to build another house at Birstall when the trustees and managers of this house shall refuse any preacher or preachers the Conference may send them. To do it *now* will most certainly rend the society in pieces; or rather leave us no society to rend, or even congregation to preach to. For the generality of the people there and in the neighbourhood are indisputably on the side of the trustees. And why should we plunge *now* into the very evils we dread at your death, and tear or alienate from us *immediately* the *eldest* and one of the most flourishing societies in Yorkshire, for fear lest it should be torn or alienated *some years hence*. If we must have war and confusion *after your departure*, for God's sake let us have peace and harmony at least *while you live*. But if, as I hear, the trustees are Methodists in principle, and have not the smallest desire of anything else but that things should go on as they do now, the same doctrine be preached, the same discipline maintained, and the preachers continue to change in the same manner, I trust they *never will* refuse any preacher the Conference may send them. Nor indeed will they be able, since it seems the matter is not to rest with them alone, but with the leaders also who, as appointed by the preachers, are under their influence and may at any time be deprived of their offices and others put in their places, and who are so numerous as always to form a majority. But putting the case at the worst, if some years hence their minds should alter and they should refuse the preachers the Conference send, *then* the Conference will have a good foundation to go upon, and may make collections and build another house with a good

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<sup>1</sup>The trustees of the Methodist preaching-house in Birstall expanded it in the summer of 1782, which involved a renewal of the deed for the house. The original deed had been drawn up before the Model Deed was in place that gave JW control of the preachers allowed to use the house; see 'Large' *Minutes* (1763), §67, *Works*, 10:868–70. The Birstall trustees wanted to preserve the power to appoint preachers that was in their original deed. This sparked a protracted disagreement, with JW working to insure that the Model Deed applied to all preaching houses; see 'The Case of Birstall House', *Works*, 9:504–09.

<sup>2</sup>For Thomas Coke's role in this affair, see Thomas Coke, *An Address to the Inhabitants of Birstal[l]* (Leeds: J. Bowling, 1782); and Tyerman, *John Wesley*, 3:378–80.

grace, being shut out of this. To build in *such* circumstances would give no offense to the neighbouring societies, but would meet with the approbation and assistance of them all. Yea, even of the society at Birstall itself, or probably of the greatest part, and the congregation who (I am inclined to think) will always approve of a change of preachers, though of inferior talents, to the having one individual settled among them for a constancy, though his gifts might be greater. And of this disposition I believe the body of the Methodists are throughout the kingdom, having had long experience of the advantages that arise from a continual change, which are such as they could not reap from the labours of any *one* person *whichsoever* fixed among them. So that, in my humble opinion, they who say it would then be *too late* to build another house when the preachers are shut out of this are under an entire mistake. It would be the *very time*, and to do it *before* would be *too soon*—unless we are in love with confusion, and delight more to *scatter* than to *gather*; in the plentitude of our power *lording it over God's heritage*, rather than being *examples to the flock*; destroying, not with our meat indeed,<sup>3</sup> but with our *brick and mortar*, the souls of for whom Christ died, and pulling down and dispersing abroad the house of *living stones*, for fear least at some future period we should not have one of dead stones to assemble in. Excuse me, dear sir, if I say I for one entirely disapprove of such proceedings, and if I were of any consequence, or had any weight, would give my voice and enter my protest against them. In the name of faith in that divine providence which hath hitherto watched over this great work and strangely brought the most unlikely and blessed things to pass, so that you have often stood in admiration and called large congregations to behold, saying, 'What hath God wrought?'<sup>4</sup> Whence is this distrust and fear of future consequences? Whence these polite contrivances and schemes laid by art and man's device? Are they from above? What, though they produce strife, contention, and every evil work? Separate chief friends, scatter whole societies, sow the seeds of discord among the principal preachers, and furnish matter of idle conversation to a whole country and open the mouths of the enemies of God and his cause in ridicule and banter? 'By their fruits you shall know them.'<sup>5</sup> They are from beneath, of their father the devil, whose delight it is to divide and destroy. He, my dear sir, has too much hand in these contentions, and cares not how *great* or how *small* the matters are that produce them. While our foresight and policy are busy in devising schemes for the future security and enlargement of God's work, he is equally busy, and but too successful, in secretly turning these schemes to the present advantage of his own kingdom, by making these well-built plans (shall I say, these castles in the air?) the occasion of discord among God's people, which he well knows never fail to subserve his interest. Alas, sir! Do we not know that whatever kindles the flame of wrath and hatred among the followers [of] Christ, and turning the lambs of his flock into lions and tigers, biting and devouring each other, is the pure and genuine offspring of him whose name is Apollyon and whose nature it is to hate and destroy? And have we forgot? [breaks at bottom of a page; remainder missing]

Source: Benson's manuscript copy for his records; MARC, PLP 7/8/10.

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<sup>3</sup>See Rom. 14:15.

<sup>4</sup>Num. 23:23.

<sup>5</sup>Matt. 7:16.

From Hester Ann Roe

[Macclesfield]  
November 21, 1782

My Dear and Honoured Sir,

I have been much indisposed since I wrote last.<sup>1</sup> But I think it is not wholly my old disorders. I believe since my cousin [Robert]'s death my nerves have been much affected, because anything sudden will occasion tremors which I can no otherwise account for, at the same time that my soul is in perfect peace and solidly happy. As also many times there is a dullness and stupidity, when at the same moment I feel a direct witness that it proceeds not from any abatement of the ardours of love divine. Glory be to God, I feel this as a well of water ever-springing up afresh, and I know the work of his grace takes still deeper root than ever in my worthless heart. And though at times the enemy suggests if this nervous disorder takes hold of me as on my late dear cousin, I shall not rejoice evermore as I have done hitherto; yet I am enabled to answer him in the power of faith, 'My strength shall be equal to my day.'<sup>2</sup> If he afflicts, I have his word of promise, 'My grace is sufficient for thee.'<sup>3</sup> Nor can I have one painful fear. I know in whom I trust.

I was yesterday employed in visiting different members of the classes with Mr. [James] Rogers, a business which has been much neglected here of late, and which I trust, will be made a blessing to many.<sup>4</sup> I find it profitable. Mr. Rogers has suffered much through the prejudices of some, but he is as gold purified in the fire. It has been an unspeakable blessing. It has cut off his intimacy with those who would perhaps have proved snares and hindrances to his soul and his labours, and united him more closely to the little flock who are rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom. I believe he has acted faithfully to God, to souls, and to you.

The select band is now the most precious meeting in which I ever assembled. There are forty-eight members, all truly and happily walking in the narrow path. Thirty-five, I have no doubt, enjoy perfect love. About six have enjoyed it before, and are now seeking it afresh. And the rest, who never enjoyed it, are thirsting for it more than gold or silver. We are all too united in one spirit. All in this little company are helpers of each other's joy.

I love Mrs. Rogers much.<sup>5</sup> She is indeed one of the excellent ones of the earth. I feel much for you respecting the affair at Birstall.<sup>6</sup> May the Lord strengthen your hands, and in doing so, defend his own cause. Your warfare shall surely yet be glorious, though it be through briers, or thorns, or scorpions. The Lord still reigneth, and will defend his dear servants. Surely he is purging his Sion, and will remove the chaff, and leave himself a pure and a peaceable remnant, whose motto shall be: 'Holiness to the Lord.'

The openness of my disposition has sometimes brought me into inconveniences. But with you I believe it will not, and therefore I speak freely. I am very unapt to suspect any person of guile. But experience tells me all are not to be trusted. I feel I need the continual unction of the Holy One to teach me. O pray that this may be every given to

Your ever affectionate, unworthy child in a precious Jesus,

H. A. R.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 217–18.

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<sup>1</sup>See her letter of Sept. 28, 1782.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Deut. 33:25.

<sup>3</sup>2 Cor. 12:9.

<sup>4</sup>Rogers was currently the Assistant for the Macclesfield circuit.

<sup>5</sup>James Rogers married Martha Knowlden (1755–84) in 1778; after her death, Roe would become his wife.

<sup>6</sup>See the letter of Joseph Benson, Nov. 16, 1782.

From the Rev. Johann Gottlieb Burckhardt

London, in Savoy-Square  
November 28, 1782

Viro summe Reverendo J. Wesley,

S[alutem] P[lurimam] D[icit] Johannes Theophilus Burckhardt, Pastor Germ. ad aedem St. Mariae (Savoy).

Legi nuperrime, in libro quodam germanico periodico, judicia perversissima de Methodistis in Anglia. Mei itaque esse puto, istiusmodi praeconceptis opinionibus, quae sunt rei christianae valde noxiae, in patria mea obviam ire, veramque Methodismi historiam, originem, naturam, fata ac statum praesentem popularibus meis enarrare ac describere. Peto igitur a Te, Vir Venerande, ut mihi, talem historiam scripturo, genuinos fontes indicare, atque scripta suppeditare velis, quibus ista historia jam pertractata est, et quae ad illustrandam illam faciunt. Pittius, unus ex praedecessoribus meis, sine dubio Tibi non ignotus fuit. Caeterum, ex animo precor Deum, Patrem Domini, nostri Jesu Christi, ut in commodum ecclesiae suae, senectutem Tuam juvenili robore induere atque ornare. Seque diu inter nos in posterum conservare velit,

Vale, mihi que fave!

[English Translation]

Most Reverend Mr. John Wesley,

Greetings from Johann Gottlieb Burckhardt, Pastor of the German Church of St. Mary-le-Savoy.<sup>1</sup>

I read lately in one of the German periodicals a perverse evaluation of the Methodists in England. Accordingly I intend to oppose these preconceived opinions in my homeland, which are very harmful to Christianity, and to recount a *true* history of Methodism for my countryfolk, describing its origin, nature, progress, and present state.<sup>2</sup> Therefore I ask you, honoured sir, to direct me to such historical writings, genuine sources, and the authentic materials for such a work; and that you supply me with texts in which this history has already been told and its nature illustrated. Pittius,<sup>3</sup> one of my predecessors, was no doubt known to you. In any case, I heartily pray to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and for the sake of their church, to endue and equip you with the strength of youth in your old age, and that he will choose to preserve you among us for many years.

Goodbye to you kindly.

*Annotation:* by JW; 'Dr Burckardt / Nov 28 1782 / a[nswere]d Dec. 15'.

*Source:* holograph; MARC, WCB, D6/1/230.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Johann Gottlieb Burckhardt (1756–1801) pastored St. Mary-le-Savoy 1781–1801.

<sup>2</sup>See his eventual publication, J. G. Burckhardt, *Vollständige Geschichte der Methodisten in England* (Nuremberg, 1795).

<sup>3</sup>Rev. Johann Richard Pittius (d. Nov. 4, 1767) pastored the congregation 1742–67.

<sup>4</sup>A previous transcription was published in Whitehead, *Life*, 2:401–02.

From J. M.<sup>1</sup>

[Bristol?]  
December 1782

[...] And first, I would advise you to speak comfortably to the people, who are irritated to a high degree against you.<sup>2</sup> The die is not yet cast. You are not yet in as bad a situation as England is with regard to America. A few comfortable words might yet make them your own forever. Let not your sun go down under a cloud. Stain not, as it were with blood,<sup>3</sup> every action of your whole life. Leave the event to providence. You cannot prevent a separation of your preachers after you are gone to rest; why should you see it in your lifetime? A door is open for you at Bristol, and a comfortable door too.<sup>4</sup> Why should you leave the word of God to serve tables? At the instigation of those who would be glad to see your head laid in the dust, if they might sit in your chair! One would think you might, with almost half an eye, see what some of them are aiming at. May the God of peace open your eyes, and direct you to act in such a manner as will disappoint our grand adversary of his unlawful prey.

I am, reverend sir,

Your well-wisher and humble servant,

J. M.

Source: published excerpt; Whitehead, *Life*, 2:402–03.

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<sup>1</sup>This letter is known only from its published transcription in Whitehead, *Life*. Whitehead describes the manuscript in his hand as incomplete, and gives only initials for the author. One possibility would be John Maddocks Esq. (1727–94) of Lincoln's Inn, a barrister whom JW consulted in July about the Birstall preaching-house deed; see Tyerman, *John Wesley*, 3:381.

<sup>2</sup>Whitehead (p. 402) suggests the irritation was on the part of Methodists strongly committed to the Church of England, troubled by the influence of one of JW's close associates who supported the push for separation from the Church. The content of the letter might fit better irritation on the part of those seeking to separate, who were frustrated by JW's hesitance.

<sup>3</sup>See the footnote in Whitehead, *Life*, 2:403.

<sup>4</sup>It is unclear what this open door might be.

From Sampson Staniforth (autobiography)<sup>1</sup>

[Greenwich]  
c. December 1782

Reverend and Dear Sir,

1. I never thought I should be called upon to appear in print, or to give an account of myself, considering how many of my brethren there are who have not only deeper experience but far greater abilities and more time than me. But since you desire it of me, I think it my duty to obey those that are over me in the Lord. I now therefore cast my mite into the treasury, and pray God it may be profitable to some soul! I shall first speak of my life from the time of my birth till I was about twenty-five years old: and secondly, from the time that God called me to the present time. I am sensible my case is peculiar, both in a state of sin and in my conversion to God. And my account of it must be very imperfect, as I never kept any diary and can only set down a few things that I can call to mind after so many years.

2. I was born at Sheffield, in December 1720. My father who was a cutler, had thirteen children; but only four lived to years of maturity. There was no care taken of my education; none in the family having the form, much less the power of religion—so that while I was young, I heard nothing about either religion or morality. Hence it was that I had no conviction of any kind, no fear of God before my eyes, no thought of his providence, of his sparing mercy, or indeed of his having anything to do in the world. Nay, I was totally averse to all good, and hated the very appearance of religion. And in this deplorable state I continued till I was fourteen years of age.

3. I was then put apprentice to a baker. This was a very good place for my body. But no care at all was taken of my soul, only that sometimes my master made me read on Sunday a chapter in the Bible. But I knew not what it meant, nor why it was called the word of God, or what people went to church for? From fourteen to seventeen I was diligent in my business, and gave satisfaction to my master. But all this time I never once thought: Why was I born into the world? What is my business in it? Or where shall I go when this life is over?

4. I was now fast bound with the chains of sin, filled with unholy desires, and as often as occasion offered bringing them into practice. And I had not the least remorse for any of the sins I was daily committing; being as perfectly 'without God in the world',<sup>2</sup> as the beasts that perish. I now got into bad company, and by their advice and encouragement ran into open wickedness, gaming in particular, to the great disadvantage of my master, and the great sorrow of my parents. And yet I still had not the least compunction, nor any more sorrow for sin than a wild ass's colt.

5. I began about this time to get into company with the soldiers that were in the town. And I frequently told my mother that I had an inclination to go into the army. This troubled her much, and she often with tears expostulated with me concerning it. To keep me out of it, she used to supply me with money. But this only enabled me to keep more company, and to run into all manner of sin. Several times she fetched me away from my companions at night. But whenever I could, I ran away from her and got to them again. And in this ungodly course I went on, till I was about nineteen years of age.

6. One night I was in company with a neighbour's son, who had been in the army some time, and was now absent from it upon a furlough, to spend a few days with his friends. After we had been drinking till about eleven o'clock, he asked me whether I would not list? I immediately answered I would, and he gave me three guineas, and a crown to drink His Majesty's health. We continued drinking all night. In the morning one came in that knew me, who went and told my mother. She came with one of my sisters and

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<sup>1</sup>Sampson Staniforth (1720–99) was born in Sheffield, joined the army about 1739, and was converted while on a campaign in Europe about 1744. Back in England for a while, he came under JW's preaching in 1745. He eventually left the army and settled in Greenwich, working as a master baker and supporting the Methodist cause, including financing the construction of a preaching house. Over the years he also served as a local preacher, particularly in Deptford and Rotherhithe.

<sup>2</sup>Eph. 2:12.

took me home, and put me to bed. Afterwards she went and returned the money which I had received, and with a little more bought me off. I then went home to my master, who received me very kindly, and did not upbraid me with anything that I had done.

7. But all this made not the least impression upon me. I felt no gratitude either to God or man. About eight days after, as I was one morning going out with my bread, I met the sergeant and two more soldiers and told them I wanted to list. We went into an alehouse together, and I received the money from them. I sent the basket back to my master, and immediately went two miles to the justice's to take the oath. About a fortnight after I left Sheffield. All my friends were in tears. But it made no impression on me, as I was not only fierce and passionate, but also sullen and malicious, without any feeling of humanity. Instead of weeping with those that wept, I even rejoiced in their sorrow.

8. Hence we marched for Edinburgh. We arrived there on the 15th of the November preceding the great frost. I was drafted into one of the companies that lay in the castle. There my hardships began. There were no barracks then, but we lay upon straw in the vault, and throughout the winter had but one fire for seventy men. Through my own sin and folly, my little pay was soon gone. And generally two days in a week, Tuesday and Friday, being the days before the paydays, I had little or nothing to eat. But even this, together with hard duty, made no manner of impression upon my heart. Nay, I became more hardened, and added profane swearing to my other sins. From thence we marched to Glasgow, where I several times heard that dear servant of God, Mr. [George] Whitefield. But I had no conception of what he said, nor any desire to profit by it. We next marched to Ayr, where a kind of providence watched over me for good. For I and two more wild fellows took a boat and rowed down toward the sea. But we had not skill to manage it, and the ebbing tide was carrying us down to the sea, when just at the end of the pier the boat gave a turn and we caught hold of a post. Here we held till help came. Otherwise we had probably gone to the bottom of the sea, and to the bottomless pit at once, as we were all sinning with a high hand, drinking in iniquity like water.

9. From this place we marched to Perth, and lay there some time. During our stay, I paid my addresses to a young woman. But though she loved me, I did not behave to her with that honour I should have done. Just at that time the old Highland regiment came to quarter at Perth, and I was remanded to the other side of the river, to a little village called Bridge End. She had some relations in this regiment, to whom she told what had passed between us. They sent for me, and for some time behaved with a deal of kindness, expecting that I would give them farther promises of fulfilling my engagement with her. She was present at the same time. Finding I did not in any wise answer their expectations, they began talking together in their own language and, as I could not but observe, with great warmth of spirit. Though I did not, she understood what they said, and endeavoured to pacify them. A little after she rose up, called me out, told me they were determined to kill me, and begged me, for God's sake, to return with all speed into my own quarters. I took her advice and returned immediately. I came to town again the next market day. They heard of it, and were in search of me, being fully determined upon revenge. But she found me out first, informed me of their fixed resolution to murder me, and insisted on my crossing the water without delay. I ran to the waterside. A boat was just going off, into which I stepped. But before we were half over the water, they came running down with their swords drawn to the riverside. But they durst go no farther, there being strict orders that none should pass the river.

10. We marched from Perth to Edinburgh, and thence to Shields, in order to embark with the rest of the army for Flanders. I had now been three years and a half in the army. We were eight days on our passage, and landed at Ostend in spring 1743. Thence we marched to Ghent, where we were joined by three regiments more, to guard the king's baggage and the army's clothing. This was a long and fatiguing march, as well as a dangerous one. We had above four hundred wagons, with other carriages and several pieces of cannon under our care; and expected every day to be attacked by a part of the French army. So that we were obliged constantly to march in order of battle, and had no settled camp till we came to the grand army, a few days after the Battle of Dettingen.

11. We then marched to the camp at Worms. There orders were read at the head of every regiment that no soldier must be seen above a mile from the camp, upon pain of death; which was to be executed immediately, without the form of a court martial. But this did not at all deter me. Although my

life was in continual danger, I went on in the same course all the campaign, neither fearing God nor regarding man. One night in particular, as soon as we had pitched our tents, I set out with some of my comrades to a little town which lay on the left of the camp. I was busy in drinking when the captain with a guard of horse was coming to take us up, being appointed to seize upon all who were found out of the lines, and to hang up the first man without delay. I looked back and saw the captain and his guard, who had shut all the gates. But I ran to the great gate, wherein was a wicket-door, which was only upon the latch. I slipped through, and before the gate could be opened for horsemen to follow me, I ran some distance from the town, and hid myself among the vines. There I lay till they were past, and then got into the camp, just as the roll was calling.

12. After several marches we came, toward the close of the year, to the camp near Spires [i.e., Speyer]. Before this many grievous complaints had been made of our soldiers' plundering the country. To prevent this, it was again proclaimed at the head of every regiment that the captain with his guard would be out every night, and had express orders immediately to hang up the first man that he took. I was close to the officer who read this; and to show how little we regarded it, as soon as he was gone to his tent, I and ten more of our regiment set out to plunder. We went to a village about two miles from the camp to search for money, but could find none. However we saw four bullocks, which we drove away before us. One of our officers met me and asked whose they were? I told him they were some that we had bought. He said very well, and went away. We sold three of them, and killed the other. The next day the poor people came to the camp and found the three which we had sold. They made their complaint to the commanding officer, who immediately gave orders to apprehend us. But that very morning I had been sent to some distance from the camp on an out-party—so the good providence of God, though I knew him not, once more preserved me from a shameful death.

13. Orders now came for our marching into Flanders, in which long march nothing material happened. The English army quartered in Bruges and Ghent. Our regiment was in Ghent, where we had cold lodging, little fire, and hard duty. I lay here three months, still continuing in my ignorance and rebellion against God. Meantime I had many sorrowful letters from my dear mother, with frequent little supplies of money. All the next summer we lay quite inactive, only plundering all the country. When I look back on those times, I know not which to admire most, God's goodness or my own wickedness. To complete which, I was now engaged with a Negro man's wife, who was passionately fond of me. But what is too hard for God? I was now about twenty-five years old and had never yet once said, with any real desire, 'Lord, have mercy upon me!' But better days were at hand. The manner of God's bringing me out of the horrible pit I am next to relate.

[14.] After several marches we came to another camp, where we lay nine or ten weeks. There was one in the same company with me whose experience was a direct contrast to mine. His name was Mark Bond. He was born at Barnard Castle, in the county of Durham. For many years I was wholly without God in the world. But he feared God from three years old, and was under great concern for his soul, and many times prayed to God in secret. When his parents sometimes put him to bed without saying his prayers, as soon as they were gone he would rise and say them. Otherwise he could not sleep. From this time, till he was seven years old, he was harassed with various temptations—but with one above all: he was violently and continually importuned to curse God. Till one day, when he was about seven years of age, he went into the fields, under a hedge, and actually did it. The moment he had uttered the words he was in great horror and distress of soul. he then thought God would no more have mercy, and that there was no salvation for him. Nevertheless he was, by the fear of God, restrained from outward sin. From that time till he was about eighteen, the sorrows of his heart were enlarged. He concluded he must go to hell, and had no Christian friend to advise with. O what need have we to bless God for those helps he was destitute of! He durst not however put an end to his own life. But a recruiting party being in the town, he entered into the army, desiring and hoping that he should soon be killed. Upon this principle he listed in the company I was in. But his ways was not like those of other men. Out of his little pay he saved money to send to his friends. We could never get him to drink with us, but he was always full of sorrow. He read much, and was much in private prayer.



[15.] At the beginning of the campaign, he went to hear the preaching of John Haime, William Clements, and John Evans. There he found what he wanted. God soon spake peace to his soul, and he rejoiced with joy unspeakable. He then began to think whom he should open his mind to? He thought of several, but could fix on none but me. He could not shake me off his mind, till he came to me and told me what God had done for his soul, adding how desperate my case would be if I died without experiencing the same. But all of this was strange language to me. I understood it not. And as soon as he was gone, I used to go to her I mentioned before, and make sport of all he had said. He came to me after, but I would not hear him. He then endeavoured to turn his thoughts on someone else. But I was continually on his mind, sleeping and waking. He could not rest, either day or night, but it was on his mind, 'Go to Sampson.' He came to me, and told me what he had felt and suffered on my account. But I did not mind it, till he met me one time, when I was in distress, having neither food, money, nor credit. On his coming and asking me to go and hear the preaching, I said, 'You had better give me something to eat or drink. For I am both hungry and dry.' He took me to a sutler's, and gave me both meat and drink. Then he took me by the hand, and led me to a place erected about half a mile from the camp. I had no desire to hear anything of religion, but on the contrary went with great reluctance. Who it was that was speaking I do not know. But this I know, that God spake to my heart. In a few minutes I was in deep distress, full of sorrow, under a deep sense of sin and danger, but mixed with a desire of mercy. And now, I that never prayed in my life, was continually calling upon God. In time past I could shed tears for nothing, but now the rock was rent. A fountain was opened and tears of contrition ran plentifully down my cheeks. A cry after God was put into my heart, which has never yet ceased, and I trust never will. My dear companion observed it with great joy. I was as it were knocked down like an ox. I had nothing to plead, having never had either the power or the form of godliness. No works, no righteousness was mine. I could only say, 'God be merciful to me a sinner!'<sup>3</sup>

[16.] From that hour, as much addicted to it as I was before, I never swore an oath. And I was never more overcome by liquor, though I had been so enslaved to it for several years. Indeed there was a constant cry in my inmost soul, 'Save, Lord, or I perish!'<sup>4</sup> When the preaching was over, my dear companion took me in his arms, blessed God with a joyful heart, and said he would come the next night and fetch me to the preaching. I went to my tent full of sorrow, thoroughly convinced what a miserable state I was in, and seeing all my sins stand in battle array against me. All the next day I was longing for the time of hearing preaching and seeing my dear companion. But I had not patience to stay so long. I went to the place some time before they began. There were several soldiers of other regiments come before me. Some were reading, others conversing of the things of God. Some at a little distance were singing. And some down in a corner were at prayer. I was walking about, my heart full of sorrow, my eyes full of tears, wishing I could pour out my heart to God like them, when one came to me and kindly asked me if I came to preaching, and how long I had done so? I answered, 'Last night was the first time.' He took me aside and said, 'Let us go to prayer.' I said, 'I cannot pray. I never prayed in my life.' But he went to prayer with me. By this time my dear friend was come, and rejoiced to find that I was there before him. The more I heard, the more deeply was I convinced of sin, and of my danger on account of it. He asked if I had a Bible or any good book? I said, 'No; I knew not that ever I had read any. He said, 'I have a piece of an old Bible. Take it. I can do better without it than you. 'I took it as a great treasure, and read in it with great joy. The next day my old companions found me out, and called me many names. But it made no impression upon me at all, as I was every day more and more resolved to save my soul. I spent more and more time in reading and prayer, and missed no opportunity of hearing the word. I was deaf to all the allurements of my comrades, regarding neither their evil nor their good words. I had now a tender conscience. I could neither drink, swear, game, nor plunder any more. I would not take so much as an apple, a bunch of grapes, nor anything that was not my own.

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<sup>3</sup>Luke 18:13.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Matt. 8:25.

[17.] My companion, who had been employed for some time in an out-party, now came home to the company. He immediately took me to be with him as his comrade, and watched over me as a tender parent over a beloved child. He inquired into all my affairs, and finding I had contracted some debts, said, 'The followers of Christ must be first just, and then charitable. We will put both our pays together, and live as hard as we can; and what we spare will pay the debt!' From this time I continued, by the grace of God, seeking him with my whole heart.

[18.] Many trials I had, partly from my old companions, partly from the sins I was before given to. But glory be to God, I was preserved from both, and enabled to persevere in the way of duty. My companion took every step he could to help me forward in the ways of God. Nevertheless all this campaign I was in great distress of soul. Yet I hated sin and followed God, though I knew he was angry with me. The more I heard, and the more I read the word, the greater was my pain. For I saw more clearly my miserable state, both by nature and by practice. All the remainder of the campaign I was in deep distress, having sometimes a little hope, sometimes none. But still I was convinced the way of duty was the only way of safety.

[19.] The work of God now greatly increased among us. And indeed the change which God wrought upon me gave a great alarm, not only in our company but through the whole regiment. My dear companion and I began to reprove sinners, to invite them to hear the preaching, and to exhort as many as would hear, to turn to God and flee from the wrath to come. And it pleased God to bless our weak endeavours, so that before the end of the campaign we had ten in the regiment I was in who were closely united together and were joined in such love for one another that we had in effect all things in common. And thanks be to God, the flame spread through all the camp, so that we had a large number of hearers. And more and more were continually added to the society. I still went on my way sorrowing, but bringing forth fruits meet for repentance. When the camp broke up we marched for winter quarters, part to Ghent, and part to Bruges. I was afraid we should be left without a preacher. But God took care of this also. For as the army was divided, so were the preachers. John Haime and John Evans lay at Bruges, and William Clements at Ghent, where our regiment was. I rejoiced much at hearing this, although it could not take away the load of guilt which pressed down my soul.

[20.] As soon as our regiment was settled at Ghent, we hired two rooms: one for the preaching, and one for private meetings; for when off duty we met twice a day. Here my sorrows increased. It was strongly suggested to me that my day of grace was past, that I had sinned the unpardonable sin, and it signified nothing to strive any longer. O what distress my poor soul was in! I thought the very stones in the street, and the timber in the wall cried out against me for my enormous wickedness. I felt that truth, 'The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmities; but a wounded spirit who can bear?'<sup>5</sup>

[21.] I told all my troubles to my dear companion; who truly sympathized with me, but told me I should not be thus long, for the time of my deliverance was at hand.

[22.] Yet I went on in the same state, having little hope of mercy, till one day I was ordered on duty at one of the outposts. I was in deep distress, which my companion observed, and when he parted from me, said, 'I hope you will have better news to tell me when you see me again.' When I came to the guardhouse I longed to be alone, that I might pour out my soul before God. I thought myself the most miserable creature on earth, far beneath the brute and inanimate creatures—all of which answered the end of their creation, which I have never done! From 12:00 at night till 2:00 it was my turn to stand sentinel at a dangerous post. I had a fellow sentinel but I desired him to go away, which he willingly did. As soon as I was alone, I kneeled down and determined not to rise, but to continue crying and wrestling with God, till he had mercy on me. How long I was in that agony I cannot tell. But as I looked up to heaven, I saw the clouds open exceeding bright, and I saw Jesus hanging on the cross. At the same moment these words were applied to my heart, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee.'<sup>6</sup> My chains fell off. My heart was free. All guilt was gone, and my soul was filled with unutterable peace. I loved God and all mankind, and the fear of

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<sup>5</sup>Cf. Prov. 18:14.

<sup>6</sup>Luke 5:20.

death and hell was vanished away. I was filled with wonder and astonishment. I then closed my eyes, but the impression was still the same. And for about ten weeks, while I was awake, let me be where I would, the same appearance was still before my eyes, and the same impression upon my heart, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee.'

[23.] The corporal came at two o'clock to relieve the sentries, but I could not think the time was half gone. When I came into the guardhouse I was full of matter, and longed to tell what God had done for my soul. But I did not dare to cast pearls before swine. I longed for my dear companion that we might rejoice together. As soon as the time for relieving the guard came, I hastened to the room where I lay. As I was going, my companion was looking for me. And before I could speak, said, 'I know God has set your soul at liberty; I see it in your countenance.' I then told him all, and after we had taken some refreshment, we went to our little company and concluded the day in prayer and praise, magnifying God for all his mighty works.

[24.] During our stay in Ghent we met twice or thrice a day, either for preaching, prayer, or to tell our experience to each other. And God increased our number every day, so that we had now some in almost every regiment. I was still happy; but found a strong desire to be more holy, that I might be more happy. And from this time, reverend and dear sir, I found my heart united to you, and to the people that were under your care, of whom brother Clements was often speaking. And I truly loved them whom I had not seen. Indeed I considered myself as a member of the same body, and longed greatly to see them.

[25.] About this time I began to think of my parents and family. My dear mother had from time to time sent me little supplies, either in money or such other things as she knew I wanted. I now sent her a long letter, asking pardon of my father and her for all my past disobedience, and telling them that God for Christ's sake had forgiven me all my sins. I thanked her for what she had done for me, but desired she would not send anything more, as I knew it must straiten her, and I had now learned to 'be content with my wages'.<sup>7</sup> This letter they could not at all understand, and it was handed about from one to another, till it came to one Mr. Wadsworth, a Dissenting minister, who having known what manner of life I led before, could not in anywise believe it.<sup>8</sup> However he wrote me a friendly letter, and sent me a Bible, which was more welcome to me than gold; as was a Common Prayer book which my mother sent me. A few days after, my letter came into the hands of Mr. John Wilson, who was then one of the chief persons in your society, and much alive to God.<sup>9</sup> He sent me a comfortable letter and a hymn-book, which much refreshed my soul. About this time you sent some books over, which were of great service to us.

[26.] On March 26, 1745, the French, taking the field before us, opened their camp with seventy-six thousand men, and above a hundred and fifty pieces of cannon. We were then ordered to march out of our quarters. But before we could come up, they had laid siege to Tournay, and had entrenched themselves up to the very chin. After several little movements, we were all assembled on the 19th of April, under the Duke of Cumberland, being in all, besides the train of artillery, forty-six thousand men.

[27.] By this time, having given way to unprofitable reasoning, I lost my rapturous joy, and a kind of heaviness followed. But blessed be God, the evidence of my acceptance was not interrupted.

[28.] We then drew so near the French that we could hear their evening and morning gun. But between us and them there was a wood, which we were obliged to cut a way through. All the pioneers were employed in this. On the 28th I was ordered to go and guard some baggage. But on the 29th, early in the morning, the corporal brought me word, 'You must go into the ranks, for before tomorrow night we shall have a battle.' When I came into the ranks, I felt some fear. But as we came near the French army, we halted a little. I then stepped out of the line, threw myself on the ground, and prayed that God would

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<sup>7</sup>Cf. Luke 3:14.

<sup>8</sup>Apparently Rev. John Wadsworth (1678–1745); see Joseph Hunter, *Hallamshire* (London: Taylor, 1819), 169.

<sup>9</sup>John Wilson, an optician, was active in the Methodist society in Sheffield from its beginning; see Everett, *Sheffield*, 50.

deliver me from all fear, and enable me to behave as a Christian and good soldier. Glory be to God, he heard my cry, and took away all my fear. I came into the ranks again, and had both peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. By this time night came on. We were ordered to lie on our arms. Toward morning, part of the army marched through the pass which we had cut through the wood. My dear companion and I had sweet communion together, having constant and strong confidence in God. As soon as the dawn of the day appeared, we were ordered to advance. The column on the right had passed through. I was in the second column. But all the road was made almost impassable, which broke the head of our column. And in the meantime the French batteries playing upon us did us much hurt. We wheeled off, in order to get into the plain of Fontenoy. I had not marched far till we met a horse without his rider, and the lower part of his head taken off by a cannonball. A little after I saw one of the guards lie dead, and soon after, many more. We still advanced and drew up in line of battle in the plain of Fontenoy. The French before us were entrenched up to the neck, and many batteries of cannon were playing upon us. I was in the front rank, and the left hand man joining the Dutch. We stood there till the Dutch turned their backs and marched away. I was then left exposed to a battery on the left, and the batteries and small arms in the front. Soon after our regiment, with some others, were ordered to advance and attack the French in their trenches. We marched up boldly, but when we came close to the town of Fontenoy we observed a large battery ready to be opened on us. And the cannon were loaded with small bullets, nails, and pieces of old iron. We had orders to lie down on the ground. But for all that, many were wounded and some killed. Presently after the discharge, we rose up and marched to the first trench, still keeping up our fire. They gave way. But when we entered, batteries in the flanks were opened, which tore our regiment so that we were obliged to fall back into the rear. Yet we rallied and renewed the attack. But it was to no purpose. All the day I was in great spirits, and as composed in my mind as if I had been hearing a sermon. I neither desired life nor death, but was entirely happy in God. Night coming on, the retreat was beat, and the whole army marched away, leaving our cannon, and sick, and wounded behind us. The profane sinners now received reproof, and promised to become new men. And though most of them soon forgot their resolutions, yet in some there was a lasting change.

[29.] As soon as I had opportunity to speak to my dear companion, he told me it had been a happy day to him. He had received two musket balls. But one struck him on the right thigh, and hit on two seven-penny pieces that were in his pocket (they are of a mixed metal, about the size of half a crown); it appeared to him as if he had received a blow with a stick. The other struck him on his left side pocket, upon a clasped knife, and bent the blade and loosened it in the handle. So that we may well say,

Go and return secure from death,  
Till God command thee home.<sup>10</sup>

I had ate nothing that day but a little brown bread, and drank only a little water. But I was very thankful, as if I had received it immediately from the hands of God.

[30.] We marched all that night and the next day, and more and more of our scattered army overtook us. But many lay down on the ground, and could go no farther. Glory be to God, he gave me constant peace, and strength to keep with the main body, being always one of the first, till we encamped at Lessines. We then began to inquire who of our society was gone home? We missed many out of our regiment. One was saying, 'O how happy I am!' And just as he spoke, a cannon shot came and took off his head. We lost four preachers, and many of the society. But my dear companion, with the other brethren in the regiment, were still as the heart of one man. Such was the religion of the soldiers at this time, before any of them were corrupted by new opinions! I then thought this state of life is the only one to love and serve God in—I would not change it for any other under the sun, upon any consideration whatever. How did this sweeten all the fatigues, and hardships, and dangers I had to go through! Glory be to God, I rejoiced in them all. Meantime I was continually exhorting sinners to repent. And they would

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<sup>10</sup>Isaac Watts, 'Psalm 121', st. 5, in JW, *CPH* (1738), 14.

bear it now, as the French were so near us, and we knew not how soon they would fall upon us. The whole army was drawn up in order of battle, expecting to be attacked by them every day. But instead of this, they pushed forward and took Ghent, and afterwards all Flanders, as far as Ostend.

[31.] About this time the lieutenant and paymaster of our regiment sent for me and said, 'My servant was killed at Fontenoy, and I intend to take *you* in his place.' As he had always been particularly kind to me, I knew not what to do. It was not a command, but a favour offered, which he left to my choice. I earnestly prayed to God for direction. I then returned him my sincerest thanks for his kind offer, but said, 'I could not accept of it.' He looked earnestly at me and said, 'Pray, what are your reasons for refusing it?' I answered, 'Sir, the first is, I could not have time to attend preaching, and meet with my Christian friends. The second, I should be obliged to do on the Lord's day what would give me pain, and displease God.' He replied, 'I like you the better for being so honest. Go your way. I will be your friend.'

[32.] A short time after there came an order for ten men out of our regiment to go to the train, and learn the exercise of the great guns, to supply the place of those that were killed at Fontenoy—but active, sober men, and such as could be depended on. The corporal came and said, 'Get yourself ready, for you must leave the regiment and go to the artillery.' I was sorry to leave my brethren, but could not in conscience disobey a lawful command. My brethren also were sorry. But we encouraged each other that we should not be far from one another. So we prayed, and parted. My pay was now near double to what it was before. And I had two of the society with me, brothers Hammond and Hodges, both much alive to God. I was kept in constant peace, athirst for God, and longing for more of his image. As often as I could I went to see my dear brethren, and we always prayed and praised God together. And even the rest of the company were glad to see me, for I have frequently remarked there is a kind of affection in the army toward one another which is hardly to be found elsewhere.

[33.] I had not been many weeks in my new employ when we heard there was a rising in Scotland, and that the rebels had defeated the king's army at Prestonpans, near Edinburgh.<sup>11</sup> And orders came that the greatest part of the English army should march directly for England. I was sent back to my own regiment. We made forced marches, and the transports being ready at Hellevoetsluis, we soon came within sight of land. In all these movements I found no decay of inward life. I knew it was my duty to obey my superiors, and God made it my pleasure. He was always before me in every place. And I could boldly testify,

Thy presence makes my paradise,  
And where thou art is heav'n.<sup>12</sup>

[34.] Our regiment and two more, landed at Gravesend, when we marched on and encamped at Deptford Heath, in the latter end of October 1745. The next Lord's day, we of the society went to Bexley church. We lay at Bexley three or four weeks, and constantly attended on Mr. [Henry] Piers's ministry, and there we received a larger account of *you*. O how did I then long to see you! Thence we marched to Deptford. When we were drawn up there in the Broadway, William Giles came and invited us to his house, where we spent the evening in singing and prayer, and my soul was much refreshed. My mind was still kept in perfect peace. It was nothing to me where I was, at home or abroad, in the field or in the church, marching or sitting in the closet. We made long marches from hence, hearing that the rebels were marching swiftly southward. Wherever we were I inquired if there were any Methodists, that we might sing and pray together. The army was assembled when we came to Stafford. And we were ordered to be ready at a minute's warning. We had not been here many hours when, at ten o'clock in a cold, frosty night, about the middle of December, the drum beat to arms. We were drawn up in order of battle and marched on, our spies informing us that in two hours we should meet the rebels. We had then orders to load our pieces and to be ready at the word of command.

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<sup>11</sup>The battle took place on Sept. 21, 1745.

<sup>12</sup>CW, Hymn on Acts 16:31, st. 13, *HSP* (1742), 96.

[35.] We marched on, and the morning came on. The rebels, now hearing of us, turned off for Derby road, thinking (it seems) to pass us and get to London. By this time we had got to Stone, where we learned they were returning northward. On this the main army was ordered to pursue them, and some regiments to march back to London, lest they should give us the slip. Our regiment was one of these. We were to lie in the towns and villages near London. I had a great desire to lie at Greenwich or Deptford. We made long marches; and when we were near London, orders came that our regiment should be quartered at Greenwich and Deptford. I was glad, though I knew not why. For I had no knowledge either of the place or the people. On Christmas eve we came to the place, and I was quartered in the next public house, which is the very house where I now live.

[36.] On Christmas day we went to church, and spent the evening at brother [William] Giles's in singing and prayer. We lay here till April 1746, but had orders not to go above a mile from our quarters. Hearing these orders read, I went to the commanding officer, who said, 'Well, Sampson, what do you want?' I said, 'Leave, sir, if you please, for two or three of us to go to London, twice or thrice a week.' He said, 'For what?' I answered, 'To hear preaching.' 'What', said he, 'cannot you go to church?' I said, 'Yes, sir, and I count it both my duty and privilege so to do. But I am much united in affection to the Rev. Mr. Wesley, and I want to see and hear him, and to be joined with him and his people.' He looked at me and said, 'Well, thou art the same honest man as before.' He immediately wrote an order for me and one or two more to pass to and from London as often as we pleased. He added that he knew Mr. Wesley, and was glad I had made so good a choice. When not on duty, we likewise met twice a day in the Old Room at Deptford, to read the Scriptures, and to pray and praise God. At this time I had no thought of preaching, though my dear companion often told me God would call me to it before I died.

[37.] Twice a week, during our stay at Deptford, I went to the Foundery or West Street Chapel, where I was always profited by your preaching. Here I became acquainted with her that is now my wife. After much consideration and prayer, I mentioned it to her. After a little while she answered if I was out of the army, and in some way of business, she had no objection. So here it rested for the present.

[38.] One day one of the society desired me to go to Eltham with a message. As soon as I came thither (it being three miles from our quarters), a sergeant and two soldiers seized me as a deserter. They brought me back as such to Greenwich, and carried me before the commanding officer. I told him the real case. He asked them, 'Had *you* any passport?' On their answering no he said, 'Make haste home, or I will order you to the guard-house.' He then smiled upon me and said, 'Go to your companions.'

[39.] One night as we were coming from the Foundery a soldier met me and said, 'Make haste home, for early in the morning you are to march for Canterbury and Dover.' I was a little struck, and did not find my mind so passive in all things as it used to be. When I came to Deptford I found the orders were come. We spent great part of the night in prayer and praise, and early on April 22, with many tears, left our dear friends at Deptford.

[40.] Before we set out my dear companion was fully persuaded that I should get out of the army. But he prayed that he might not live to see it. And he believed God would grant his request.

[41.] We stayed awhile at Canterbury, and met twice a day; but there was then no society there. Thence we marched to Dover Castle. Here I received a letter from Deptford informing me that my dear friend would be glad to see me once more. Having procured a furlough for fourteen days, I set out on May the 28th, about 4:00 in the afternoon, and not stopping, reached Deptford (sixty-seven miles) about 4:00 the next day. On the 12th of June (my permit being then out) I was married.<sup>13</sup> The same day a letter from my officer informed me that our regiment was embarking for Holland, and I must come immediately. So I took leave of my wife and friends, on my wedding day, and set out without delay. The next day we began our march to Gravesend, where the transports lay. We embarked on the 20th of June, with a fair wind. But when we were within sight of land, the ship wherein I was, stuck fast upon the sand-bank. We lay rolling about, every moment expecting the ship to break. Many of the soldiers cried to God for mercy. Our little company, seizing the opportunity, exhorted them to forsake sin and turn to God,

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<sup>13</sup>Staniforth married Mary Hutchinson on June 12, 1746 in Deptford.

which they promised to do if he would please to spare them. All this time my soul was truly happy. I had peace with God, and rejoiced with joy unspeakable.

[42.] While preparation was making to save as many as possible when the ship should sink, she gave a spring, and got off the bank. And in a few hours we came safe to Willemstad. We marched immediately to camp (it being the latter end of June), being commanded by Prince Charles of Lorraine. In a few days we came within sight of the French army. My wife had desired me to apply for my discharge. But I thought this was not the proper time, as we expected a battle every day, lest I should seem afraid to fight and so bring a scandal upon the gospel.

[43.] But we found those of our society that had been in Scotland had lost their simplicity and zeal for God, and instead of that, spent all their time in disputing about this and the other doctrine. But blessed be God, he kept all in our regiment of one heart and of one mind. We were almost always in sight of the French—they watching our motions, and we theirs. Meantime provisions were both scarce and dear. But I did not now dare to plunder. We marched through orchards and vineyards where there was plenty of fruit, which I knew would be taken away in a few hours. But as faint as I was, I durst not touch it, because it was not my own.

[44.] All this campaign I had a solid dependence on God, and a thankful remembrance of all his mercies. And everything which I had, I received as from the immediate hand of God. One day as we were marching, the bread wagons did not reach us in time; and we were in great want of bread and of all provisions, while being on our march in sight of the enemy. We expected a battle every hour. We wanted water likewise. And here we saw the difference, between them that feared God and them that did not. The latter cursed the king, and blasphemed God. And how did they groan and fret under their hardships! On the contrary, the former could cheerfully say, 'The will of the Lord be done!' My soul was more than usually happy, rejoicing in God my Saviour. I felt much love and pity to my poor fellow soldiers, and exhorted them to turn to God, and then they would find themselves happy under every trying circumstance.

[45.] As I was marching in the ranks, I felt hunger bite hard, but had not a murmuring thought. I lifted up my heart to God, and knew he could supply all my wants. I had not gone far before I found a piece of brown bread, which I picked up and received as out of the hand of God. We had but little rest. We kept Maastricht in our rear, as a place of retreat if needed. And all our provisions came that way. This the French knew, and laboured to cut off our communication with it. The season began to be cold, and the two armies were so near together that whichever retreated first would be sure to suffer greatly. The French began to cut off our supplies. Prince Charles observing this, thought it high time to prepare for a retreat into our winter quarters. So he ordered that a strong party should advance in front of the army, to keep the French in play and make them believe he intended a general action. This consisted of two English regiments, whereof ours was one, with some Hanoverians and some Dutch—making in the whole about twelve thousand men. On September 30th we had orders to hold ourselves in readiness, and after gun-firing, to leave our tents standing and march silently about a mile in the front of the camp. Prince Charles ordered our commander to go to such a distance and fortify his men, and to keep his post till further orders, or till he could keep it no longer.

[46.] We all thought the army was to cover us, in order to bring on a general engagement. But they were ordered to retreat, with our cannon and baggage, to the other side of the town. This was done by two o'clock the next day. We advanced according to order (after my companion had given me to understand that we were to be parted that day). As soon as we came to the place appointed, we were drawn up in line of battle. We English posted ourselves in some gardens and orchards, which were some little cover. At daybreak the whole French army advanced in seven or eight columns, all covered with horse on the right and left. They advanced slowly, while the Queen of Hungary's light horse and theirs skirmished between us and them. Here we lay, waiting for orders to retreat to our army. But the prince forgot to send them, being busy with his cups and his ladies. So our brave general kept the field all day, in spite of the whole French army. I bless God I found no fear but constant peace, and my spirit rejoiced in God. While we lay on our arms, I had both time and opportunity to reprove the wicked. And they would bear it now, and made great promises, if God should spare them, of becoming new men. By this time the

French came very near us, and a cannonball came straight up our rank. But as we were lying upon the ground, it went over our heads. We then had orders to stand up and fire. The right of the French being closely engaged with the Dutch, the French centre advanced and fired on us and the other English regiment. The rest of the French inclined to the right of us, in order to get round us. They quickly took our two pieces of cannon, and immediately turned them upon us. We were then ordered to retire with all speed into the plain, where we expected to find our own army. But they were far enough off, their general taking no thought for us.

[47.] All this time I found a constant waiting upon God. All fear was removed. I had no tremor on my spirits, and the presence of God was with me all the day long. My dear companion was on my right hand, and had been all the night. As we were both in the front rank a musket ball came and went through his leg. He fell down at my feet, looked up in my face with a smile and said, 'My dear, I am wounded.' I and another took him in our arms and carried him out of the ranks, while he was exhorting me to 'stand fast in the Lord'.<sup>14</sup> We laid him down, took our leave of him, and fell into our ranks again. In our farther retreat, I again met with my dear friend, who had received another ball through his thigh. But his heart was full of love, and his eyes full of heaven. I may justly say, here fell a great Christian, a good soldier, a faithful friend. I was obliged to leave him, for the French pressed hard upon us. Yet I was enabled to say, 'The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.'<sup>15</sup> I trust I have seen many that were perfected in love, but none so full of it as my dear companion. He was always cheerful, but never light; always in prayer, but a man of few words. Not a thoughtless look or an idle word could be observed in him. Even to this day, when I think of him, it is both with pleasure and profit.

[48.] Night came on, but the French still pressing upon us, we retreated all night, till we came near Maastricht. It rained very hard, being the 30th of September, and was exceeding cold. Toward morning, being out of the reach of the French, we had orders to halt. We had no tents, and it continued raining. However, being well tired, I lay down on the wet ground, put my knapsack under my head, and soon fell fast asleep. In the morning we had orders to march and join the grand army. The small remains of those whose lives had been so vilely thrown away did so without delay.

[49.] But now I began to miss my companion. It seemed as if I had lost part of myself. I could have wished that I had died by his side. But I found I must look up, or I should sink into deep waters. I cried unto God, and he heard my prayer, and turned my heaviness into joy. After a few days, we marched to our winter quarters, which were at Bois-le-Duc in Holland. About this time I received letters from my wife, begging me to apply for my discharge, and she would send whatever money was wanting. I made this a matter of earnest prayer, and after several steps, procured a promise from our colonel to discharge me for fifteen guineas. I wrote to my wife and she sent a note, which was readily accepted. But in the meantime Colonel Philips sold his commission. Our new colonel consented to discharge me for the same sum, on condition I would be his servant till we came to England. But just at that time, I fell ill of a fever, and orders came for our regiment to be clothed and to take the field. But no clothing came for *me*, and my arms were taken from me. I was still very ill when the colonel told me, he would set out for England in a few weeks: 'and if you are not able to go, I must leave you behind me'. This threw me into much heaviness. But I cried to the Lord, and he soon turned it into joy. The fever instantly left me, and by the time appointed I was able to attend on the colonel. My brethren and I spent great part of the night in commending each other to God. I attended the colonel to Helvoetsluys, went on board the packet, and landed at Harwich in eight-and-forty hours. And on the 22d of February 1748, [I] found my wife and all my friends well at Deptford.

[50.] About this time John Hyatt and I, with two more, being one night met together at the preaching room, one Richardson, a sailor, who once ran well but had for some time turned back to folly, earnestly desired to meet with us. The more we prayed for him, the more his sorrows increased; till his cries were so loud they almost drowned our voices. After the rest, I began to pray a second time. He fell

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<sup>14</sup>Phil. 4:1; 1 Thess. 3:8.

<sup>15</sup>Job 1:21.



back and began beating himself against the floor, so that we could hardly hold him down. I prayed on. Suddenly he gave a spring out of our hands, jumped up, clasped his hands, and cried out, 'He is come! He is come! Jesus is mine! My soul is happy!' By this many of the neighbours burst in, thinking we were killing one another. He went home rejoicing in the Lord, and in two or three days went to sea. But we never heard of him since. So I trust, he is gone to paradise.

[51.] In the midst of much outward reproach I now felt many inward conflicts. I found the remains of inward corruption, and earnestly longed to be delivered from them. So much the more were evil reports spread, even by good men, who followed not with *us*. And I always observed, the more devoted to God we were, the more did the enemy rage.

[52.] The disturbances at the time of preaching were now so great that I was obliged to apply to a magistrate. But after a few of the rioters were taken up, we had peace and our congregation increased. I then appointed a meeting on Thursday evenings, wherein I read part of one of your sermons. Some of your preachers likewise came down from London, and the congregations increased so that the room could not contain them. I consulted *you*. You advised me to get a piece of ground and build. I immediately opened a subscription, and having procured ground, desired three builders to give in their proposals. This was in the year 1757. As soon as the building was finished (which, with the galleries, cost two hundred and twenty-five pounds), I paid the master builder what I could, and offered him a note for the rest. He said, 'No: your word is sufficient.' I was also in debt to my mealmen.<sup>16</sup> Yet I durst not withhold my hand from the cause of God and the poor; though I stood alone, not having one to help, or stand engaged with me.

[53.] It was about six years before I could discharge this debt; I then gave up the lease to *you*. I had for some time had thoughts of preaching, but they were now stronger than ever. So I gave now and then a few words of exhortation, and I was so engaged herein I could not retreat. Whenever I thought of desisting, I was unhappy. I then made it matter of earnest prayer, till I durst delay no longer, but with much fear and trembling undertook to preach on those nights when the preachers did not come, though my fear was so great that it sometimes affected my body. For some time I preached at Deptford only. But on my signifying my desires to *you*, you accepted me, and gave me a little to do in town.

[54.] My time was now fully employed. I had my own business to mind, together with that of the society. I was preacher, steward, visitor of the sick, and leader of the bands and classes. Meantime I had many reproaches, both from others and from our own people. But God blessed me in all these things, and gave me to see some fruit of my labour. For from time to time some were convinced of sin, and others justified. And indeed had it not been for this encouragement, I could not have continued to preach.

[55.] In the year 1760, both my labours and my trials increased. I was made one of the four constables of our parish; and on October 27th, I was sent for to the bench to be sworn in. Many laughed, and many gazed at me as a monster. But my soul was composed and happy in God. When they called me to take the oath, I told them, 'I cannot in conscience.' One from the bench cried out, 'Fine him twenty pounds, and he will swear anything.' I answered him, 'No, sir, not for twenty worlds.' After many more words, the chairman said, 'Mr. Staniforth, shall I make an oath for you?' I said, 'Sir, if you please.' He then proposed the following, to which I had no objection: 'Sampson Staniforth, of the parish of Greenwich, is by us appointed, to serve the office of constable for one year, in the best manner he can, according to his own way of thinking.'

[56.] When we were dismissed, I gave my partners to understand that I should be punctual in the execution of my office. And one of them being a great swearer, I told him, 'You must not swear before *me*, as I will make you pay for it.' When the quarter sessions came on, the high constable summoned all the constables in the hundred (four-and-twenty) to meet. When I came into the room, one and another cried out, 'No swearing now!' After dinner they drank the king's health, which I drank; and a second, which I drank in water. The next man cried with a loud voice, 'Here is Dr. Squintum's health.'<sup>17</sup> When it

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<sup>16</sup>I.e., those who supplied him the flour for his bakery.

<sup>17</sup>This was a pejorative name for George Whitefield.

came to me, I stopped, and he said, 'What, Mr. Staniforth, will you not drink that health?' I answered, 'I pray God to bless that good man, and give him health and length of days.' I then left the room. And from that time they left me to do just as I would. This was a trying year, but God enabled me to give satisfaction to the parish, while I found his presence always with me, and my soul prospered much. I was the next year overseer of the poor. But I had three good partners, and passed through the year with great ease.

[57.] About this time I had a remarkable deliverance. The conveniency belonging to my house and my neighbour's was a heavy brick building. Just as I came out of it one day it fell down. Had it been a minute sooner, I should have been buried in the ruins.

[58.] It was now the great revival of the work of God began.<sup>18</sup> Observing some wildfire mixed with that holy and heavenly flame, I endeavoured gently to check it both in public and private, exhorting all to keep close to the written word; to hold fast whatever was agreeable to the Scriptures, and let all the rest go.

[59.] In the year 1764, I was sent for by Mr. [Thomas] M[axfield] to his house. The messenger told me he wanted to speak with me, and I must come immediately. When I came, I found the Grecian bishop with him, who ordained me and three more.<sup>19</sup> But finding it would offend my brethren, I have never availed myself of it to this hour.

[60.] God now gave me what I had so long desired, to owe no man anything. And I went on cheerfully, though not without many temptations, both within and without. But I still resolved to lay out myself and my substance for the cause of God and the good of souls. And he was still pleased to give me some tokens for good, both in preaching and visiting the sick.

[61.] There now came into our neighbourhood one Mr. B. a Dissenting minister, a man of strong sense and great learning. He applied to me to serve him with bread. He was open and free in his conversation, but of a warm temper. He often called upon me, and we commonly got into dispute, particularly about original sin and justification, in which I always found great freedom of speech and enlargement of heart. One night he stayed to supper; and as he declined it, I asked a blessing, concluding as usual with, 'for the sake of Jesus Christ'. Observing he smiled, I said after supper, 'Sir, is it not for *his* sake, that we receive every blessing?' This introduced a warm dispute, till he rose up in a great rage, and striking his hand upon the table said, 'I expect no more benefit from the blood of Christ than from the blood of a bull.' From this time we did not converse together, till he fell sick and was visited by Mr. [Josiah] Dornford. He asked him whether he knew Mr. Staniforth, and begged he would send me to him. Mr. [ornfor] told me, but before he spoke a letter came desiring me to come immediately. He received me with great kindness. I spoke to him of the nature and necessity of repentance, and showed it was needful to feel our original corruption, as well as our actual sins. While I was speaking, the tears ran down his cheeks, and my soul was much drawn out to God for him. I asked, 'Shall I go to prayer?' He said, 'By all means, and may God hear your prayer.' Afterwards, he said, 'Dear Mr. Staniforth, my time is short. Be with me as much as you can.' This was Thursday. On Friday I went again, both morning and afternoon. I spoke closely to him, and repeated what he said at my house. He said, 'I thank God and you that I see my error. O pray for me!' On Saturday likewise I was with him twice, and he felt more and more the need of a Saviour. I then said, 'Christ must be equal with the Father, or he cannot atone for our sins.' He answered, 'He is. And I believe he is able to save all that come to God through him.' We then prayed to him with joy and confidence, and praised God together. On Sunday I was with him twice. The second time (which was about 8:00 in the evening), he said, he should live but a few hours. I asked, 'What is the ground of your hope of heaven?' He replied, 'The mercy of God, through the merits of my dear Redeemer, and my soul is happy in him.' I said, 'Then your sentiments are greatly changed.' He said, 'Yes. Blessed be God for his grace, and you as his instrument. I now know, there is no way of

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<sup>18</sup>I.e., the London 'Blessing' revival, with its excesses by George Bell, etc.

<sup>19</sup>This was the ordination by Erasmus of Arcadia, arranged by Thomas Maxfield, of four men to assist Maxfield in his chapels. Cf. JW to *St. James's Chronicle*, c. Feb. 10, 1765, *Works*, 27:417.

salvation but through Jesus Christ.' He kissed my hand, and about eight hours after gave up his soul to God.

[62.] I now began to be more employed in and about London. Every Sunday morning I walked thither, to meet the preachers and to know my appointments. I had six miles to walk all weathers, and in the winter to go and come in the dark, as I was always in town at 8:00 in the morning, and took care to be at every place where I was appointed. And I had many sweet hours of communion with God as I walked by the way. I made it a rule, from the beginning to this day, to bear my own expenses. This cost me ten or twelve pounds a year; and I bless God, I can bear it. Beside meeting the class and band, and visiting the sick, I preach five or six times in the week. And the Lord gives me to rejoice, in that I can still say, 'These hands have ministered to my necessities.'<sup>20</sup>

[63.] In the year 1771 we began preaching at Rotherhithe. I went in my turn, and found my heart much united to the people. So was theirs to *me*. The place we preached in being both dear and inconvenient, they thought of building and applied to me concerning it. I laid the case before *you*. You encouraged me to go on, and said you could not do much, but you would help me as far as you could. I took a piece of ground, and set the workmen about the building, which cost in all near two hundred pounds. For this I alone stood engaged. I lent upwards of a hundred pounds, and was near eight years before I could get the building entirely out of debt. I still constantly preach there once a week, and every first Sunday in the month. I soon saw some fruit of my labours here also. W. C. being convinced of sin, and under the afflicting hand of God, I desired our friends both at Rotherhithe and Deptford to set apart a day of prayer on his behalf. God heard the prayer, restored him to his right mind, and filled his heart with love. About the same time Samuel Gibbs was convinced of sin, and soon after converted to God. He was afterwards settled at Snowsfields, and became eminently useful. He died happy in January 1781, and I preached his funeral sermon.<sup>21</sup>

[64.] I was still frequently tempted to leave off preaching. But generally when the temptation was strongest, I was informed of another and another that had received a blessing. Glory be to God, who does not 'send us a warfare at our own cost'!<sup>22</sup> I was now likewise blessed in temporal things, having enough both to answer all demands and, if I was called away, to leave a little to my wife, who has for many years laboured under a severe asthma, and been thereby cut off from all the public means of grace. For her sake I began to preach in my own house every Monday evening. And hereby I have reason to believe some good has been done to others also. Several of my neighbours come to hear me, send for me when they are sick, and will do nothing in the way of charity without me.

[65.] About this time I had several invitations to leave the [Methodist] connexion. One offered me forty pounds a year, another fifty—urging that I might hereby save myself much fatigue, as well as considerable expense. But whenever I thought closely upon the subject, three objections occurred. 1) it was clear God had blessed me in this way, therefore I was afraid to go out of it; 2) I saw how much hurt had been done in the society by these separations; and 3) as to money or ease, my heart is not set on money, and I am not weary of my labour. So upon the coolest reflection I can still say, and that with full purpose of heart, 'This people shall be my people, and their God shall be my God.'<sup>23</sup>

[66.] What farther God has for me to do, in his cause and for the good of souls, I know not. But I trust he will enable me to be more thankful for every mercy, more faithful to grace given, and more fruitful in those few days which he may please to add to my life.

[67.] My present method is: I pray with my wife before I go out in the morning, and at breakfast time with my family and all that are in the house. The former part of the day I spend in my business; my spare hours in reading and private exercises. Most evenings I preach, so that I am seldom at home before

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<sup>20</sup>Cf. Acts 20:34.

<sup>21</sup>Samuel Gibbs (c. 1745–81) was buried Jan. 7, 1781 at the Independent chapel on Union Street

<sup>22</sup>Cf. 1 Cor. 9:7.

<sup>23</sup>Cf. Ruth 1:16.

nine o'clock. But though I am so much out at nights, and generally alone, God keeps me both from evil men and evil spirits. And many times I am as fresh when I come in at night as I was when I went out in the morning. I conclude the day in reading the Scriptures and in praying with my family.

[68.] I am now in the sixty-third year of my age, and glory be to God, I am not weary of well-doing. I find my desires after God stronger than ever. My understanding is more clear in the things of God, and my heart is united more than ever, both to God and his people. I know their religion and mine is the gift of God through Christ, and the work of God by his Spirit. It is revealed in Scripture, and is received and retained by faith, in the use of all gospel ordinances. It consists in an entire deadness to the world and to our own will; and an entire devotedness of our souls, bodies, time, and substance to God, through Christ Jesus. In other words, it is the loving the Lord our God with all our hearts, and all mankind for God's sake. This arises from a knowledge of his love to us: 'We love him because we know he first loved us.'<sup>24</sup> A sense of which is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost that is given to us. From the little hereof that I have experienced, I know he that experiences this religion is a happy man. Two verses in one of our hymns exactly describe what I now feel, and what I desire,

If so poor a worm as I  
May to thy great glory live,  
All my actions sanctify,  
All my words and thoughts receive!  
Claim me, for thy service claim  
All I have, and all I am.

Take my soul and body's pow'rs,  
Take my memory, mind and will,  
All my goods, and all my hours,  
All I know, and all I feel:  
All I think, and speak and do:  
Take my heart—but make it new!<sup>25</sup>

Thus, reverend and dear sir, I have given you a little sketch of God's dealings with me. May the Lord bless you with length of days and much happiness! So prays

Your much obliged son and servant in the gospel,

Sampson Staniforth

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 13–19, 66–72, 122–25, 181–86, 237–43, 294–99, 348–52.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Cf. 1 John 4:19.

<sup>25</sup>CW, Hymn 155, sts. 3–4, *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* (1745), 129–30, st. 3–4.

<sup>26</sup>This account is reproduced in Jackson, *EMP*, 4:109–51; along with a letter description of Staniforth's death.

From The Rev. Samuel Badcock to John Nichols<sup>1</sup>  
[a public letter on the Wesley family]

South Molton  
December 5, 1782

Mr. Samuel Wesley of Epworth, in the Isle of Axholme in Lincolnshire, was the grandson of Mr. Bartholomew Wes[t]ley, who was ejected by the Act of Uniformity (in the year 1662) from the living of Charmouth in Dorsetshire. He practised physic after his ejection; but the death of his son John Wes[t]ley so affected him that he did not survive him long. This John Wes[t]ley (of whom see a very minute account in Calamy's *Continuation or Supplement to the Abridgment of Baxter's Life*, vol. I., pp. 437–445<sup>2</sup>) was ejected by the same rigorous act from the living of Whitechurch, near Blandford. Samuel Wesley (the son of John) was sent to the university. There he imbibed all the orthodoxy of the High Church, and forgot the nonconformity of his ancestors. He was the author of several large works, the merit of which was by no means thought proportionable to their bulk. An heroic poem called *The Life of Christ* excited the ridicule of the wits, particularly of [Samuel] Garth in his *Dispensary*, and [Jonathan] Swift in his *Battle of the Books*.<sup>3</sup>

In one of the earlier editions of *The Dunciad* this Mr. Wesley was honoured with a niche in the temple of 'The Mighty Mother'. He was placed by the side of a respectable companion, Dr. [Isaac] Watts.

Now all the suff'ring brotherhood retire,  
And 'scape the martyrdom of jakes and fire;  
A gothic library of Greece and Rome  
Well purg'd; and worth Wesley, Watts, ...

(See the learned commentator's note, by way of *apology*, as well as explanation.) They were afterwards deprived of this *distinction*; and I have heard that Mr. [Alexander] Pope substituted other names to fill up the chasm, on a very serious though gentle, remonstrance made to him by Dr. Watts.<sup>4</sup> 'I never offended Mr. Pope', said the amiable doctor, 'but have always expressed my admiration of his superior genius. I only wished to see that genius more employed in the cause of religion, and always thought it capable of doing it great credit among the gay or the more witty part of mankind, who have generally despised it

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<sup>1</sup>For background on Badcock, and his access to manuscripts that belonged to Samuel Wesley Jr., see Badcock to JW, Apr. 22, 1780. John Nichols (1745–1826) was editor of *Gentleman's Magazine*. For JW's reply to several claims in this account see JW to *Gentleman's Magazine*, Jan. 11, 1785 (*Works*, 30:297–301)

<sup>2</sup>Edmund Calamy, *A Continuation of the Account of the Ministers ... ejected and silenced after the Restoration in 1660, or before the Act for Uniformity*, 2 vols. (London: R. Ford, 1727).

<sup>3</sup>Note in original: 'Had W— never aim'd in verse to please,  
We had not rank'd him with our Ogilbys:  
Still censures will on dull pretenders fall,  
A *Codrus* should expect a *Juvenal*.

I have seen a MS. poem of Wesley's, in which he thus retorts on the satirist:

What wonder he should Wesley *Codrus* call,  
Who dares surname *himself* a *Juvenal*!

<sup>4</sup>Note in original: 'I received this intelligence from my late worthy friend the Rev. Mr. Lamb of Dorchester; who had the information from Mr. Price, Dr. Watts's co-pastor, and with whom he was connected both in office and friendship, with an unbroken union, for thirty years.'

because it hath not always been so fortunate as to meet with advocates of such exalted abilities as Mr. Pope possesses, and who were capable of turning the finest exertions of wit and genius in its favour.' The remonstrance had its effect, and Dr. Watts was no longer to sit in the seat of the dunces. The removal of Wesley might possibly be owing to the interposition of his son Samuel Wesley [Jr.], with whom Mr. Pope corresponded, and for whom he always expressed a very particular regard. I have seen very friendly letters of Pope to him when he was an usher at Westminster school.

Mr. Samuel Wesley the elder published a poetical version of the Old and New Testament, and at a very advanced age a voluminous work in Latin on the Book of Job. This last work was presented to Queen Caroline by Mr. John Wesley (the celebrated father of the Methodists), who in a letter to his brother Samuel acknowledges the very courteous reception he was honoured with from her Majesty, who gave him *bows* and *smiles*—but *nothing for his poor father!*<sup>5</sup> The work was never held in any estimation by the learned. The engravings seem to have been the first rude efforts of an untutored boy. Nothing can be conceived more execrable!

Old Samuel Wesley married a woman of extraordinary abilities. I think she was of the family of Dr. Samuel Annesley, a celebrated nonconformist minister. Her letters to her children bear the marks of sublime piety and great sense; particularly one to her eldest son, on the principles of natural religion,<sup>6</sup> which is now, or was lately, in the possession of Dr. [Joseph] Priestley, with many others equally sensible and curious. This excellent pair had a very numerous offspring. Samuel Wesley [Jr.], first an usher at Westminster school, and afterwards head master of Blundell's school at Tiverton, was the eldest; Charles, the present Methodist preacher, was, if I have not been misinformed, the youngest.

Samuel [Jr.] was a man of wit and learning: a High Churchman and a noted Jacobite. Sir Robert Walpole was the principal object of his political satires, many of which remain unpublished on account of their treasonable tendency; for, in the rage of Jacobitism, he was not scrupulous in the selection of characters, but poured out the very dregs of it on royalty itself. He however published enough to render himself obnoxious to the ministry. So that little was left him but that penitence which, arising from mortification, only vents itself in abuse. Time however had so far gotten the better of his fury against Sir Robert as to change the satirist into the suppliant. I have seen a copy of verses addressed to the great minister in behalf of his poor and aged parent. But I have seen something much better. I have in my possession a letter of this *poor and aged parent* addressed to his son Samuel, in which he gratefully acknowledges his filial duty in terms so affecting, that I am at a loss which to admire most, the gratitude of the parent, or the affection and generosity of the child.<sup>7</sup> It was written when the good old man was nearly fourscore, and so weakened by a palsy as to be incapable of directing a pen unless with his left hand. I preserve it as a curious memorial of what will make Wesley applauded when his wit is forgotten.

Mrs. [Susanna] Wesley lived long enough to deplore the extravagances of her two sons, John and Charles. She considered them as under *strong delusions to believe a lie*; and states her objections to their enthusiastic principles (particularly in the matter of *assurance*) with great strength of argument, in a correspondence with their brother Samuel.<sup>8</sup> He too exerted *his* best powers to reclaim them from their wanderings, but in vain!<sup>9</sup> *'The extravagant and erring spirit'* could not be reduced to *'its own confine'*. It had burst its bonds asunder, and ran violently down the steep!

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<sup>5</sup>See JW to Samuel Wesley Jr., Oct. 15, 1735, *Works*, 25:444–45.

<sup>6</sup>See Susanna (Annesley) Wesley to Samuel Wesley Jr., Mar. 11, 1704; in Charles Wallace (ed.), *Susanna Wesley* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 41–48.

<sup>7</sup>Badcock likely means the letter of Samuel Sr. to Samuel Jr., Feb. 28, 1733, in Clarke, *Memoirs* (1823), 461–63.

<sup>8</sup>See Susanna (Annesley) Wesley to Samuel Jr, Mar. 8, 1739, Wallace, *Susanna Wesley*, 177–79.

<sup>9</sup>Note in original: 'Samuel Wesley used to call them "*The Brethren of the New Assurance*".' Cf. Samuel Jr. to JW, Mar. 26, 1739 (*Works*, 25:613) and Apr. 16, 1739 (*Works*, 25:634–35).

Samuel Wesley married a woman of the name of Berry.<sup>10</sup> Her father was a clergyman of the established church, and rector of Watton in Norfolk. Her grandfather was a nonconformist minister; and after his ejection from East Down in the north of Devonshire, resided at Barnstaple, where some of his descendants continue to live in reputation. Samuel Wesley [Jr.] left an only daughter, who married a Mr. Earle, an apothecary at the last mentioned place.<sup>11</sup> They had an only daughter, who married a gentleman of the name of Ma[u]nsell.<sup>12</sup> She died in travail for her first child.

John Wesley, the Methodist, was born about the beginning of the present century. Dr. Priestley hath in his possession a letter from Mrs. Wesley to her son Samuel Wesley, who was at that time a scholar on the foundation at Westminster.<sup>13</sup> She begins the letter with lamenting the great loss the family had sustained by a fire that had happened a few days before at the parsonage at Epworth, by which they were all driven to great necessity. The house was burned to the ground, and few things of value could be saved, the flames spread so rapidly. She thanks God that no lives were lost, though for some time they gave up *poor Jacky* (as she expresses herself); for his father had twice attempted to rescue the child, but was beaten back by the flames. Finding all his efforts abortive, he '*resigned him to divine providence*'. But parental tenderness prevailed over human fears, and Mr. Wesley once more attempted to save his child. By some means, equally unexpected and unaccountable, the boy got round to a window in the front of the house and was taken out—I *think* by one man's leaping on the shoulders of another, and thus getting within his reach. Immediately on his rescue from this most perilous situation the roof fell in. This extraordinary incident explains a certain device in some of the earlier prints of John Wesley,<sup>14</sup> viz. a *house in flames*, with this motto from the prophet, 'Is he not a brand plucked out of the burning?'<sup>15</sup> Many have supposed this device to be merely *emblematical* of his spiritual deliverance. But from this circumstance you must be convinced that it hath a *primary* as well as a *secondary* meaning. It is *real* as well as *allusive*. This fire happened when John was about six years old; and, if I recollect right, in the year 1707.<sup>16</sup>

I need not expatiate on the abilities of this singular man. They are certainly wonderful! In the early part of life he discovered an elegant turn for poetry, and some of his gayer pieces in this line are proofs of a lively fancy and a fine classical taste. I have seen some translations from the Latin poets, done by him at college, which have great merit. I once had an opportunity, by the favour of his niece [Philadelphia (Wesley) Earle], of inspecting some curious original papers which throw great light on his genius and character. He had early a very strong impression (like Count Zinzendorf) of his designation to some extraordinary work. This impression received additional force from some domestic incidents—all which his active fancy turned to his own account. His wonderful preservation, already noticed, naturally tended to cherish the idea of his being designed by providence to accomplish some purpose or other that was out of the ordinary course of human events. There were some strange *phenomena* perceived at the parsonage at Epworth, and some uncommon noises heard there from time to time, which he was very curious in examining into, and very particular in relating. I have little doubt but that he considered himself as the chief object of this *wonderful* visitation. Indeed, Samuel Wesley's credulity was in some degree affected by it—since he collected all the evidences that tended to confirm the story, arranged them with

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<sup>10</sup>Ursula (Berry) Wesley (1695–1742).

<sup>11</sup>Philadelphia (Wesley) Earle (1728–73).

<sup>12</sup>Philadelphia (Earle) Maunsell (1751–74).

<sup>13</sup>Susanna (Annesley) Wesley to Samuel Jr., Feb. 14, 1709, in Wallace, *Susanna Wesley*, 65–66.

<sup>14</sup>Note in original: 'Engraved by [George] Vertue, from a picture of [John] Williams's, in the year 1745.'

<sup>15</sup>Cf. Zech. 3:2.

<sup>16</sup>Actually, 1709.

scrupulous exactness, in a MS consisting of several sheets, and which is still in being.<sup>17</sup> I know not what became of the ghost of Epworth; unless, considered as the prelude to the *noise* Mr. John Wesley made on a more ample stage, it ceased to speak when he began to act.

The dawn of Mr. Wesley's public mission was clouded with mysticism—that species of it which affects silence and solitude; a certain inexplicable introversion of the mind, which abstracts the passions from all sensible objects, and as the French Quietists express it, perfects itself by an absorption of the will and intellect and all the faculties into the Deity. In this 'palpable *obscure*' the excellent Fenelon lost himself when he forsook the shades of Pindus to wander in quest of 'pure love' with Madame Guyon! Mr. Wesley pursued for a while the same *ignis fatuus*<sup>18</sup> with Mr. William Law and the *ghost* of De Renty. A state, however, so torpid and ignoble ill-suited the active genius of this singular man. His elastic mind gained strength by compression; thence *bursting glorious*, he passed (as he himself somewhere says) 'the immense chasm upborne on an eagle's wings'.<sup>19</sup>

His system of divinity indeed was relaxed; or rather I would say, it was made more commodious for general use. The speculations of the mystics were too abstracted and too much sublimated for the conceptions of the gross herd of mankind. Refined maxims, that have little connection with the general sentiments and habits of the human race, were not calculated to make proselytes by the common engines of hope and fear. The *million* could neither be amused nor alarmed by principles in which the heart could *feel* no interest. A few minds of a peculiar texture might possibly take a fancy to them. But Mr. Wesley's business was with minds of every composition. And though the poet says,

*Oderunt hilarem tristes, tristemque iocosi;*<sup>20</sup>

yet he employed himself to search for some common band by which dispositions the most heterogeneous, and sects the most discordant, might have a centre of union. He studied mankind beyond the walls of his college; and the fellow of Lincoln became, in a *certain* sense, a man of the world. His penetration is wonderfully acute. And his *dexterity* in debate hath been so long known that it is almost become proverbial. He was ever more attentive to reason and prudence than his great rival, George Whitefield. He was more calm in his address; more candid in his sentiments; and more reasonable in his doctrines. He had all Whitefield's zeal and perseverance, with double his understanding, and ten times more learning and science. Though *prudence* was his pole star, yet imagination was frequently his card. He gave it all the play that was necessary to establish the credit of his mission.

Mr. John Wesley's prudence hath been frequently imputed to some sinister motives. And what appeared to his friends as 'the wisdom of the serpent', was pronounced by his enemies to be *the craft of the wicked one*. The zealots of the second house of Methodism<sup>21</sup> speak this with a full mouth. I was at Bristol some years since, when the Hon. Mr. [Walter] Shirley, by the order of my Lady Huntingdon, called him to a public account for certain expressions which he had uttered in some charge to his *clergy*, which favoured too much of the popish doctrine of the merit of good works.<sup>22</sup> Various speculations were formed as to the *manner* in which Mr. Wesley would evade the charge. Few conjectured right. But all seemed to agree in one thing, and that was that he would *somehow* or *other* baffle his antagonist. And baffle him he *did*, as Mr. Shirley afterwards confessed in a very *lamentable* pamphlet which he published

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<sup>17</sup>The accounts of the visitation of 'Old Jeffrey' at the Epworth rectory 1716–17 that survive are actually in CW's hand, copied from manuscripts of Samuel Jr.; see CW, *Journal Letters*, 3–29.

<sup>18</sup>A 'false' or imaginary fire / light.

<sup>19</sup>Cf. JW, *Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*, §35, *Works*, 11:57.

<sup>20</sup>Horace, *Epistles*, I.xviii.86; 'The grave dislike the gay, the merry the grave' (Loeb).

<sup>21</sup>I.e., Calvinist Methodists.

<sup>22</sup>I.e. the controversy over the 1770 *Minutes*.



on this *redoubted* controversy.<sup>23</sup> In the crisis of the dispute I heard a celebrated preacher, who was one of Whitefield's successors, express his suspicion of the event: 'For', says he, 'I know him of old. He is an eel; take him where you will, he will slip through your fingers'.

A poem entitled 'Religious Discourse', and published by him in one of his earlier collections, was pointed out to me by his own niece as a very striking delineation of his disposition and character.<sup>24</sup> She said her father regarded it in the same unfavourable light.<sup>25</sup> I have some doubt of this, for I have the original copy now before me,<sup>26</sup> with marginal corrections (chiefly *verbal*) in the handwriting of Samuel Wesley.<sup>27</sup> Had he thoroughly disapproved of it, he would have drawn his pen across the whole. His correction of particular passages was a tacit acknowledgement of his approbation of the rest.

At the beginning of the poem are these lines:

But who must talk? Not the mere formal sage  
Who speaks the obsequious echo of the age,  
To Christian lives who brings the gospel down,  
A gospel moderniz'd by —!<sup>28</sup>

On this *hiatus* Samuel Wesley notes in the margin: 'If T—n, too hard'. [John] Tillotson was undoubtedly meant. He was equally the object of dislike to Methodists and High Churchmen. His theology was too rational for the former, and his politics were too moderate for the latter. The wonder is not that John Wesley should have shown an inclination to insult the memory of a sober divine; but the wonder is that Samuel Wesley should have been disposed to show lenity to a low Churchman, and a Whig of the revolution—especially when it is considered that he himself hath made this same renowned and amiable prelate the object of bitter satire, both in his 'Parish Priest', and in a poem 'To the memory of Dr. South'.<sup>29</sup> In the former his name is mentioned, and very invidiously contracted with Stillingfleet's; in the latter he is plainly alluded to as a secret abettor of 'Socinus and his followers';

And yields up points their favour to engage,  
Transcribing Episcopius by the page.<sup>30</sup>

The archbishop hath been also charged with too free a use of the *Fratres Poloni*, the great Codex of the Socinians; though he never condescended to acknowledge the obligation to such obscure writers. For whoever heard of Schlichtingius, Pscipcovius, or Wolzogenius? In the oblivion into which they were sunk, he might fancy himself to be secure from detection. Or possibly he might think that whatever he could glean from their works that had any intrinsic value in it should be left to itself, to make its own way

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<sup>23</sup>Walter Shirley, *A Narrative of the Principal Circumstances Relative to the Rev. Mr. Wesley's Late Conference ... with the Declaration then Agreed to by Mr. Wesley and Fifty-Three Preachers then in Connexion with Him* (Bath: T. Mills, 1771).

<sup>24</sup>JW published this poem in *HSP* (1739), 58–63; and *MSP* (1744), 3:200–05.

<sup>25</sup>Philadelphia (Wesley) Earle, speaking of Samuel Wesley Jr.

<sup>26</sup>Note in original: 'An autograph of Mr. John Wesley'. The poem was by John Gambold; cf. *The Works of the late Rev. John Gambold* (Bath: S. Hazard, 1789), 251–56. Badcock apparently had a manuscript copy by JW, which JW sent to Samuel Jr. (it is unknown whether this manuscript survives).

<sup>27</sup>In his reply to Badcock (Jan 11, 1785, *Works*, 30:297–301) JW says that CW had just assured him the marginal notes were by CW, not Samuel Jr.

<sup>28</sup>These lines were heavily revised in the form JW published.

<sup>29</sup>See SW Jr., *Poems* (1743), 55–63 and 162–67 respectively.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, 164.

in the world, well knowing that it could receive no assistance or recommendation from the Brethren of Poland.

But to return from this digression to the *characteristic* poem of our sagacious and wary apostle.

There are passages in it which might give occasion to Mr. John Wesley's enemies to represent him as a man of more art than integrity. And perhaps it would puzzle the most subtle of his proselytes to reconcile his maxims with that '*childlike* and *dovelike* simplicity' which he teaches and they profess. As the poem is very curious, and but little known, I think you will be pleased with a few extracts from it:

To the pert reas'ner, if you speak at all,  
Speak what within his cognizance may fall.  
Expose not truths divine to reason's rack,  
Give him his own belov'd ideas back.  
*Your* notions, till they *look like his*, dilute;  
Blind he must be, but save him from dispute.  
But when we are turn'd of reason's noontide glare,  
And things begin to show us what they are,  
More free to such your true conceptions tell,  
*Yet graft them on the arts where they excell.*  
If sprightly sentiments detain their taste,  
If paths of various learning they have trac'd,  
If their cool judgment longs, yet fears, to fix,  
Fire, erudition, hesitation mix.<sup>31</sup>

It is this *accommodating* method which hath brought on Mr. Wesley the opprobrium of Jesuitism. I hope his *ends* were catholic and disinterested. Though I must acknowledge that such *means* have the suspicious complexion of selfish and *sectarian* cunning.

To positive adepts, *insidious* yield,  
To gain the conquest *seem* to quit the field.  
Large in your grants—Be their opinion shown,  
Approve, amend, and *wind it to your own*.<sup>32</sup>

The following lines have spirit and humour in them:

There are who watch to adore the dawn of grace,  
And pamper the young proselyte with praise.  
Kind, humble souls! they with a right good will  
Admire his progress—till he stands stock still! 8 61  
So fond, so smooth, so loving and so civil,  
They praise the cred'lous saint into a devil!<sup>33</sup>

Sectaries and enthusiasts of all descriptions have frequent opportunities of contemplating characters of this unsteady make. A religion that is founded more on passion than judgment; which applies its *criteria* to certain feelings which have no fixed principle in the understanding; a religion which

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<sup>31</sup>This is st. [6] of 'Religious Discourse', found in *HSP* (1739), 60.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid*, st. [13] (p. 62).

<sup>33</sup>The first four lines are the ending of *ibid.*, st. [8] (p. 61). The last two lines do not appear in the form published by JW (or in Gambold's posthumous published collection). Presumably they were in the earlier draft JW sent to Samuel Jr. for comments.

consists of *singularities* that are beyond the habits of common life and general custom, will be ever subject to ridiculous and untoward vicissitudes.

Dr. [William] Warburton hath been thought profane in the ridicule he hath so repeatedly thrown on Mr. Wesley's account of 'the pains and throws of the second birth'. He considered the whole as a compound of imposture and credulity. The learned bishop was not always delicate in the choice of his allusions. If his ideas were gross, he never gave himself the trouble to refine them down by the niceties of expression. As he thought, so he writ; and seemed to imagine that to polish a rugged sentiment was to weaken its force. 'The devil', says he, 'acted as midwife to Mr. Wesley's newborn babes'.<sup>34</sup> In another part of his book, he takes occasion from a concession of the arch-Methodist to declare that 'Mr. William Law begat Methodism, and Count Zinzendorf rocked the cradle.'<sup>35</sup> He allows Whitefield little credit; calls him 'the *madder* of the two'.<sup>36</sup> But considering him in a very inferior light to Mr. Wesley, almost passes him by unnoticed. Whatever good and laudable intentions the bishop might have had, or how zealous soever he might have been to support the interest of sober religion against the insults and encroachments of fanaticism, yet I think it is pretty generally allowed that he was not perfectly happy in the means he chose to effect his good purposes. There is much acute reasoning, and much poignant and sprightly wit, in his *Doctrine of Grace*; but there is in it too much levity for a grave bishop, and too much abuse for a candid Christian. If the subject was not unworthy of his pen, he should not have given such a representation of it as to make it look as if it was. Who *begat*, or who *midwived*, or who *nursed* Methodism, is a point I shall leave to the determination of others. Mr. Wesley's *own* account of this matter is seen to a better advantage in his poem<sup>37</sup> than in Dr. Warburton's extracts from his *Journals*. Excuse this quotation; it shall be the last.

But, lest, reform'd from all extremer ill,  
They should but civilize old nature still;  
The loftier charms and energy display  
Of virtue model'd by the Godhead's ray;  
The lineaments divine, perfection's plan,  
The baseness and the dignity of man.  
Commences now the agonizing strife,  
Previous to nature's death and second life.  
Struck by their own inclement piercing eye,  
Their feeble virtues blush, despair, and die.  
They view the scheme that mimic nature made,  
A fancy'd goodness, and religion's shade.  
With angry scorn they now reject the whole,  
Unchang'd the heart, undeified the soul,  
Till indignation sleeps away to faith,  
And God's own power and peace take root in sacred wrath.<sup>38</sup>

Particular instances may be adduced that in a detached view might render Mr. Wesley's *understanding* a very problematical thing. But an impartial and wise judge will not determine by a few particulars, but by the result of the whole. Mr. Wesley had a very important end in view, and it required a great degree of sagacity, as well as resolution, to plan and pursue the means that were necessary to effect

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<sup>34</sup>Cf. William Warburton, *The Doctrine of Grace* (London: A. Millar, 1763), 1:129.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, 2:152.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, 2:252.

<sup>37</sup>Again, while JW published the poem, he was not the author—that was John Gambold.

<sup>38</sup>This is st. [15] of 'Religious Discourse', found in *HSP* (1739), 62–63.

it. These means considered in their joint dependence and operation were extraordinary, and called for an equal share of enthusiasm to actuate and wisdom to superintend. Such schemes of reformation as were so extensive and complicated as his were not the transient visions of an overheated fancy, but the deep projects of a subtle mind, and called for the most determined efforts of a warm, resolute, and yet cautious spirit.

In one of Mr. Wesley's earlier publications, entitled *An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*, he, in the strongest language, disavows all pecuniary motives; and calls on posterity to vindicate this disinterestedness in one of the boldest apostrophes I ever read: '*Money must needs pass through my hands*', says he; 'but I will take care (God being my helper) that the mammon of unrighteousness shall only pass through; it shall not rest there. None of the accursed thing shall be found in my tents, when the Lord calleth me hence. And hear ye this, all you who have discovered the treasures which I am to leave behind me; if I leave behind me ten pounds (above my debts and the little arrears of my fellowship) you and all mankind bear witness against me, that I lived and died a thief and a robber.'<sup>39</sup> I doubt not but his pride, and something *better* than his pride, will prevent the stigma.

At the age of fourscore, Mr. Wesley is still active and cheerful. His activity indeed hath always kept him in spirits, and prevented those fits of languor and despondency which generally overtake the indolent. He is an excellent companion. And in spite of censure, I believe he is an honest man. The jealousy of the Tabernacle<sup>40</sup> hath joined with the zeal of a *higher* house to detract from the purity of his character. But the *arrow that flew in darkness* only recoiled on those who sent it.

Mr. Wesley, after receiving the sacrament this last summer at the Cathedral of Exeter, was invited by the bishop to dine at the palace.<sup>41</sup> There were some who thought his lordship might have spared the compliment. But others considered it as only another proof, added to the many he hath already given, of his amiable courtesy, candour, and good sense. How far he relaxed his zeal or his dignity by his condescension may be a point to be canvassed by the scrupulous: but the wise and the good of every communion will settle it in a moment.

The discourse at the table turned on a variety of literary topics. At that time the public was amused by the controversy about Rowley's poems. Mr. Wesley said that he had made inquiries about Chatterton, and from the information he could gather he could scarcely believe him equal to such a complicated and ingenious piece of fraud.<sup>42</sup> The subject introduced the name of Mr. Jacob Bryant. Mr. Canon Moore asked him if he had ever read that gentleman's *Analysis*. He said he had not only read the two first volumes, but had actually abridged them.<sup>43</sup> Mr. Moore lent him the third volume, which he intended to abridge likewise. These are instances of uncommon assiduity, as well as singular curiosity in this *transcendent* man, as Bishop Warburton denominated him in a vein of mingled satire and irony. But posterity may perhaps apply the epithet to him *without* a jest.

I could with pleasure enlarge on this subject. But I write in great haste, and have only time to add that there was a sister of the Wesleys, called Mehetabel, who married a gentleman of the name of Wright.<sup>44</sup> I have seen some good pieces of hers both in prose and verse. She was unfortunate both before

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<sup>39</sup>JW, *Earnest Appeal*, §96, *Works*, 11:87–88.

<sup>40</sup>George Whitefield's preaching house in London, representing Calvinist Methodists.

<sup>41</sup>Cf. JW, *Journal*, Aug. 18, 1782, *Works*, 23:249–50,

<sup>42</sup>Thomas Chatterton (1752–70) was an precocious English poet who published a set of poems attributed to a 15th-century cleric named Thomas Rowley.

<sup>43</sup>Jacob Bryant, *A New System: or, an Analysis of Ancient Mythology*, 3 vols. (London: T. Payne, 1774–76). JW published his abridgement of the first two vols. in serial form in *AM* 6 (1783), 138 through *AM* 7 (1784), 649. If he abridged the third vol. later, it was not published.

<sup>44</sup>Mehetabel (Wesley) Wright (1697–1750).

and after marriage; as was another of her sisters, who married the *famous* Wes[t]ley Hall of Salisbury,<sup>45</sup> who had the honour of being Mr. Madan's *precursor* in the great mission of Thelyphthora!<sup>46</sup> I am, dear sir,  
Yours, etc.,

S. Badcock

*Source:* published transcription; *Bibliotheca Topographica Britannica XX* (1784). A slightly abridged reprint appeared in *A New Review; with Literary Curiosities, and Literary Intelligence* 6 (Dec. 1784): 460–69; and *Westminster Magazine* (Dec. 1784): 695–700. A shorter set of excerpts was published in: *Gentleman's Magazine* 54 (April 1784): 279–80; *The Weekly Entertainer* (May 1784): 481–84; and *Walker's Hibernian Magazine* (June 1784): 299–300.

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<sup>45</sup>Martha (Wesley) Hall (1706–91).

<sup>46</sup>I.e., in considering polygamy allowed by Scripture; referring to Westley Hall's mistresses.

From Joseph Benson

Halifax  
December 14, 1782

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I acknowledge the honour you have done me in replying so largely to my letter.<sup>1</sup> And I allow you have given a sufficient answer to the many things which some have urged in favour of the plan of settlement adhered to so tenaciously by the trustees. But at the same time I perceive the principle I had laid down and endeavoured to prove in my letter remains in full force—viz., *that it is time enough* to build another house in Birstall when we are shut out of this. Perhaps you *purposely* wave this point, having no design of building *immediately*, but willing to conceal your intentions from the trustees, hoping they will be induced to comply with your desire through a *fear* of your erecting another house. In which case I should commend your prudence, were there any hope of their being prevailed upon in this way. But I fear they are too sensible of their strength (having the whole society and congregation on their side) to be influenced by any such motive. And I fear too so long as this is threatened their minds, with the minds of the people in general, will be exasperated against you and the Conference, a cordial reconciliation prevented, and the work of God hindered. It seems therefore, if you do *not* intend to build *immediately* (and surely you will not build where you have not a prospect of getting, I had almost said one *single hearer*), you should not be unwilling to have this known, as it may be a means of removing their prejudices and of uniting them again to you and the preachers. And then, as you have secured ground to build on, you may keep the ground in reserve—that at what time soever they shut us or any of us out of their house, we may begin immediately to erect another. In which case it would be strange if we did not take the society and a major part of the congregation also along with us, and leave them an empty house from which to raise the interest of their money.

But if you *do* purpose to build immediately, then you may lay your account with the following things: 1) Nearly the whole society and congregation will leave us. 2) We shall get few or no hearers. 3) We shall hurt the minds of hundreds, both preachers and people, throughout the kingdom, particularly throughout the west of Yorkshire, and cause many of them to leave us. And 4) the greatest part of those that leave us will go back into the world, and their blood will be required at your hands. I say 'their blood will be required at your hands' for you are entrusted with the care of these souls and ought to do what in you lieth to preserve them—and if you do not, are guilty of their blood, even as a physician is guilty of destroying the life he might save but will not.

'But how can you save them?' How? By *yielding* a little in a point which neither Christ nor his apostles require you to urge. By suffering things to remain at Birstall as they have done for 30 years. Or if you do not choose that, by *deferring* only to build another preaching house till it be needed. And for doing this you have the authority and example of an apostle, who became all things (he lawfully could) to all men, that he might save some; and declares in a similar instance he would eat no meat while the world stood, if meat made his brother to offend.<sup>2</sup> In other words, he complied with people's prejudices where they were not to be conquered, as far as he could with a good conscience. But you not only destroy these souls *negatively*, by not saving them when you might; but you even destroy them *positively* at least as much as the trustees, and many will think more. For 1) the trustees would not have taken one step towards building, had it not been for your letter to Mr. [John] Valton encouraging them to believe the house to be built should be settled on the plan of the old deed.<sup>3</sup> 2) After they had agreed with workmen and got stones on for the building, they would have stopped the work and bourned the loss had you not signed the deed,

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<sup>1</sup>See JW to Benson, Nov. 29, 1782, *Works*, 30:90–93; which was a reply to Benson's letter of Nov. 16.

<sup>2</sup>See 1 Cor. 9:19–23.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. JW to Valton, Mar. 24, 1782, *Works*, 30:30–31.

assuring them there was no doubt but your brother would sign too.<sup>4</sup> 3) Afterward, when your brother had refused to sign, they had determined a second time to desist and make the best terms they could with the workmen. But Mr. [Christopher] Hopper, by your order, wrote to them to proceed in the building and that matters would be settled to their satisfaction. In consequence of this they went on with the work, which they never would have done had they not put confidence in *you*, that you would abide by what you had done. Besides, it may be said in their behalf that they do not want anything new at Birstall, but what has been from the beginning. Nay, and that to come as near you as possible, they got the deed altered considerably for the better, and perhaps as far as they could without destroying the very foundation of the trust. So that it will be affirmed *they* have not gone out of *their* way, but *you* out of *yours*, [by] introducing a new thing at Birstall, to the hurt of many souls and the utter ruin of God's work. But supposing the trustees *only* were to blame, and the ruin of God's work lay solely at *their* door, yet consider, dear sir, it is not to be expected *they* should feel as much concern on this account as *you*. Shall the *sheep* care as much for one another as the *shepherd* cares for them all? And shall the shepherd who might have saved the sheep content himself with saying, 'The *sheep* destroyed *one another*. I destroyed them not'?

Reverend and dear sir, I entreat you to bear with me on a subject of less importance. I would not have prevailed upon myself to use this freedom, but when the souls of hundreds (may I not say thousands?) are at stake, I must speak. Whatever power the Lord has given you (and he has given you *great* power), he has given for edification and not for destruction. In the former case you *use* your power. But in the blessed work wrought about Birstall a few years ago? A work in which we gloried, of which the kingdom sung, and a work which gave birth to this new preaching house, which it is certain need not have been build had not that work been wrought, for the old one would have been large enough. And were we so little acquainted with Satan's devices as not to know that he would leave no stone unturned to stop its progress, if not destroy it utterly? Behold, he has well nigh gained his end! He has put an effectual stop to one of the most glorious works that has been wrought from the beginning; nay, and has gone a great way to overturn it from the foundation, and that by the means of what was good! Oh, thou compassionate lover of souls! 'Where is thy zeal and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels and mercies? Are they restrained?'<sup>5</sup> 'Behold and visit this vine which thine own right hand hath planted!'<sup>6</sup> Oh, disappoint the enemy of souls of his design, and deprive him of the glory he has gained among the companions of his revolt by this masterpiece of hellish policy—in which however we have lent him no little assistance, and therefore are entitled to a share of his cursed applause!

With an heart mourning for the cause of God I shall conclude with the words of our Lord too applicable in this case: 'Woe to the world, because of offences, for it must need be that offences come. But woe to that man by whom the offence cometh.'<sup>7</sup> 'It were good for that man that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.'<sup>8</sup>

I am, reverend and dear sir,

Your afflicted son in the gospel,

Jos. Benson

*Source:* Benson's manuscript copy for his records; MARC, PLP 7/8/11.

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<sup>4</sup>JW signed the deed proposed by the trustees on May 9, 1782. He does not mention this in his *Journal* account published later, by see JW to CW, May 28, 1782, *Works*, 30:48–49.

<sup>5</sup>Isa. 63:15.

<sup>6</sup>Ps. 80:14–15.

<sup>7</sup>Matt. 18:7.

<sup>8</sup>Matt. 18:6.

From the Rev. Thomas Davenport

Allextion  
December 14, 1782

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Your favour of August 14th came duly to hand, for which I thank you.<sup>1</sup> I still want peace. I wait for it; and God enables me, in some degree, to wrestle for it. I trust he will strengthen me to wait patiently his leisure. My great burden is the care of souls. And though I see daily more and more of the evil of my heart, if any sin reigns it is that of omission.

God enables me to do something at stated seasons. But I fall dreadfully short. I have not here a soul to strengthen my hands. Nothing seems to take root. I often think my eyes are so dim that I only 'see men as trees walking'.<sup>2</sup> I had some hopes from your last that one of the preachers would have called upon me here. I watched with a longing eye. I trust the Lord will commiserate these souls, dead and hardened as they are in trespasses and sin—some having the form, but scarce one the power of religion. 'Breathe, Lord, upon our dry bones, and bid them live.'<sup>3</sup>

A fortitude equal to that of a missionary to the savages is needful for one that comes here upon so great an errand. But what may not a two-edged sword do? We see in other places what it has done. Mammon is the god to which every knee here bows. Alleine's *Alarm to Unconverted Sinners* was put into my hand, and it has been profitable to me.<sup>4</sup> Oh that I were able to give a few of them away! Who knows but a blessing might attend it?

I feel a longing desire to converse with you. I persuade myself that God is carrying on his work in my own soul, but I have many conflicts from without. I thank God that mine, and the prayers of my true friends, have not been in vain. And though my gifts are small, I am not left quite destitute of the grace that bringeth salvation.

I wish for nothing but more of the love of God. All else must be mingled with sorrow. And I must eat my every morsel with bitter herbs, the bitter reflection of an unequalled obstinacy. Intercede for, reverend and dear sir,

Your humble and affectionate

T. D.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 665–66.

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<sup>1</sup>See *Works*, 30:71.

<sup>2</sup>Mark 8:24.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Ezek. 37:3–5.

<sup>4</sup>JW had just published an abridged version of Joseph Alleine, *An Alarm to Unconverted Sinners* (1782; Bibliography No. 428).



From Mrs. Martha Ward

Cork  
December 22, 1782

My Dear Sir,

The mercy of God, and his care of his vineyard, has been abundantly displayed among us. Could you, sir, see the unanimity, the peace, the prosperity of our little Zion, your heart would rejoice. There is a universal revival in our bands and classes. God is in the midst of us, and all feel that uniting principle of life exciting us to provoke one another to love and good works. Our congregations are large on Sundays; and on week-nights of late they are much increased and deeply serious. The select society is again assembled. A general conviction rests on believers for holiness of heart. Some who formerly experienced it, but had lost their evidence, are again restored. And others are brought into that rest which belongs to the people of God.

Prayer-meetings are in some places kept up, but not so generally as we could wish. I have now a young woman in the house with me who is on full stretch for purity of heart; so that I am no longer like a sparrow alone on the house top, but have one in the house like-minded with me. Where shall I begin to tell of those mercies that are infinite in their nature, and endless in duration! O my contracted heart! May God enlarge it, to contain more of his fullness!

Insatiate to the spring I fly,  
I drink and yet am every dry;  
Ah! Who against such charms is proof?  
Ah! Who that loves can love enough?<sup>1</sup>

Sister [Christiana] M[alenoir]'s heart is healed. Her soul rejoices in the perfect love of Jesus. She is now the active, zealous, faithful disciple she was some years ago. May the prayer-hearing God still continue to bless the labours of his servants! May your eyes behold and your ears hear of the widening power of his gospel! May it spread from heart to heart, from town to town, and from one end of the earth to the other. Even so, Lord Jesus, pour thy Spirit upon all flesh; reign in every heart; let all the people praise thee; make thy aged servant rejoice, and give his spirit into thy hands when his eyes have seen thy salvation! I am, dear sir, with true affection and respect,

Your loving daughter and servant,

M. W.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 666–67.

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<sup>1</sup>'We Love Him Because He First Loved Us', st. 9, in JW, *CPH* (1741), 40 [a hymn originally by Bernard of Clairvaux in Latin, that JW took from Johann Christian Jacobi, *Psalmodia Germanica* (1732)].

From John Allen

[Manchester]  
January 3, 1783

Sir,

For some time we have hardly ever preached but one, two, or more have returned thanks, either for a sense of pardon, or for having their backslidings healed, or for experiencing that the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin.

On Monday evening last we had a good time while keeping the love-feast. After a few had spoken of the goodness of God the fire was kindled, so that some began to weep, others to tremble, and several to roar out for the disquietude of their souls. We then left off conversing, and spent an hour in singing and prayer; when the cry was still the same. After we had dismissed the people, many returned to pray with those who would not depart without a blessing—on which their cries and agonies became much greater than before. After some time four or five declared that God had turned their captivity into joy! We had such another love-feast at Middleton on New Year's Day.

In about three weeks, more than twenty have found peace with God, while others have been either awakened, quickened, comforted, or healed. And we are not without hopes of seeing greater things here in a short time.

J. Allen

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 9 (1786): 664.

From Ann Bolton

[Witney]

January 3, 1783

Reverend and Dear Sir,

My present situation finds me full employ; and were I not to rise early and take my time for retirement in the morning, I should enjoy but little of that pleasing repast. I think secret converse with God and searching his blessed word was never so much my delight as of late; and I can truly say I esteem it more than my necessary food. I have abundant cause to praise a gracious God, who condescends daily to instruct me how to war a good warfare, and makes me in his strength strong to endure. I cannot go one step without my divine leader, who is both my sun and shield. I look to him for a solution of all my doubts, and in every difficulty. And on him I am enabled to cast my every care. So that though my way is very rough and thorny; yet his presence, his smiles, his gracious aid and condescending care, makes all easy, pleasant, and delightful. He makes crooked things straight, and rough places plain; so that his word is fulfilled in the effects of his grace. The prevailing desire of my soul is to be wholly the Lord's, and given up to his will in all things. He greatly encourages me to persevere in the way of simple faith. And cleaving to him, I can go straight to him with all my troubles, and freely tell him all my complaints. O that I did more fully answer all his mercies, by a momentary aim at advancing his glory!

When you was at Witney,<sup>1</sup> and for some time before, my soul was filled with faith and hope respecting the prosperity of the work of God here. From day to day those words enlivened my expectation, 'I will abundantly bless her provision, and satisfy her poor with bread.'<sup>2</sup> And blessed be God, he is faithful and hath in some measure fulfilled his words. But I am waiting to behold its full accomplishment. About a week since, I was searching for a word of comfort and instruction, and providentially opened my Bible on the fifty-fourth of Isaiah—which, as I read the chapter through, was opened and explained to my mind as a farther token of what the Almighty is about to do for his church in this place. And every time I read it (which has been often since) I discover fresh beauty and immense fullness therein. I am, dear sir,

Your obliged and affectionate servant,

A. B.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 49–50.

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<sup>1</sup>JW's most recent visit to Witney recorded in his *Journal* was Oct. 16, 1782 (*Works*, 23:257).

<sup>2</sup>Ps. 132:15.

From Ellen Gretton<sup>1</sup>

[Grantham]  
c. January 3, 1783

Dear and Reverend Sir,

I beg leave to return my most grateful thanks for your kind invitation to Rauceby, and intention of assisting me in my present difficult situation.<sup>2</sup> I full purposed carrying my respects to you and Mr. [John] Pugh in person this afternoon. But being prevented, have sent Robert Derry over,<sup>3</sup> as he wishes much to hear you and is, I trust, in some measure again disposed to receive the truth. I should be happy to see you before your return to town [i.e., London], as I have not certainty when I can go up myself. If you return through Grantham, [I] may hope for that pleasure. Or if you wish me to come over to Rauceby, I must beg the favour of being sent for any day most convenient. Your intended favour will be truly acceptable and most gratefully received, as my long illness and other circumstances have involved me in many distresses. But out of them all I believe my God will deliver me. I praise him for his goodness to me, his most unworthy creature. Though he hath chastened and corrected me, he hath not given my soul over unto death, nor suffered my faith to fail. I entreat an interest in your prayers, and beg you will accept mine for your soul's comfort and peace, and that your late important charge may be attended with the divine blessing. May you be first partakers of the grace of God and heirs of his eternal kingdom.

I beg you will present my best respects to Mrs. [Ann] Pugh, and believe me

Your grateful and very dear affectionate friend in the bonds of grace,

E. Gretton

*Source:* copy for records; London, Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, Archives, MA 8610/5.

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<sup>1</sup>This is Gretton's copy of her reply to JW's letter of Dec. 31, 1782; written on the fly leaf and address side of JW's letter.

<sup>2</sup>The invitation to John Pugh's home in Rauceby was not included in JW's letter of Dec. 31; it was likely conveyed by the person who hand delivered the letter.

<sup>3</sup>Robert Derry (1730–1801) was converted to the Calvinist wing of Methodism while apprenticing as a shoemaker in London. After relocating to Grantham he decisively aligned with the Wesleyan wing of the revival, hosting preachers in his town and on occasion preaching himself. Derry and his wife hosted Gretton as a lodger in their home for several years. Derry remained a faithful leader in the Methodist society in Grantham until his death. See Thomas Cocking, *The History of Methodism in Grantham* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, & Co.), 153–62.

From Lady [Darcy (Brisbane) Maxwell]

[near Edinburgh]  
January 13, 1783

Reverend Sir,

Of late I have found a solemn sense of eternity deeply impressed on my mind, attended with a permanent and growing conviction that nothing here below deserves a thought but living to God; unless as it tends more immediately, or remotely to forward this great end. I think the Lord has given me more than ever to form a just estimate of this world and the things of it. And of a truth, I see them to be lighter than a feather, while I feel the weight and see the importance of eternal things; the scale does indeed greatly preponderate on this side.

I am stirred up much to press vigorously on. My soul is struggling into God with all the importunity of prayer, but as yet still with unavailing efforts. I try to scale the mount of holiest love. I see, and deeply feel how far I am behind. And while thus wrestling for inward conformity to the divine image, I feel much drawn out in strong desires after activity in the ways of God. But in every situation I find there is danger, for I now see such emptiness in all created good that my heart is (perhaps too much) disunited from it. And even amongst Christians I meet with so few, if any, that are as much alive to God as I wish to be, and feel I must be in order to be completely happy, that a little of them goes a great way. Perhaps this is wrong. How various and how subtle are the devices of the enemy! But the wisdom that cometh from above is profitable to direct in all things. I am now within a short mile of Edinburgh, and have more frequent opportunities of being in the house of God, and of enjoying intercourse with his children (which I esteem a privilege) than I had before. Through mercy I enjoy a larger measure of health than usual. All I want is more of the life of God—for which I sigh and in[ward]ly mourn.

I trust you still wax stronger and stronger, having your hands made strong by the mighty God of Jacob; and are still favoured with much success in your attempts to promote the Redeemer's kingdom. That every revolving season may bring you an increase of both is, reverend sir, the desire of

Your faithful humble servant,

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*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 51–52.

From Ruth Hall<sup>1</sup>

[York]

January 18, 1783

Reverend and Dear Sir,

According to your desire, I will simply relate to you the Lord's gracious dealings with me. I had oft times serious impressions upon my mind when I was very young. The Lord drew me with the cords of his love. When in the means of grace, or in the company of serious people, I often wished to enjoy the happiness which I heard others speak of. But these impressions soon passed away. I went on thus till the year 1772, when I was much stirred up to seek the Lord, that I might know him for myself. But I let these convictions also die away.

The Lord then permitted me to be sorely harassed with temptations from the devil, so that I had scarce any rest from morning till night. Blasphemous thoughts of God were mostly urged upon my mind. I then began to think I had sinned beyond the reach of mercy. This brought horror into my soul, and made me miserable, till I opened my mind to my dear mother,<sup>2</sup> who encouraged me to see the Lord, assuring me he would be found of me if I sought him with my whole heart. This generally gave me ease for the present. But I soon sunk back into my former despair. I went from home after this, and was in some measure diverted from what oppressed my mind by giving way to trifling. And as my seriousness wore off, I was less harassed with temptation.

In this state I continued till the year 1776, when I was again stirred up by hearing that a young woman, who had not been long in the society, had received the blessing of sanctification. I was cut to the heart when I thought how long I had been [in the society], and knew nothing of the divine life, notwithstanding the precious means I enjoyed. I then determined not to rest till the Lord should bless me also. I wrestled with him much in prayer at all opportunities for about a fortnight; when one night, after I had continued pleading with God till almost midnight, these words were impressed on my mind, 'Jesus Christ maketh thee whole. Thy sins are forgiven thee.'<sup>3</sup> I could not believe it at first, though the words were repeated many times, for I doubted whether they came from God. At length I determined to strive to believe. And as soon as I did this, I felt power to believe that Jesus was my Saviour. My burden of guilt was removed, and I could now rejoice in the Lord. I was soon tempted to think I had deceived myself. But I saw this was from the enemy, and was enabled to resist it. I went on comfortably for a few weeks, and then gave way to sin, by which my soul was brought into darkness. But the Lord again shed abroad his love in my heart.

I was convinced by degrees of the necessity of holiness. The Lord showed me how much I lived beneath my privilege: that I was called to love him with all my heart, and devote myself entirely to him. I often felt a strong desire to experience this blessing, but found in me an evil heart of unbelief. When I felt evil tempers arise, and get the better of me, I thought it impossible that I ever could be saved from them. But as my dear mother was such a witness of it in every respect, I had some hope that I too might experience the saving power of God. Indeed I was much hurt by the conduct of a young person of my acquaintance, who professed to be in this liberty but did not walk accordingly. I often feared that I, in like manner, should be a reproach to the cause of God. But the Lord graciously helped me, particularly by the conversation of one who I believe lives near to him. Having an opportunity of being with her alone, I found liberty to open my mind freely. And the Lord so blessed what she said to me that I thought I could give myself into his hands. All my doubts were removed, my soul was as melting wax before the fire, and at a love-feast about two days after was set at full liberty.

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<sup>1</sup>Ruth Hall (b. 1759) was the daughter of JW's earlier correspondent Ruth (Crowther) Hall and her husband John Hall, born in Leeds. See JW's letter to her of Dec. 9, 1783, *Works*, 30:194–95.

<sup>2</sup>Ruth (Crowther) Hall.

<sup>3</sup>Acts 9:34; Matt. 9:5.

These words were then applied to my mind: 'Stand fast in the liberty, wherewith Christ hath made thee free.'<sup>4</sup> Fear again arose in me, and I said 'Lord, I shall not stand, I shall not stand, I shall not hold the blessing.' When immediately these words were applied, 'Thou standest by faith. Be not high minded but fear.'<sup>5</sup> And with them such light shone into my mind that I saw more clearly than ever how the soul, by believing every moment in Jesus, is upheld and strengthened. And in that moment I was enabled to give myself to the Lord, to be entirely his. I felt such humility of spirit as I never did before. I saw myself to be nothing, and that Jesus was all in all to me. And glory be his holy name, since that time I have proved his saving power. I have been much exercised both from outward and inward temptations, yet I find by looking to the Lord he maketh my peace to flow as a river. I still see heights and depths, lengths and breadths before me, and feel a determination to press forward, that I may be made all that he would have me to be. I beg an interest in your prayers, and am, dear sir,

Your affectionate,

Ruth Hall

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 105–07.

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<sup>4</sup>Gal. 5:1.

<sup>5</sup>Rom. 11:20.

From Ann Bolton<sup>1</sup>

[Witney]

January 29, 1783

Reverend and Dear Sir,

How can I but be gratefully affected toward the Author of my mercies, when I consider the great things he has done for me! He has shown me many troubles, of different kinds, but in all and through all, his own right hand hath upheld me and brought me deliverance. I am persuaded that whatever concerns me is under the direction and guidance of divine Providence, and that he disposes all in such a way as will most advance or promote my felicity.

I feel, blessed be God, that the severe exercises he has led me through have taught me a more simple, steady reliance upon him and the word of his truth. I seem to have gained a greater intimacy and holy familiarity with him. In short, I can with greater confidence claim him as my covenant God. I know I have an interest in all his promises, by virtue of my interest in the Redeemer's merits. My soul is sweetly delivered from all anxious fears and cares. I think I never felt my mind so deeply affected with desire for the promotion of the gospel as of late. The promises of God respecting it are very precious to me, and are frequently afforded me with a peculiar unction of the Spirit. My soul rejoices in hope of seeing the inhabitants of Zion increasing day by day.

I have also lately found stronger desires of being useful, and have been much quickened to improve myself in such knowledge as will best fit me for that purpose. My desires and views of this kind have been very affecting. In this large family, duty to it and the calls of business allow me very little time in the day for retirement. I therefore rise about 5:00 (and I hope strictly to adhere to it) and make me a little wood fire in my room, and comfortably and quietly enjoy my morning.

I have thought of late that it is a very great privilege to furnish the mind with useful knowledge, not only as it respects the present life, or the service we might render our fellow creatures, but as it enlarges the faculties of the soul, gives it juster views of things, and I suppose, prepares it for greater enjoyment of the beatific vision. I shall be greatly obliged to you for a few thoughts on this subject. I have given you the two urging motives for my endeavouring after improvement: to make me useful here, and fit me for eternal enjoyments; both which I apprehend include the glory of God. I am, dear sir,

Your much obliged and affectionate servant,

A. B.

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 108–09.

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<sup>1</sup>Bolton is replying to JW's letter of Jan. 5, 1783, *Works*, 30:110–11.



From John Francis Valton

Burton  
February 1, 1783

Thursday, January 2. This evening I held a watch-night at Batley. Under the sermon a child, about twelve years old, cried out much, and soon found peace with God. Another fell down under the exhortation, and another was cut to the heart. These continued crying in great distress till near midnight, when the Comforter came and brought peace into their souls. I did not think that human nature could have continued such a constant cry for so long a time.

On Saturday the 18th we had a most excellent watch-night at Chidswell,<sup>1</sup> about a mile from Hanging Heaton. It lasted near five hours. Four persons were most earnestly crying out for mercy for several hours. Two or three of them were convulsed for some time, and shook like the aspen leaf. Another dropped down upon the floor, and several others felt a wounded spirit. At last three of them were filled with peace.

Tuesday 21. Last night we had a wonderful time at Hanging Heaton. We continued in prayer for two or three hours after I had done preaching, amidst the groans and cries of several. We told the Lord we would not go away without their deliverance, and God granted our request when they praised and glorified their great Deliverer. This was a precious night indeed!

Thursday 23. I preached and held a watch-night at Dewsbury Bank. As I was giving out the hymn, I felt the power of God descend, and told the people we should have a wonderful time. Presently, cries, groans, and other signals of distress manifested the spirit of bondage. It seemed to be a Pentecost indeed, and strangers might reasonably have conjectured that three persons were full of new wine. It was a most wonderful time, and several were set at liberty. The Lord did with his great, and sore, and strong sword (of the Spirit) punish Leviathan. Holy and reverend is his name!

Monday 27. This night I preached and held a watch-night at Anthony Williamson's, at Lee-fair. We had a large congregation, and a most awful time. Cries, tears, and groans, etc., were uttered forth for some hours, when two children and a young man found peace. It is amazing to think what one child went through! It would have pierced a stone to have heard her cries and prayers.

Saturday, February 1. I preached again at Chidswell. Soon after preaching the power of God fell upon the people, and Satan made a dreadful resistance. One woman was like the man among the tombs.<sup>2</sup> Four people were employed in holding her for some hours. Her shrieks were dreadful! But blessed be God, we had three set at liberty before twelve o'clock!

Yesterday, February 3. I called at a place near Chidswell, to see a publican's wife who was ill in bed. Several came into the room while I was there. When I was at prayer dreadful convictions seized her, and her arms became cold and contracted. Soon after another woman was seized, and then a third, and several cried out bitterly. However before I left them God heard our prayer and two found peace. The landlady cried out, 'I am cured both in body and soul.' It was a wonderful time.

J. Valton

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 10 (1787): 98–100.

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<sup>1</sup>Orig., here and below: 'Childshill'.

<sup>2</sup>See Mark 8:28.

From Elizabeth Scaddan<sup>1</sup>

February 3, 1783

Reverend and Dear Sir,

At your desire I shall endeavour, though I am at a loss where to begin, to give the recital of that goodness and mercy which hath followed me all the days of my life, and which I can trace back to my earliest remembrance. I reflect with pleasure on the kindness manifested toward me by a young lady, who was one of my sponsors, in endeavouring to instill into my tender mind an early sense of my duty to God and my neighbour. Nothing in her power was wanting in order to effect this, and from her I learned both by example and principle that the duties of religion demanded my chief concern. Her endeavours so far succeeded as to give my mind a religious turn; and before I was ten years old, I felt a concern whenever I thought I had offended God. I had a heart that was gay and volatile, alive to pleasure, though not insensible to the miseries of my fellow creatures. As I grew in years, I was often led to reflect on the many evils attendant on this state of existence, and the joys that awaited those who patiently continued in well-doing. I often meditated on the glories of heaven, and have been happy in the thought of one day being a partaker of them. Though death wore a dreadful aspect, even when I considered him the messenger of my release from a world where sin and pain abounded, to partake of the happiness of heaven.

I had sometimes a fear lest I should not be admitted there; but for the most part valued myself on having better principles and morals than the generality of those I conversed with. which quieted my fears of judgment but did not make me willing to pass through the valley of the shadow of death. In this respect I was subject to bondage, from which nothing but the coming in of a better hope, that what arose from the view of moral rectitude, could deliver me. I remember once while very young I was ill and wept much lest I should die, and had some fear of not going to heaven, as I saw myself a sinner and not prepared for that celestial city. But as I soon recovered, these impressions wore off, and gayer reflections took possession of my thoughts. I indulged my disposition for mirth and the enjoyment of the pleasures of the world so far as I could, practising what I deemed the duties of religion when they did not interfere with my worldly delights. Nor did I find that bitterness or satiety in the gratifications of terrestrial things which many have felt, and which have led to a renunciation of them. I believe this was owing to my not having the least notion that I did wrong, and from my natural disposition, which was not studious of occasions for uneasiness. I have abundant reason to praise God for his restraining grace; for, as touching the moral law, commonly received among men, I was truly conscientious, abhorring profaneness or a neglect of social duties.

I had *The New Whole Duty of Man* given me by the lady before mentioned.<sup>2</sup> I read in this often, and with pleasure observed that I was not very deficient in the duties contained therein; but felt some degree of distress on finding myself liable to frequent, sudden, and violent anger; and vainly imagined that, could I conquer this, I should be an almost perfect character. I took every means recommended in that book in order to accomplish this end. And when I have been overcome by this sin, have retired and used the prayer there laid down on this occasion, with many tears and some degree of belief that the Lord would hear and answer my request. For I believed there was a God, and that 'he was a rewarder of all who diligently seek him'.<sup>3</sup> I had learned to apply to him upon every occasion in life, and by prayer and supplication to make my request known to him, by using a form suited to my purpose.

I recollect one act of faith, which respected a temporal circumstance in which I was interested. I laid it before the Lord and entreated his aid, and promised if he would indeed answer my petition I would

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<sup>1</sup>This may be the Elizabeth Scaddan born in Penzance Cornwall in 1754, who would marry Jethro Hornblower in 1789 and die in 1823; but there is no other evidence to confirm this.

<sup>2</sup>(London: Wicksteed, 1741).

<sup>3</sup>Heb. 11:6.

record his mercy and sing a psalm of praise to him. And the psalm I fixed on was the hundred and sixteenth. I could see no prospect of deliverance but by the interposition of providence. And blessed be his name, I had an evidence that he heareth prayer! And I accordingly sung praises to him with a glad heart. After this I began to delight more in the ways of the Lord, and could prefer them to the diversions and amusements of the world; yet would not totally renounce these, for fear of being singular.

A woman in your connection frequently talked to me on divine subjects. But for some time it had little effect, as I was much prejudiced against all who bore the name of a Methodist. I used sometimes to call at the preaching room with company, in our return from walking: but thought it no more my duty to attend to what was there delivered than if I had gone into a Roman Catholic chapel or to a Jew's synagogue. Nor did I fear even to jest in that place. After being more merry than usual there one evening, on my return home I met with a slight misfortune, which made me think I ought not to have gone to such a place and I determined to go there no more. I kept this resolution, though often entreated to go there in order to pass a leisure hour and to make sport of the people there assembled.

On a strict examination of myself, I found I had not power over anger. I lamented this in secret, and begged of the Lord to deliver me from it. Having still an opportunity of conversing with the woman above mentioned, I discovered something in her which I had not attained. I became fond of her conversation, and of reading the Scriptures every day. I thought it a matter of importance to know the things belonging to my everlasting peace, and felt a growing delight in inquiries of this nature. I thought I had done wrong in promising not to hear Methodist preaching, and frankly told this woman my thoughts on this head. She convinced me that I was indeed wrong, and that such a promise was better broke than kept. I went again to the preaching room, with an earnest desire of improvement, though quite ashamed of having this desire known. And I have often put on an air of gaiety, fearing my acquaintance would think I was seriously attending to the word preached, or joining in prayer.

At length the Lord in mercy gave me the hearing ear and understanding heart. So that about the latter end of the year 1772 I was inquiring the way to Zion, having my face thitherward. The word of God came with power, and I found it to be a 'discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart'.<sup>4</sup> I saw myself obnoxious to divine wrath, and that I had only as it were been 'putting a new piece on an old garment',<sup>5</sup> according to our Lord's parable. But I now saw the necessity of being formed anew, in order to regain the lost image of my glorious Creator. I could no longer esteem myself on account of my fancied excellence. The conviction of my lost estate increased daily, though without any fears of hell. Which I since wondered at, for I scarce ever thought of anything beside how I should be reconciled to God or admitted into his favour. Nor had I just views of the all-sufficiency of my Saviour's merit.

I dared not often to frequent the congregation of the people called Methodists—my friends and relations having taken some means to prevent my so doing, on seeing me more thoughtful than usual. I earnestly applied to God saying, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? Only reveal thy will concerning me, and through thy grace, I am determined to follow thee through evil as well as good report.' It plainly appeared to me that I ought not to neglect any opportunity of assembling in his name. I felt the work of grace deepening in my soul, till I was enabled to come to God, stripped of every plea but the blood and righteousness of a crucified Saviour. Yet before I felt the word of reconciliation, or was brought into communion with God, while my spirit was wounded for sin, the burden of which became intolerable, Satan stirred up my relations to hinder this work in my soul. They thought I should be forever undone if they did not prevent my associating with the people above mentioned.

Gentle methods were at first taken, in order to prevent my so doing. And they promised I should have as much time allowed me as I desired for worshipping God, if I would give up this people. Tears were joined to entreaties, which melted my heart, but did not shake my resolution. In vain did I plead that a wrong judgment was the ground of the objections raised against them—that God had owned their meetings, that I believed it my duty to attend them, and that I ought to obey God rather than man. All I

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<sup>4</sup>Heb. 4:12.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. Matt. 9:16, a parallels.

could say had no other effect than to incense my friends against me. My mother begged some friends of whom I had the highest opinion to remonstrate with me, which they did in the mildest terms. I allowed the weight of their arguments, if conscience did not dictate to the contrary; but when this was the case, I could not be controlled.

They were surprised to find so young a person obstinately persist in what elder and more experienced persons disapproved. I answered that I was not too young to die, or to give an account for my conduct in this life. And that I ought to use the means which I was convinced were the most conducive to my soul's good. The displeasure of my family increased on finding they could not attain the end proposed, and threats were made use of to deter me from proceeding any farther. I was told that I should no longer remain with them, that they would disown me, and accordingly I had only till the next morning to determine what answer to give them. In vain did I urge them to try me for a little longer, that they might see whether any ill consequences attended my being with the Methodists and showed the impropriety of casting me out into the world utterly unprovided for. This only enraged them more. My elder sister had some serious impressions, and would like to have gone in the same way with me; but not being convinced of the necessity of it, she did not contend. I was now distressed exceedingly, and thus reasoned with myself, 'I am indeed very young, and inexperienced. Bet I have set my judgment in opposition to elder and wiser persons.' I was at a loss how to proceed, well knowing that if I went out of the way of duty, I could not expect divine aid. I believed the Lord would not deceive me. I therefore entreated him to dispose my mind in the morning to pursue the way in which he would have me to walk, and if I had been wrong, that I might no longer persist. I thus gave myself up to his direction and felt my mind composed.

In the morning when I awoke, I felt a sense of the divine presence, and clearly saw that I ought not to give up the people I had contended for. All my concern therefore was for my dear relations, who were fighting against God! But how was I surprised to find that the Lord had so wrought upon the mind of one of my family, who was the most bitter of my adversaries, that he was thoroughly convinced of his error, though the night before he determined to show no lenity towards me. He was now giving thanks to God, who had done such great things for me. And the rest of the family, astonished at such an instantaneous alteration, were reconciled to me also, and never attempted to hinder me afterward. Nor was it long ere the Lord made me a joyful partaker of his pardoning love.

Since that time, I have for the most part gone on my way rejoicing, though various have been the snares laid for me, and the temptations and trials I have been exercised with. Yet, having obtained help of God, I continue to this day. Glory be to his name, he has often granted my petitions. And I had the satisfaction of having two of my family as well as some of my intimate friends in the same connection with me: and this in a very short time after their being amongst my persecutors.

And now, dear sir, I have endeavoured to give the relation desired by you; though to be as particular as I might, would take up too much paper, and too much of your time. Excuse what deficiencies you will find in this, and believe me, with the utmost duty and respect,

Your friend and servant,

E. Scaddan

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 182–88.

From John Allen<sup>1</sup>

[Manchester]  
February 13, 1783

Sir,

We have still a good work of God among us here. Many are brought to a sense of pardoning love, and others to experience salvation from all sin. We have still hardly a meeting but one or another finds peace with God, or has his backslidings healed, or else is renewed in love. Brother M. has had five of his children converted since Christmas, who are now happy and appear to be very steady. Many have been wrought on in a very wonderful manner. Some have even roared out for the disquietness of their souls; but these have frequently been set at liberty in a short time.

Indeed we have sometimes had more noise than I liked. But I durst not pluck up the tares, for fear of destroying some of the wheat. I have therefore thought it best to leave the whole to God—thinking it much better to have a little false fire mixed with much true, than to have none at all.

We have some about ten, eleven, or twelve years of age who are truly happy, speak very clearly of their experience, and are as solid as persons of fifty years of age.

At Ashton[-under-Lyne] the Lord has converted Mr. G[reen], Mrs. G[reen],<sup>2</sup> and her sister. Mr. Green was wrought on in a very strange way. He was first affected under prayer, and grew worse and worse, till he roared like a bear, and rolled up and down the floor for two days and two nights! He was in such agonies that hardly any durst stay with him. However when they ventured into the room, and began to pray, he grew more calm. And soon after his captivity was turned into joy. He is now very comfortable.

Miss Hobson, Mrs. Green's sister, and sister to Mrs. Beard at the New Mills,<sup>3</sup> was brought in nearly the same way. They are all now happy, and I hope will be ornaments to religion.

We have a good work at Oldham also. Many there have found peace with God. Most of this work is among those who have been in the society for some time, though some others have been both awakened and converted.

J. A.

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 9 (1786): 664–65.

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<sup>1</sup>John Allen was currently the Assistant for the Manchester circuit.

<sup>2</sup>This would be William Green and Sarah (Hobson) Green, married 1769 in Ashton-under-Lyme.

<sup>3</sup>Hannah (Hobson) Beard (1733–1810) and her husband James Beard (married in 1756) were pillars of the Methodist society in New Mills; see the brief memoir of her life in *MM* 35 (1812): 532–35.

From an Unidentified Correspondent<sup>1</sup>

[Sheffield]  
February 18, 1783

Benjamin Wood was naturally of a cheerful temper, and sustained a good character in the world. He was of the fraternity of Free Masons, and looked upon the Methodists as a very contemptible people. But being invited to hear preaching in January 1780, he was much pleased with what he heard, and continued a hearer till at length the word made a deep impression upon his mind.

He then desired to be admitted into the society. This was a means of deepening his conviction, so that he now saw himself a lost sinner, wretched and miserable. He continued thus until the month of September in the same year, when one morning at the preaching God set his soul at liberty. He then cried out, 'O Lord, I will praise thee, for though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me.'<sup>2</sup> From this time he was remarkably zealous for God, reproving sin wherever he came, and warning all among whom he was to flee from the wrath to come.

As the preaching had been much blessed to him, he was exceeding ardent in persuading others to hear; always answering their objection with, 'Come and hear for yourselves. How can you judge before you hear?' His labour in reproving sin, and in bringing others to the preaching, was not in vain. He was also very free in telling of the loving kindness of the Lord wherever there was a probability of doing good. He had a peculiar love to his class, and to his leader, and went on steadily in the path of holiness. It does not appear that he ever lost his first love, but held his confidence steadfast to the end.

He had many and great trials in the world, but was more than conqueror through him that loved him. He had much concern for the welfare of his family, and the last time he was at his class (the Tuesday before his death) he prayed earnestly for them with many tears; and added, 'Lord, if my death will contribute anything to their salvation, thy will be done!'<sup>3</sup>

On January 24 [1783] he was attacked in his head, back, bowels, and stomach. It affected his speech also. He made no complaint, though his pain was great; but was quite resigned to live or die. Being asked, 'On what is your dependence for salvation grounded?' He answered, 'On the death of Christ. I believe that for his sake my sins are forgiven, and I am accepted with God.' It was then asked, 'Are you afraid to die?' He answered, 'No: I believe I shall be eternally happy.' He then sung that hymn, 'My God I am thine, ...'<sup>4</sup> quite through. Being asked, on the day of his death if he was happy? he blessed God, and said, 'I am.' About four o'clock, on January 28, without a struggle, he resigned his soul into the hands of his Redeemer.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 414–15.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>It was likely from Thomas Taylor, the current Assistant for the Sheffield circuit.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Isa. 12:1.

<sup>3</sup>Note in original: 'He was then in perfect health.'

<sup>4</sup>CW, 'Hymns for Believers, #16', *HSP* (1749), 1:219–20.

<sup>5</sup>Titled: 'A Short Account of Benjamin Wood, of Sheffield'.

From Mary Freeman Shepherd<sup>1</sup>

[Hilton Park]  
February 21, 1783

Reverend and Dear Sir,

This family will think themselves exceeding happy to be favoured with your company at the time you mention.<sup>2</sup> Your lodging room is already marked out, and will be kept aired for your reception. They are already informed by me of your hours of dining, supping, and going to rest, and nothing here is to interrupt your accustomed regularity and mode of life.

I thank you for your very friendly letter, but you mistake my case.<sup>3</sup> So far from being too wise, I am not *wise enough* for this world. I cannot relish the most accomplished head, the most feeling heart adorned with every graceful expression, and the most amiable qualities in person and manner; if piety be not their leading principle, their ultimate end. I am not wise enough to disguise my sorrow when such amiable qualities are separate from religion; or dissemble an admiration and approbation which I do not, cannot feel for anything divested or short of the excellence which alone can subsist when the fashion of this world shall be passed away. On the other hand, I feel and cannot help feeling, a certain painful sensation on the collision of rough, angular, unpolished pieces of *free stone*, which I should imagine (if they are really designed for, or belonging to the *Urbs Jerusalmę beata*<sup>4</sup>) should be hewed into some tolerable shape; at least their spiculas a little chipped off by the workman's trowel.

I do not love to be scratched and cut, and my skin rubbed off. All I ask is that courtesy which ever will appear where religion really is, and is as inseparable as matter and form. I love not ceremony and affected polish. I only wish for *charity* in the hear. And it will, it must express itself in outward courtesy, simple in those that have not been used to the great world. But how lovely is that simplicity! And how superior even this to all the dancing master can teach, or the great world perfect!

The Methodists! I sing their praises every day. Perhaps there is not a body of people where there is so little *vulgarity* among those of the lower classes of life: so much good sense, and so much good manners. Do not think I despise the Methodists. I honour them exceedingly. And it is one of my motives for honouring you that you have been such an instrument in the hand of God for restoring, with religion, her inseparable attendants, clear heads, sound judgments, pure morals, good hearts, breathing forth in word and deed, love, good will, and civility between man and man. I am, most truly,

Your grateful, affectionate servant,

M. F. S.

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 162–64.

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<sup>1</sup>Mary Freeman Shepherd (1731–1815) was born to Anthony Freeman (1703–73) and his first wife Ann Fallett (1704–33). She was particularly close to, and received support from, an unmarried uncle named Nathaniel Shepherd (1718–59)—and around 1784 added his surname (she never married). Mary began to appear in Wesley family correspondence in 1783, becoming a close friend of Sarah Wesley Jr. and a key influence in the decision of CW's son Samuel to convert to Roman Catholicism. In JW's *Journal* record of the meeting to which she was presently inviting him, he comments that he had known Mary almost from her childhood (see *Works*, 23:265). He had corresponded with her from at least 1757; see JW to Ebenezer Blackwell, May 28, 1757, *Works*, 27:84–85.

<sup>2</sup>Hilton Park (near Wolverhampton, Staffordshire) was an estate currently owned by Sir Philip Gibbes (1731–1815) and his wife Agnes (Osborne) Gibbes (d. 1813). Philip grew up on a sugar plantation in Barbados owned by his father, and inherited it. While his wife and children lived mainly in England by this point, he spent considerable time in Barbados. For more on this family and their relationship to JW, see Clive Norris, 'John Wesley and Enslavement Revisited', *WHS* 64 (2023): 15–23.

<sup>3</sup>This letter is not known to survive.

<sup>4</sup>'The blessed city of Jerusalem'.

From William Collins

Stockton  
February 25, 1783

In the year 1743 there lived in London one who was then foreman to a stay-maker—a good workman, but a very great drunkard. He married, and in a short time after he and his wife removed to Yorkshire. They lived together till she bore him six children. But by his excess in drinking, he kept himself, his wife, and children without even common necessities. He then removed to the county of Durham. His wife then knew little more of religion than himself, though she had formerly heard Mr. John Wesley call sinners to the Lord Jesus. But she did not dare to do it after her marriage, her husband swearing if he had a wife who was inclined to the Methodists he would burn her.

As he now drew near his latter end, she got a clergyman to attend him. But the clergyman observing a peculiar hardness in him, told his wife it was to no effect.

The night of his death, she read a prayer out of the [Common] Prayer Book to him. Aut he cried out, 'Away with that popish book.' She then begged him to say the Lord's Prayer. He uttered some words with the utmost contempt and indifference, and said, 'Bearn, I cannot pray. I cannot pray. I cannot pray. It is all over!'

About an hour or two before he died, his wife asked him if he had anything against her. He replied, 'I have not. But if I had taken thy advice I had not been brought to this deplorable condition.'

About two o'clock in the morning he said, 'Hand me down my clothes, for I must away!'—and died!

In the winter, about six weeks after his death, she with her helpless children, one of them sucking on her breast, were carried in a cart to her parish, whence they were ordered to the poorhouse, which was a place where they used to confine bad women and lunatics. Into this loathsome prison she and her infants were thrust, with nothing to lie on save a little straw, and nothing to cover them. However, after some time they all dropped asleep. Towards morning she awaked, began to bemoan her wretched condition, and calling her husband by his name, said, 'To what a miserable state have you brought me and my innocent babes? We are all to perish for want.'

She had scarce spoke when there was a terrible rushing noise, as if the place was going to be unroofed, and a glimmering light with a sulphurous smell. Then appeared her husband, with fiends who formed a circle round him. He seemed in exquisite pain, and cringed and leaped while they scourged and tormented him.

He said, 'Do not grieve on account of your situation. You will be soon taken out of this place. And you and your children will be taken care of, and you will never perish for want. But as for me, this is to be my condition to all eternity'; and then disappeared.<sup>1</sup>

W. Collins

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 411–12.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Note in original: 'According to what he told her it happened. She has been a member of our society several years, and is a sober, sensible, steady Christian, and in much better circumstances.'

<sup>2</sup>Titled: 'A remarkable Instance of Divine Justice, in the death of a Drunkard'.



From Thomas Hanby<sup>3</sup>

c. February 28, 1783

John Taylor, of Bewdley in Worcestershire, a young man about three and twenty years old, lived utterly without God in the world. Till on Tuesday, January 28, 1783, he was drinking at one Thomas Pountney's house, to such excess that he was much disordered. The landlord, observing this, refused to draw him any more ale. He then, after many oaths and imprecations upon himself, rose up to go away. But as he was going out of the door he dropped down. Thomas Pountney being near, caught him. He was stiff as a dead man, his eyes set wide open, and his teeth quite closed. They laid him upon a bed. He soon began to grind his teeth, while his face was distorted and he was convulsed all over—and that so violently that it was as much as four persons could do to hold him. Twice indeed, for a little space, he showed a composed and quiet countenance. But after a short time, the violent convulsions and all other symptoms returned. Thus he continued, from nine o'clock on Tuesday night, till seven on Thursday evening. He then came to himself, but being unable to speak, made signs for a pen and ink, and having wrote, 'Take me home to die', presently fainted away. He was removed home, but could not compose himself to sleep for a fortnight; which together with the terror that still remained upon his mind, reduced his body to the most deplorable state of weakness that can be imagined.

Mr. [Thomas] Hanby (who took the account from his mouth, on February the 25th) asked him, whether he remembered being at Thomas Pountney's. He said, 'I perfectly remember every circumstance, till the moment that I fell down, as I was going out of the door.' 'But what became of you then?' said Mr. Hanby. 'As soon as I dropped down', said he, 'I fell into a dreadful, deep pit. And when I came to the bottom, I was seized by many devils, who rejoiced over me and dragged me away. I struggled with them in the greatest agonies, while they were pushing and hauling me, to get me into the fire.' I asked him what fire he meant. He said, 'The fire is a vast mountain. I could see no end of it. I seemed to be thirty or forty yards from it. The devils strove to drag me to it. But they could not move me from the place that they dragged me to at first.' 'Did you see any persons in the fire, or hear any remarkable noise?' 'I saw no persons. But I heard the most dreadful screams and lamentations.' 'How did the place upon which you stood appear?' 'As black as pitch, with a darkness peculiar to itself, so that I could see nothing but the devils that surrounded me, and the world of fire before me.' 'But did you feel any pain?' At this question he fell a-trembling, turned pale, and seemed to be struck with an universal horror. When he could speak he said, 'O yes! I felt such misery, pain and anguish that, had I been in possession of the whole world, I would have given it for a moment's ease.' 'How long do you suppose you remained there?' 'O, a long time. Till an angel came, at whose appearance the devils fled, and I found myself perfectly easy and wonderfully happy. The angel said, "Your wickedness has brought you to this place." I followed him a little way, but he then left me and the devils came again with dreadful yells, and dragged me back to the place I was at before. They strove again to push me into the fire. But I struggled. and they were not suffered to prevail.' 'In what forms did the devils appear?' 'Many of them appeared like bears, lions, and other wild beasts.' 'How long do you suppose you were tormented a second time?' He answered, with the same emotion as before. 'O, a great while! But the angel came again, and the moment I saw him the tormentors fled, and I felt no pain at all; till he gave me up to be tormented a third time, and then my tormentors returned, and all my pain and anguish returned, with the same violence as before.' 'How long in all do you imagine you remained in this place of torment?' 'It seemed to me to be five or six years.' How dreadful must that pain be, which though it really lasted not two days, appeared to endure so many years. O what must those pains be, when continued to all eternity!

'Did the angel appear any more?' 'He did. And to my unspeakable joy, not only the devils fled away, but I was permitted to follow him to the very gates of heaven. Yea, and to look into it.' 'Did you see any persons there?' 'I saw transparent persons, very beautiful and glorious, and heard them sing in a

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<sup>3</sup>Thomas Hanby was currently assigned to the Birmingham circuit, which included Bewdley.

manner I cannot describe. This I heard long before I came to the gates. I would fain have gone in, but the angel told me I must go back and tell my brethren what I had seen. I said, “And must I leave my good angel.” In saying those words his spirit returned.

Since that time he is greatly changed, attends all the ordinances of God, and has left the company of all his wicked acquaintance. But he seems still ignorant of *the power of religion*. This is a mystery indeed! It is well if the last end of this man be not worse than the first!

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 7 (1784): 160–62.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Titled: ‘A Strange Account’.

From Dorothea (Garret) King

[Dublin]  
c. March 1783

I had lately the happiness of frequently visiting the late Mrs. Dawson. For several months she enjoyed a constant sense of the presence of God, and her will seemed to be lost in the divine will.

When she drew nigh her end, one whom she had a very high opinion of said, 'You know not what you have to go through.' On this she fell into reasoning, and by this means into a strong conflict with the powers of darkness. All her sins stood in array before her. A cloud overspread her soul. I was with her at the time. But before we parted the day began to break, and the shadows fled away. Her peace increased from that time. The next day, which was the day of her departure, I visited her again. Her soul was now all light and joy. 'I am going', said she, 'to my Father's house. I have no doubt. I am my beloved's, and he is mine!'<sup>1</sup> I asked her, 'Do you find the reviving of inward sin?' Her reply was, 'Far from it'. Her body was so weak and convulsed that she could not speak without the greatest pain. After I left her, she sat up, and as well as she could, endeavoured to speak to her sisters, who attended her, and exhorted them. Among other things she said, 'I have had many conflicts, but now I would not change with one of you.' But her speech failing, she looked round with a heavenly smile, and soon after resigned her soul into the hands of her dear Redeemer.

Her death was a means of strengthening my faith. I was enabled to believe that sin should not again find a place in my heart, and that my God would be with *me* also in the dark valley. Come what will in that hour, my soul longs, yet with an entire submission to the divine will, to be with Jesus, in whose presence I always find myself. In him I live. On him I every moment depend. He bears all my burdens. He delivers me out of every distress, and keeps me free from every temper contrary to love.

D. K—

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 305–06.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Song of Sol. 6:3.

<sup>2</sup>Titled: 'An Account of the Death of Mrs. Dawson, of Dublin'.

From J[ane] T[hornton]<sup>1</sup>

[London]  
c. March 1783

From his early years [Charles Greenwood] had convictions of sin, and the drawings of God. While he was [an] apprentice he constantly attended gospel preaching—in doing which he was much opposed. When he was out of his time, it was impressed on his mind to count the cost whether he would choose God or the world. He prayed much, and the Lord strengthened him to give up all for him. About the time he went into business he had a bad fever, in which the Lord manifested himself to him in such a manner as made him desirous to depart. But the disorder so hurt his nerves that the physician told him he would feel the effects of it all his life after. And he soon began to do this, those glooms taking place which beclouded his fairest prospects so many times since. He also lost a sense of the favour of God. But he continued to follow hard after him, and kept in connection with his people. He had frequently manifestations from the Lord, and experienced great deliverances from bodily disorders, and the powers of darkness. All this time he was remarkably exact in relative duties, particularly family worship; and many were the blessings his family enjoyed through that means. The Sabbath was indeed his delight, and our Sabbaths together were remarkably sweet. The covenant-times were often good to him.

During six weeks of his last illness, he was in much heaviness through manifold temptations. He found many fears lest he should die without a full manifestation of divine love. But he had great patience and resignation. On Monday, the 17th of February, his soul entered into an agony of prayer. He cried, 'I will not let thee go unless thou bless me.'<sup>2</sup> He prayed for full deliverance, and that he might be enabled to testify it to all around. And the Lord granted his request. Upon one saying, 'Let us try to turn our prayer into praise', and beginning to sing, 'My God I am thine!'<sup>3</sup> he took it up and sung, 'My God I am thine! I am thine! What a blessing to know that my Jesus is mine! Yes, thou art mine! Mine forever! My beloved is mine, and I am his! Thou hast put off my mourning! There is now no condemnation, no condemnation! Thou hast blotted out the handwriting that was against me!

Jesus, thy blood and right'ousness  
My beauty are, my glorious dress:  
Midst flaming worlds in these array'd,  
With joy shall I lift up my head.<sup>4</sup>

Yes, with joy shall I lift up my head!'

On a friend's saying, 'You remember the promise, the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head',<sup>5</sup> with a look of heavenly sweetness and triumph he said,

Satan thy due reward survey,  
The Lord of life why didst thou slay?<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The article is titled: 'An Account of the late Mr. Charles Greenwood, of London'. The author is almost certainly Jane Thornton (b. 1738), sister of Mary (Thornton) Greenwood, Charles Greenwood's second wife. Jane Thornton also corresponded with CW about this death on Apr. 6, 1783.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Gen. 32:26.

<sup>3</sup>CW, 'Hymns for Believers, #16', *HSP* (1749), 1:219–20.

<sup>4</sup>Zinzendorf, 'The Believer's Triumph', st. 1, in JW, *HSP* (1740), 177.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. Gen. 3:15.

<sup>6</sup>Zinzendorf, 'The Believer's Triumph', st. 5, in JW, *HSP* (1740), 177.

Bind him Jesus! bruise him Lord! Thou hast bruised him! Thou hast!

Dear Lord my thankful heart shall raise,  
The voice of pray'r, the voice of praise.<sup>7</sup>

He then sung, 'Thou shepherd of Israel and mine'<sup>8</sup> —and went on exerting himself for two hours, so that we feared he would be quite spent, and advised him to rest: on which he cried out, with the greatest ardour,

'Forever here my *rest* shall be,  
Close to thy bleeding side:  
This all my hope, and all my plea,  
For *me* the Saviour di'd.<sup>9</sup>

Yes, thou hast died for me! For me! No condemnation now I dread. Jesus and all in him is mine.' He had continued all that night praising and calling upon God, saying, 'I am thine! I am thine!' And had very little rest, so that in the morning, his head seemed a little affected. But after some sleep his understanding was clear as ever.

In the afternoon, he made use of such expressions of faith and love as encouraged us to bear up under what we foresaw would be the event. He broke out, 'Praise him! Praise him! Let us magnify his name together! Praise him all ye angels and archangels! And all the spirits of just men made perfect. O ye spirits and souls of the righteous! Bless ye the Lord. Praise him and magnify him forever! Forever! forever!' With a face beaming with glory, and his hands spread out, he went on,

Glory is on earth begun;  
Everlasting life is won.<sup>10</sup>

Everlasting life! Eternal glory! Mine! Mine! Eternally mine! My sun shall no more go down, nor my moon withdraw its shining.' His countenance naturally cheerful, was now lighted up with glory. His smiles were full of love, full of heaven. Every smile divinely told the pleasures of that place. When his raptures subsided, the spirit of a little child took place. He repeated the promise, 'Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, I am thy God.'<sup>11</sup> 'Thy God! Yes, thou art my God forever! Forever and ever!'

He then solemnly surrendered himself up to God, and said, 'I renounce all confidence in anything I *have* done, or *can* do. I have no trust or confidence but in the atonement. I take the Lord Jesus for my prophet, priest, and king.

Take my soul and body's pow'rs;  
Take my memory, mind, and will:  
All my goods, and all my hours;  
All I know [and all I fee].<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Isaac Watts, Song of Solomon 2, st. 1, in JW, *CPH* (1737), 31.

<sup>8</sup>CW, 'Song of Solomon, 1:7', *Scripture Hymns* (1762), 1:294–95.

<sup>9</sup>CW, 'Christ Our Righteousness', st. 3, *HSP* (1740), 96.

<sup>10</sup>Cf. CW, 'Hymn After the Sacrament', st. 6, *HSP* (1739), 1916.

<sup>11</sup>Cf. Isa. 41:10.

<sup>12</sup>CW, Hymn 155, st. 4, *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* (1745), 130.

Here he paused: 'Yes. All I know, and all I feel! But O Lord, who searchest the heart and triest the reins, if thou seest any flaw in this covenant I know not, discover it to me. O let me not deceive myself! I cannot deceive thee.' He then prayed for himself and us, that we might meet again and be united forever—always repeating 'forever' with a peculiar emphasis.

He continued in this blessed frame (interrupted only by intervals of sleep, from which he generally awoke with, 'Praise! Praise the Lord!') till two o'clock on Wednesday morning, when taking a little wine, he had such difficulty in swallowing it that those about him concluded he could not continue many hours. Upon this the family was called up, whom he received with most affectionate looks; but yet as one who had done with all below, which he had frequently in his last illness declared he had. On striving again to take a little wine he said, 'I have lost all relish for earthly meats and drinks, and can taste only the wine of the kingdom.' Some friends coming to see him in the forenoon, he witnessed a good confession to each of them. Though he spoke with great caution, and more than once said, 'I hope no advantage will be taken of my weakness, if I should not express myself quite right. But God knows my heart.'

In the afternoon he took leave of his children in a most solemn, and affectionate manner. To his eldest son<sup>13</sup> he said, 'The Lord bless you, my dear! And may he guide and direct you in all things. Watch and pray!' And on seeing him much affected, he said, 'O do not! I cannot bear that now. Beware of the world. It is a deceitful world.' To his youngest son he said, 'God bless Josiah!<sup>14</sup> And make him like the good Josiah of old. O give your heart to God! Your whole heart; your whole life. In short, give all for all; and you shall have all.' He then spoke to his youngest niece, and advised her to give herself to God. He then kissed them all, and on their withdrawing, endeavoured to compose himself to sleep, saying, 'He giveth his beloved sleep.'<sup>15</sup> In the evening, when a friend came in, he said, 'I gave myself and everything up to the Lord, when you were here last, and it has been all tranquillity since. I have no fear; no doubt of any kind.' He then prayed most fervently that we might all be so united here as to unite forever in praising God, and in loving him and each other. 'And we shall', said he, 'we shall meet again, and live forever.' His eldest niece now passing by the bed, he said to her and us, 'My Polly! My sister! My love!' On Polly's going to him, he kissed her and prayed most affectionately for her. He then said again, 'My sister.' On my<sup>16</sup> going to him, he bore a dying testimony to our friendship, that it had been *in* Jesus, and *for* Jesus, and that we should both live *with* Jesus forever. He then called his wife,<sup>17</sup> and took leave of her in a most affectionate manner—and witnessed to the piety and faithfulness of their union, and that it would last to all eternity.

On seeing his dissolution drawing near, he said, 'My flesh and my heart are failing. But God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever! Forever! O Jesus! Sweet, lovely Jesus!'

He comes! and right'ousness divine,  
And Christ, and all with Christ is mine.<sup>18</sup>

On one telling him that now he proved the truth of the promises, 'O yes', said he, 'the covenant of his peace shall not be removed. I am all peace, all tranquillity! I fear no evil. The Lord is my shepherd—I have no fear! I feel no pain! My pain is gone!' (though he was convulsed for twelve hours

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<sup>13</sup>Charles Greenwood's oldest surviving son, by his first wife, Sarah (Dickinson) Greenwood (1745–69), was Thomas Greenwood (1764–1811).

<sup>14</sup>Josiah Greenwood (1767–96) was Charles's youngest son by his first wife.

<sup>15</sup>Ps. 127:2.

<sup>16</sup>Jane Thornton.

<sup>17</sup>Mary (Thornton) Greenwood.

<sup>18</sup>CW, 'Groaning for the Spirit of Adoption', st. 3, *HSP* (1740), 131.

before his death). On one saying, 'Jesus is all': 'O yes', said he, 'Jesus is all! Praise him! Praise him! O I see beyond description!' He then cried out,

For me my elder brethren stay,  
And angels beckon me away,  
And Jesus bids me come!<sup>19</sup>

He then asked a friend if he had anything very dreadful to pass through in the article of death? 'Not', said he, 'that I fear anything; but I should be glad to know.' On her saying, 'Jesus is with you, and will be with you', he replied, 'Yes, Jesus is with me, and will be with me!' And then cried out, 'Come, Lord Jesus! come quickly! The Spirit and the bride say, Come!' The room being full of friends, one of them said, 'You can bless the Lord who has brought you to this moment, to witness this good confession!' 'O yes', said he, 'and the Spirit witnesseth in my heart of things not lawful to utter, even such as eye hath not seen!' Again repeating, 'Come Lord Jesus! Come quickly!' Then nature being exhausted, with the word 'Praise' on his faltering tongue, he sunk down, and fell asleep in Jesus.<sup>20</sup>

O what a soul transporting sight,  
Mine eyes today have seen!  
A spectacle of strange delight,  
To angels and to men.

See there, ye misbelieving race,  
The wisdom from above;  
Behold in that pale, smiling face,  
The pow'r of him we love. [...]

The glory, while he lays it down,  
Shines through the sinking clay,  
And lo! without a parting groan,  
The Christian wings his way.

Without a groan the Christian dies,  
But not without a word;  
On me, on me, he loudly cries,  
To follow to the Lord.

He calls me by my worthless name,  
My soul he beckons home;  
And lo! in Jesu's hands I am,  
And lo! I quickly come.<sup>21</sup>

J. T.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 306–09, 361–63.

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<sup>19</sup>CW, 'The Pilgrim', st. 8, *Redemption Hymns* (1747), 68.

<sup>20</sup>Greenwood died Feb. 21, 1783 (recorded in JW's *Journal, Works*, 23:263). See CW's epitaph in MS Funeral Hymns (1756–87).

<sup>21</sup>CW, 'On the Death of Alexander White', sts. 1–2, 11–12, *HSP* (1749), 2:83–84, 86.

From an Unidentified Correspondent<sup>1</sup>

Sheffield  
March 11, 1783

Elizabeth Booth was first stirred up to seek the Lord at a prayer meeting about five years ago, being then near sixteen years of age. Soon after she was more deeply awakened under the preaching. She continued seeking rest for her soul for some time, and at last found that peace which the world cannot give while she was hearing the word. She soon after was convinced of the exceeding corruption of her nature, and prayed much that the blood of Christ might purge her entirely from dead works, that she might serve the Lord without fear, in righteousness and true holiness. At last the favour was granted to her, so that she rejoiced fully in the God of her salvation.

Going from hence to Rotherham (six miles) to a love-feast she caught a cold, which brought on a complication of disorders. She was now called to exercise much patience, as she was grievously afflicted for many months, and could attend no public means. Afterwards her hearing was taken from her, so that there was no conversing with her, nor could she hear the prayers which were offered up for her. But though she could not hear, yet she could greatly rejoice in the God of her salvation. Though she was reduced to a skeleton, and very unable to turn herself in bed, yet no complaints were heard. But lamb-like and serene, she waited till the bridegroom should call her away. Indeed the Lord was very gracious to her in restraining Satan, and in causing the light of his glorious countenance almost uninterruptedly to shine upon her. So that she could say,

Thy pow'r in human weakness shown,  
Shall make me all entire;  
I now thy guardian presence own,  
And walk unburnt in fire.<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless the captive exile longed for her release; and now the day of liberty arrived. A few hours before her death she was taken with a violent bleeding at her nose and mouth. 'Now', said she, 'my Jesus is going to fetch me away! Now I shall be released! He is coming! He is coming!' To a neighbour that came in, she said, 'I am going to Jesus! I am glad to see you! O, how I love you! And I hope to meet you in the kingdom of my dear Redeemer!' On giving her a little milk and water, she said, 'Lay me down, and I will rise no more till my Lord takes me away.' And in a few minutes she departed, uttering the name of Jesus!

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 412–13.

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<sup>1</sup>The writer is again likely Thomas Taylor, the current Assistant for the Sheffield circuit.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. CW, Hymn 28, st. 1, *HSP* (1749), 2:26.



From Charles Boone<sup>1</sup>

March 13, 1783

From a principle of affection to our deceased brother [Thomas Payne], I think it my duty to add something to the account already given, in the year 1781.<sup>2</sup> And I am more particularly inclined to this as it contains a little account of the Lord's gracious dealings with his servant in his sickness and death.

In the beginning of his illness he had deep impressions on his mind that this affliction was unto death—the thought of which, he often said, was a reviving cordial to him.

As his bodily weakness increased, his desire after *full* sanctification increased; for which his soul was deeply engaged in constant, mighty prayer.

About two months before his death, the enemy was permitted to assault him many ways. But one temptation in particular was very severe for the time it lasted, which was to doubt the being of a God. But he was soon delivered from it. After which, he had much communion with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

About a fortnight before he died he was led to such a discovery of himself as he never had before: even all the sins he had ever committed were presented to him, attended with such a deep sense of his weakness and blindness, as made him exceedingly tremble. Above all, what gave him the greatest pain was that he had done the work of the Lord, in many instances, so much in his *own warm spirit*; and not in the meekness and gentleness of Christ.

This was attended with such a sight of the majesty and holiness of God, and the excellency of his glory, as excited a vehement cry in his heart for the coming of Jesus, to make him fully meet for the enjoyment of himself. And our Lord soon heard him. His faith beheld the great atonement—on which he received a *whole Saviour*, who applied the all-cleansing blood. He was now filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory, and experienced that complete salvation he had so long preached to others.

From this time his conversation was truly in heaven. His exhortations and persuasions to all that came near him to devote themselves entirely to God, were delivered in such a powerful manner as made deep impressions on every heart.

The day before his death (when Mr. [Thomas] Rankin called to see him) his soul was truly comfortable. And after some conversation concerning the goodness of God to him, he said, 'You are going to preach. Tell the people, tell the societies, I die a witness of the truth I have preached to others. And I now solemnly declare, I believe the doctrine taught by the Methodists; and that the discipline they enforce is above all others, the best calculated to bring sinners to God and to keep them close to him.' During the night he frequently spoke of the love and power of God to his soul, waiting patiently for the coming of his Lord.

About an hour before he departed, Mrs. [Margaret] Payne, seeing him in an agony, said, 'My dear, you appear as if your heart was breaking.' He replied, 'Let it break! Let it break! But it is hard work to die!' After this he was very calm, and appeared to possess great serenity of mind. But now the hour of release came, when he turned his eyes towards Mrs. Thomas, and with a piercing, yet pleasing look said, 'Lord, have mercy! Jesus, save to the uttermost! To the very uttermost!' And soon after, while we were commending his soul to God, he fell asleep in Jesus.

Thus departed this Christian hero, this valiant soldier of Christ, who counted not his life dear to him, so he might finish his course with joy, and the ministry he had received from the Lord.

Charles Boone

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 7 (1784): 81–83.

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<sup>1</sup>Title: 'A Short Account of the Death of Mr. Thomas Payne, who departed this life, Jan. 6, 1783'.

<sup>2</sup>Payne's autobiographical reflections in a letter to JW dated Mar. 16, 1781.

From Ann Loxdale

[Shrewsbury]  
April 11, 1783

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I believe I am not going backward, but am still increasing in the divine life; though by such slow degrees as are almost imperceptible. My mind is not, as once it was, always staid upon God. Yet I enjoy some precious seasons of sweet communion, and can at all times rejoice in the clear manifestation of the love of God to my soul, through the Son of his love. I have also found, in some close trials, my will given up to God, and an earnest desire that his whole will may be fully accomplished in me and by me.

I see my privilege to attain, but I do not wrestle, strive, and agonize with God *continually* for his salvation. I go on from day to day mourning and rejoicing, but seem to be at night where I was in the morning. I have a clear testimony that I love the Lord my God with my whole heart. There is not a thing in earth or heaven that I love or desire in comparison of God. But I want to do the will of God on earth, as I shall do it in heaven: to work, speak, and think always to his glory; to be dead to the world, and have my life hid with Christ in God; to have the evidence that I am every day growing as willows by the water courses, as calves in the stall, increasing in holiness and in every good word and work. And God, who has given these desires, will assuredly accomplish them. I can believe all on the Lord's part is ready, and that he is willing to bless me, not according to my deserts, but according to his rich mercy in Christ Jesus. But I do not *always* ask as if I would not be denied.

Hosannas languish on my tongue,  
And my devotion dies.<sup>1</sup>

At times indeed the Lord does graciously bless me; not only by giving me power to wrestle with him, but by giving me an answer of peace. Some time ago, I was very earnest with the Lord that he would bring every thought into subjection to his will. I asked (I thought) believing he would answer. But he did not bless me according to my desires. I then begged him to give me as a token for good, a mind staid upon him the remainder of that day and the next, which was Sunday. While I was speaking, my prayer was turned into praise. [I] had no particular words applied, but I felt the Lord had answered my prayer. And I proved it so, for I had constant communion with God that day and the next. I feel much pleasure in the thought of soon hearing from you, as your letters are a very particular blessing to my soul, and remain, dear sir,

Your very affectionate and faithful servant,

A. L.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 164–65.

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Isaac Watts, 'Breathing After the Holy Spirit', st. 3, in JW, *CPH* (1738), 43.

From the Rev. Charles Wesley

[London]  
c. May 10, 1783

[[Sally and I take it very kindly your writing, “I think verily you will keep out of debt while I live, if you will give me an hint now and then.”<sup>1</sup> *Notus in fratres animi paterni*<sup>2</sup> is not applicable to our brother Samuel only. So I always thought, and now I will tell you so. In my many failings, I knew you would h[elp] me out “if I could have given you an hint.” But that was more than I could do. You have almost as large a family to provide for as E. [Kalsmn?] had. Our old friend Lady Huntingdon desired me to tell her whenever I want anything for myself or others. I never once asked her for anything. That pro[spect?] of riding a fiery horse restrained me;<sup>3</sup> and the blood(?) of the Ellisons with uncle Matt[hew].<sup>4</sup> I have even faulted(?) Patty<sup>5</sup> for asking and wanting you to do more for her. You are the only man who should be your own(?) almoner.

*Source:* CW shorthand copy of reply; MARC, DDWes 3/54 (on JW's letter of May 2)

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<sup>1</sup>A quote from JW to CW, May 2, 1783; the letter to which CW is replying.

<sup>2</sup>Horace, *Odes*, II.ii.6; “well-known as he is for his fatherly affection for his brothers” (Loeb).

<sup>3</sup>I.e., dealing with someone who is hard to control.

<sup>4</sup>Apparently Richard and Susanna (Wesley) Ellison, CW's sister and brother-in-law, received help from Matthew Wesley, Samuel Wesley Sr.'s brother, and this became a difficult situation.

<sup>5</sup>I.e., Martha (Wesley) Hall.

From Joseph Benson<sup>1</sup>

[Bradford]  
c. May 22, 1783

Reverend and Dear Sir,

The reason why I expressed an hope of staying in this circuit another year was because you had been accustomed to favour me in that respect in times past, and I knew of no cause you could have to remove me after one year now, as I knew Mr. [Samuel] Bradburn, having been two years already, did not expect to stay any longer. And I was well persuaded it was not likely to be for the profit of the people on many accounts to let Mr. [Thomas] Mitchell stay. As to being Assistant, I neither expected nor desired such an office, and therefore asked you to send Mr. [John] Valton, thinking you would make him Assistant, or the married preacher you might send to Bradford.

But yet you must give me leave utterly to deny what you lay to my charge. I did not let 'things go as they would go when at Manchester', and whoever informed you so misinformed you. Ever since I have travelled, whether Assistant or not, I have always made it a point of conscience to contribute all I could to the good of the work, both by doctrine and discipline, and to regulate whatever seemed to want regulating in every place. And when I could not otherwise do it, I wrote to you—as for instance, regulating smuggling at Sunderland.<sup>2</sup> And for the truth of this assertion I appeal to the preachers with whom I have travelled, Mr. [Alexander] Mather, Mr. [Christopher] Hopper, Mr. William Thompson, Mr. [John] Allen, Mr. [Duncan] Wright, Mr. [Samuel] Bradburn. And as to the year you speak of, if you would consult Mr. [Matthew] Mayer of Stockport, or the stewards of Manchester, they would give me a different character. Mr. Valton (I know) wrote some things to you respecting the society classes, as if many were kept in who were not worthy members. But he afterwards wept bitterly for what he had said. And therefore I never mentioned the matter to him, nor do I love him any less on that account.

However, I will confess to you that in one point I am not a good Assistant. I have not courage to beg as some of my brethren and therefore probably may not raise enough for the yearly collection. And it is chiefly because this is so disagreeable to me therefore I would rather not be named Assistant. And yet I shall do what I have always done. I shall assist the Assistant when he will let me.

If I supposed you intended me not to stay another year, I would desire my wife [Sarah] to write to you; and then I am sure I should carry my point, because as she expects to lie in the last week in July,<sup>3</sup> she could urge reasons for not removing which I am sure you neither could nor would gainsay. In the meantime, she has great confidence in your tenderness and believes you will not distress her in her present condition with fears of having to remove, when she is so unfit for any such thing. She begs her love to you. I hope dear sir, I shall always have cause to respect you as a father and subscribe myself

Your dutiful son and obliged servant in the gospel,

J. Benson

P. S. We have heard you intend going to Holland. Is there any truth in that report?<sup>4</sup>

*Source:* Benson's manuscript draft, on back of JW's letter of May 19; Bridwell Library (SMU).

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<sup>1</sup>Benson is replying to and quotes excerpts from JW's letter of May 19, 1783. Benson was currently assigned to the Bradford circuit, along with Thomas Mitchell, with Samuel Bradburn as Assistant. Benson was returned to this circuit the coming year, with Alexander Mather as Assistant.

<sup>2</sup>See Benson to JW, Dec. 17, 1776, etc.

<sup>3</sup>I.e., she is about due to deliver a baby.

<sup>4</sup>JW did make a trip to Holland the second half of June 1783.

From an Unidentified Correspondent<sup>1</sup>

York  
May 24, 1783

Mrs. Crask of York, about seventeen years ago, was convinced that she was a guilty sinner. She trembled at the voice of an avenging God. But it was not long before he healed the broken in heart. And the fruit of it appeared from that day till her spirit returned to God.

During the last ten years of her life she was a daughter of affliction. But she was persuaded, that all would work together for her good. Indeed, soon after her happy change it pleased God to visit her with a severe fever. In the midst of which Mr. [John] Wesley came to York, and was desired to pray with her. He did so. She recovered from that moment; a mercy which she remembered to the day of her death.

Her patience under sufferings was invincible. She was often so straitened in her circumstances as to want, even the necessities of life. But she would say,

Welcome whate'er my God ordain,  
Reproach or poverty, or pain.<sup>2</sup>

Some years after she had found peace she saw there was a higher salvation, and resolved not to stop short of it. She reached forth unto the things that are before, until he said, 'Be thou clean.'<sup>3</sup> From that hour she lived in the exercise of every Christian temper, and enjoyed an uninterrupted witness of Christ reigning in her heart.

A little before her death, one asked her, 'How are you?' She answered, 'Pure and comfortable. But I have had a sore conflict. I was sometimes afraid that I should be impatient, or that I should lose my senses. But I cried mightily to God, and he heard and answered me.' Seeing one of her children weeping, she said, with uncommon vehemence, 'Right eyes must be plucked out. Did not you tell me yesterday, you had given me up? Do not turn coward? Bear this cross boldly, and you will be the better able to bear the next.'

One saying to her, 'Before next Sabbath you will more fully prove what these words mean,

I see a world of spirits bright,  
Who reap the promise there;  
They all are rob'd in spotless white,  
And conqu'ring palms they bear.'<sup>4</sup>

She said, 'It is most likely.' Then, with uncommon cheerfulness, she repeated the next lines:

O what are all our suff'rings here,  
If, Lord, thou count us meet,  
With that enraptur'd host t' appear,  
And worship at thy feet!  
Give joy, or grief, give ease, or pain;  
Take life, or friends away:

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<sup>1</sup>Titled: 'Some Account of Mrs. Crask'. The writer was likely John Pawson, currently Assistant for the York circuit.

<sup>2</sup>CW, Hymn 143, st. 3, *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* (1745), 121.

<sup>3</sup>Matt. 8:3, Mark 1:41, Luke 5:13.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. CW, Hymn 3, st. 6, *Funeral Hymns* (1759), 5.

But let me find them all again,  
In that eternal day.<sup>5</sup>

She added, 'It is a shame for us to complain of our crosses, when we are so well supported.' Then recollecting some of Mrs. Hall's last words, 'Precious faith!'<sup>6</sup> She said, 'Now I prove it precious! It is all in all.' We then kneeled down to prayer. After which she said, 'My heart was engaged, though my voice failed me. I am sorry my acquaintance did not converse with me more, while I was able to speak for God. I might have been profitable to them. But the opportunity is past. I cannot now speak as I wish to do.' However, as long as she had breath, she exhorted all around her, to be bold for God, her complete Saviour. Three hours after, she fell asleep.

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 643–45.

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., st. 9, p. 6.

<sup>6</sup>Ruth (Crowther) Hall, JW's correspondent, who died in 1778.

From Edward Dromgoole<sup>1</sup>

Petersburg, Virginia  
May 24, 1783

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I came to be acquainted with the people called Methodists in Ireland, about the beginning of the year 1770, near the town of Sligo. After I heard them I was convinced of the necessity of religion, but was not powerfully awakened to see that I deserved the wrath of God. I began to read the Bible, which I had not done before (being brought up a Roman Catholic). I joined in society, and in a few weeks resolved to read my recantation publicly in the church. This procured me the displeasure of some of my relations.

In May I left Londonderry, and sailed for America, and arrived at Baltimore in Maryland, in August following: and then proceeded up the country about sixty miles, to a town called Frederick, where I lived for some time before I heard of any Methodists. But having a letter directed to Mr. Strawbridge,<sup>2</sup> I enquired for him, and in the fall had an opportunity of hearing him preach, and again in the spring following. I earnestly entreated him to come to Fredericktown, that I might hear and be saved. During twelve months, I had frequent and strong convictions on my mind, and was often under great fear lest I should be lost forever. One Sunday evening, while I was in great distress of soul at prayer, the Lord visited me with his salvation. But being ignorant, I did not then believe that my sins were forgiven, and after a few days lost my comfort. I now felt different from what I had done. My burden was removed, and yet I feared I was given over to a hard heart, for I could neither repent nor fear as I had done. My distress and trouble greatly increased, till one evening in prayer the Lord showed me that he had blessed me. I believed, I rejoiced, I doubted not, for my joy was then full.

It would not be expedient to take up time in relating the various trials and exercises of my mind, until the Lord by his spirit, and providence, called me out to labour in his vineyard. It is now ten years since I first began to preach. I find myself as helpless as ever, and see my own insufficiency more clearly than the first day I spoke in public. I live at present in Virginia, near North Carolina, and within about forty miles of the Rev. Mr. [Devereux] Jarratt, who is and has been a great friend to the cause of God. The work in America has gone on with amazing swiftness since the war began. We have now I believe about seventy travelling preachers, many of whom are acceptable men and very useful in the work of God. We have been in some measure divided in the south, but the Lord has effectually healed our divisions. And we are now more firmly united than ever, on the same plan that was proposed and subscribed in England in 1774. I was lately at a conference in Virginia where many of the preachers attended. Mr. Jarratt preached two days, and administered the sacrament to a large congregation.

The preachers at present are united to Mr. [Francis] Asbury, and esteem him very highly in love for his work's sake; and earnestly desire his continuance on the continent during his natural life, and to act as he does at present—to wit) to superintend the whole work, and go through all the circuits once a year. He is now well acquainted with the country, with the preachers and people, and has a large share in the affections of both. Therefore they would not willingly part with him, or submit to other to act in his

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<sup>1</sup>Edward Dromgoole (1751–1835) was a native of County Sligo, Ireland. He converted to Methodism in 1770 and immigrated to Maryland in North America later that year. His Methodist convictions were renewed there by the preaching of Robert Strawbridge. Dromgoole himself soon began preaching, and served as a formal itinerant from 1774–86. He then settled in Brunswick County, Virginia as a planter and merchant, while hosting Methodist preachers and remaining active as a local preacher until his death. See Frank Baker, 'Edward Dromgoole and John Wesley', *WHS* 26 (1947): 25–28.

<sup>2</sup>Robert Strawbridge (1732–81), also a native of Ireland, had been converted by the preaching of Lawrence Coughlan before immigrating by the mid-1760s to Frederick County, Maryland. Strawbridge began holding a Methodist class in his home and preaching in the surrounding area at his own initiative, then was drawn into the body of American Methodist preachers for a while, until his decision to baptize and offer the Lord's Supper without being ordained led to a parting of ways.

place, until they have good proof of his integrity. If any of our brethren should be appointed to come from England to help us here, we shall gladly receive them; as there is now a great and an effectual door opened, and a blessed prospect of great good being done. I remain, with great respect,  
Your humble servant,

E. D.

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 219–20.



From Jonathan Brown<sup>1</sup>

Douglas, Isle of Man  
June 7, 1783

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Through abundant mercy, the work still goes on among the poor people here. We had a little addition the last quarter, and our hearers do not appear to be weary of hearing of a precious Christ. Therefore I hope the Lord will not stay his hand among them. The preachers here in general are pious and lovers of discipline; and will, I believe, respect the English that are so too. Many of the old members are in earnest for all the mind which was in Jesus. About three days ago one told me that in her band she was much drawn out in prayer for the cessation of all indwelling sin, and in a very little time she by faith obtained the blessing, and the Spirit witnessed that her heart was cleansed from all unrighteousness.

I lately met a dear friend on the road. We sat down to relate to each other the dealings of God with our souls. And he told me that for twenty-one years he had been a lover of the meek and lowly Jesus; but in general there had been such a sand-bank before him, that he thought he gained little ground. The evening coming on we parted, and soon after I received the following lines from him.

Glory be to God most high, I believe he hath removed the sand-bank from my soul! So that now I hope, Jesus being my pilot, to sail into the haven of eternal happiness. Blessed be my faithful God, I have no doubt but he has purified my heart by faith. I am emptied, I believe, of envy and wrath, desire and pride. One act of simple faith has done more than twenty-one years striving in prayer without it.

I believed the report, and could congratulate the happy man on his deliverance. My soul longed to launch out into the deep, that I might share in the same salvation. In a second letter he writes thus, 'I believe that sin has ceased. Yet I find I must keep watching that it do not enter in again. The just shall live by faith. And he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and the wicked one toucheth him not, while he keeps believing in Jesus.' O that thousands, and tens of thousands might witness the good confession before men and angels!

A woman, a member of our society, has continued to fast and pray for the rebellious for the space of eleven days, without either eating bread or drinking water, and all the while was neither hungry nor faint. I desired her on the eleventh day to take a little food, which she did. I greatly wondered at the goodness of the Almighty in supporting her for so long a time. But what is it that the Lord cannot do? Blessed be his name forever!

I am, reverend and dear sir,

Your very affectionate son in the gospel,

J. B.

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 274–75.

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<sup>1</sup>Jonathan Brown (1750–1825), a native of Stanhope, in Weardale, received assurance of his salvation about 1772. He was admitted 'on trial' as an itinerant preacher in 1778 (see *Works*, 10:474) and would serve for 38 years. See *Minutes* (post-Wesley, 1826), 6:106. Brown was currently one of three preachers assigned to the Isle of Man.

From Thomas Taylor

St. John's [Florida]  
June 8, 1783

Reverend and Dear Sir,

The articles of peace are no longer a mystery.<sup>1</sup> But who could ever have dreamed of terms so ignominious? For better than two years past, I have been well convinced that the Americans would gain their independence. All therefore that remained was to make the price of a peace good in other respects. And surely every candid person must be sensible that, in consideration of that, together with the evacuation of Charlestown and New York (which the Americans were fully convinced they could not drive us from), generous terms might have been procured for the loyalists—excepting a few individuals that were particularly obnoxious, and who might easily have been provided for by government. For certainly France (if satisfied in other respects) would never have continued the war, to prevent the restoration of those unfortunate exiles whose loyalty they themselves approve of. Instead of this, insult has been added to repeated injuries.

East Florida, to which all the refugees were conducted as an asylum, and where many of them were beginning to get comfortably settled, is wantonly given away. And where are they to go? To Nova Scotia they will not, and the islands will only suit such as have slaves. A letter appeared the other day in the *[Royal] Gazette*, exhorting the people to stay where they are, and stand by each other, and no longer to be the dupes of a nation whose national faith, respecting them, is sunk even below contempt.

You have already heard that the *impotent* recommendation of Congress (as Lord [Frederick] North terms it) will not be attended to by the northern states. And I dare say the southern will follow their example.

There was no kind of town in this province except St. Augustine—until last winter, when the refugees founded one at this place, about five miles from the mouth of the river. It has yet no proper name, though vulgarly called John's Town. It is just forty miles from St. Augustine. About fifty good houses are already built, and many more beginning, when the news of the peace put a stop to all farther improvements. There is no place of worship in the province but at [St.] Augustine: where, besides the English church, there is a Romish chapel founded by the Menorcans settled by Dr. Turnbull.<sup>2</sup>

The inhabitants here were about subscribing to have a clergyman among them. But that, like everything else, is now dropped. There is hardly the form of religion among us, and very little (I fear) of the power. I was in Georgia about five months ago, with a flag of truce, for my family; and was then informed by many individuals that upon application I might have leave to return there. But if I can fix anywhere else, I believe I shall hardly trouble them.

I am, reverend and dear sir,

Yours most affectionately,

T. T.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 272–74.

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<sup>1</sup>The Articles of Peace (with Britain) had been ratified by the Continental Congress on April 15, 1783; the war officially ended when the document was signed as the Treaty of Paris, on Sept. 3, 1783.

<sup>2</sup>Orig., 'Minorquins'; immigrants from the island of Menorca, sponsored by Andrew Turnbull, MD (1718–92).

From an Unidentified Correspondent

June 20, 1783

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Upon repeatedly enquiring after your welfare, I was agreeably surprised to learn that you was either gone or going to Holland; which made me delay writing to you till now, that I supposed you might be returned. I shall be glad to hear your attempts to promote the kingdom and cause of your divine Master in that part of the globe have been successful, and that your health also has been confirmed by it. May you go on and prosper more and more—till called late, very late to receive your great reward.

O what a value does it stamp upon life when every moment of time is filled up with, and for God! And how desirable is life upon these terms! What a poor and despicable thing is the world, and all it calls great and good, and all the happiness that results from its richest enjoyments, when compared without living *to* and *for God*! Surely this is a heaven upon earth, the greatest felicity our natures are capable of. I feel it so, though I have but just *tasted* of this happiness. What a superlative degree of it should I enjoy, were my experience equal to my privileges, and I may venture to say my desires. But I seem peculiarly tried in this respect. I hunger and thirst without being filled, which is a painful situation. But surely my expectation shall not be cut off. For the word of the Lord cannot fail, and he hath given me exceeding great and precious promises. And in the mean time I have great cause to praise him, for 'he performeth all things for me'.<sup>1</sup> He allows me all holy familiarity with himself, especially in secret and social prayer and mediation. In the lowest sense of the word, I feel as a spring shut up, as a fountain sealed, as a garden enclosed. He has also given me such a measure of bodily health as I have not enjoyed for many years past, which I believe with a blessing, is greatly owing to much air and exercise. Assist me with your prayers to use it for his glory who gave it, and believe me, reverend and dear sir,

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*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 588.

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<sup>1</sup>Ps. 57:2.

Hendrika Christina (van Santbeek) Rodenbeeck<sup>1</sup>

[Amsterdam]  
c. July 1, 1783<sup>2</sup>

My son was remarkably serious and tender-hearted from the time he began to speak. When he was two years and a half old, he was taken with the measles. On Sunday morning, lying on my lap, he desired to kiss his sister, not six years old. A little after, he said to me, 'I must kiss *you* too.' I took him up. He clasped me round the neck and kissed me. When he unclasped his hands, I asked, 'Whither are you going?' He answered, 'To the Lord', and in a few moments died.

Nine months after, my daughter, then about six years of age, fell ill of the smallpox. One morning she called, with unusual earnestness, for her dear mother. I leaped out of bed, and as soon as I looked on her, said, 'My dear child, you are going to eternity.' She said, 'Mother, will you pray for me!' She would take no denial till I told her, 'I will, as well as I can.' She was going to kneel; but I dissuaded her from it, as it was very cold. After I had prayed, I asked her how she did? She gave no answer to this, but asked, 'Are these words in the Bible, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not"?'<sup>3</sup> I said, 'They are.' Upon which she began to pray, and then to repeat several verses of a hymn. And in this manner she spent some hours. Meantime the apothecary came in and desired she would drink something. She replied, 'I cannot swallow.' He said, 'Then you must die.' She cheerfully answered, 'I cannot help that.'

I now withdrew for a while, wanting to be alone. But she quickly missed me and asked where I was? One saying, 'She is praying for you.' she said, 'It is very well.' When I came in, she asked, 'Where have you been?' I answered, 'Praying for you.' She answered, 'None need pray for my life. My sufferings are past; my fight is fought. I am going to heaven.' I was astonished, and said, 'My child, before we go to heaven, we must know Christ.' She answered, 'I know Christ. "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world!"'<sup>4</sup> She spoke no more, till she entered into the joy of her Lord!

H. Christina Roodenbeck

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 7 (1784): 591–92.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Hendrika Christiana van Santbeek married Jan Hendrick Rodenbeeck in Oct. 1754 in Amsterdam.

<sup>2</sup>No date is given for the letter. Rodenbeeck related this tale orally to JW in Amsterdam on June 21 1783; see *Journal, Works*, 23:276–77. She apparently then wrote it down and sent it to him at his request.

<sup>3</sup>Luke 18:16.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. John 1:29.

<sup>5</sup>Titled: 'A short Account of two Children at Amsterdam: in a letter from their Mother'.

From Mr. M. H.

Chester  
July 14, 1783

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Mr. [John] Fenwick<sup>1</sup> tells me he means to recommend me to the Conference, as a proper person to take a circuit next year; which, although I feel as a great honour, yet for many reasons I must hope for the *present* may prove ineffectual. After the conversation I had with yourself on this subject when you were here,<sup>2</sup> I would not now trespass further on your valuable time. But as such a step may possibly give a turn to my everlasting interests, I think it my duty to write to you on this occasion, and I trust you will forgive this call on your pastoral character.

The main objection that occurs to me is that I am not yet sufficiently anointed for such a mission. It has ever been my misfortune to have my gifts and grace over-rated by my friends, which through the sad effects of self-love has often well nigh destroyed my soul. My walk is such that I do not always abide in Christ. How unfit then am I to exhort others to abide in him? How does this deprive a man of that dignity and humble confidence that is the strength of a messenger of the great and holy God? Can a limb out of joint derive nourishment from the nobler parts? A branch severed from its root have vital sap, bud, blossom, and bear fruit? Yet through grace I am preserved from gross abomination. But I lamentably feel this is not enough, when I stand up between the living and the dead. Add to this, I feel a dreadful and shameful ignorance of the letter of God's word—without the greatest knowledge of which, I am convinced I labour in vain.

I believe it my duty also to cultivate my little talents to the utmost, in the acquisition of such accessary learning as may enable me not barely to affirm each sacred truth, but scripturally and rationally to explain more clearly to the understanding, and press them more forcibly on the consciences of my hearers; at the same time to vindicate them from unreasonable objections and false glosses of men, that gainsayers may be convinced or silenced, and the weak and pious strengthened and established. And I conceive I cannot have a more convenient time for such improvement than the time of youth, and before I have fully launched out into the main ocean of life. Indeed there are many truths of which I have not the least doubt, yet dare not speak of them, being convinced how very weakly I can explain, support, or defend them. I am also willing to make my coming out a matter of calmest deliberation, strongest conviction, and most serious prayer; knowing that nothing less can support me under the various and trying exercises I shall meet with, and conciliate the approbation of the best of parents.

I can appeal to God that I know of no other motives that influence me. Mr. Fenwick has put the supposition to me that I might be desired to take a circuit, and asked in such a case, 'What would you do?' I answered, 'Endeavour to lay myself in the Lord's hands, seek his will, and *then* act agreeably to the sacred rights of conscience.' May God, even the Father of Jesus Christ, bless you with a fullness of all spiritual blessings in his Son. And I pray you believe me, with truest respect, gratitude and love, reverend and very dear sir,

Your ever affectionate and obliged child and servant,

M. H.

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 330–32.

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<sup>1</sup>Fenwick was the current Assistant for the Chester circuit.

<sup>2</sup>JW had been in Chester on May 8–9, 1783; see *Journal*, 23:268–69.

From Johanna Carolina Arnodina Loten<sup>1</sup>

Utrecht  
July 15, 1783

Honoured Sir,

How was I surprised and much delighted in receiving your most kind and tender letter from Rotterdam.<sup>2</sup> I am not worthy your least attention. The remembrance of meeting here on earth gives me great pleasure. We see that neither the thoughts, nor the ways of men, are the thoughts or the ways of the Lord God.

Eternal providence, exceeding thought,  
Where none appears, had made itself a way!<sup>3</sup>

My brother, my friend, I am now very sorry, because I want [i.e., lack] your pleasing company. There are very few hours that I do not remember you. Methinks I hear now your lovely voice in preaching and praying, calling sinners to the love of God, according to the meekness of Christ, your great Master. Methinks I hear you say in prayer: 'O Lord, speak thou to the hearts.' 'O Lord let us know ourselves.' 'Search us, O God, and try our hearts; try us, who knowest our thoughts, and see if there be any wickedness in us, and lead us in the way everlasting.'

Oh that I could recall that agreeable time; but it is past, it is past, and the Lord knows if we shall ever meet again. O dear friend! My prayer is that the Lord will comfort my soul, and that he will give you life and good health, that you may come every other year to Holland. My dear friend, there is one thing I would ask of you. It is this, if you will be so kind to send me your sermon that you preached in Utrecht.<sup>4</sup> I beg pardon for the freedom I take in giving you so much trouble. Mrs. T[ydeman]<sup>5</sup> and I, should be very glad to see it. You feared that I was in danger of not suffering the reproach of Christ. But I feel it in several respects that I cannot well express, particularly since your departure from Utrecht, for many people speak not well of me because I had you and your worthy company to our house on the Sabbath evening, the 29th of June. This gives me great trouble; but it is good for my soul. I am in the Lord's hand, like clay in the hand of the potter. He can do with me as he will, and I trust in him that he will make me happy for ever. For he that gave his dear and only begotten Son to be a sacrifice for poor sinners, shall give all things unto them who come unto him through that mediator.

My dear family give their most kind love to you. Their hearts very sensibly remember your worthy company at our house in the country. We recommend ourselves to your precious friendship; wishing that the Lord your God will take particular care of your soul and body, and give you every purchased blessing. I remain, with all due esteem,

Your unworthy but very affectionate sister,

J. A. L.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 645–47.

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<sup>1</sup>Johanna Carolina Arnodina Loten (1753–1823) was the daughter of Arnout Loten (1719–1801; mayor of Utrecht) and his wife Lucreta Christina Sheffer (1726–92; married 1749). JW had met her in June, during a trip to the Netherlands; see JW, *Journal*, June 26, 1783, *Works*, 23:280.

<sup>2</sup>This letter is not known to survive. JW was in Rotterdam June 30–July 1.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Edmund Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, Bk. I, Canto 6, vii.55–56.

<sup>4</sup>The sermon was on 1 Cor. 13:1–3. JW wrote it out in 1784 and published it in *AM* in 1785; see Sermon 91, 'On Charity', *Works*, 3:290–307.

<sup>5</sup>Sophia Theodora (de Beveren) Tydeman (1751–89); the wife of Meinard Tydeman (1741–1825), a professor of law, who translated for JW as he preached that day.

From Ann Bolton

Stroud  
July 31, 1783

Reverend and Dear Sir,

The great exercise I passed through for several weeks before I left home has much debilitated my tender frame. I seemed, for the first few days I was here, to be but half alive. And in this I cannot but observe the wisdom and goodness of God, that while I was in the midst of hurry, and almost constant calls to business, I had strength for my day; but as soon as providence favoured me with a kind release from it, and gave me a situation more quiet and peaceable, I was let to feel extreme languor, the ill effects perhaps of an overactive spirit.

I believe in this I often need to be admonished, and have wished that those about me understood the matter, that my natural spirits, animated by divine grace, are frequently too powerful for the texture of my body. And as the Almighty has been pleased by the voice of his thunder to awake dead souls, and extort the cry from so many in our neighbourhood, 'What must I do to be saved?'<sup>1</sup> I should have been in danger (though I know he could have preserved me) of ruining my constitution. So great was the fervour of my spirit, and so enlarged my heart for the gathering in of the people, that I am inclined to believe my gracious Father appointed me this rest, to fit me the better for his designs hereafter.

In silent language my heart dilates before him, and shows to his benign eye its unutterable adoration. His love attracts my soul into closer union, as I ascend the daily steps of mortality, and I find it my chief delight to follow him which way soever he leadeth. As my day lengthens, the scene brightens. And I can say religion, the religion of Jesus, is more than ever amiable, and its fullness desirable to my soul. I believe the many purging fires into which my beloved Lord has cast me have in some measure answered the gracious design of his love. I feel a greater deadness, and a more mortified spirit toward the world. I have tried it, and found it false and deceitful. The bliss proposed in an acquaintance with my God I have proved also, and it answers far beyond what my most animated fancy could suggest. O the unutterable pleasures my soul enjoys in communing with God, and with his saints! I am, dear sir,

Yours, etc.

A. B.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 275–76.

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<sup>1</sup>Acts 16:30. A major storm had just swept England. See JW, *Journal*, July 14, 1783, *Works*, 23:284; and JW to Elizabeth Ritchie, July 20, 1783, 30:158–59.

From John Prickard (autobiography)

c. August 1783

I was born in New Mote in Pembrokeshire, on the third of August 1744. That village was then the freest from vice I ever saw. This circumstance I have reason to be thankful for, as I spent the greatest part of my childhood without seeing or hearing much of outward wickedness.

When I was about nine years old my father removed, with all his family, to Creswell Quay, in the same county, where he has lived ever since. There the scene was sadly changed—it being a creek of Milford Haven, where a vast quantity of coals are shipped off, the great resort of sailors and of other strangers introduced cursing, swearing, and Sabbath-breaking, with many foolish and wicked amusements.

My parents (who were religiously disposed) restrained their children as much as possible from the company of wicked children, and by that means, through the blessing of God, we were kept from outward wickedness. Nevertheless I sometimes took the advantage of their absence (when they have been gone to hear the word) and have played in the streets, or else gone a pleasuring on the water on a Sabbath-day. I was also much inclined to go to cock-fightings, and other amusements, but was happily prevented.

I lived with my parents till I was about seventeen, during which time I had frequent drawings of the Spirit of God, and many severe reproaches of conscience. Very often did I hear the word with pleasure, especially from Mr. [George] Whitefield, and Mr. Howell Davies, and believed *all* the truth so far as I was instructed. Indeed, I believed more than the truth, more than I can believe now; for I was a thorough predestinarian, not hesitating even at reprobation! But all this time I was a stranger to God and my own heart.

In the latter end of the year 1761 I removed to Brecon to an uncle. He at that time disliked the Methodists, thinking it sufficient to go to church twice on Sundays, which he did and obliged all his family to do the same. But he laid no restraint on me. I might go to hear the Methodists if I chose. But as I was now got from under the tuition of my parents, and being rather ashamed of the cross, I neglected the preaching entirely. Nor was this all, for (being free from outward restraint) I fell into open sin, such as swearing, cursing, breaking the Sabbath, and sometimes (for the sake of company) I drank to excess.

At first I felt some remorse of conscience, but soon found that sin hardeneth the heart. For after a while I became a habitual swearer, and gave my mind up to vanity. I went on thus for three years and upwards. Though I had frequent checks of conscience, and *always* believed that if I did not mend my ways, I must go to hell. Yea I often resolved in my own mind that I must be a Christian *indeed*, be born of God, or I could not be saved. I therefore fully intended to be truly religious, and to be a Methodist, when I was settled in the world. Indeed though I never was so uncharitable as to think that none could be saved but them, yet (as I *believed* them to be the most scriptural in their sentiments of any I knew) I always thought it my *duty* to join them some time or other. Thus I held a good part of the truth in unrighteousness. Yet I went so far as to dispute warmly with my cousin in its defence, and often confuted him by quotations out of the Common Prayer Book. But alas! I was all this time ashamed of the people I *knew* to be the children of God, and also an enemy to God both in heart and in life.

When I was a little turned twenty, my eldest cousin (a sober, industrious, sensible young man) died of a consumption. He lingered above a year, and had constant hopes of recovery. But being at length confined to his bed, he gave up all hopes of life. About four days before he died, his father was in the room with him, and heard him burst out into a sudden bemoaning of his sins. His father said, 'My dear, you have led a regular, sober life, and there can be no fear of you. If you are not safe, what will become of such a sinner as me, and thousands more?' His son replied, 'But I have been a negligent sinner', and refused to be comforted by all his father could say. The day he died (his father being still in the room with him), he lay quiet for a considerable time, till he heard the clock strike *one*. He then lifted himself upon his pillow (though he had not been able to *turn* in bed for many days before) and cried out, 'O, happy hour! Happy hour!' and presently died. Thus God made one a dying witness of the knowledge of salvation, by the remission of sins, who did not believe the doctrine till a very little before his death.



This extraordinary death of so near a relation was a loud call to all the house, and to me in particular. But though it made some impression on me for a short season, it soon vanished away.

Soon after I heard an alarming sermon preached in our church upon the day of judgment. I was *cut to the heart*, and could get no rest all the afternoon. But I banished the impressions in the evening, by going into company. Yet while I was there I had hard work to get rid of the sermon: the day of judgment still stared me in the face.

The summer following I fell into a decline, and lingered for some months. About the beginning of September, as I laid in my bed one night, all of a sudden the following thoughts struck me: 'My cousin died of this disorder last winter; and it is hardly possible that I shall live till spring. What! and must I die so soon? Then as sure as I am now alive I shall go to hell! Alas! I deserve nothing less! I can expect nothing less!' Then waiting for the young man who lay with me to go to sleep, I arose and went to prayer, and besought the Lord to restore me to health; and solemnly promised that if he did, I would immediately turn to him, hear his word, and own his people. And (O wonderful goodness!) he heard me and gave me *another trial*. For in less than a fortnight I was better; and before winter set in, was quite recovered.

But alas, I did not keep my promise. It is true, I heard the Methodists all the winter. But as I recovered my serious impressions wore off to such a degree that, when the days lengthened (so that we must go by daylight to the preaching), I was ashamed to go! I also broke off *all* outward sin for a time. But when I got quite out of danger, I returned to them again with greater greediness than ever. And thus I continued all that year.

Early in the following spring I went to see my parents. But all the time I was at home, I behaved very undutiful, in refusing to be restrained from going to cock-fightings, etc. When they persuaded me with great tenderness, I had the audacity to tell them (though against my conscience) that they were as bigoted as papists! But I severely smarted for this, before I found the Lord.

Some time after I returned to Brecon, I was providentially led to hear Mr. C. And being cut to the heart, I once more sought the Lord in earnest for a short time, and then fell into sin again.

Towards the latter end of the summer 1767, my surviving cousin, Mr. William Miller,<sup>1</sup> said to me one Sunday morning, will you go to hear Mr. Wesley who is to preach at eight o'clock? I replied, 'I will.' Accordingly we went, and waited till Mr. Wesley came. When he appeared, the first sight I had of him so much affected me that I could not soon forget it. Soon after he stood up, and preached from the following words, 'The wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein.'<sup>2</sup> Under this sermon I was more instructed than under *all* that I had heard before put together. In the evening he preached on, 'He healeth the broken in heart.'<sup>3</sup> Both these sermons were of such service to me that I never more gave such a loose to sin as I had done before—although soon after I fell from my former steadfastness, and lived careless for near a year.

The means of this fall was as follows. Wanting to send a letter to my father, and hearing that there was a young man at the inn who was going to Pembroke, I took it to him to save the postage. And as he had lived some time in London, and was a sprightly young man, the enemy suggested that I was some years younger than he, and at present as likely to live. I therefore thought, why should not I enjoy the pleasures of life a little longer as well as others? Especially as I have no desire to be wicked? Thus the subtle adversary reasoned with me, while my foolish heart, first listened, and then yielded to the temptation. I have often since regretted this fall more than all the rest, because it had not only all the aggravations of the others, but blasted the first fruits of Mr. Wesley's labour, which made such a promising appearance on my heart and mind.

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<sup>1</sup>William Miller (1742–1817), of Brecon, Wales.

<sup>2</sup>Isa. 35:8.

<sup>3</sup>Ps. 147:3.

In August 1768, Lady Huntingdon opened her school at Trevecca. Among the scholars there, was a Mr. [Joseph] Shipman (one of those expelled from Oxford the year before).<sup>4</sup> Under the second sermon he preached in Brecon I was again convinced of my wretched condition, and resolved once more to turn to God. I was so deeply affected that I thought all in the house must have felt the same impressions, and indeed many did. Glory be to God, I have been enabled to hold on my way ever since! The Sunday following I heard Mr. Howell Harris, when the word sunk into my heart. I then began to mourn for all my sins, and to seek the pardon of them through the blood of Jesus. I would also gladly have joined the society, but as no one asked me. I was afraid to ask them because I had no acquaintance with any of them, and because I thought I was not fit to be among them—being much afraid I should fall again and bring a scandal upon them. Indeed I was afraid they would not receive me, and seemed to dread a refusal worse than death.

About a month before Christmas I had a strong desire to receive the sacrament; yet I trembled at the thought, lest I should eat and drink my own damnation!<sup>5</sup>

As I wanted a new Common Prayer Book, the bookseller persuaded me to buy one with *A Companion to the Altar* in it.<sup>6</sup> I took his advice. When I went home I read it, and the Lord so blessed it to my soul that all my scruples were removed. Accordingly I resolved to go to the Lord's table on Christmas day. When the time came, I was overwhelmed with dread, and went trembling to the altar. But when the minister gave me the blessed elements, God gave me the sweet drawings of his love. This did not abide long, but while it did I thought I was in heaven! Surely I have reason to love the Church of England (and blessed be God I have done so ever since), for I felt then (as I have done many times since) that the Lord can and doth give his blessing to all who come to his table trusting in him, though neither minister nor congregation are truly spiritual people.

That evening Mr. Cheek preached in the Methodist meeting, and desired any who chose it to stay at the meeting of the society.<sup>7</sup> I gladly accepted of the invitation. In his exhortation he said if any desired to join the society, they might speak to someone who knew them, and they should be admitted on trial. As I longed to be joined to them, I spoke to Mr. J. and was that night admitted. I was soon known by all the society, and some of them who were Calvinists took great pains to confirm me in their opinions. But I never could hold them *altogether*, after I was convinced of sin and had tasted in a small degree that the Lord had pity upon *me*, for I concluded that if he was willing to save wretched, sinful *me*, he could find no one more unworthy of his mercy among the whole human race.

One evening as I was alone in a bower in my uncle's garden, the enemy wanted to trouble my mind about those things. On this I fell on my knees and begged of the Lord to teach me what was right on either side—if it was *necessary* for me to *know them*. Immediately I felt those words impressed on my mind, 'Be determined to know nothing save Jesus Christ and him crucified.'<sup>8</sup> I cried out, 'Lord, that is enough', and resolved that I would not give way to any such thoughts till I had found the Lord in pardoning love. Upon this I found more earnestness in seeking him than ever, and often mourned in bitterness of spirit because I did not mourn enough!

One morning while I was hearing the word I felt power to believe that my sins were forgiven. But in a moment I was robbed of the blessing by the enemy's suggesting that I had not repented enough. Sometime after I rose (as usual) to read and pray, and as I was reading a sermon upon faith the Lord again gave me power, not only to believe, but also to *hold fast* my confidence. O what a heaven did then spring

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<sup>4</sup>See S. L. Ollard, *The Six Students of St. Edmund Hall expelled from the University of Oxford in 1768* (London: Mowbray, 1911), 7–8.

<sup>5</sup>See 1 Cor. 11:29.

<sup>6</sup>William Vickers, *A Companion to the Altar* 6th edn.; London: Edmund Parker, 1707).

<sup>7</sup>Nicholas Moseley Cheek (1741–1805) was admitted as an itinerant at the 1765 Conference (see *Works*, 10:303). He served for three years, then became the incumbent of Salford, St. Stephen.

<sup>8</sup>Cf. 1 Cor. 2:2.

up in my soul! I felt that the kingdom of heaven is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost! My heart was filled with joy, and peace, and *grateful love*. I walked all that day in the light of God's countenance. At night that dear servant of God, Mr. Watkins of Llanusk, met the class.<sup>9</sup> And oh how did his soul rejoice when he heard that another was born into his Father's kingdom! He conceived a great affection for me that night, which he retained to the day of his death. My life was then truly comfortable. I could bless God every hour that ever I was born.

In the latter end of that summer I was appointed class leader. I entered upon this office with great reluctance; yea with fear and trembling. However the Lord supported me. The society increased that winter, so that in the spring I was obliged to take charge of another class. Sometime after there were prayer-meetings established, and the preachers desired me to take the conducting of them upon me. After they had been continued some time, I found it impressed upon my mind to give a few words of exhortation. And we went on happily for some time.

But in August 1770, Lady Huntingdon proposed to Mr. Bold that the chapel in Brecon should be reserved for the use of her scholars, and whomsoever her ladyship should appoint; by which means Mr. Wesley's preachers were to be entirely excluded.<sup>10</sup> But Mr. Bold refused to comply, and soon after settled the chapel on the Methodists. I then dreaded what soon followed, namely a separation of the society. As I was strongly attached to some of the scholars [at Trevecca], it was like death to me to be separated from them. But I saw the unreasonableness of their proceedings. Lady Huntingdon had not given a shilling towards building the chapel, but Mr. Wesley had subscribed eighty pounds. I considered farther that the society had been raised and kept up for near twenty years by means of Mr. Wesley and his preachers. Her Ladyship said to several of us who waited upon her on the occasion that she had no objection to Mr. Wesley; that she loved and honoured him; that her sole reason for separating was a desire to see what good her students would do separate from everybody else. Soon after her Ladyship sent one of the students to town to preach in another place, at the same time our preacher was in the chapel. This distressed me much. I had the cause of God much at heart, and I feared such proceedings would injure it greatly. But God overruled all for good.

I never till now felt what may be called the fiery darts of the devil. He tempted me several times in one night to drown myself, and I had many other horrid temptations. But God provided me a friend in the time of adversity. Robert Phillips lived in the same house with me, and was witness to all my distresses. He was an exceeding pious, as well as sensible young man. When he saw me in deep distress, and undetermined which side to take, he laboured with all his might to compose my mind; which he happily accomplished, and when that was done, my attachment to Mr. Wesley, the justice of his cause, and my being now almost clear in his sentiments, soon determined me to stay where God had called me. On this I soon got the better of my uneasiness, and my former tranquillity revived. I have since thought that the Lord permitted me to feel more upon this occasion than anyone else, to prepare me for what he intended concerning me.

A few months after, Robert Phillips urged me very fervently to begin to preach. I was much affected while he spoke to me on that head. But when he asked me if I ever felt any inclination or disposition of mind towards it, I could not say but I had. Yet I could not say assuredly that it was from God. Therefore I always suppressed the thoughts. Soon after, one of the preachers was taken ill, and I went to Llanusk to desire Mr. Watkins to go and preach for him at Llangene. But as Mr. Watkins was ill also, he desired me to go. But I told him I durst not, till I was sure I was called of God.

The next week, brother Phillips collected together some of the most sensible and pious of *our* society, and one Watkin Watkins (a gracious young man) of Lady Huntingdon's society. We continued in prayer till near midnight, and before we parted all present, with one consent, declared they believed God had called me to preach the gospel, and urged me at last to make a trial. I was still very timorous, and

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<sup>9</sup>John Watkins (d. 1774) of Glanusk, Brecknockshire, was a class-leader and local preacher; cf. David Young, *The Origin and History of Methodism in Wales* (London: Kelly, 1893), 135.

<sup>10</sup>Hugh Bold (1731–1809) was a lawyer in Brecon and steward of the Methodist society there.

must own I had a dislike to being a Methodist preacher, knowing that he has a larger portion of reproach than others. Yet this was not the principal reason of my reluctance, but the very great importance of the work. But as I durst not be inattentive to the persuasion of my friends, and to what I felt in my own heart when most happy, I consented to make a trial, and accordingly went to Llangene. And though I was not so happy as usual in my own mind (being much agitated), yet the power of the Lord was present. He gave me utterance and many were comforted greatly. But this did not satisfy me. For as there were none awakened, nor justified that I knew of, I resolved as I went home that I would go no more. Indeed I was *very* glad that the trial was over, and that I had now, as I thought, *full proof* that I was *not called*, and that I should no more be troubled with such thoughts. But God forgave me this rash resolution, and my reluctance to take up the cross. When I went home all my friends were still of the same opinion, that I should go on. Mr. Watkins went to the same place the following Sunday, and gave out that I should be there on that day [the following] week. I went with great reluctance. But just before the time of preaching I poured out my soul before the Lord in prayer, entreating him to give me a token of his will in blessing my endeavours if he approved of my proceedings. I prayed in faith and the Lord heard me. My own soul was overwhelmed with divine love, and many were filled with the presence of the Lord, and some with godly sorrow. From that time I have been kept from having many doubts respecting my call to preach the gospel.

The following spring and summer I exercised my small talents principally in the neighbourhood where I began. And at the end of the year both Mr. John] Dempster and Mr. [Martin] Rodda advised me to give myself up entirely to the work at the ensuing [1772] Conference. But as I much doubted my abilities for a travelling preacher, and thought I should be useful in that neighbourhood as a local preacher, I declined it. After Conference I had work enough, for there was one preacher less than the year before appointed for the circuit, and I was called to supply the vacant Sundays at Brecon and the Hay.

Mr. Fletcher's *First Check* came out about this time.<sup>11</sup> I read it with attention and prayer, and all that followed as they came out. And I bless God I ever saw them, for I have had no doubt of the truth ever since.

Several of the preachers every year advised me to travel. But as I was useful where I was, I could not think of leaving that town till God had raised one up to supply my place as a local preacher, especially as I knew the circuit was not able to support another travelling preacher.

The summer following I lost a good friend, Mr. Howell Harris.<sup>12</sup> He had often given me good advice. I went to see him about nine days before he died. I shall never forget his parting words to me and another young preacher: 'My dear young men', said he, 'wherever you are, take care to maintain that the only reason why *all* are not saved is that which the Saviour hath given, they will not come unto me that they may have life.' The next winter I lost another great friend—the dearest to me of any man living, Mr. [John] Watkins of Llanusk.<sup>13</sup> He had been a zealous preacher for twenty years, and enjoyed the love of God uninterruptedly for four-and-twenty years. He had taken great pains with me from our first acquaintance. When I took my last farewell of him he said, 'O my dear John' (the tears flowing from his eyes), 'the enemy strives to have my life; but it is hid with Christ in God.' He died soon after in full triumph of faith. I may safely say that he did not leave his fellow behind him in all that country, for deep piety, Christian experience, zeal for God and true benevolence. He feared not the face of *any man*, if he met him in defence of the cause of God. But I have seen him submit like a lamb when his own reputation has been shamefully traduced, though I knew he was as innocent as a newborn child of the things laid to his charge. Thus lived, and thus died, my dear friend; and as such I mourned for him. O that I may be found at his feet in the day of the Lord!

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<sup>11</sup>John Fletcher, *A Vindication of the Rev. Mr. Wesley's Last Minutes* (Bristol: W. Pine, 1771).

<sup>12</sup>Harris died July 21, 1773.

<sup>13</sup>Watkins died on Jan. 19, 1774.

About this time Mr. Church began to preach.<sup>14</sup> I then thought God was making my way clear to go into the work. But a thought struck me (and followed me for many days) that God had raised many preachers in England and America; but few, if any, in the West Indies. It was therefore strongly impressed on my mind that I ought to offer myself to go thither. Accordingly I mentioned it to Mr. John Brettel, who said he would go with me if I was approved of. I then wrote to Mr. Wesley upon the subject.<sup>15</sup> But he, not approving of it, advised me to go to Kingswood [school] till Conference, and told me he would then appoint me a circuit. But my friends were loath to part with me. And at that time I was dubious of my call to travel in England, supposing there were plenty of travelling preachers there. And therefore I declined taking his advice respecting Kingswood, and waited to see if God would reveal his mind to me more fully between that [time] and the Conference. And though I laid it before him with great earnestness, I was rather in suspense till a few days before the Conference sat, when I came to a determination to write to him and to desire him to decide it for me. Soon after the Conference I received a letter from him informing me that he had appointed me to the Glamorganshire circuit.<sup>16</sup> I then prepared for my journey, and went off as soon as possible. At my first setting off the Lord gave me great encouragement; for the people were loving and kind, and Mr. [Charles Boon[e] (my fellow labourer) watched over me in *tender* love. He saw my weakness and defects, and studied my improvement in all things.

The next year [1775] I was appointed to the Pembroke-shire circuit. Mr. [Samuel] Bradburn was exceeding kind to me. He took as much pains with me as if I had been his brother. That year we had some fruit of our labours, especially at Carmarthen; but we had many trials also. However I can bless the time that I was appointed there, if it was only for the sake of being a year with Mr. Bradburn. Mr. [Thomas] Dixon was my other partner, whose steadiness, and meekness, was of great use to me.

The next year [1776] I was appointed for Glamorganshire again, to labour with plain, *honest* Mr. Ashman.<sup>17</sup> We spent a happy year together. It is remarkable that the two years I was in that circuit there was very little good or harm done among us. The congregations in several places were tolerably large and lively; but yet few were convinced or converted.

At the next Conference [1777] I was sent to Londonderry, to labour with Mr. [Richard] Watkinson. We had many trying circumstances to encounter here. But we lived and acted in perfect harmony, and had some fruit of our labours, which made our trials much easier. That year the Lord was pleased to carry on a great work at Coleraine, which has continued ever since. Two clergymen of the established church, Mr. B. and another whose name I have forgot, were favourable to the cause and kind to us.<sup>18</sup>

While I was in this circuit I received a circular letter respecting an African mission. As soon as I read it, I felt a strong desire to offer myself to go. Yet my nature shuddered at the thought of leaving father and mother, brothers and sisters, friends and country—but especially my dear brethren in Christ. I

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<sup>14</sup>William Church (1749–1830) was a son of John Church, one of the original trustees of the Methodist preaching house in Brecon. He had just begun preaching locally. He would be admitted ‘on trial’ as an itinerant in 1777 (see *Works*, 10:464) and serve in this role through 1789 (see 10:712). See Young, *Methodism in Wales*, 136.

<sup>15</sup>This letter, in the spring of 1774, is not known to survive; nor is JW’s reply.

<sup>16</sup>Conference met in Bristol Aug. 9–12, 1774. JW’s letter was likely written before he left Bristol on Aug. 15. It is not known to survive.

<sup>17</sup>William Ashman (1734–1818), a native of Holcombe, was converted in his mid-teens. He was admitted ‘on trial’ as an itinerant in 1765 (see *Works*, 10:303). He continued to serve in this role until health issues led him to desist in 1798, and return to his home town. See Jackson, *EMP*, 5:296–311 (also in 1790 in-letters) and *Minutes* (post-Wesley, 1818), 4:396.

<sup>18</sup>The first clergyman was surely Rev. Charles Boyd (1708–81), who was rector of Killowen 1772–81. Killowen was just across the River Bann (connected by a bridge), and Boyd hosted JW for breakfast the following year; see JW, *Journal*, June 7, 1778, *Works*, 23:91.

also dreaded the intense heat of the sun by day, and the damps of the night, which I had heard were in general *fatal* to an European constitution. In this deep distress I prayed to the Lord that he would give me direction and strength. The next morning I went to Church, when one of the Psalms for the day was the 121st. In reading it I viewed it as an answer to my prayer. But when we came to the 5th verse my soul was so *overwhelmed* with *divine love*, that I could no longer doubt of the will of God concerning me. As we read on, I resolved to offer myself to go, on which *all my fear* and *dread* vanished away.

I think I should not do justice to this narrative, if I did not insert the 5th and following verses. 'The Lord himself is thy keeper. The Lord is thy defence upon thy right hand; so that the *sun* shall not burn thee by *day*, neither the *moon* by *night*. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil. Yea, it is he that shall keep thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth for evermore.'<sup>19</sup> Having received this *clear* answer to my prayer I hesitated no longer, but offered myself freely and fully if approved of by my brethren in Conference [in 1778]. But they did not approve of the mission itself, on account of the war.<sup>20</sup> So the matter was for that time laid aside.

I have often thought since that they were too cautious. And sometimes I have thought that because they would not give me up at *all hazards* to the Lord, he has shown them what he can do in my native country. For I have had two violent fevers since, and by the last have been rendered incapable of doing much for near two years. I know it was tenderness in my dear brethren, but I have always been of opinion that we ought to have gone. And if the Lord ever restores me to tolerable health, and it is judged right to send out a mission into those dark regions, I hope I shall be as ready to go as ever.

While the matter was in suspense, I wrote to Mr. L. of Pembroke, to acquaint my parents of my intention. In a short time he wrote me word that when he told them they said, they had given me up to the Lord when I first set out to travel, and were determined never to recall me. This gave me great comfort; for as they are *tender, loving* parents, it would have added much to my affliction if they had opposed my going.

The next year [1778] I was appointed for Ireland, to labour in the Lisburn circuit. This was a year of great trouble; but I was enabled to bear it all for the sake of God and his cause. In the month of February the ship *Lydia* (a letter of marque of above three hundred tons burden, belonging to Messrs. Robinson and Chorley of Liverpool) was wrecked near Sheepland, in the Isle of Cale, when all the crew (except one man) perished. She was outward bound, and richly laden with various kinds of English and Irish manufactories. We had several societies in that neighbourhood, and many of our people went with the rest of the country people to plunder the wreck; and others of them bought or received presents of the stolen goods.

Before I came to that end of the circuit I had to preach at a new place (Kilkeel) in the mountains of Mourne. At the time appointed there was so large a congregation assembled that the little house would not hold one quarter of them. And as they had never seen a Methodist preacher before, they urged me to come out. But I objected, as it blew and rained very hard, and was also pretty late in the night. To this they replied that I should be as well off[f] as them, and better; for they would make me a tent on the lee side of the house with boat sails. As I found they began to be clamorous, I put my cloak on and went out immediately, for I saw they would be long in making the tent. Accordingly I preached near an hour, while the people were as attentive as if they had been in a church. That night a work begun which flourished for some time, and was in a good state when brother Boothby left the circuit the year following.<sup>21</sup> How it has been since I do not know.

But preaching out of doors in the night, and in such weather, gave me a dreadful cold. In this state I went among our poor fallen people in the Isle of Cale, and found that every society had more or less

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<sup>19</sup>Cf. Ps. 121:5–8.

<sup>20</sup>See the summary of this discussion in Tyerman, *John Wesley*, 3:272–73.

<sup>21</sup>William Boothby (1732–1801) was admitted as an itinerant in 1776 (see *Works*, 10:452). He was named Assistant for the Lisburn circuit at the 1779 Conference, and moved to Chester the following year. He served until superannuated in 1790 (10:711), and was residing near Macclesfield at his death.

been partakers of the accursed thing, except that dear people in Shangford.<sup>22</sup> I therefore found I had nothing to do but to get rid of them, and at the same time to preach repentance and restitution unto them. My preaching had the desired effect with many, who came with tears in their eyes and proposed restitution as far as they were able. Nevertheless I thought it my duty to put them out of the society for a season, as their crime was so glaring, and of so heinous a nature. I considered that repentance was all that we could require for the offence against God, and restitution was all we could insist on for the offence they had committed against their neighbour. But they could make no satisfaction for the scandal they had brought on the people of God but by being publicly put out of the society, and kept out for a season. I accordingly, with an almost broken heart, read out sixty-three in Downpatrick on the Sunday evening; adding that those who would make restitution should be restored at a proper time, but those who would not should be recorded in the general steward's book, with an account both of their crime and obstinacy.

This severity (as some called it) had in a great degree its desired effect. It entirely rolled away the reproach that would otherwise have stuck to the Methodists, and prevented our usefulness in those parts. On our removing the preaching from the place where the depredations were committed, a creditable farmer took us in, where much larger congregations assembled, and where a good society was raised before the year was out.

All this time the cold I had taken at Kirkeel increased daily, for want of time to take something to remove it. I was also almost heartbroken for the great evil that was done. Which both together threw me into a violent fever. But herein I experienced much of the tender dealings of God. I was seized with the fever in Lisburn, and in one of the tenderest families in Ireland, where the accommodations were every way suitable to my condition. Here I lay in a very dangerous way for three days. But my physician (Dr. Bell) was very attentive. The fourth day I was out of danger, and recovered so fast that I preached in a fortnight from the beginning of my fever, and was on my circuit in three weeks.

This fever was a great blessing to my soul, for I felt the truth of those words, 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted.'<sup>23</sup> It was also good for my body, as it removed a consumptive habit which I had laboured under for fifteen years, inasmuch as I had as good health for above two years after, as ever I had in all my days.

After this I and my fellow labourer went on comfortably the remaining part of the year, while the work of God prospered more than it had done before (in our time) in the Isle of Cale.<sup>24</sup> For many of the offenders were deeply humbled before God for the scandal they had brought upon his cause, repented heartily for the breach of his holy law, made all the restitution they could to the people they had injured, and therefore were admitted into the society again. What was very remarkable, there were some who never belonged to us (only as hearers) that desired to make restitution with our people, being induced thereto by *our preaching*.

Some time after I wrote to Messrs. Robinson and Chorley the whole state of the case, and desired to know with whom I was to deposit what was restored. They wrote me a very polite and Christian letter, and directed me where to send the effects, and empowered me to allow the people *salvage* for their trouble (but this I never did, because they had stolen the goods), and congratulated me upon being connected with a people so open to conviction. I also heard that several gentlemen in the neighbourhood remarked that the Methodist preachers had proved themselves honest men, and said if the ministers of every persuasion had acted as they did, most of the goods might have been saved. Thus we see our God can defeat Satan's boldest designs, by causing all to end in his glory.

I was next [in 1779] appointed to Belfast, where I continued till March [1780], when Mr. Wesley was kind enough to remove me at my own request to Londonderry again. I shall ever feel gratitude for this great tenderness to me in that removal, and to Mr. [Thomas] Rutherford for changing with me so readily. But I stayed three weeks at Coleraine before I went to Derry, and found a blessed increase of the

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<sup>22</sup>Likely Strangford.

<sup>23</sup>Ps. 119:71.

<sup>24</sup>Prickard's fellow itinerant that year in Lisburn was John Hampson Jr.

work of God. For it was at that time the best disciplined and most lively society I ever saw before or since. And no wonder, for it had been blessed with two good men (Messrs. Rutherford and [Henry] Moore), and indeed most of the society had drank into their spirit.

From thence I removed to Derry and was received by my old friends with much love. I continued there till about a month before Conference, when Mr. Wesley was pleased to direct me to go to Dublin with all speed, to supply Mr. [Richard] Boardman's place, who was gone to England. Soon after I came, my uncle Miller (with whom I had lived thirteen years),<sup>25</sup> being very ill, desired much to see me, and procured a letter to be sent to Mr. Wesley, requesting that he would send for me, that he might see me before he died; Mr. Wesley was so kind as to comply with his request, and accordingly wrote to me, to be in Bristol the Saturday before Conference.<sup>26</sup>

At that [1780] Conference I was appointed for Brecon. When I came thither I found my uncle recovering, who rejoiced to see me, as did also all the family and my religious friends. Yea all my acquaintances in the town seemed glad to see me. But I was a good deal grieved all this year to see so little fruit of our labours; though, blessed be God, there was some.

In February I met with a great deliverance as I was going into Radnorshire. As I passed over the mountains beyond Painscastle, it snowed very hard. When the snow ceased, a thick mist came on, and soon after a very dark night. In these circumstances I expected nothing but to perish before the morning; as the snow had filled up all the roads, and as I was afraid the fog would bewilder me. Going on I soon lost my road, and found myself among a number of turf-pits. In this situation I looked up to God for direction. Presently I recollected that the wind was west when I came up the hill, (and knowing that my course was near north, and that there was a valley lying east and west, about two miles to the northward) I resolved to shape my course by keeping the wind upon my left cheek. Being rather afraid lest the wind should change, I looked up and left that to God. As I could not see twice the length of my horse, I was in great danger of falling into the turf-pits. Nevertheless I went on trusting in God, and was kept happy in my soul. Having travelled a long time in the dark, I at last saw a star through the fog, and judged that the valley was near. And in a short time I found it to be the case, to my very great comfort; and through the mercy of God, I entered it and so got safe to B. Griffith's about half past seven o'clock.

The June following, Mr. R[owland?] of Caresoos,<sup>27</sup> related a remarkable instance of the power of religion. About a week before that there had been in that neighbourhood the most tremendous storm of thunder and lightning, hail and rain, that ever had been seen there by the oldest man living. Indeed I never before saw such horrid devastations in roads, hedges, fields, gardens, and houses, and hope never shall again till the general dissolution of all things. But as it was then so well described in all the public papers, and repeated in most of the parish churches in a *brief* for the poor sufferers, it must be well known to all people; and therefore I need not mention the particulars here. But the circumstance I am going to relate was this: six or seven people belonging to Mr. Rowland's society were assembled together for prayer, in a house by the side of a river which falls into the Severn at Caresoos. All of a sudden the river rose and overflowed all the banks. The house was built of timber, and was soon swept away, with all the people who were in it, except one young man who got upon the top of the chimney, which was of brick. The neighbours seeing him in this situation came to the waterside. But (having no boat in all the neighbourhood) they could yield him no relief. Though there was nothing before him but certain death (for the waters kept rising very fast), yet he continued singing and shouting in Welsh, with all his might, 'Glogoniant!', 'Glogoniant!' that is, 'Glory', till a large piece of timber (a wreck of a bridge that was carried off) struck against the building, and dashed it to pieces, on which he fell into the water and followed his companions into a blessed eternity. But before he fell he told the people on the shore that all his companions went off praising God in like manner.

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<sup>25</sup>Isaac Miller (1701–84), of Brecon, Wales; the father of William Miller.

<sup>26</sup>Neither of these letters is known to survive.

<sup>27</sup>I.e., Caersws.



At our next Conference in 1781, I was appointed for [King's] Lynn circuit. This year I was exceeding happy in my partner (Mr. [George] Button) and promised myself a comfortable time. But the Lord knew what was best for me. For on tenth of October I was seized with a violent bilious fever. It was eighteen days before I was deemed out of danger—during which time I was thrice thought to be dead by all who saw me, and was actually once deprived of all sensation for six minutes. But God restored me and gave me much patience and a great sense of his love.

Sending for the minister of the parish (Mr. Crofts), he came, on which my soul was much refreshed. When I had an interval of ease, so that I could bear to sit up, I sent for him again to administer the Lord's supper to me. Many of our friends attended, and we all felt the divine presence in that blessed ordinance. After this he came often to see me; and when I was able to sit up, he would stay some time with me, and often pressed me to send to the parsonage house for anything I desired. But though I never sent for anything (as I needed nothing), he often sent what he thought was proper for me. May God reward him for his kindness to one who was near four hundred miles from his father's house!

Here also I saw the wonderful goodness of God, in afflicting me in the most convenient place in all the circuit. For Mr. and Mrs. Parker spared no pains or expense in providing everything convenient for me.<sup>28</sup> And Mr. and Mrs. Stead (at whose house I lay) devoted all their time unto me, and cheerfully ran the risk of catching the disorder, by attending me all the daytime.<sup>29</sup>

When I began to get better, and was able to converse, I spoke often to my doctor of the things of eternity. He was an elderly man, and of good report in the town. I had a particular love for him on account of the great attendance he gave me, visiting me five times a day, though he was much employed among other patients. About the time he had done with me he was taken ill himself, and soon after died. His nurse (one of those who were with me) sent me word that she hoped my conversation and prayers were not lost upon him.

As soon as I was able I went to [King's] Lynn. But (having begun preaching too soon) I got a severe return of my disorder. I stayed there till Christmas, and found I could not recover in that bad air. I then wrote to Mr. Wesley, representing my situation in full, and the state of the circuit, which had suffered greatly on account of having but one travelling preacher. He kindly invited me to come to London without delay if I was able, adding, 'Here you can have the best medical advice in the kingdom.' He then sent me money enough to bear my expenses, which was very seasonable, as I was run very low by a long doctor's bill, etc., which the circuit was not able to discharge.

When I was coming away, a gentleman of Lynn was so kind as to take me five-and-twenty miles in his own chaise, the day before the coach came in, to try if I could bear the journey, as well as to take off some of the fatigues of the first day. Accordingly, through the help of God, I arrived in London with very little difficulty. When I came to the Foundery, Mr. Wesley and all the family received me with the greatest tenderness. I indeed found it a house of mercy to me in my weak state. For Mr. and Mrs. Bradford, who had the management of the house, took the greatest care of me.<sup>30</sup> In a few days, Mr. Wesley sent me to Dr. L\_\_\_\_.<sup>31</sup> Who presently finding out my case, I recovered wonderfully under his hands. But about the latter end of February the winter set in very severe, and gave me a violent relapse into the fever. I began to recover again in about three weeks, but a cough and feverish habit remained all the spring and summer.

In June Mr. Wesley sent Dr. [Thomas] Coke to Dublin, and some of our friends thought that such a journey would do me good. Accordingly we set off, and on our landing in Ireland I was rather better; and continued tolerably well all the time I was there, which was about three weeks. For two or three days after I returned to London I could not discern whether the journey had done me good or harm, as I had

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<sup>28</sup>Thomas and Mary (Franklin) Parker, of Fakenham.

<sup>29</sup>He may means Thomas and Ann (Readwin) Steed, of Fakenham.

<sup>30</sup>Joseph and Mary (Angell) Bradford.

<sup>31</sup>Likely John Coakley Lettsom (1744–1815), a Quaker physician and philanthropist in London.

been very sick at sea, and came from Liverpool to London without being in bed. But when the fatigue was over, it was visible to all who saw me that it had done me good. Yet I was not so well as to be able to take a circuit. When I mentioned this to Mr. Wesley, he judged it best for me to continue in London, that I might be under his eye, as well as near Dr. L[ettsom].

Soon after [1782] Conference we began to meet the classes, which I found very fatiguing to my body. As soon as we had done this, we entered on a more labourious task—viz., visiting those in their own houses who had not met their classes the last quarter. Before we had quite gone through this business I was again seized with a fever, and continued very ill for near three weeks: at the end of which I began to recover again. Before this I was above three months not able to preach. But now the Lord so strengthened me that I could preach two sermons on the Sabbath, and one in the middle of the week, without the least hurt.

When I was at the worst, many of my friends who lived a little way in the country, kindly invited me to visit them for the benefit of the air. I gladly accepted of their offers, and lived among them as much as I possibly could, varying the scene as I felt myself affected. This was the principal means of my recovery this time, for the doctors advised me to take but little medicine.

At present I am astonished at the infinite goodness of God, in raising me up so many friends in my time of sickness. I receive it as a pledge of his love, and am enabled to believe that he will always provide for me. If I should be advised to remove to my native air, for the confirmation of my health, I have several open doors. Two gentlemen in particular, in two different counties, have lately given me pressing invitations to come and live with them as long as I find it needful. But as I am now able to do a little, I am inclined to stay in the circuit if I *can*. But if it is judged better for me to remove into my native air, I am resigned.<sup>32</sup>

During my last confinement I was wonderfully supported; for though the enemy tempted me sore at times, yet he gained no advantage over me. I was often tempted to murmur at my being obliged to drag on so heavily. But I was enabled to be resigned to the will of God, knowing that I was his prisoner.

I often thought with great comfort on what Mr. Charles Wesley said about a year ago: 'Young and healthy Christians are generally called to glorify God by being *active* in *doing* his will; but old and sick Christians in *suffering* it.' Lord, let me but glorify thee, and choose thou the *manner*! Only give me strength, and I will bless thy name.

I bless my kind Redeemer that he has given me full confidence that he will not remove me hence till I am made ready. And I am firmly persuaded that it is the privilege of all that are born of God, to be saved from *all* sin, and to live in the full enjoyment of the love of God. And that this salvation is necessary in order to our entering into the kingdom of heaven. I hope he will soon accomplish this great work in me, that I may be *wholly* his, in heart and in life, in time and to all eternity.

John Prickard

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 11 (1788): 459–61, 513–16, 570–73, 626–28; 12 (1789): 14–17, 68–72, 122–25, 180–82.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Prickard was assigned to London for recuperation by the 1782 Conference. He was returned there in 1783, though JW hoped to send him to Pembrokeshire. But he died and was buried Nov. 3, 1783.

<sup>33</sup>This account is reproduced in Jackson, *EMP*, 4:170–97; along with brief comments on Prickard's death.

From Richard Rodda (autobiography)

c. August 1783

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I was born in the year of our Lord 1743, in the parish of Sancreed, in the county of Cornwall. My parents had no great share of this world's goods, yet were esteemed by all who knew them, for their honesty and industry. My mother feared God. But being a stranger to his method of justifying sinners, she went about to establish her own righteousness. When the Methodists came into Cornwall, preaching repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, she was whole and needed not the Physician. And as evil reports were soon spread abroad concerning the Methodists, she and my father readily believed all that was said against them. Accordingly they kept their distance, and considered them as enemies both to church and state.

However, my sister (who was the eldest of ten children) ventured to hear, and God fastened his word in her conscience, as a nail in a sure place. On this she sunk down at the feet of Jesus and implored mercy, who in a short time turned her sorrow into joy. As this change was visible, it induced my mother to hear for herself. It was not long before God stripped her of her self-righteousness. His arrows drank up her spirits, and his hand pressed her sore. For three weeks she cried unto the Lord, as out of the deep; at the end of which, being on the brink of despair, he set her soul at liberty in a moment, and enabled her to say, 'Christ hath loved me, and given himself for me!' From this time she was diligent in the means of grace, and did what she could to bring up her children in the fear of God.

One of the first things I remember was my old grandmother praying to God, with lifted hands and eyes, as she passed into the other world.

When I was about four years old, as I was lying on the ground and looking up to heaven, I thought I saw the form of a large tree. While I gazed on it, something inwardly said, 'That is the tree of life.' This was before I could read or even knew a letter.

When I was six years of age, the Spirit of God frequently strove with me; and sometimes I was so distressed, I knew not, what to do. Yet I learned my book very well, and could repeat to my parents at night great part of what I had read by day.

About the year 1750 the gospel was preached in my father's house. I loved to hear it, and strove to get as nigh the preacher as I could. Soon after this my mother fell into a deep consumption. She was brought so low that she could not walk across the room. After many things had been tried in vain, she was perfectly restored by making a hole in the ground and breathing into it for a quarter of an hour every morning.

When I was seven years old I felt the drawings of the Father, and the operation of his blessed Spirit on my heart. The preachers that came to our house often spake to me concerning my soul, and their instructions were not in vain. They often distilled on my heart, as dew on the tender herbs. But after this, I lived in a family which had not so much as the form of godliness. And as they encouraged me in every vice, my good desires and serious impressions so far vanished that I could laugh and tell lies without fear or remorse.

One day as I was riding on full gallop, in company with several others, my horse threw me over his head, and then leaped quite over me. And though another horse coming close behind did the same, yet I received no hurt! Surely the tender mercy of God preserved me, or I had gone quick into the pit! Soon after this the kind providence of God brought me back to my father's house, and I was sent to work in the tin mines. From this time, God began to work effectually on my heart.

In the year 1756 the Lord showed me that my inward parts were very wickedness. I saw that my heart was a sink of pollution, and that my past life condemned me. When I heard a certain preacher in St. Just's, I thought, as soon as he began, he could not have much to say. But before he had done, I thought he kept his eye continually on me, while everything he said seemed to point at me. I could hardly bear it, and had some thoughts of moving to another part of the house, where he might not see me. But I soon found it was God who was applying his word to my heart.

From this time strong convictions followed me. And though I was often drawn away with sinful companions, yet my conscience terrified me, and drove me to the feet of Christ to implore forgiveness. My mother greatly helped me by her prayers and admonitions; as did also my two elder brothers, who about this time found peace with God.

I now applied to Mr. [Peter] Jaco for admission into the society. He gave me leave to meet, but only as a probationer—I suppose because he thought me too young to be admitted. Nevertheless, I constantly met in class. And sometime after, when you sir called over [at] the society at Newlyn, I was received into the connection.

I was near two years seeking rest for my soul. Sometimes I thought God would never show me his mercy; at others, I hoped he would. Sometimes I was alarmed by terrors; at others, I was drawn by love. God is witness how often I have watered my pillow with tears, and rose at midnight to pour out my soul before him! One time in particular, I was in such trouble that I thought God was frowning over me, and that hell moved from beneath to meet me. Once, a very wicked boy being in company with me as I walked the road, I was constrained to fall on my knees, and cry aloud for mercy. For every step I took, I feared I should drop into everlasting burnings.

About the beginning of June 1758, while I was praying in my father's house and earnestly entreating God to write forgiveness on my heart, the following words darted into my soul, 'Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.'<sup>1</sup> In that instant my burden was removed, and my soul was filled with peace and joy. But I soon doubted whether this was what many termed 'justification', and as I had always a fear of deceiving myself, the enemy soon reasoned me out of my happiness and my soul seemed as far from the blessing as ever.

On the 11th of that month, while Benjamin Trembath was praying by me, God gave me a clear sense of his forgiving love. There was not the least doubt remaining of my acceptance through the Beloved. For many days and weeks I was enabled to rejoice in God my Saviour. Every duty was profitable, as it conveyed to me fresh tokens of the divine favour. My understanding was opened to behold the power, wisdom, and goodness of God in creating, upholding, and governing the world. I saw that the whole earth was full of his majesty and glory. But what most astonished me was the wondrous greatness of redeeming love. To behold the Ancient of days become an infant! The Filler of immensity, contracted to a span!<sup>2</sup> The Lord of heaven and earth, taking upon him the form of a servant; and, after fulfilling all righteousness, bowing his blessed head on the cross, to save his avowed enemies. These considerations filled me with love and gratitude, which I expressed in the following lines.

Praise God my soul, whose wondrous love  
Hath drawn thy thoughts to things above,  
Where Jesus ever reigns:  
Let ev'ry sinful, wand'ring thought,  
Be into full subjection brought,  
Till freed from sin's remains.

When pure and perfected in love,  
Oh, may I never, never rove  
From Christ my living head;  
But steadfast and unshaken stand,  
Obedient to my Lord's command,  
While by his Spirit led.

Among the little, happy flock,

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<sup>1</sup>Matt. 9:2.

<sup>2</sup>See CW, 'Desiring to Love, Hymn VI', st. 4, *HSP* (1749) 1:60.

Who sit beneath their guardian Rock,  
Will I take up my rest;  
My shepherd's voice, my soul shall hear,  
And freed from doubts and slavish fear,  
Shall lean upon his breast.

His loving arms extended wide,  
Shall press me to his wounded side,  
Nor let me thence depart;  
But fill my soul with joy and peace,  
And all the fruits of right'ousness,  
Shall flourish in my heart.

The heav'nly spices of his grace  
Do sweetly now perfume the place  
Where Satan had his seat;  
Jesus hath spoil'd the powers of hell,  
And lo! I now forever dwell  
Triumphant at his feet!

Here will I lie, nor ever move,  
Till Christ my Lord shall say, 'My love,  
Come up and dwell with me;'  
Then I on wings of love shall rise,  
And reign with him above the skies,  
To all eternity.

Many times that text ran in my mind, 'I shall never be moved';<sup>3</sup> the Lord of his goodness hath made my hill so strong. I thought my enemies were all dead, and that my warfare was accomplished. How little did I know at that time of the Christian conflict? Or the deep import of these words, 'Unto you it is given, in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe in him, but to suffer for his sake.'<sup>4</sup>

Through unwatchfulness I fell into levity (a besetting evil), and Satan strove to tear away my shield. But though God suffered him not to do it, yet my joy was greatly damped. My unwatchfulness cost me many an aching heart. And I found I had most need to watch when in company with professors; where, not suspecting harm, I was often overtaken before I was aware.

About the year 1759, when I was forty fathoms under ground, by a miracle I was saved from being drowned in three fathoms of water. O the tender mercy of God in preserving me! Surely the angel of his presence saved me, through whose help I continue unto this day!

Not long after I was seized with a fever, and brought very near the gates of death. My soul longed to take her flight and struggled, like a bird in a cage, to obtain its liberty.

One day my friends thought I was dead, and one of my brothers informed my mother that I was passed into the other world. And I thought myself that my soul had actually left the body, and was mounting upwards, like a bird in the air. I saw with the eyes of my mind such glory as cannot be expressed. I saw the eternal Sun of righteousness shining more glorious than the sun in his meridian lustre. Indeed I had such views of God and glory as I never had before or since. My mother, on hearing that I was dead, ran to the bed and raised me up in her arms. After some time I again began to breathe. But the impression it left will never be obliterated. It was much against my wish that I was again restored

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<sup>3</sup>Cf. Ps. 16:8.

<sup>4</sup>Phil. 1:29.

to life; for it was the longing desire of my soul to depart, and to be with Christ, of which I had full assurance.

The first time I went abroad after my recovery, I was impressed to serve in His Majesty's navy. I pleaded my youth, and my present weakness. While I was speaking, an honest Quaker came by, and addressed himself to the mayor as follows:

Q. What art thou going to do with that lad?

M. Send him to serve His Majesty.

Q. There are others more fit for the service; yea, a hundred in this town. Send them. Send idle, disorderly persons, not honest men's sons who live by their diligence and frugality.

M. The king must have men, and if we cannot get seamen, we must take others.

Q. Look upon that lad; thou mayest read innocence in his countenance.

M. He will look much better after he has been six months at sea; and in time he will be a captain.

Q. Let him go home; there are men enough to be got besides him.

After a few more words, the mayor told me to make haste home.

I admire the kindness of the Most High in this. Many of my neighbours were sent from their native land, and carried to the *Havannah*. But God put it into the mind of that good, old Friend to speak for me, and thereby to procure me my liberty.

About this time the Lord opened the mouth of one of my brothers to speak in public. The first time I heard him, he spoke from the words of good, old Simeon, 'Mine eyes have seen thy salvation.'<sup>5</sup> That night the farmer's house where he had preached took fire and was burned; but the family were saved, so as by fire.

When I was about twenty years of age some Christian friends desired me to go to prayer, for as yet I had not prayed much in public. This was a cross to me. But when my mother urged me, I broke through. I have no doubt but the gracious Spirit helped my infirmities, and enabled me to ask those things that were agreeable to the will of God. I was encouraged to go on, and as we had family prayer for many years, I often assisted in the performance of that duty. Soon after, I was desired to pray again in public, and after much importunity I consented.

The doctrine of Christian perfection was now preached among us, and numbers professed they had attained the blessing. I had not the least doubt of the testimony of several, as their whole behaviour agreed with their profession. I believed the doctrine, and my soul longed to experience it. I prayed that every thought and desire might centre in God. While my eldest brother and I were pouring out our souls to God for this blessing, the Lord poured out his Spirit upon us. Every heart present appeared like melting wax before the fire, and in that hour God gave my mother a testimony that he had cleansed her from all unrighteousness, which I trust she retains to this day.

My soul was now on full stretch after the blessing. I not only believed it attainable, but that I should attain it. Therefore I constantly expected that Christ would come to cleanse and keep my heart. Accordingly, one Saturday night I came to the class and resolved not to depart till mine eyes had seen this great salvation. After I had entered the room, my heart seemed as hard as a stone. But I was not discouraged. All my prayer was, Lord create in me a clean heart, and renew in me a right spirit.<sup>6</sup> The mighty power of God descended on me. My heart was emptied of every evil, and Jesus took up all the room. I could no longer refrain from telling what God had done for my soul. My heart was filled with love, and joy, and my lips praised him.

For three weeks I enjoyed constant fellowship with God. There was not a cloud on my mind. I walked in the light, and often scarce felt the ground on which I trod. I never expected to feel a wandering thought more. But at the end of three weeks I felt my thoughts wander, and then inferred I had lost the blessing, and had hard work to retain what I had received even in justification!

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<sup>5</sup>Luke 2:30.

<sup>6</sup>See Ps. 51:10.

Not long after this I was greatly harassed with blasphemous thoughts. But my soul abhorred them. The devil likewise tempted me to destroy myself. One day, when I had a razor in my hand, he told me that was a fit instrument for the purpose. He likewise added, if I did, I should be happy forever. But something within answered, No murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. My struggle was so great, I thought the blood would have started through my nose, eyes, and ears. At length I threw the razor on the ground, and fell on my knees. God soon heard me, and rebuked the destroyer.

All the time I had these sore conflicts, God secretly called on me to warn sinners to flee from the wrath to come. But in this I was disobedient. The language of my heart was, Send by whom thou wilt, but send not me.<sup>7</sup> It was about this part of my life the hand of the Lord was more visible in preserving me than in any other. I shall mention two or three instances.

One day I was standing in a tin-pit, about eight yards from the top and four from the bottom. The men above were drawing up a piece of timber, the end of which pulled a stone out of the brink of the pit. The men above cried out, on which I leaned my head a little forward, and the stone fell between my shoulders. In that instant I fell backwards, and dropped down the four yards below me. And as I fell among some small stones, my back and neck were hurt. But blessed be God, I had no bones broke! Nor any other damage but what I recovered in two or three days. Those who saw me fall expected my brains were dashed out. But the kind hand of God lengthened the thread of life! O how great is his goodness!

Some time after, I had another proof of God's mercy and goodness. I was one day standing on what we call in Cornwall a borough of attle,<sup>8</sup> which filled an old tin-pit and stood a considerable height from the surface of the earth. While I was standing on its top, it sunk in an instant under my feet and I literally went down quick into the pit. The attle immediately followed me and covered my head. But I went down till I came where a miner was working, who was greatly surprised to see me. If I had been retarded in my passage, I must have been inevitably suffocated. Glory be to God! I received no damage.

But the greatest deliverance happened soon after this. One day as I was working in the bottom of a pit, about ten yards deep, I laid aside my tool and fell on my knees, and found uncommon enlargement in prayer. In less than two minutes the ground fell in. A very large stone fell before me, which rose higher than my head. Two others fell, one on my right side and the other on my left. These likewise rose above my head. A fourth fell like a cover, and rested on the top of the others about four inches above my head. Some scores of small ones fell behind on my legs and feet, while others fell on the cover that was over me! Here I was shut up as in a prison. When my father came to the brink of the pit and found me buried, he fell a-weeping. But when he found I was alive, he told me the whole pit would fill to the top. I desired him to go out of the reach of danger. I was a little surprised at first, but it was soon gone. As the stones were large and hollow, I had sufficient room to breathe. When he perceived that no more stones fell he got help, and by degrees removed some of the large stones. And after cutting my shoes from my feet, I was got out without receiving the least injury. I cannot help admiring the providence of God in the following particulars.

1. I was praying at the time this happened.
2. I was kneeling. Had I been standing, I should have been crushed to pieces; had I been sitting, my legs would have been broke with the large stone which fell before me.
3. They fell in an instant. Had I heard them coming, probably I should have rose from my knees, and then the stone which fell like a cover would have dashed out my brains.
4. Three large stones fell, one before me, and one on each side; and only small ones behind on my legs. Had a large one fallen there, my legs would have been broken into shivers.
5. The three large ones that fell were a few inches higher than my head, and were instantly covered with another large one. Had they been a few inches lower, the last would certainly have killed me in a moment. Surely this preservation was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in my eyes!

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<sup>7</sup>See Exod. 4:13.

<sup>8</sup>The off-casting of a mine.

One Lord's day we expected a travelling preacher. The people were gathered together from various parts, when word was brought that he could not come. On hearing this, I was desired to stand up and speak to the people. The conflict in my breast was very strong, and if my friends had observed my countenance they could not help seeing it. But I refused to open my mouth. Presently a horrid gloom overwhelmed me. I knew not where to go, or what to do. I feared God would send me down quick into the pit. I came home greatly distressed, and while walking in the fields, filled with confusion and horror, I feebly said, 'Lord if it be thy will that such a worm should speak thy word, chasten my body, but save my soul.' I was instantly seized in every part. My head was sick, and my heart faint. My feet and legs were so enfeebled they could scarce support my body. I fell on the ground and laid my mouth in the dust, while the hand of the Almighty pressed me sore. After a time I faintly said, 'Lord, if thou wilt restore me, my mouth shall show forth thy praise. I will this night begin in the family.' In an instant the distress was removed, both from my body and mind, and I was filled with peace and love.

When I returned to the house, the enemy told me to put off speaking a day or two longer. But I attended to the counsel of the wise man, 'When thou vowest a vow unto the Lord, take care and perform it.'<sup>9</sup> Accordingly I exhorted that night, for the first time, which was in my father's house. Soon after I was desired to exhort in the society; and then, by their advice, I did it in public.

The first time I attempted to preach, I was exceeding anxious about dividing the word in a proper manner. And as I was a mile from the preaching house, I walked a by-road, that no one might disturb my thoughts, or turn off my mind from the subject. As I went along, I began to preach to myself, and continued so to do until I came near the preaching house. But how was I disappointed when I took the same words before the congregation? Alas, all my fine skeleton vanished from my sight, and I was filled with shame and confusion!

I believe this would have cured me of taking another text, if my Christian friends had not pressed me to a second trial. And as I did not lean to my own understanding, God was pleased out of the mouth of the weak to ordain strength.

Other societies now invited me to preach to them. When I went, God was with me of a truth. Several were convinced of sin, and some found peace.

In the parish of Morvah three or four have fallen to the ground under a sermon, and groaned to God for mercy. Many who had backslidden returned unto God, who healed their backslidings, and loved them freely. The travelling preachers, who had forsaken them, again visited them, and some who were then restored are now in Abraham's bosom.

Mr. [Thomas] Rankin, who was the Assistant, at the quarterly meeting desired me to inform the company why I undertook to preach. I rose trembling, and with many tears said, When you came first into the round I gave you an account of my conversion, and my call to this work. Since that, I have spoke at several places, and here are some present who have heard me. They are at liberty to speak what they think. On this, two or three grave men arose, and represented me in a very favourable light. Mr. Rankin admitted they were proper judges, and told me I should preach and exhort on Sundays, so as to return the same night. From this time, I frequently on the Sabbath travelled many miles on foot, preached three times, and returned home about 10:00 at night. Many times, in my going out and returning home, I have prostrated myself on the ground and lifted up my heart to God for his blessing on my endeavours, and often found him benignly near. Glory be to his name forever!

One of my brothers [Martin Rodda] who was labouring in the vineyard often refreshed my soul by his letters. But when he wrote of settling, it filled me with grief. For I thought, after setting his hand to the plough, he ought never to look back. But some difference that happened between him and a troublesome man in the town of Pembroke, caused him to decline the itinerant life. He came to Cornwall, and in a little time we both sailed for Wales. Here I tarried four or five weeks and preached in various parts, and I hope all I said was not in vain.

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<sup>9</sup>Cf. Eccles. 5:4.



I returned and continued working at my business a full year, and then with my youngest brother I went to Wales again. On the 10th of July, 1768, I was married to E. S.<sup>10</sup> My mind was very serious at that time, from which my mother-in-law concluded I was in a decline. But having obtained help from God, I continue to this day. I returned to Cornwall with my wife about the beginning of August. We received the travelling preachers near twelve months. Business again called me into Wales. Here, sir, I met with you.<sup>11</sup> And as you wanted a preacher for Glamorganshire circuit, I freely offered my service, which you accepted. I then bought a horse, etc., out of my own money, and made all the haste I could into my round.

Here I found great favour in the eyes of the people, and was in more danger from their smiles than their frowns. The preacher that was with me was also exceeding kind, so that my time glided on smoothly. In April I returned to Cornwall, and brought my wife back with me into Wales.

When Mr. [James] Dempster left me in the circuit while he went to the [1770] Conference, I preached at two new places, lying between Pembroke Ferry and Haverfordwest. At the last of these places a little society was formed, and I hope a few of them continue to this day.

The next year I spent partly in Pembrokeshire, and partly in Brecknockshire and Radnorshire. In this round I attempted to enlarge our borders. In the strength of the Lord, I went to Bishop's Castle, a town wicked to a proverb. I had nobody with me; but the Lord was with me of a truth. I put my horse up at an inn, and wrote a lesson for the crier. I gave him this and the money at the same time. After reading the notice, he began to make some scruples. I told him he had taken my money, and therefore I insisted that he would do his duty. Accordingly he published me to preach under the town hall, the most public and convenient place in the town. At the time appointed, hundreds flocked to hear. I stood on the steps and preached from Amos 5:6. I bless God, he did not let me want matter, manner, or liberty! Some threw their hats in my face, but that did not hinder me from proceeding. The tears trickled down many faces. And after I had done, five or six came round me and begged I would come again. I believe the power of the Highest reached many hearts, and had my successors followed the blow the kingdom of Satan might have been shaken in that wicked town.

The next day I rode thirty or forty miles to Tenbury in Worcestershire. The first time I came to this place, Mr. G—<sup>12</sup> was there, intending to preach in the house of Miss H—, who had removed thither with an intent to keep a boarding-school. Before he began he informed the congregation that if any of them misbehaved he should take the liberty to stop his preaching, and put them out of doors. In a short time some of them began to make a great noise; accordingly he came down to fulfill his promise, laid hold on one of them, and was putting him out, when twenty more surrounded him—and if the good women of the house had not interposed, I know not what the consequence would have been. However we soon got all the mob out of doors, and then ended our meeting in peace.

The second time I came, the people cried out I was come to preach against the Church. I know not when I have attempted to preach in greater confusion. They brought gunpowder with them, and almost filled the place with the smoke of it. It happened a very rough man, who had come out of the country, came that night to hear preaching. He sat near me, and had a large bludgeon in his hand. As soon as he heard the explosion of the gunpowder, he rose from his seat, and with his mouth full of oaths said, he would knock the brains of the persons out who had made the disturbance. I begged of him, if he was my friend, to lay aside that weapon; after sometime he seemed more pacified.

Before I came the second time, a great part of the church fell down. But as it happened on a weekday, no person was hurt. I think it was the Sunday after that the minister, whose name was David, stood on a part of the ruins, and took for his text, Psalm 132:1, 'Lord, remember David and all his

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<sup>10</sup>The marriage took place in Pwllcrochan, Pembrokeshire, Wales; his wife's name was Elizabeth Stoplong.

<sup>11</sup>This was in mid-Aug. 1769. Rodda would serve under James Dempster (as Assistant) in the circuit for western Wales until the 1770 Conference, when he was formally admitted on trial as an itinerant and stationed on that circuit (see *Works*, 10:380–82).

<sup>12</sup>Likely James Glasbrook, Assistant of the Gloucestershire circuit.

troubles.' He spoke of the tender care and sparing mercy of God, in not permitting the church to fall when the people were in it. The tenderness of his own heart appeared by the tears flowing plentifully down his cheeks. But while he wept, the hardened congregation laughed! The reason some assigned for their behaviour was, 'The parson had made too free with the bottle.'

When I came the third time, I was resolved to preach abroad. And that all the town might have notice, I sent for the crier, who was unwilling to publish it until I gave him a double fee. About half an hour before the time, a mob assembled before the house where I was. They saw me through the window, and cried out, 'There he is.' I went to the window, threw up the sash, and said, 'I am here, and will be with you soon.' When the time came, I went out in the strength of the Lord. Some of them pelted me with dirt and broken tiles. But they neither hurt me, nor hindered me. Before I ended my sermon, some of the mob got a piece of wood dressed like a man. They put an old wig on its head, and danced it up and down before me. But I looked up to God, and was preserved from levity. The mob, from this time, became more civilized. But I have not heard whether there was any Methodist preaching in the town since I left it.

The next day I rode to the city of Hereford. The house we used to preach in being very small, and in an obscure part of the city, I resolved to preach out of doors here also. To that end, I walked through the city to find the most convenient place; and when the hour came, I stood with my back against St. Nicholas Church. While I sang a hymn, numbers flocked together, among whom were several gentlemen and two or three clergymen. I was soon accosted by a baker, who said, I was come to preach against the Church. He was very passionate, but the Lord endued me with patience. I went on, and he soon went away.

After this some made an attempt to throw a pail of milk on me, but others prevented them. However, before I had done, a wicked man (whose nickname was Bacon) gathered dirt out of the kennel, and threw it in my face and eyes. It so besmeared me that I could proceed no farther. I then walked to the house of a justice of the peace: a man of unblemished character. He came to the door and desired me to walk in, and said he was sorry for the ill-usage I had received: and added, 'This is a very wicked place,' etc. I said, 'You see, sir, I have been ill-used, and therefore I hope you will do me justice.' He said, 'Why did you not apply to the mayor?' I answered I had no objection against applying to him, but I inquired for the nearest justice. He said, 'The city is divided into wards, and each magistrate has his ward.' I answered, 'I presume, as His Majesty's commissioner of the peace, you are empowered to restore and keep the peace throughout the city.' He said, 'That is true. I am no enemy to religious people of whatever denomination.'

I said, 'The Methodists are a people in being near forty years. They are loyal subjects. They are inoffensive, and desire to live peaceably with all men.' He then asked, 'By what law do you expect satisfaction?' I answered, 'By a law made in the first year of the reign of William and Mary, called the Toleration Act.' He asked, 'Have you taken the oaths?' I said yes, and showed him my certificate. He read it, and said, 'If you insist on it, I will send the man that disturbed you to gaol. But if I do, as he has a wife and several children, these must come on the town. Therefore if you will show him lenity this time, I will take care of him in future.' I answered, 'I shall submit to your judgment in the affair. I insist on no damage for what is past. I only desire that in future I may preach the gospel in peace.' He said he was glad to find I was of a pacific disposition; that he would have the man before him the next morning, and threaten him; and that if ever he disturbed me again, he would send him to gaol forthwith. I then returned him thanks, and departed—and believe he kept his word, seeing that man never hindered me after.

I spent the next year in Cornwall with great satisfaction, and the Lord visited many with his great salvation. On Easter Day, in the morning, I preached at Mevagissey. The power of God was present, both to wound and to heal. The cries and prayers of some, and the praise of others, constrained me two or three times to break off preaching and join with them in prayer and praise. Though I am no advocate for noisy assemblies, yet I think there are times when people cannot help *roaring* for the disquietude of their souls, and others when they cannot refrain from praising God *aloud* for all the great things he hath done for them.

From thence I went to St. Mawes, and preached at noon. The word of God was like a hammer that breaks the rocks in pieces! From thence I rode to Tregony,<sup>13</sup> and preached in the street. Here likewise the gracious Spirit wrought upon many hearts. At the close of the year we had just a hundred more in the society in that circuit than was in it when we came, many of whom had found peace with God.

The next year I travelled in the west of Cornwall. Here we saw but little fruit, but my soul was often like a watered garden. One Sabbath-day I went, with several others, from Plymouth Dock to St. Germain's. An old Quaker gave me leave to speak before his door. The congregation was large, and in general very attentive. I believe the Lord spoke to many hearts. After preaching, the Quaker took us to his house, and gave me a little refreshment. After I received it, I sat sometime in meditation, as my soul was in a happy frame. Afterwards I fell on my knees and poured out my soul in prayer. All who were present fell on their knees also. The power of God descended, so that scarce any refrained from sighs, groans and tears. From this I inferred that Friends can feel as well as others, when the Lord touches the heart.

The year after, I went to Wales. But alas, the antinomians had sown their tares so thick that there was little or no room for the wheat to spring up.

The two following years I spent in the east of Cornwall, with much satisfaction. Before I came, a good work was begun at Plymouth Dock, when Mr. Thomas Olivers was there. Before he came, the antinomians seemed to carry all before them. Mr. Olivers preached several controversial sermons, in which he laid the axe at the root of Calvinism and antinomianism. His arguments were powerful, and well supported by the word of God. Many now began to awake out of sleep, and these glorious beginnings were a means of adding near a hundred to that society. Before he came, they were a little more than thirty; and when I carried the account to our yearly Conference they were a hundred and thirty.

While in this round I again visited St. Germain's, but met with a very rough reception. The mob gathered round the door, pelted me with rotten eggs, and after we shut the door they cursed, and swore, and broke the bottom part of it in pieces. God enabled me to possess my soul in patience. My mind was stayed on him, and I was kept in perfect peace.

I likewise preached at Millbrook. Here also they pelted me with eggs; one of which would have taken me full in the mouth, but a young man that stood before me instantly put up his hand and caught it. Blessed be the Lord, he was on my side, and I had no fear what men or devils could do unto me.

When I came to Bodmin, the people told me two or three young men had several times disturbed the congregation. I told them if they disturbed me I would endeavour to make them quiet. In the evening one of them came and began to make a noise. I desired him to be quiet, but he would not. I stopped in preaching, came from the pulpit, and put him out of the room. I had no sooner resumed my discourse than he came in and behaved more disorderly than before. I told the people I could not proceed, and desired they would take notice of it. Next day we got a warrant and brought the offender before the mayor, who talked to him in a manner becoming his office. He told him he might as well go to church and make a noise there, that the law was on our side, etc. The young man trembled and cried, and offered to kneel and ask pardon. But I suffered him not. He paid the expense of the warrant and constable, and we had quietness all the time I was in that circuit.

Since that I have met with many heavy trials from a quarter I least expected, but think it most prudent to pass them over in silence. God knows them all, and the Judge of all the earth will do right.

On the 29th of last June, I preached on Woodgreen, at the end of Witney, in Oxfordshire. While I was preaching, something uncommon impelled me to say, 'My dear friends, take notice of what I am going to say. Before this day [next] month, you will hear and see something very uncommon.' But I knew not why I said so. On Wednesday the 2nd of July it began to thunder and lighten in a very dreadful manner. The people cried out that I had prophesied the world was to be at an end in a month, and they thought it was now fulfilling. Two persons were struck dead by the lightning. Numbers had their sin set in order before them, saw the necessity of a Saviour, and some groaned after him.

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<sup>13</sup>Orig., 'Treconey'.

On the 10th the Lord thundered from heaven, and sent forth his lightnings a second time. On the 11th it was more dreadful than it had been before. Now indeed the most stubborn heart trembled and bowed before the Lord. The numbers that flocked both to the Church and meeting were incredible, and there was such an awakening among them as the oldest man living could not remember. In consequence thereof, the next time I came there I added fifty new members to our society.

Thus, sir, I have given you a short account of the mercy of God to my soul and body; and also of that *little* which I have done and suffered for his name's sake. Before I conclude, it may not be amiss to give some account of my sentiments. And,

1. I believe God made the first man holy, harmless, and undefiled. But being in honour, he continued not. He yielded to the tempter, and this stripped him of the moral image of God. I believe also that all sinned and fell in him.

2. I believe all mankind were in Adam when God gave him the promise of a Saviour; and that consequently the promise was not only to him but to his children.

3. I believe, with the Church of England, that Christ made on the cross a perfect and sufficient sacrifice, satisfaction, and oblation for *all* the sins of the *whole world*, whether *original* or *actual*. And that by virtue of this, all men may be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth—that God rejects none but such as do despite to the Spirit of grace.

4. I believe that in order to be saved from the guilt and power of sin, men must repent and believe in Christ.

5. I believe repentance to consist in a consciousness of sin, a godly sorrow for it, and a turning from it to God. I also believe faith to be the gift of God, but the act of man. God gives the power, and man uses it.

6. I believe that, in order to final salvation, our faith must be productive of good works. That without *universal, personal* holiness no man shall see the Lord. This is so fully asserted in the word of God that I am persuaded all the craft of men, and all the rage of devils, cannot overthrow it.

7. I believe the crown of all spiritual blessings is the gift of eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

These sir, are the doctrines I believe and teach; and at present I have no desire to change. I have had several offers from the world, but I love it not. I have had the offer of two or three Dissenting congregations. They have my thanks for their intended kindness. But it is my desire to live and die a Methodist preacher. The height of my ambition is to labour among my fathers and brethren until we lie down together in the dust, and mount up into our Master's joy.

I am, reverend and dear sir,

Your son in the gospel,

Richard Rodda

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 7 (1784): 298–303, 353–58, 410–16, 464–68.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>This account is reproduced in Jackson, *EMP*, 2:295–323; along with a narrative of Rodda's death and a statement on his character.

From John Francis Valton (autobiography)

c. August 5, 1783<sup>1</sup>

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I have long resisted your importunate desire that I would give you a short account of my experience;<sup>2</sup> being desirous to conceal my insignificant life till I was no longer interested in the honour or dishonour that cometh of man. But your last letter on the subject, and the Rev. Mr. [John] Fletcher's opinion on the same, have satisfied me that I 'owe it to God and his church'.<sup>3</sup> I shall therefore humbly submit an extract thereof to the perusal of candid people, while I implore the benediction of my God.

I was born in the year 1740. My parents were natives of Franche-Comté near Switzerland, and members of the Church of Rome. They came to England a year or two before I was born, so that I was providentially born and brought up in England. I was (with a brother and sister) made a member of that Church, and remained so during the early part of my life. I can well remember that serious impressions were very early made upon my mind. But I had no one to guide me. When I was about nine years of age, I was sent to France for education. I was there boarded at a priest's, who was a schoolmaster. At this school I remained many months, imbibing the baneful notions of idolatry and superstition. But as the priest half-starved me, I never let my mother rest till she removed me back to London. Soon after I returned I was sent to a Latin school in Yorkshire, and was boarded at a clergyman's, who was master of the school. Having had but little knowledge of popery, I readily attended the Church of England during the seven years that I was there. But as nothing was ever said to me about religion. I remained in utter darkness, and lived without God in the world. While I was here, I once met with Mr. [James] Hervey's *Meditations*. I was very powerfully affected, and resolved to amend my life. For several days I was careful not to offend my God; but the impression was soon effaced.

At seventeen years of age I returned to London, and after spending a year or two at an academy, was soon after, through the interest of a nobleman, got into a public office under the government. I was appointed a clerk at Portsmouth, where God was pleased to restrain me in a wonderful manner, amidst innumerable temptations. After I had been in office near three years, I was appointed to attend the army in Portugal, last war, as a clerk of the stores, etc. I found in myself a fear when I went to sea, lest the ship should be lost and my poor soul perish. I had the same fear of being killed in an engagement when I landed, and of my soul becoming a prey to the worm that never dies.<sup>4</sup> While I was at Lisbon I frequently visited their churches, saw their idolatry and superstition, and rejoiced that I had escaped the mother of harlots.

Soon after I returned to England I met with a sore trial, which made me think of and seek after God. But being amongst my gay companions, this, and some temptations that now were thrown in my way, quite overturned my resolution, and I became as vain and sinful as ever. However, I purposed that if God should please to remove me where I was unknown, I would then give myself up to him. The desire of the *unrighteous* was granted;<sup>5</sup> for the merciful God was pleased to make way for my removal in two or three months. I was then sent to the king's magazines at Purfleet, where I was an entire stranger. In this place there was a gentlewoman whose husband was in the king's service.<sup>6</sup> She had been a member of the

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<sup>1</sup>The date is suggested by Valton's conclusion, penned just after 1783 Conference that met July 31–Aug. 4.

<sup>2</sup>JW had first requested the account in a letter to Valton on Feb. 9, 1780, *Works*, 29:546–47.

<sup>3</sup>Valton sent the first two pages of his account in early 1782 (see JW to Valton, Jan. 18, 1782, *Works*, 30:6). The 'last letter' pressing him to complete the account was June 5, 1783, *Works*, 30:150.

<sup>4</sup>See Mark 9:48.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. Prov. 10:24.

<sup>6</sup>She is identified as Mrs. Edwards in Jackson, *EMP*, 6:11.

Methodist society for some years, and was the only one in that neighbourhood. She invited me to her house one day, and spoke something on serious subjects. I threw in my mite, which made an impression on her mind in my favour. She now frequently invited me to her house, and lead me out of the paths of error and misery, to the fountain of life and love. She put several books into my hands which were made very useful to me. In a few weeks, painful convictions began to fasten upon my mind, and I sincerely strove to forsake all sin and make a sacrifice of my accustomed amusements. Fear prompted me to pray, sometimes with and sometimes without a book. Her conversation roused me, and I began in good earnest to seek after God. But being in danger of resting on my form of godliness, she, with some difficulty, beat me out of all my retreats, and convinced me that nothing would avail without faith, and that salvation was the free, unmerited gift of God, through the redemption that is in Jesus. The books that I read bore the same testimony, which at length threw me into self-despair. Prayer became a burden, and I knew not what to do. At length I resolved to write to you, sir, and in an anonymous letter unbosomed my heart, and sought your advice. Your letter I beg leave here to transcribe for the benefit of such as may be in the like state with me.

London  
January 31, 1764

Dear Brother,

It is certainly right, with all possible care to abstain from all outward evil, but this profits only a little. The inward change is the one thing needful for you. You must be born again, or you will never gain an uniform and lasting liberty. Your whole soul is diseased, or rather dead, dead to God, dead in sin. Awake, then, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light. To seek for a particular deliverance from one sin only is mere lost labour. If it could be attained, it would be little worth, for another would arise in its place; but indeed, it cannot before there is a general deliverance from the guilt and power of all sin. This is the thing which you want, and which you should be continually seeking for. You want to be justified freely from all things, through the redemption which is in Jesus Christ. It might be of use if you should read over the first volume of *Sermons* seriously and with prayer. Indeed, nothing will avail without prayer. Pray, whether you can or not. When you are cheerful, and when you are heavy, still pray. Pray with many or with few words, or with none at all. You will surely find an answer of peace. And why not now?

I am, etc.

J. W.

This letter proved a blessing unto me indeed. I now gave up myself to God, and resolved to seek the general deliverance that I wanted. A few weeks after this I was much encouraged by a child of seven years old, who came to drink tea with me. I called her once 'my little angel'. The girl replied, 'O, I dreamed last night that you were made an angel, and me too, and that you flew up to the skies, and that I followed you calling upon you to stop, but you would not, but flew up till you got to heaven.'

About this time my skepticism appeared. I was tempted to question the being of a God; whether he could hear my prayers, especially as there might be many praying at the same time. I doubted of the divinity of the Scriptures, and the purity of the Lord Jesus Christ, being born of a woman. My prayers now were very dry and formal. I quarrelled with all the books I read, as they appeared dark and mysterious—the Scriptures doubtful and unintelligible. [I] thought God had nothing to do with me, nor ever regarded my prayers. However I continued to pray several times a day. Satan now set upon me with great power. He represented the many stages I had to go through before I got to heaven: 1) deeper conviction; 2) justification; and [3)] then through many tedious steps to sanctification; after that, [4)] through many more to glory. He suggested to me that I had better postpone the work till by marriage I had acquired a fortune, and then I might retire and wholly give myself up to God.

I had also grievous assaults from fear and shame, and felt at times my heart as hard as adamant. Yet I had now and then wonderful tokens of the divine goodness, and have risen up in the middle of the

night to pray and praise the Lord. One day I uttered my soul in these words, 'This afternoon I found the river of joy swelling in my breast, through the influence of the sweet, heavenly shower; and the Sun of righteousness arose upon me, and gave me a warmth to my heart, and called forth the enlivened seeds of gratitude.'

About this time I had a remarkable dream. I thought that I was in a very large house, which was then building at the place where I lived. I thought I went upstairs into the garret, where I saw the devil in bed. I went up to his bed's feet, got hold of his clothes and stripped him naked. This enraged him so that I thought he got up and pursued me. In my flight I met my Redeemer, who told me, 'If he touches thee, he will have thee.' I replied, 'Lord how is it possible that I should escape touching him?' I thought he made signs to me to get behind him, and lay hold of the hem of his garment, by which I escaped the grand adversary. I knew not the purport of my dream till I was about to strip the devil of his subjects.

I generally found that the drawings of the Father were followed with painful discoveries of my evil nature. My heart now appeared to me like the Ethiopian's skin, and I had no ease in my bones by reason of my sin. I said in my haste, all comforters are liars, and I was sorely tempted to give all up. In the agony of my soul I one day swore that I would give up religion. I was so stung with remorse for what I had done that I raved like a madman, bit myself, and became fit only to dwell among the tombs. Who but those who have felt the like can conceive the horrors of my soul? I fell on my face, but durst not lie there, expecting to be hurried into everlasting burnings. The sun and the light were a pain to me. The condemned hole in Newgate would have best suited the gloomy horrors of my soul. I charged my God most foolishly, and uttered expressions only befitting the mouth of a devil. After this I went upon a visit to London, and being at Mr. [Robert] Windsor's, Mr. Mark Davis came there to drink tea.<sup>7</sup> I accompanied him to Wapping, where he preached, and found the word made a blessing to my soul. This was the first time of my hearing a Methodist preacher.

After this the trials and temptations that I endured were so various that I cannot, sir, consistent with your plan, recount them, and therefore must pass to the eve of my deliverance.

The enemy of souls had for some weeks stirred up the husband of my mother in the gospel,<sup>8</sup> who was determined that I should not be permitted to see her. To effect this, he both secretly and openly defamed me, and made me out such a monster that I became universally despised by the gentlemen in the office, and the country round about. On the third of May things were come to the height. I had the severest trial that I ever felt. But an invisible hand supported me and enabled me to bear the indignation of man. I went into my room, with a variety of suggestions to put an end to my life. But by the grace of God I was preserved. I prayed with great violence, till nature was exhausted. I then stripped off my coat and wrestled upon the floor in great agony. In this posture I continued all the night, groaning to be delivered, and in the greatest torment. In the morning nature failed, and I was so ill that I was obliged to go to bed. But alas, I could not rest! I got upon my knees again and began crying to God for mercy. I had such a sense of the wrath of God due to my sins that I expected the pit to open its mouth and swallow me up quick. While I was praying, suddenly I was wrapped up in the visions of the Almighty. I saw the holy God with vengeance in his countenance, and thunder in his hand. He seemed determined to deal the vindictive blow. At the same time I saw the great Priest of God, standing in his seamless garment, interceding for me. For a time the Almighty seemed inexorable. At last he looked with a placid smile upon his Son, and then upon the malefactor, and it seemed as though he had said,

My Son is in my servant's pray'r,  
And Jesus forces me to spare.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Mark Davis (1734–1803) was accepted as an itinerant at the Dublin Conference in 1756, shortly after joining the Dublin society (Crookshank, *Ireland*, 1:131). Davis left the itinerant ranks in 1768 to set up a school in London (see *Works*, 10:353).

<sup>8</sup>I.e., Mr. Edwards, of Purfleet.

<sup>9</sup>CW, Hymn 40, st. 2, *Redemption Hymns* (1747), 50.

My burden was gone, and my soul became calm and serene. And I laid me down in peace and took my rest. This sight I had for several days, and yet I knew not clearly the purport of it for some months, not having an interpreter with me, one among a thousand.

After I had had a little breathing time, my soul was tried to the very uttermost. A dangerous plot was laid for me by the implacable husband of my friend. But God wonderfully delivered me. The sins also that I had been guilty of before my conversion were brought to my view. A light from hell gleamed upon me! Despair seized me, and I had not a shadow of hope. My body was so chastised at the same time that I had well-nigh lost my senses. O how my soul mourned and prayed! Notwithstanding all this weight of affliction, I began now to warn and woo the sinners that came in my way to flee from the wrath to come. I felt a very earnest desire for the salvation of all mankind, and could not help throwing in my mite for this purpose.

About this time my relations began to be very uneasy about me. They thought that all the hope of my gain would be gone, and I should lose the favour of my noble patron, which would entirely prevent my promotion. In answer to this the reply of my soul was, 'Come Lord Jesus, and then adieu to friends, the world and all its delusions.' The loss of these was nothing to me, while a sight of my evil nature absorbed my spirits and reduced me to the very depths of misery. O how bitterly did I lament the force of my passions from day to day! In what agonies did I bewail my nativity, and how often have I cursed the hour that gave me to the light? I have over and over gnashed my teeth, and could have tore myself to pieces. The fear of instant damnation prevented me from giving utterance to the horrible blasphemies that passed through my mind. Pride haunted me like a shadow. I have been frequently upon the point of cursing my God and all around me.

O what a loathsome hypocrite  
Am I? a child of wrath and sin,  
An heir of hell, a son of night,  
An outward saint, a fiend within:  
A painted tomb! a whited wall!  
A worm! a sinner stripped of all!<sup>10</sup>

It was about this time that predestination presented its Medusa's head to my mind, and the old murderer at times persuaded me that God had ordained me, in free wrath, to the worm that never dies and to the fire that never is quenched. This suggestion has often thrilled through my soul with horror. When I have been in the extremity of suffering from self and Satan, I have had this thought strongly suggested, 'That I was so tried more than many others, because God had intended me to preach the gospel, that by the experience of temptations, I might know how to succour others.' In spite of all my sufferings, I continued in much prayer. Indeed most of my time was spent in this exercise, as I had very little business in the office. Sometimes I have had great power in prayer, and my soul has been raised into an ecstasy. But like Samuel, I knew not the voice of the Lord. One night I dreamed twice that God had pardoned my sins. In the first dream I thought I told a friend that the Lord had forgiven me my sins, and that the witness of the Spirit came into my soul like the 'rushing of mighty waters'.<sup>11</sup> I then awoke, and prayed to God that if he had forgiven me he would then give me the assurance of it. I dreamed the same again, but thought then that the witness 'came as a rushing, mighty wind'.<sup>12</sup> Notwithstanding this, I kept praying,

Send forth the witness of thy Son,  
O God, into my panting heart:  
That govern'd by thy blood alone,

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<sup>10</sup>CW, 'Groaning for Redemption', Pt. III, st. 7, *HSP* (1742), 79.

<sup>11</sup>Isa. 17:12.

<sup>12</sup>Cf. Acts 2:2.



From thee I never may depart;  
But following my celestial guide,  
Be number'd with the glorifi'd.<sup>13</sup>

One day being in an agony of grief and temptation, I fell on my knees but could not pray. I then came to a resolution to give up all. I said in a deluge of tears, 'Lord I do not wonder at my wicked thoughts and desires, for how should it be otherwise? Can clean water flow from a foul spring, or good fruit grow upon a bad tree? Lord let me now fall into thy hands, do with me as seemeth thee good. I have given up all, and must quit the field. I see I can do nothing till thou hast changed my nature.' Scarce had I pronounced these words, but I found something inwardly concurring with my resolution, and saying, 'Why, that is the thing thou shouldst do.' I was suddenly comforted. I now saw that God permitted me thus to suffer in order to divorce me from the law, and to bring me to Christ. I walked in sweet freedom and was happy, having as it were shook off my chains. I leaned upon Jesus and was truly supported. He was my wisdom and righteousness, and I could praise my God with joyful lips. But oh how short-lived was my liberty! The next day I was reduced to the utmost misery. Hell rose up against me. I felt hatred to God and longed to curse him. I gnashed my teeth, stamped round the room like a demoniac, and wanted only fire to complete my hell. This scene was introduced by the tempter. He suggested to my timorous heart, 'Aye, thou art now become quite light and trifling, instead of mourning for thy sins.' I believed him and fell into bondage. Under my sufferings I still endeavoured to win souls for God. I met and prayed with four or five persons once a week, and read to them, and occasionally spoke to those that came in my way.

About the beginning of September I was taken by a friend to Miss [Jane Catherine] March's. A few select friends were met together, to whom I freely unbosomed myself. They greatly comforted me, when they told me that it was clear to them that God had forgiven me all my sins. I think when they went to prayer God gave me the witness of his Spirit and I could truly praise him. About this time I was seized with a long and dangerous intermitting fever, but my temptations were then suspended. I had a longing desire to depart, that I might be with Christ, for I had no doubt but that I should see and enjoy my God forever. But in the midst of my consolations, I had many hours of long interruption by temptations. Once, for near eight hours together, I had such horrible views of the mansions of eternal misery that the sweat ran down me like tears. But I was heard in that which I feared, and the Lord, one day, in the midst of my sufferings, applied these words, 'I will do thee good in thy latter days.'<sup>14</sup> I believed, although I knew not the import of the words. I concluded this first year with some days of sunshine; a sweet promise was applied to me, and I was enabled to receive it. I felt my bosom glow with love, and was overwhelmed with a sense of his abundant goodness. Here ends a small part of my experience in the year 1764.

In the beginning of the second year of my pilgrimage the language of my soul was, 'I find my evil nature thrust sore at me. O God, if thou art not on my side, I shall be ruined. O Lord, arise and fight for me. For Christ's sake deliver me. What avails it Lord that thou hast pardoned me, if thou dost not also give me the mind that was in Christ Jesus? O come Lord and fix thy throne in my heart, and rule in me without control. Bring me to the perfect day, when I shall love thee with all my heart and soul, and all I do be a holy and acceptable sacrifice to thee, through Jesus Christ my great high priest.' It seemed to me at times that the Lord wanted to keep me in close communion with himself, and to sequester me from everything worldly: and indeed the language of my soul was,

Thy only love do I require,  
Nothing on earth beneath desire,  
Nothing in heav'n above:  
Let earth and heav'n and all things go,

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<sup>13</sup>Cf. CW, Hymn on Rom. 8:14, st. 2, *Scripture Hymns* (1762), 2:282.

<sup>14</sup>Cf. Deut. 8:16.

Give me thy only love to know,  
Give me thy only love.<sup>15</sup>

In March I received the abiding witness of the Spirit, and was truly happy. In a deluge of delight, I gratefully acknowledged the goodness of my God. But this only prepared me for deeper discoveries of my evil nature, and sorer conflicts. A while ago the battles of the warrior were as a confused noise, but these as with garments rolled in blood. My consolations were of short duration, and as it were, given me like cordials to men under the surgeon's knife, to prevent my fainting. I have had such horrid blasphemies injected that I have been forced to put my handkerchief in my mouth to prevent my bringing forth monstrous births. At times I have raved, bit, and tore myself like a madman, and have cried out, 'Lord I cannot drink this bitter cup. O remove it from me.' I have been near to curse my God, religion, and my natal day. Sometimes I have, in the most moving, piercing, lamentable cries, called the Redeemer to my help. My arms and heart were open to embrace and welcome the desire of nations, and in the extremity of grief I have rolled and twined like a worm upon the floor. The following is a small specimen of the sufferings of my crucified heart.

November 11. Miserable, miserable, miserable! Not less than hell. I cried bitterly unto the Lord, but in vain. All my faith, hope, and most of my love gone! I cannot conceive how peace should still remain? I was on the border of blaspheming; full of enmity, nearly giving up all. I cried, 'O why was I born! O ye parents, what misery have you occasioned! My agony is insupportable! Lord, thou layest upon me more than I can bear. And yet I must bear it, for I cannot avoid it. Lord, give me no comfort. I do not want it. I regard it not. If thou wilt do anything for me, deliver me from sin and perfect my soul in love.'

O what dreadful prospects I have before me! I fear that in spite of all my endeavours I shall be damned. When I earnestly pray for holiness, hell seems to be in an uproar. What will be my fate I know not. I am truly miserable. Lord save me. Sometimes I have not only been tempted to blaspheme, but have felt hatred to God and could hardly bear to hear his name mentioned. Satan has not been content with his inward assaults, but terrified me in other respects. One night I was awakened in a most uncommon manner. I thought something turned my head upon the pillow with great force, which awoke me. Another night, while I was in great horror of mind, I kneeled down to prayer, and as I prayed I thought the devil forced a fist into my side. I gave a spring across my bed and screamed out; but the Lord directly strengthened me. Another time I was pestered with him all night. Towards morning I dreamed that I was at prayer in my room and the evil spirit suggested he would appear. I did not mind that, then I thought he gave me a push to throw me upon my face. I still prayed on. He then gave me such a twist in my neck as awoke me. During this year I generally arose between 4:00 and 5:00 in the morning. My hours of prayer were 5:00, 7:00, 9:00; and 1:00, 6:00, and 9:00; besides short prayers between, and the rest of the day was mostly spent in reading and singing. Twice a week I observed as solemn fasts, as also some particular days. Sometimes I extended my fasts to near 6:00 in the evening, by which I nearly ruined my constitution.

I frequently suffered much in my mind, through coldness, dryness, and heaviness in my devotion, although the very language of my heart was,

Father I long my soul to raise,  
And dwell forever on thy praise:  
Thy praise with glorious joy to tell,  
In ecstasies unspeakable:  
While the full pow'r of faith I know,

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<sup>15</sup>Cf. CW, 'Desiring to Love', st. 7, *Festival Hymns* (1746), 49.

And reign triumphant here below.<sup>16</sup>

Now and then I had very precious seasons in prayer. It was after one of these that I said, 'This morning I had a very close conference with my God. The Lord gave me whatever I asked. O what sweet communion I had with my God! With what rapture did I anticipate death! And who would not, with such a hope full of immortality?' At another time, At nine o'clock prayer, Jesus did sweetly reveal himself unto me. His garments smelled of myrrh, aloes and cassia, and I could truly rejoice in him. Meantime I had many fears of falling away, and dreaded being exposed to company, lest I should, through shame, omit reproving them. These fears followed me more or less through the year, and made me pour out strong cries and tears unto God. However, in the general, I took up my cross, and endeavoured not to suffer sin upon my brother, and with some good effect. I also read a sermon once a week to about nine persons, and met them as a class, when Mrs. E[dwards] could not come. And sometimes I had sweet refreshments in this work, though it was often a great trial to me.

Towards the latter end of this year, William Darney, a preacher, drank tea with me one afternoon in London. He well-nigh ruined my soul. I unbosomed my heart to him, and told him the earnest wrestlings of my soul for sanctification. To my great surprise and discouragement, he told me that there was no such a thing as being saved from sin on this side a deathbed. I was thunderstruck! I replied, 'Sir, I had rather have given a thousand pounds than you should have told me this. What! Am I to wait till death comes to sanctify the elect people of God? And frees the soul from the works of the devil?'

*Hei mihi! quanta de spe decidi!*<sup>17</sup>

My soul was thrown into the greatest distress. I thought I never could continue the war against fleshly lusts all my life, especially the sin that did so powerfully beset me. But he gave me this short recipe, 'Marry.' And I think the next night brought me three or four damsels, I suppose to choose a wife from among them! I was all this evening in a deplorable state! My heart was broke, and I was resolved to give all up. I went to bed with a broken heart.

In the morning I awoke, perfectly assured of my Redeemer's love, and cried out, 'Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.'<sup>18</sup> Yet when I arose a little before 4:00, I was variously assaulted. I bitterly lamented my coming to London. I had nothing of this when in my obscure corner. I communed alone with my God. O Lord, thou hast hitherto taught and wrought alone in me. Preserve and love me to the end.

A day or two after this watchman smote me and took away my vail,<sup>19</sup> you sir came to London for the winter months. I went that evening to the Foundry, and heard you adapt a discourse to my situation from these words, Psalm 81:10, 'Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it.'<sup>20</sup> This discourse was like oil to my wheels, and rescued my soul from the destroyers. I was now set on my legs again, and the Lord caused the bones that were broken to rejoice. A few days after, it was shown me that the Lord was sitting upon me as a refiner's fire. My soul was often in an agony of prayer, and drowned in tears with horrible cries and exclamations: I was as it were the sport of devils. However I had hung out the bloody flag, and was determined by the grace and power of Jesus, either to conquer or die.

I have now given a very small extract from the account of my trials and temptations during the year 1765. I trust it will be useful to some precious souls, and illustrate the astonishing mercy, love, patience, power, and faithfulness of my God, whom I do now adore, praise, and love, and on my bended

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<sup>16</sup>Cf. CW. 'A Prayer under Convictions', st. 8, *HSP* (1739), 86.

<sup>17</sup>Terence, *The Self-Tormenter*, ll. 248, 251; 'Oh dear! Such high hopes dashed!' (Loeb).

<sup>18</sup>John 21:17.

<sup>19</sup>*OED*: 'Scottish. Value or worth; account, estimation'

<sup>20</sup>This was on Oct. 24, 1765; see Jackson, *EMP*, 6:46.

knees make an offering of it to his favour and patronage. 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me praise his holy name.'<sup>21</sup>

January 1, 1766. This day I wrote down my state as follows.

I find an abiding sense of God's love to me for Christ's sake, and believe every moment that all my sins are blotted out. I still feel pride, a desire of creature love and esteem, and much wanderings of heart; all which I earnestly desire to be saved from. My constant prayer and earnest expectation is to be perfected in love. I believe that the Lord will make me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me. I believe that I shall soon love the Lord with all my soul. I expect the blessing every time I bow my knee to God. In fine, it is my desire to consecrate myself wholly to God. I regard not riches, honours, preferments, or anything else that the world esteems. Jesus Christ is the sum total of all my desires. I feel it cleaves to all my thoughts, words and works, and it is my misery. I pray and cry till my strength fails me. Never sure did poor soul long more to love thee, and please thee, oh my God; and yet such is my nature that I fail in everything. O God do thou cleanse me from all my idols. Let there be no strange god in me. Save me from pride, and a filthy, unbelieving, heart. Lord, hast thou brought me through two years almost continued agony of soul, to cast me off at last?

O how bitterly did I lament the complicated sin of my heart, and deprecate the demerits of my whole life. My whole employment from morning to night was agonizing prayer, steeped in tears, till exhausted nature could bear no more, and my body could not obey the volitions of my soul. I frequently joined fasting or abstinence to my prayers and cries, and offered violence to the throne of mercy.

One day whilst I was at prayer, the Lord applied these words with power, 'The Egyptians thou hast seen this day, thou shalt see them no more forever.'<sup>22</sup> Sometime after this, while I was upon my knees, in one of the invisible flights of my soul a messenger of love assured me that neither life nor death, etc., should be able to separate me from the love of God. I talked with my Maker face to face, and was hereby strengthened for more grievous temptations. Indeed before this I had most dreadful encounters with the powers of darkness, which I wrote down in these words: 'At one and six o'clock prayer, I suffered violently from the enemy! O what agony my soul was in. It was the hour and power of darkness. Lord, thou wast faithful and good, and didst not leave me to the lust of my implacable enemy.' Above an hour was I engaged. Language is too faint to express or impart an idea of what I suffered.

On the sixteenth of January, about eleven o'clock at night, being in bed, I thought something ran its face to mine and gave a hellish shriek, and was directly followed with a strange rumbling sound near the window. I looked for the author of this, and felt some apprehensions of Satan's becoming visible. About this time I fell into the hands of one of those croakers who say, 'Believe God has done it, and it is done.' My poor distempered soul drank in this potion, and directly, when I went upon my knees told God, I believed he had done the work, and thanked him for it. But soon after, finding it otherwise, I charged God with unfaithfulness, and this made way for some dreadful blasphemies and most grievous sufferings. But providence threw my respected friend Mr. Robert Windsor into my way, who, by the grace of God, delivered me from this snare of the fowler.

On the 20th of January the Lord handed me the bitter cup. My soul was in dreadful agonies. I cried out, Lord, now let me drink the last drop, the very dregs. I cried and strained till I was ready to burst.

Yea, Lord, with deepest shame I own,  
My weariness of all thy ways;  
My haste to throw the burden down,

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<sup>21</sup>Cf. Ps. 103:1.

<sup>22</sup>Cf. Exod. 14:13.

Nor bear the hidings of thy face;  
Nor wait till thou create me new,  
And give the crown to conquest due.<sup>23</sup>

Lord, hast thou chosen for me various sufferings? Through sufferings then let me go. Lead on, my Captain, Conqueror, and King.

Me and my brethren in distress,  
Patient within thy kingdom keep;  
Sure all thy fulness to possess,  
Our harvest in the end to reap;  
Thy spotless nature to retrieve,  
And glorious in thine image live.<sup>24</sup>

On the 12th of April, I wrote down the following words: 'O good Lord, what misery I feel! Hell! Hell! Hell! The fire of hell flames about me, and devils are ready to drag me to endless burnings.' About the latter end of this month, I entered a hotter furnace than ever. My dearest relation desired to shake me off. All my acquaintances were set against me, and my spiritual family in a poor, dry state. A violent fever seized my body, and sore temptation assailed my soul. One day I seemed near death, and saw nothing but a dark valley before me, through which I must pass. A horrible dread overwhelmed my soul, and the pains of hell got hold upon me. In the midst of these sufferings I felt no shadow of murmuring, nothing but love, patience, and resignation. This is but a small part of my inward sufferings, but enough perhaps to encourage some who may be under spiritual martyrdom. Notwithstanding all my trials, I continued to meet a few friends weekly, and read sermons to them, and met them as a class. I reproved sin wherever I came, distributed pamphlets, and warned sinners to flee from the wrath to come. I visited the sick soldiers in their barracks, and instructed them as well as I could. I was never easy in my mind, when I heard of any that were sick, if I did not visit them. I went among the lime-burners (a graceless people, near to where I lived) and spoke to them, and gave them pamphlets, and reproved the Sabbath-breakers that I used to meet with in my way to church; and in a word, endeavoured to lay out my whole talent for God's glory and the good of souls. The unfaithfulness of several whom I met constantly, as in a class, caused me to shed many a tear. However several were brought by my weak instrumentality to a saving knowledge of the truth, and I have now the pleasure to find that the fruit of my tears and toil is not lost.

Under my sufferings, my soul has often been comforted by gracious answers to prayer. Once, when I was in sore trouble, the Lord said to me, 'I will show thee what great things thou must suffer for my name's sake.'<sup>25</sup> A little after, in an agony of prayer, it was whispered to me, 'I have blessed thee, yea, and thou shalt be blest.'<sup>26</sup> By these promises my soul was comforted and supported; and indeed without them it must have fainted, as I had but very few and small intervals between my sufferings. I had greatly impaired my health with fasting, so that I was obliged to diminish this and only use abstinence. I continued in daily martyrdom for a few months more, earnestly labouring to mortify the deeds of the body, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God. My soul was on the stretch for a full deliverance from all the carnal mind; at times ready to believe that God had done the work, but had not sufficient proof to support my faith till the latter end of August. On the twentieth, I had a notion that the Lord was taking away all my sin. On the twenty-ninth (a day of happy memory) I wrote down the following account in my journal.

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<sup>23</sup>Cf. CW, 'For the Tempted', st. 5 *HSP* (1749), 2:101.

<sup>24</sup>Cf. CW, 'For the Tempted', st. 8 *HSP* (1749), 2:102.

<sup>25</sup>Cf. Acts 9:16.

<sup>26</sup>Cf. Luke 14:14.

Where shall my wond'ring soul begin?  
How shall I all to heav'n aspire?  
A slave redeem'd from death and sin,  
A brand pluck'd from eternal fire!  
How shall I equal triumphs raise,  
Or sing my great Deliv'rer's praise!<sup>27</sup>

Glory be to God my Saviour, in whom I now truly believe and rejoice. This being my intercession day, at twelve o'clock I kneeled down before the Lord. No sooner was I upon my knees than I felt a strange alteration take place in my heart, as in a moment, and after a blissful pause I cried out for near five minutes, 'Glory be to God! Glory be to God.' Then I said, 'Lord, thou hast delivered me from all sin. Thou hast not failed of all that thou hast promised. Glory be to thee, thou hast given me my desire over my enemies. I am sure thou hast destroyed sin. I am sure thou hast!' After praising my God for some time, I requested a text of scripture by way of confirmation. I opened the bible, and fixed my finger upon these words, 'that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord', Romans 5:21. I fell down on my face and praised the Lord. I was lost in wonder, love, and praise! I felt indeed the 'silent heaven of love'.<sup>28</sup> Soon after, when I returned to prayer, I felt a much greater degree of love than before. I could not contain myself. Whilst I was praising God, I was so transported that I essayed several times to fly from my knees. I then began to bless God for Mr. [John] Wesley, who preached to us the *whole* gospel. And now what shall I say? O Lord! Great and marvellous have been thy mercies towards me! They are without number. Glory be to thy holy name! Thou, thou alone hast wrought all my works in me. O do thou establish the thing thou hast wrought in me, and grant that it may be found unto the praise and glory of thy name, at the appearing of thy blessed Son, my Saviour, Jesus Christ.

And now my unbelieving brethren, what will you say to these things? Will you go, as at other times, to seek for enchantments in order to overthrow this truth, or to explain away this glorious salvation? Will you not cease to pervert the right way of the Lord, and bring an evil report on the good land, the rest of grace? Will you still blaspheme the work of the Holy Ghost, till God, in his just displeasure, shall condemn your souls to a wilderness state here, and perhaps save you but as by the skin of your teeth!

On the first of September, the language of my soul was, 'O my Jesus! My Christ! My Redeemer! My Saviour! Thou art lovely and precious! I glory in thee! I rejoice in thee! How wonderful has been thy love to me; surpassing all conception. O the many snares that are laid for me, and yet my blessed Jesus does preserve me, and will preserve me to the end. I am weakness, ignorance, and helplessness itself; but my Jesus is strength, and wisdom, and all things to me!'

Two or three days after this, Satan began to assault me. Impure things were so injected that I could not read. I sung and prayed, and the Lord answered me by Isaiah 6:7, 'Thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin is purged.' But directly after, I was attacked again, and God then directed me to these words, 'If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established,' Isaiah 7:9.<sup>29</sup> I stood reprov'd, and was enabled for a few days to hold fast my faith, in spite of many temptations and soul injections. One night I was sadly harassed with dreaming of a lion pursuing me up and down. The next day, the lion roared upon me indeed! It was a day of sore temptation. After dinner, I went with the family into the parlour to prayer, but I could scarce speak. Before I had done, I sunk upon the floor, quite overcome. I begged of them all to leave me, that I might wrestle it out alone. O how I was torn and tempted! What torment did I endure, and yet I could praise God! I was much harassed concerning visiting the sick that I had no knowledge of, nor knew how to get admittance to. I believe Satan drove me into extremes in order to weary me out. It is

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<sup>27</sup>Cf. CW, 'Christ the Friend of Sinners', st. 1, *HSP* (1739), 101.

<sup>28</sup>Cf. CW, Hymn on Luke 14:7, st. 10, *HSP* (1749), 1:260.

<sup>29</sup>Orig., '19'; a misprint.

unknown what crosses I had to take up respecting this. In the meantime my language was, 'O my God, forgive me all my unfruitfulness, and deliver me from all my fear and shame. My God, thou knowest that I not only delight in thee, but the great desire of my soul is to bring sinners to the fountain of love. I would give my life, that I might to the utmost improve my small talent, and glorify my dear Redeemer. O my Saviour, give me grace, that I may wholly and simply follow thee, bearing thy reproach, and let it ever be my meat and drink to do thy will.' Under all my sufferings I was enabled, for the most part, to believe that I was saved from evil, and that God had given me a new heart.

On the 29th of September, being in London, I went to Spitalfields chapel. After the sermon was over, I went to prayer before sacrament, when the Lord did in a most wonderful manner bless me. He poured his love so copiously into my soul that I hardly knew how to contain myself. There the glorious Lord was unto me as a place of broad rivers. I thought I must have cried out, 'The blood of Jesus cleanses from all sin.' I never was so overpowered in my life. My breath and strength was well-nigh exhausted in praising God. In the midst of my joys I had this scripture impressed on my mind, 'This day thou shalt be with me in paradise.'<sup>30</sup> Instantly, or ever I was aware, my soul was like the chariot of Aminadab.<sup>31</sup> I was transported to the third heavens, and had a most glorious display of that celestial place! O how did my soul exult and gasp to breathe that purer air! I longed and expected to be dissolved, and to be with Christ. O my God, I bless thee, for thou art mine and I am thine forever. Two or three days after this I had another ecstatic view of the realms of bliss, and found a strong assurance of my Redeemer's love.

On the 5th of October, I wrote as follows. The Lord poured his love into my soul this morning. I went to church very happy. I do not know that I ever had the testimony of the Spirit more clear to the forgiveness of sin than I had this morning of my being cleansed from all sin. When I put the question to my soul, Yea, hath God destroyed sin in me? I felt the Spirit so strongly answer me that I cannot better express the sensation, than by comparing it to what Elizabeth felt, when she heard the salutation of Mary, 'The babe leaped in her womb.'<sup>32</sup> In prayer, after dinner, I was overcome with what I felt. The love of God came so powerfully upon me that I could scarcely bear under it. I thought I must have sunk down. A few days after I said, the Lord still blesses me with an increase of his love. I scarce ever go upon my knees but I have very blessed and glorious displays of his love. I feel no doubt, no unbelief, nor (blessed be my God) anything but pure love. My sole desire is after the living God, and for more of his image. I feel the presence of the Almighty, and his banner over me is love. I long to hear that word, arise my love and come away!

October 24. O how did the Lord reveal himself to me this day! He gave me the spirit of prayer and supplication. I recapitulated, with joy and thankfulness, the particular mercies received since my conversion, and felt an inundation of love. All yesterday I felt sweet serenity of soul, and this day has been as yesterday, and much more abundant.

October 26. This morning, from half past 4:00 till near 8:00, I spent delightfully in prayer and singing. I found my God most remarkably present. I sung and prayed with tears of love, till my strength was exhausted.

November 16. I was seized with an illness, which terminated in a cholera morbus. I looked for death every hour. But oh with what transport was I filled! My joy was unspeakable and full of glory. I saw the blessed Jesus ready to receive me. I was sick of love! I cried out in these awful moments, 'The blood of Jesus Christ truly cleanses from all sin.' I felt it, giving glory to God. All the day long Jesus was my joy and my song. The next day my raptures were increased. The name of Jesus, or a thought of him, did so agitate my body that I thought the vessel must break to set the soul at large! I cried out, 'The love of God will kill me! It is too much. I cannot contain myself!' The raptures of my soul were inexpressible, and my joy insupportable. My tongue was fully employed all day in declaring the loving kindness of the Lord.

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<sup>30</sup>Cf. Luke 23:43.

<sup>31</sup>Cf. Song of Sol. 6:12.

<sup>32</sup>Luke 1:41.

November 18. I was apprehensive of death, and was truly happy. In the midst of prayer, these words were applied to my heart, 'Gad, a troop shall overcome him, but he shall overcome at the last.'<sup>33</sup> How truly these words were verified the sequel will show. I told a friend who came in that I had some trial coming on, and began preparing for battle. About 4:00 that afternoon I thought (and only thought) I felt something contrary to love. In an instant I lost sight of God, and Christ, and all consolation. My condition may be conjectured from what I wrote down after this.

November 20.<sup>34</sup> O good Lord, my case is desperate! I am undone forever! O my God, let this cup pass from me! I cannot stand under my sufferings. Woe is me! Woe is me! O let me lose all my remorse, that I may enjoy a little peace and comfort in this world. O implacable enemy, cursed fiend! Thou sportest with me. I am now in thy hands. O my God, command that he spare my soul. O that I were a dog or any creature but a man! O that I had never seen the light! My soul is sorrowful even unto death. I am the most miserable creature breathing. O pity me! Pity me, oh my God, my Jesus! All around me is dismal! Look where I will, nothing but horror presents itself; standing, walking, sitting, rolling on the floor! In this state I besought the Lord, but seemingly in vain.

December 11. While at dinner with some friends one day, my soul was surrounded with devils. I thought I was Bunyan's barren fig-tree. Despair almost seized me. When my friends were gone out of the parlour, I fell back in my chair, and with my arms extended, body distorted, and eyes uplifted, I blessed my God, and kissed that hand that seemed to be consuming me for my unfaithfulness. I could only adore. I could not blame nor accuse my God. I am amazed that nature could endure so much.

To conclude this year's account. Although I endeavoured to be as useful as my small talent would permit, and lived a life of prayer and self-denial, giving myself up to God, and to the profit of my fellow creatures; yet Satan was continually driving me on into things beyond my measure, and hissing into my ears that I was 'an unprofitable servant'.<sup>35</sup> Not discerning the agency of Satan, this, together with an ague and fever my body was afflicted with, caused me sore distress, as will appear in the subsequent account.

January 1, 1767, I wrote as follows. I have no doubt but that the Lord did deliver me from all sin, but whether it is so now or not I cannot tell. I cannot say that I find any murmuring or impatience. I am content to suffer, so that I may be presented blameless at the coming of the Lord Jesus. I hate all praise, feeling that I am vile, ignorant, and helpless—yea a dead dog! O my God, shine upon the work that thou hast wrought, that I may know the things that are freely given me of God. Make me a pillar in thy temple that I may go out no more.

January 18. This day my misery became insupportable. I was only fit for Bedlam! No demoniac could be worse! Cries, tears, and groans were poured forth from my broken heart. I uttered things which I ought not, and never so heartily cursed the day of my birth before. I cried, screamed, roared, and tore myself for some time, and then in an agony of prayer concluded the day. The next morning I arose in misery, and being in an agony, I prayed most violently. My language was: O I am damned! I am damned! I am fairly overcome! I yield! I yield! O poor, unfortunate young man! My poor, dear soul, thou must perish! Farewell God, Jesus, heaven and happiness! I am lost, lost! O Spira, Spira! I remember thy fate and tremble!<sup>36</sup> O Lord, thy hand lies heavy upon me! My fears and trials are intolerable! O my God, for Christ's sake, take away my life! I pray thee, O Lord my God, take away my soul! Lord Jesus call me home, and deliver me from the evil to come. I shall fall and forever perish! The next morning from 5:00 to 8:00, I was in utter despair. Tears and groans, with outstretched hands, were part of my morning sacrifice. I besought the Lord for death.

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<sup>33</sup>Gen. 49:19.

<sup>34</sup>Orig., 'December 20'; a misprint.

<sup>35</sup>Cf. Matt. 25:30.

<sup>36</sup>Referring to Nathaniel Bacon, *A Relation of the Fearfull Estate of Francis Spira, in the yeare 1548* (London: Legat, 1638).



February 18. This day that text, 'Gad, a troop shall overcome him', was explained to me more clearly and fully than ever. I have for some months past run the gauntlet, and have had a temptation to most of those sins that formerly dwelt in my heart. I was violently beset by the fear of man, shame of my Master's cross, and fears of not holding out. The horrible decree sounded in my ears: 'Thy destiny is damnation.' Sloth, envy, jealousy, pride, anger, and love of the creatures, I had temptations to all these: and yet under all, I saw God always to be love, and I also loved him.

February 29. Last night I had no sooner begun to compose myself in bed but I had a very terrifying vision. I saw a pair of scales in the air, and one of them was so light that it flew up and kicked the beam. I tried to compose myself again, and was worse terrified than before. I saw myself in a circle, surrounded by dogs in chains, who barked at me and endeavoured to get at me, but could not. I was then almost afraid to sleep again. But turning on my face, I said a few words in prayer, and then slept undisturbed till morning. Reasoning upon the vision of the scales, I concluded this to be the interpretation: 'Thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting.'<sup>37</sup> This threw me into great horror and agony of soul, and made me wretched and miserable!

On the 4th of April, I cried out: O God my Saviour, my load is grievous, my burden is intolerable! I sink under the mighty pressure! O woe is me! woe is me! woe is me! I am undone and lost! All things bear hard upon me. I deserve infinitely more, O God, but if thou enterest into judgment with me, I cannot abide. I justify thee if thou dost instantly send me into hell, yea the hottest hell. O my God, if I say anything hastily in prayer or writing, thou knowest it is wrung from me by sharp temptations. I call thee to witness, thou holy God, that I believe they do not come from my heart. O my Saviour, I own thou mayest justly deny me all comfort upon earth, and leave me to wander about like an accursed Cain, die miserably, and perish everlastingly. And now, oh my God, how shall I help myself? Oh, help is not in me! Blessed Jesus! Son of the living God, have mercy upon me. My soul draws nigh unto death. I am undone if thou dost delay. Come, oh Saviour, come ere I die! Father, save me from this hour. If it may be, let this bitter cup pass. O my God, my sufferings disqualify me for business. I am afraid I shall lose my senses and go mad. I am weary of my life! Farewell all comfort. I am lost, undone, and damned forever. O eternity! Eternity! Eternity!

On the 11th, I breathed out my sufferings in nearly these words: O the agony of my soul last night and this morning! No heart can conceive, nor tongue describe my misery. I was almost mad! My hands, my head, my body, my several actions all made signs of distress, with supplications for mercy and pity. I twisted and twined like a worm. Oh woe, woe, woe to me a poor, unhappy, young man! Bowels of mercy pity me, pity me, pity me! A few days after, I cried out, 'I am utterly lost and undone!' My soul sweat blood! Bathed in tears, and rolling on the ground, I implored mercy of my God. But my God answered me no more, either by dreams or visions, or by his prophets. I then cried out, 'See! See oh Lord God, how the murderer pursues me with hellish injections! How he breathes his poison. Save me from the noisome pestilence. Away damned spirit! As the Lord liveth, before whom I speak, I will hold fast this truth, "God is love." As thou livest, oh my God, though thou slay me, yet will I trust in thee!<sup>38</sup> Though thou consume me, I will love thee, and praise thee.'

On the 4th of May, my soul lay stretched out upon the rack. I was tempted, mocked, scourged, and sawn asunder! I had trials of cruel mockings indeed! The very heavens seemed to have no beauty to desire them, when weighed in a balance with my sufferings. O where is mercy, pity, and the blood of Jesus? O the hellhounds gnaw me! They swarm about me like bees. It was great pleasure to me to see yesterday that I spit blood a few times. I was glad to catch at any incident that promised speedy relief.

These make up but a small part of my sore temptations during this year. But besides these, it was given me to suffer by outward persecution also, as the sequel will show. On the 12th of March, I went to Rainham (a place near four miles from where I lived) to hear a preacher that was invited down by a

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<sup>37</sup>Cf. Dan. 5:27.

<sup>38</sup>Cf. Job 13:15.

gentleman of the place, to preach at his house.<sup>39</sup> Soon after the preacher began, the father-in-law of the gentleman came in, with two more persecutors. He was a great, tall man, and armed with a large whip, and primed with drink. Having asked the preacher a few questions, he was proceeding to violence, but Mr. G[ilascoc]k made his escape into an inner chamber. He then violently attacked me, and thrust me out of the room. I retired then into the kitchen, and was praying by the fireside, expecting that I had had my portion. Soon after he came in, and flew upon me, and swore he would broil me, and immediately seized me by the breast and thrust my back against the bars, abusing me most horribly. He then took me up, and was going to lay me upon the fire, but was prevented by the other two, who were afraid that he might go too far in his rage. He then dragged me to the door and threw me into the hands of a large mob, who cried out, 'Tear him to pieces! Tear him to pieces! This is the clerk.' With that they all surrounded me, and began to pull several ways. The first pull tore my shirt nearly from top to bottom. Some pulled me by the hair, some by my cravat, and were about to throw me off the coal wharf (which was within a few yards) into the river. The tide was down, so that had they flung me in, I should in all probability have been smothered in the mud. Expecting to be tore or trod in pieces, every moment, I cried out, 'Will you murder me?' Immediately God sent the ringleader of the mob to tear me out of their hands. He then bade me begone home, and uttered abusive language. A person present that favoured me undertook to escort me safe from the mob. But meeting the minister and his wife in the town, he left me, fearing to give offence. The minister used me, only not so bad as the great persecutor. I answered him with a few mild words, and went on my way. I had near four miles to go in the dark, but the Lord brought me safely home. Thanks be to his holy name for the great deliverance.

Sometime after this, I had another instance of the guardian care of the gracious Lord. I was returning from London in a Gravesend vessel, where were some gentlemen and ladies and others. One of the gentlemen swore like a trooper. I lovingly reproved him. This made him exceeding mad, and he called me many names. I spoke to them all in great love, plainness, and earnestness, sparing neither rank nor sex. One gentleman spoke very big words, but he could then go no farther. Sometime after, we were standing upon the deck and looking towards the shore, which was some distance from the vessel, the river being there about a mile over at high water. Whilst I was standing there, the boom of the ship turned over to the side I was standing on, and no one giving me timely notice, I was knocked overboard, and plunged over head with my great coat and gloves on. They never offered to help me, or throw out anything for me to lay hold on, but did me the kindness to cry out to a man on shore to get his boat out and come to me. As I was nothing of a swimmer it was a wonder that I was not drowned. My great coat providentially swam on the water, and kept me from sinking till the waterman got to me and saved me. I believe a quarter of a minute more had landed me on Canaan's shore. The waterman then rowed after the vessel for my things, and the ship's company then gathered about me, expressing their amazement at my deliverance, and could not help owning the adorable hand of my gracious Redeemer.

I was rowed ashore and put into a warm bed, and was as well as ever very soon. O my God, thou hast brought me through *fire*, and *water*, and yet my life is spared. O that I may glorify thee therewith. Indeed I have experimentally known the truth of that scripture, 'All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.'<sup>40</sup> I have made it my one endeavour to do good both to the souls and bodies of my fellow creatures, yet am I the scorn, derision, and reproach of all; and I believe many would think they did God service by murdering me. Added to my other trials, I suffered much from a nervous fever, and sometimes from the ague. For a considerable time I could hardly speak or read, through a weakness in my head, and often in my limbs, insomuch that I could not be at ease in any posture. However my God supported me, and I was enabled to say with the same breath that cried out, 'Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me. Righteous art thou O God in all thy dealings. I lay my soul in the dust, and dare not say what dost thou? Thou dealest not with me as I deserve, but as I need. I bow my soul before thee, and pray that thou wouldst do with me what seemeth thee best.'

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<sup>39</sup>Mr. Harle, of Rainham; cf. Jackson, *EMP*, 6:63.

<sup>40</sup>2 Tim. 3:12.

On the 5th of May, being ill of a fever, my temptations subsided, and the following scripture, being deeply impressed upon my heart, was a great support to it, 'I will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on me.'<sup>41</sup> The Lord was unto me as a place of broad rivers. His peace overflowed my soul. The dreadfulest representations of hell that I could frame in my mind could not move me. I apprehended that I should die that day, my fever being extreme. Yet my soul was a heaven. I had, as it were, a view of paradise. Never did I imagine that it was possible for a soul at death to be so divested of fear, and have a hope so full of immortality. O how full was my heart of love, peace, and joy! I scarcely felt any pain, my comforts were so strong! At another time I expressed myself nearly in these words: I see more and more the love of my dearest Jesus. I see him full of grace and truth. I have power given me to commit myself singly to his disposal, that his excellent wisdom may be my guide. Temptations are frequently helps to me. They keep me awake and stir me up to courage, diligence, and prayer. I have greater communion with the world of spirits than ever, and seem often to have sweet fellowship with the saints in paradise. The invisible world seems very nigh, and I often think myself on the very borders of it. Surely now I taste of the powers of the world to come, and feast on the tree of life, which is for the healing of the nations. O God, my soul doth praise thee; for thou hast redeemed me from sin. Glory be to thee forever! Hallelujah!

At another time I said: I am this morning fully assured of honour, glory, and immortality. I feel a kind of heaven in general, and in prayer I have very wonderful displays of the love of God. I hide me in the dust while I cry out, 'O God, thou hast wrought all these works in me! I am nothing! Christ is all!' No tongue can tell what abasement I have felt. Even while writing I have been obliged to prostrate myself on the floor, and water it with tears of joy. In the morning I was so full that I thought I should die. Instantly I felt this scripture applied: 'Thou shalt no more drink of the cup of trembling.'<sup>42</sup> I believed, and worshipped the Lord. At another time I cried out, 'O the sweet fellowship I have with the Father and the Son!' My soul has been a heaven for some days. Surely a small degree beyond my present experience would quite overcome me. I felt so much that I was constrained to pray to the Lord to summons me away, that I might forever embrace my glorified Redeemer. I must observe that these strong consolations directly followed my deliverance from extreme sufferings.

I must not omit to mention that I had many answers to prayer in the course of this year, and comfortable scriptures were applied at times to my suffering heart—especially towards the close of my sore afflictions. The Lord began my deliverance with the application of this scripture in prayer, 'Rise up my love, my fair one, and come away!'<sup>43</sup> I had then seemingly a view of paradise, and prayed like a man of another world. I find two kinds of prayer in myself. One is an impetuous, violent crying out for the blessing I seek; there is much of nature in this. The other is a pleading, plaintive, weeping prayer, coming from a broken, bleeding, loving heart; there is much of the divine unction in this. I never set apart a day of prayer and fasting, to implore any mercy for myself, the church, or the nation, but I had some gracious answer.

With respect to my employment this year, I once or twice read and prayed to a few people at the place where I lived, visited all the sick that I could, and endeavoured to be as useful as possible. I had many trials from the deadness and unfaithfulness of the people here, and shed many tears on their account. One day, while I was bemoaning the deadness and departure of some of them, the Lord graciously answered me with the following words, 'Delight thou in the Lord, and verily thou shalt be fed.'<sup>44</sup> I wrote many letters to ministers and others, the success of which will only be known when God shall make up his jewels. After the Lord had delivered me out of my sore distress, and in faithfulness to his promise given me to overcome, I went to London for some weeks, and there lived a kind of angelic life. I frequently went to hospitals and prisons, and exhorted and prayed with the patients, etc. I spent

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<sup>41</sup>Cf. Isa. 26:3.

<sup>42</sup>Cf. Isa. 51:22.

<sup>43</sup>Song of Sol. 2:10.

<sup>44</sup>Cf. Ps. 37:3–4.

most of the day in visiting the sick and tempted, and on Sundays I used to reprove all the Sabbath-breakers and swearers that I met with. It was in the month of August 1767, that God enabled me to preach from a text, to my little company. He gave me much encouragement, so that from this day I began to lay aside my reading. At times I was very sorely tried on account of preaching, and have been near giving it up. Wisdom and memory were wonderfully given me, and I laboured to improve my talent. I must here make a remark respecting the erroneous conclusions that those draw from our being made pure in heart, that it swells the soul with pride, and supersedes the merits of Christ. Alas! poor souls, they do err, not knowing this state by experience. Who is so blind as the Lord's servant, as he that is perfect? I loathe myself more and more. The more I know and love my God, the more I loathe myself. The more obedient I am, the more unprofitable I seem to myself. O my God, I am nothing; but thou art my all. Jesus is my hope and my boast. Glory be to my God!

On the 1st of January 1768, I wrote nearly as follows: O my God, how manifold have been thy mercies towards me, the chief of sinners! Thou hast performed the mercy promised me, by delivering me out of the hands of all my enemies, that I might serve thee without fear, in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life. Thou hast given me to overcome, and a hope and belief that I shall no more drink of the cup of trembling. Thou art my God and my all. Glory be to thee forever!

My next volume [of my diary] contains the most remarkable occurrences in the space of about eighteen months.<sup>45</sup> A few particulars I shall subjoin.

Although God had most wonderfully delivered me, and my soul was a heaven compared with former years, yet I had many sharp temptations interspersed with my consolations. On the 21st of February [1768] I wrote: This morning was a morning of sore temptation, till nine or ten o'clock. I most earnestly besought the Lord to deliver me, and cried very passionately to be secured from future evil. In the midst of my distress the Lord answered, 'My grace is sufficient for thee.'<sup>46</sup> I acknowledged the truth of the scripture, and praised the Lord.

February 28. This was a bitter morning. I was closely beset by my old enemy. My strength was wept away before breakfast. Surely I shall soon weep my last. Known unto the Lord is all my trouble. Surely he will soon wipe away all tears from my eyes. One day, in the midst of my distress, Satan hissed these words into my ears, 'Examine him with tortures and despatch, that we may know his weakness, and prove his patience.' Wisdom of Solomon 2:19. And indeed he was permitted at times to make the experiment; but I was graciously preserved. In the course of this year, Lord \_\_\_ and the Rev. Dr. B\_\_\_ prevented my extending my little labours among the simple, teachable people. My friend was forbid giving me entrance into his house. My God, lay it not to their charge!

As I was not without sufferings, neither was I without extraordinary consolations. It was in one of these sweet seasons that I said: This morning Jesus crucified was right amiable to my soul. I saw that whatever I asked I had. I laboured for language to debase myself, and worthily to magnify the Lord my Saviour. Surely I shall live with him forever. I long to be in paradise. My time is surely at hand. The will of the Lord be done! Amen. Hallelujah to God and the Lamb! At another time, when I was walking for my health, my soul anticipated the pleasures of Eden, and tasted of the powers of the world to come. I had a happy assurance of my eternal endurance, and thought that my soul was on the verge of glory, honour, and immortality. At times I have been so filled with peace and joy, that I could not refrain leaping and praising God on the road. Indeed, in the general I enjoy a heaven on earth, and find a comfortable assurance that I never shall be blotted out of the book of life.

During this period I was favoured with ability to help my neighbours, both in spirituals and temporals, which greatly increased my confidence in the Lord. One instance I will mention. Thomas Ottawill, belonging to my little society here, was arrested for a debt contracted in his unconverted state. On their way to the jail they stopped at an inn. His wife came to me, and desired that I would go to the

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<sup>45</sup>The volumes of Valton's manuscript diary survive at MARC, MA 1977/293.

<sup>46</sup>2 Cor. 12:9.

inn, and give him some spiritual advice before he went away.<sup>47</sup> Accordingly I went, and sung and prayed with him, his wife, and the bailiffs. After prayer, the Lord having touched the creditor's heart, she made a very gracious composition with me for him. I borrowed the money demanded, and paid it for him. On my return home I was in some pain for having run myself into so much debt; but having lifted up my voice in prayer to God, I came home, and to my very great comfort found more than that sum left for me by a merchant.

This year I was enabled to preach in a friend's house two or three times a week, and to meet a few in class. I also catechised a few children, and spent my spare time in writing letters on divine subjects. When I went to London, I often visited Guy's Hospital and the new prison, and found much sweetness, and success in my undertakings. At home, sinners were convinced, some justified, and others sanctified by the grace of God. The news of this reaching you, sir, in London, made you invite me forth to a more entire devotedness to the service of souls.<sup>48</sup> But being conscious that I had neither health, courage, gifts nor grace for the work, I could not agree with your sentiments. The time was not fully come. However I set myself to extirpate Sabbath-breaking near me, and what loving advice could not do, I endeavoured to effect by applying to the magistrate. By these things you may suppose I brought upon myself ill will, but the Lord stood by me and suffered no one to do me any harm. Glory be to his holy name!

This year [1769] I made an excursion into Gloucestershire, and was at Painswick for four or five weeks, where God was pleased to bless my simple conversation to several. Some received the pure love of God, and many were refreshed, as well as my own soul. I seemed like a pure spirit while I was there, and stood on tiptoe to reach the fair regions of the skies.

The next volume of my experience contains about three years account of God's dealings with me. During that time my temptations and sufferings were small, compared with what I had undergone in the preceding years. I was enabled to go on preaching and visiting the sick as usual. My greatest trials arose now from my timidity and weakness, respecting preaching. Many times I have been ready to say, 'I will speak no more in his name.'<sup>49</sup> But I could not recede. It was come to this, 'Woe is me if I preach not the gospel.'<sup>50</sup> However the success that I met with, and the comfort I felt in my own soul, encouraged me to go on. About July 1772, I went to Dover for the benefit of the salt water, and was enabled to supply the absence of a preacher in that town for some weeks. I found much life and liberty there, and believe that my labours were not in vain. As you were informed of my proceedings, I received several letters from you, calling me forth to a more public work.<sup>51</sup> But I could not consent. A full conviction of my ignorance, weakness, and bashfulness satisfied me that I was not then called to it. My reasons satisfied you for that time, but you told me you believed I should by and by. Soon after this I had an offer of a different kind, made me by the late Earl of D—r, to be page of the presence to the queen. But as I feared a post of honour, and at court too, I thankfully declined it in favour of my sister's husband. The reasons I assigned in my journal were, 'I am here quiet, unfashionable, unnoticed, except by way of derision. I have also a few souls to care for, and above all, one of my own. And I choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the favours, honours, and riches of a court. Adieu, vain world! Stand aloof with thy slighted charms. The Lord is my portion forever. Hallelujah!'

On the first of January 1773, I wrote as follows: 'As to my soul, I now enjoy a measure of the fruits of the Spirit. I love the Lord my God above all things here below. But still I have reason to complain, as I do not now enjoy that love that casteth out fear, nor have I that firm persuasion that I shall overcome at the last.' I remember sometime ago, through very perplexing trials and temptations, I was led publicly to declare that I had lost the pure love of God. Scarce had I yielded to this but I became too late

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<sup>47</sup>Cf. Jackson, *EMP* 6:69–70. Thomas and Mary Ottawill lived in Rainham.

<sup>48</sup>See JW to Valton, Mar. 1, 1769, *Works*, 28:206–07.

<sup>49</sup>Cf. Jer. 20:9.

<sup>50</sup>Cf. 1 Cor. 9:16.

<sup>51</sup>See JW to Valton, Aug. 3, 1772, *Works*, 28:506–07.

sensible that my unbelief, at this juncture, had affected what I before only supposed had been done. The Lord has chastised my yielding to unbelief, for I have never since had a clear testimony that I was saved from sin. However I have enjoyed almost a continued calm, and daily feel a longing for home.

Towards the middle of the year 1774, I was brought into a very weak and low state of body, which lasted for some months. I changed the air for near three months, and it pleased the Lord at last to restore me in some degree, and I returned to the office. It was during this infirmity that I had a remarkable dream, the purport of which I did not then understand, but for which I had afterwards great cause to praise the Lord. I thought I climbed up an exceeding high mountain—so steep that I was obliged to cut steps in some places to get up. However the journey was not unpleasant to me. When I was at the top I soon met with a cottage, which I entered and began to speak to the poor labourer and his family. I thought they received the word with pure affection, and went round the mountain and called all that they could together. I thought I preached to them and settled a society there, and promised that I would get two of my brethren to supply my lack of service. I left them very happy. As I was returning I thought, surely here must be some mad bull upon this mountain which will prevent my going home. Scarcely had this passed my mind, but I espied one in the way. However I went to him and he was not suffered to do me any harm. I got home safe and was very happy. Then I awoke, and beheld it was a dream. I thought within myself, shall I be called to go forth to preach the gospel? How can this agree with an impression that I have had these several years that I should die in my thirty-fifth year? It was then explained to me that I should, in that year, die to all worldly things and be entirely devoted to the service of God and his church. Some months after, all this came to pass, as the sequel will show.

These two or three years past, my employment has been expounding the Scripture three times a week, meeting a class, and catechising children. I also set up an evening school for instructing the poor, miserable lime-burners' children, and prevailed with three of my society to take it in turns with me. We taught them reading and writing, etc., and found most of them books, and I instructed them from time to time in the principles of religion. As my income was small, providence raised up friends to bless and favour my design. There was a prospect of much good, and many would have had cause to bless God for the undertaking, had not their wicked parents, in spite of all remonstrance, allowed them to run away to play, and thereby frustrate our design. Another thing I undertook with a good design which kept me very poor, involved me in debt, and in time hurt my soul. I began to study and practise physic for the good of the poor, hoping thereby to have access to sick beds, and to be instrumental to the good of their souls. I procured an electrical machine, learned to bleed, and laid in a large assortment of medicines. The Lord most wonderfully prospered my undertaking. The deaf, the halt, the withered, and many others diseased, received a cure under my hands. This success brought me many patients. Their cases required me to study, and the remedies exhausted my pocket, so that I became so perplexed for want of time, and also (notwithstanding many remarkable assisting providences) for want of sufficient recruits to support the undertaking, that my mind was very much hurt. But God, when I was in the very zenith of popular favour, most graciously removed me. Indeed both my mind and body were sorely harassed through much labour of different kinds. However the Lord made me useful to his church also, for several were convinced and converted, who will, I trust, be the crown of my rejoicing in a future day. I bore this burden for a long time. But at last, as the time drew near for the accomplishment of my dream, the burden became intolerable. My constitution was ruined, chiefly by the unwholesome air of the place where I lived. The physician told me that sitting at a desk would not do for me. Another eminent man told me that I was murdering myself. Riding was proposed to me as the most promising expedient to protract my life, and perhaps the only one. Several letters from friends, after two or three months sufferings, brought me forth. The pious Mr. Samuel Wells (now in paradise) gave me the conquering stroke. 'I do not know', says he, 'but God hath said, Preach or perish.' I then came to a resolution to forsake all, and set out with my staff. When I came to this conclusion, Satan set upon me for some weeks with greater violence than ever, in order to stop me. Unknown are the sufferings I went through. Scarce had I two hours sleep in the night, but all was literally weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. I used frequently to flee into a neighbouring wood, and in the most latent part, spend several hours in bitter lamentations and cries to God, for power and courage to give up all. At last, early one morning I arose, and with the best

preparation I could, went to London. I there wrote my letter of resignation. When I had done, I fell down on my knees, and with the deepest gratitude praised my God for the power. I said with tears, O my God, I thank thee for having given me this place for so many years; and now thou requirest thine own again. Lo here I present unto thee that which is thine, and cast my soul and body upon thy providence! This I spake with a heart deluged with grateful tears. Scarce had I made this oblation but Satan tempted me to disbelieve the being of a God. I could not have known the strength of a fallen angel, had it not been for this sore temptation. I was almost an atheist till I arrived at Leeds, a few days before the [1775] Conference. Soon after I got to my quarters there, all my temptations vanished away, and my soul returned to its rest. And never since has it materially suffered from Satan. How was the dream verified that I had when I first began to seek the Lord? So soon as I stripped the clothes off Satan, he got up in a rage and pursued me. So now being about to strip him of his subjects, he collected all his power and malice to make his last, strong push at me; but blessed be the Lord my God, I still stand! None but the great God can tell what I went through, the two last months that preceded my going forth to preach the gospel. Night and day my soul was upon the rack, and the sleep departed from my eyes. This I can truly say the Lord has thrust me out, for never surely did such a concurrence of circumstances meet to manifest the will of God.

A few days before the Conference, Mr. Pawson desired me to preach for him at Leeds, which I did to near 500 people. I went into the pulpit with much fear and trembling, but was enabled to get through pretty well. All the time I was at Leeds I was exceedingly happy, and was engaged all day in spiritual exercises, in which I found myself much blessed.

On the 2nd of August 1775, I was admitted upon trial, and was sent into Oxfordshire with Samuel Wells, and George Shorter, both now in Abraham's bosom. As soon as I came to Witney, the first place in my circuit, I found a letter requiring my presence in London. Here, to my infinite surprise, I found all my relations very cordial towards me, nor did any of them censure my conduct. It also pleased the Lord while I was here to make a settlement upon me for life, for which I have cause indeed to love and bless him forever. In this circuit I was two years, and was kindly received by an affectionate people. The circuit was a very hard one, having long journeys, and a great scarcity of fuel. But the Lord was my support. Soon after I came into it, being at High Wycombe, a young woman lived somewhere there that I had seen and been acquainted with. I got a guide and set out one morning to enquire for her. A little while after she took me to see a young person who was very ill. I had a good time with her, and proposed coming at night to preach at that barren place. Consent was given, and the whole neighbourhood was invited. Accordingly I preached, and the word was received with pure affection, and a society was soon formed. As I was going thither, my way lay up a hill so high and steep that steps had been cut to accommodate the travellers, agreeable to my dream previous to my coming forth. This very much strengthened me, and was like the sign given to Moses at Horeb, before he left Egypt. When the word began to be felt, and a society formed, the Rev. Mr. T[homas] W[illiam]s, an antinomian preacher, began to roar upon us like a bull; but, according to my dream, he did us no harm.

The year after I laboured among as loving a people in the Gloucestershire circuit, and blessed be God, our labour was not in vain! They would have borne with me another year, but my constitution was so impaired that I could not bear so much riding, so I was obliged to be removed. I cannot omit making mention of the loving kindness of the Lord to me this year. Having been seized with a bilious fever, which continued some weeks, my lot was cast at Stroud. Here I met with a tender nurse and kind friend, Mrs. [Rebecca] Scudamore, who removed me to her house and, together with the rest of that loving family, showed me no little kindness. So that by the help of a skilful apothecary, and the blessing of God, I was enabled in a few weeks to return to my labour. Two or three nights after I set out, I was put into a damp bed at C—. This immediately brought on my disorder again, and obliged me to retire to a farm house near Worcester, where I remained some weeks. But during this, and the whole time I have laboured in the gospel, I have found much peace and comfort in my own soul, which have enabled me to bear up under the hardships of an itinerant life.

At the next Leeds Conference [1778] I was appointed for the Bristol circuit. As soon as I heard my destiny, my soul was in a furnace. I wrote to you, sir, entreating you to send me anywhere rather than

there.<sup>52</sup> Bristol and Bath appeared so formidable that I was sorely distressed both in soul and body. However, in spite of all my remonstrances, you continued in your resolution that I should go there. I continued in much distress for some days. At last, while I was in prayer one evening, the Lord relieved my soul with these comfortable words, 'Wait thou his time, so shall this night soon end in joyous days.' Soon after I came to Bristol, I was obliged to retire for some weeks to Norton, where I met with uncommon kindness from those dear friends to the cause of God, Mr. and Mrs. Wait.<sup>53</sup> Here I gave myself up to prayer, and gathered both bodily and spiritual strength. I spent this year with great satisfaction, having most agreeable fellow labourers. We saw a blessed work break out, and many souls were added to the societies. The people in this circuit were uncommonly affectionate, and I thought I should be glad to finish my course among them.

The next year [1779] I was appointed for this circuit again, but had some heavy trials. A circumstance that happened at Bath, greatly distressed my soul, and gave a general wound to the cause of God.<sup>54</sup> However, the few last months that I was there I enjoyed a heaven upon earth, and left them with great pain of mind. The last place I left was Almondsbury—a place that I had been at for my health for about a fortnight. Here I met with a tender, affectionate friend, that showed me every kindness for her Master's sake, and I came away with much sorrow.

At the Bristol Conference 1780, I was appointed for Manchester. When I came there my soul entered into great sufferings. The thoughts of my dear Bristol people, and the dread that I had upon my mind concerning the office which was laid upon me as the Assistant, quite drank up my spirits. However, by the grace of God, I set my shoulders to the work and endeavoured to lay out my life and soul in this service. God was pleased to own me and my fellow labourer, so that between two and three hundred new members were received into the society, and there was a general revival throughout the circuit. When I came first into it I was quite a stranger to the complexion of this people, and interpreted their shyness to strangers as a defect of love. But however, I can say I found them a most affectionate, generous, steady people; and, with tears in my eyes, I can add, they lie near my heart.

Soon after I began my work, I found that my constitution could not bear the journeys, so I was obliged to call for help. You sent me another preacher, which afforded me the opportunity of being more useful to the circuit.<sup>55</sup> I should have been very useful about Rochdale, had it not been for two or three members of that society, who required me to do what I could not, either in point of conscience or equity. They so prejudiced some of the simple people, and so broke my spirits as well as hurt my body, that the work was entirely stopped, my intended expeditions to the neighbouring villages prevented, and I fear many precious souls wounded, if not murdered, through their conduct. Lord, lay not this sin to their charge! Their conduct, and the harm that I saw they were likely to do, caused me to groan and weep on my bed. My very heart bled, and I poured out strong cries and tears to God to come to my help. I had very remarkable answers to prayer. And when I had settled this affair to the best of my power, and was on my return from Rochdale, I was conscientiously reviewing my conduct as before God, to see if I had acted amiss in the affair. Immediately these words came with a divine unction to my soul:

The op'ning heav'ns around me shine,  
With beams of sacred bliss.<sup>56</sup>

On this I greatly rejoiced, and gave glory to God!

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<sup>52</sup>This letter is not known to survive.

<sup>53</sup>William and Elizabeth (Wilshea) Wait, lived in Belluton, near Norton Malreward in Somerset.

<sup>54</sup>See JW to Alexander M'Nab, Oct. 19, 1779, *Works*, 29:515.

<sup>55</sup>See JW to Valton, Dec. 31, 1780, *Works*, 29:617–18.

<sup>56</sup>Isaac Watts, 'God Our Light in Darkness', st. 3, in *CPH* (1738), 36.



Sometime in the winter, I went to a neighbouring village called Glodwick, consisting chiefly of colliers and weavers. I preached to a crowded room full, and with much comfort, and I believe many felt the word. I preached a second time with peace and pleasure. The third time I went, I endeavoured to preach out of doors. But as Satan's kingdom began to suffer (several being awakened and joined to the society), he mustered up his forces, who being armed with stones and noisy instruments, attacked us furiously. They gnashed on me with their teeth, and threw large coals and stones at me. I was obliged after a time, to retire into the house, which I did unhurt, and sung and prayed with a few serious people. When I set off for Oldham with some of my friends the floods lifted up their voice. They threw stones and dirt amain.<sup>57</sup> Yet only one woman was materially hurt, who received a dangerous cut in her head. We were obliged to commence an action against four or five of the rioters, or we must have been murdered, had we gone there again. However, several of the people were received into society, and were filled with all peace and joy in believing. The lawsuit was compromised, and they now met in peace. I had also very severe trials from another quarter. When the new house was opened at Manchester, and I saw such large congregations, I suffered immensely through my timidity. Standing in that pulpit was to me like standing to be shot. But however, the gracious Lord brought me through the year.

At the Leeds Conference [1781] I was appointed for Manchester again. But fearing some extraordinary trials, and disapproving of some late things which had occurred, I desired you to remove me to Birstall. You consented, but my friends at Manchester were determined not to part with me till they had received an answer to a petition for my return. During this suspense I went to Liverpool. Here I remained three weeks, and spent my time much to my profit and comfort, with a loving, generous people; and I believe we were mutually profited by this interview.

When I returned to Manchester I received your letter fixing me for Birstal.<sup>58</sup> Soon after this, I repaired to my circuit, and met with much kindness from the people. This encouraged me to undertake some difficult things which my nature shrunk at. However, through the help of my God, I was brought through as well as I could expect. Although this is the most easy and suitable circuit to me, who cannot bear much riding, yet I find here enough to convince me it is through much tribulation we enter the kingdom. But I enjoy vast peace of mind, and can appeal to God that his glory, the good of the church, and the eternal welfare of my own soul are the grand objects I have daily in view.

Through the mercy of God, and the faithful concurrence of my fellow labourers, good has been done, and I have had the promise of a farther revival sealed on my heart. It was on this wise, after a shower of tears when in private prayer at Daw Green, I came down from my chamber and joined the family in prayer. The power of God fell upon me, and I prayed as the Spirit gave me utterance. I prayed fervently for the circuit, and had a blessed revival before my eyes. I praised God by way of anticipation, being assured that he was about to work. The family felt the divine unction, and I was so exhausted I could scarce get up from my knees.

I should not omit an unpromising circumstance that happened sometime after I came into the circuit. Mr. [John] Fletcher carried away a burning and shining light from Cross Hall, and thereby deprived me of a blessed helper.<sup>59</sup> I was invited to be with them on the day of their espousals, and never before knew such a blessed wedding. I now saw indeed that marriage is honourable in all—being instituted by God, in a state of innocence, and in the garden of paradise. May eternal happiness crown this devoted pair!

I must now draw to a conclusion, praising and blessing my God, whose mercy, love and faithfulness have been so wonderfully manifested in my pilgrimage. I still find my whole soul in the work. But my spirits are far too active for my body. My constitution is very weak, and, like Saul's armour, is a sore clog to my spirit. I hope to live and die in the cause of my dear Redeemer and his beloved people, and fervently pray that I may end my life in his work. My soul is happy! Divine transport

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<sup>57</sup>I.e., at high speed.

<sup>58</sup>See JW to Valton, Sept. 15, 1781, *Works*, 29:688–89.

<sup>59</sup>I.e., Mary Bosanquet, who became Fletcher's wife.

possesses my breast, and Jesus is my daily theme. My all in all forever and ever! With pleasure and confidence I still declare to all the world,

Ye all may know that God is true,  
Ye all may feel that God is love!<sup>60</sup>

In this spirit I hope to remain till the mercy of God, and the sole merits of my adorable Redeemer, shall introduce my blushing spirit into the society of angels and saints, to swell the sound of Jesu's fame and praise my God forever and ever.

I am, reverend sir,

Your most affectionate son in the gospel,

J. V.

P.S. Thus far I wrote before the [1783] Conference. Since then I have been appointed for Birstall again. I have the prospect of much suffering here, through an unfortunate affair.<sup>61</sup> But all is well. My conscience is undefiled. The Lord is before my eyes, and, by the grace of God, I will hold fast my integrity unto the end.

We took in above two hundred new members last year, and we have a fair prospect in some places this year. In the midst of great anguish of spirit (through the troubles of the church) I had one morning the most gracious visit from heaven that I have had for some years. O how I laboured in familiar prayer with Go, that I might then finish my work! 'O come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.'<sup>62</sup> Even so. Amen. Hallelujah!

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783) 404–07, 459–64, 514–21, 574–79, 635–38; 7 (1784): 13–19, 70–75, 127–32, 182–86, 241–43.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>Cf. CW, Hymn 1, st. 5, *Hymns on God's Everlasting Love* (1741), 3.

<sup>61</sup>The controversy of the proposed revised deed for the new preaching-house.

<sup>62</sup>Cf. Rev. 22:20.

<sup>63</sup>Portions of this account are woven into a much longer narrative in Jackson, *EMP*, 6:1–136.

From William Roberts<sup>1</sup>

Tiverton  
August 6, 1783

Dear Sir,

You are my father. As such I have loved and honoured you. Forty years I have been in your connection. Thirty-six I have been admitted an helper in the gospel; thirty of which my labours have been without charge to my brethren, but not so to myself. Ten pounds a year upon an average (I think) have not discharged my various expenses with the connection—which I am fully conscious was as much as I ought at any time; and for seven years past, more than my ability required. I have informed you again and again that I have exceeded my ability. Why would you not believe me? If you were not satisfied, why did you not ask me in person? You never found me concealed or disguised. Was it right upon your suspicions or any vague information to upbraid me before the congregation, and before company at the table, and even then refuse to be set right? Was it kind, was it common candour, after the plain answer I gave you in person last year, to write me as you did? Had my conduct at any time merited that you should put a negative upon all I could say or write, even when I appealed to my God for the truth of it? When I was informed after all this that you censured me in various companies at Bristol and in its vicinity, as a man with thousands and eat[ten] up of covetousness and love of this world, I was astonished and could not avoid exclaiming, 'What is become of charity? Are justice and truth also fled from the earth? Where is the man that doeth to another as he would be done by?'

Whether I have less love or more pride than Mr. [Greenaway] Jagues, I do not determine. But I hope he has not been treated with so much severity, and so totally without cause, as

Your injured,

Will. Roberts

*Source:* holograph; Oxford, Lincoln College, Archive, MS/WES/A/2/3, p. 3.

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<sup>1</sup>Roberts is replying to JW's letter of Aug. 3, 1783 (*Works*, 30:161); but continuing a dispute that began with JW's letter of Sept. 12, 1782 (30:76).

From Thomas Olivers

London  
August 31, 1783

Reverend and Very Dear Sir,

With bended knees I adore God, who has again been your helper and the lifter up of your head.<sup>1</sup> When tidings came that there were no hopes of your recovery, I was very variously affected. Once I said, 'Well, if all the world dies, I seem prepared for it, and in some measure I hope I am ready to die myself.' But in general I was much discouraged. Things appeared very gloomy on many accounts. On the other hand, I daily thought, I shall soon have done with all things under the sun; and whatever I suffer, I regard not, while it works together for my good. Whatever shall cause me to pray more, to be more dead to the world, and to be more willing to leave it, is welcome. And I bless God, sir, that for some considerable time this has been the language of my soul.

When I heard that your mind was quite happy, tears of joy overflowed my eyes. To me it appears that nothing is wanting to complete your character, in the eyes of men, but to be great in death as you have been in life. And if *we* deserve it, so you will. If not, instead of a flaming chariot, a thick cloud will descend, and wrap you in it, and waft you to worlds of endless day, and place you at your Saviour's feet.

In the meantime I make no doubt but you are more resolved than ever to do all the good you can. To employ to the best purposes, even to those which will turn out to the best account before the throne of God, the short remainder of life: holy meditations, weighty admonitions, deep solemn heart-breaking prayers, warnings, instructions, etc. Oh, with what propriety and importance will these *now* drop from your venerable lips, or proceed from your pen to the edification of ages unborn!

Will you then suffer, (what shall I say?) a son, a brother, a friend, a servant, and fellow-labourer in the gospel, to advise? Let things of *no importance* employ *no part* of your precious time. Leave things of small importance to inferior characters; and let no thought, desire, word, or work of yours be employed but about the deepest, weightiest, and most important things. And in doing these, remember your very great age. Remember your bones are not brass. I know your spirit is willing, but your flesh is surely weakened with age, labour, care, and sickness. Therefore you *must* relinquish part of your labour, or bend your bow too far. I believe this was the occasion of your two last illnesses, which had like to have been fatal to you and us. *Abate a little*, and you may yet *last long*, and be a blessing to *many thousands* for *many years*.

Dear sir, pray for me. I want, I desire, I am resolved to save my soul. And I bless God, I have no doubts at present. Grace, crosses, mercies, and judgment have in some measure humbled me and quickened my desire. I daily think I shall soon be out of everybody's way. Nor do I much care how soon, if I am but found in the way to God. Farewell, dear sir, farewell. I hope you will excuse the freedom of an overflowing heart. With much love I remain, reverend sir,

Your's affectionately,

T. O.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 332–33.

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<sup>1</sup>JW fell ill on Aug. 5, 1783, just as Conference was ending. By mid-month he was improving and on Aug. 25 he set out on a preaching tour. See JW, *Journal*, Aug. 5–25, *Works*, 23:286–87.

From [Thomas Brisco]<sup>1</sup>

[Birstall]

c. September 1783

About two years ago Emmanuel Jowit joined the Methodists. One morning, at the class meeting, he was brought into Christian liberty, which he has enjoyed ever since. He was enabled to go but once to the meeting afterwards. When Mr. [John] V[alton] talked with him, he received such answers from him concerning the salvation of his soul as greatly satisfied him. The public prayer-meetings were continued at his house on account of his illness.

On the 25th of August, Mr. V[alton] visited him again, when he said, 'The fear of death is taken away, and my soul is happy in the Lord.' Saturday the 30th, the day before he died, Mr. [Christopher] H[oppe]r visited him. He said he was happy, and that the fear of death was taken away. On Sunday noon his mother-in-law asked him how he did, he said, 'I am happy', and then lay still a while. He then spoke to his wife, and said, 'O Hannah, what a thing is this! The keys of death and hell are given to Jesus. Now I am going to a world of spirits, to be happy with Jesus.' The room being full of people he began to preach Jesus to them, and desired them all to prepare to meet him in heaven. One of his old companions standing by, he cried, 'O David, thou must not game. If thou dost, the devil is sure to have thee.' He then desired the company to sing a hymn; on which his sister-in-law gave out, 'Jesu lover of my soul, ...'.<sup>2</sup> But they all were so astonished at him that they could not join with him, so that he sung two verses or more by himself with the same strength and vigour as usual. He cried out several times, 'Neighbours, sing with me. O neighbours, if you felt what I feel, you would be almost ready to leap over the house. Jesus has given me to spread abroad his goodness, which I will do while I have any breath. I would not have you think I am deceiving myself. It is real truth. I love all the world, and would have them prepare for heaven while health and strength lasts.' So he continued about two hours, when his strength failed him. After dozing a little, he said to his wife, 'Be in earnest to follow me, and the Lord will certainly provide for thee. Tell Mr. V[alton] and Mr. H[oppe]r of all these things. Give thyself to Jesus.' He said to some of his neighbours who were going away, 'Stay a few moments, you will have to lay my bones out before six o'clock.' He then turned himself from them, and breathed out his last. His last words were, 'I am now going.'

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 7 (1784): 24–25.

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<sup>1</sup>The only circuit in which the initials for preachers in this account fits is Birstall. John Francis Valton was Assistant, along with Christopher Hopper and Thomas Brisco. Given the third person mentions of the other two, Brisco is the likely writer.

<sup>2</sup>CW, 'In Temptation', *HSP* (1740), 67–68.

From W. A—t S—d<sup>1</sup>

c. September 1783

In the year 1749, a gentleman came to reside in this town. He seemed to be a person well educated, but so wicked in his conversation that the sober part of the town shunned his company.

After he had been some time here, he was seized with a violent disorder, which confined him to his bed; and was under great terror of mind. In this situation he sent for me. I found him very ill in bed, but thoroughly sensible. He told me he was glad to see me, and desired I would pray by him. Before I did this, I desired he would give me an account of his former life. On which he said, 'My father, who was a sober, godly man, died when I was young, and left a very plentiful fortune behind him. My mother was very fond of me, and sent me to London for education—where, being naturally very gay, I soon contracted acquaintance with many loose and wicked youths, and was guilty of almost all sorts of wickedness. But notwithstanding this, I read the Scriptures and prayed every morning and night! But now, alas, my sins stare me in the face; and I believe I am beyond the reach of mercy!'

When he had given me this account, I prayed with him, and set before him the fullness of Christ: and told him how able and willing he was to save all that came unto him. I then went away, and left him a little better; but still under great terror of mind, which continued some days. However I visited him every day, and after a while he seemed to have some hopes. But one day when I came to see him, I found him more discouraged than ever, and quite in despair. On inquiring how he was, he answered, 'No hope! No mercy!' I asked what was the matter? He said, 'Last night I dreamed Satan came to me and told me, "It is in vain for thee to expect mercy, for in a very short time thou wilt be with me forever."' But though I reasoned with him, and told him this was only a chimera and the effect of his distemper, it was all in vain. I therefore left him full as bad as I found him. However I went again the next day, and found him much in the same mind. I went again the day after, which was Friday, and then, to my great surprise, found him rejoicing in Christ. I then asked him what this alteration was owing to? He answered, 'Last night I dreamed that Jesus Christ came to me and told me my sins were forgiven, and that Satan was still a liar, and bid me not fear! And now, sir', said he, 'you may think this is a chimera. But I give you this as a sign. It is now Friday. If this is true, I shall die on the Lord's day, at three o'clock in the afternoon. If I die then, you may conclude I am saved. But if I pass that time, or die before, I shall not be saved.' This he spoke with great cheerfulness; and whenever I visited him after that, I always found him very comfortable.

On the Lord's day I called on him in the forenoon, and found him triumphing in the God of his salvation. I called again after the morning service and found him still the same. After dinner (at one o'clock), I met the physician there. I took him aside, and without giving him any reason, desired to know what he thought of his patient? The physician said he is in a very bad way, but in no immediate danger. I then went into the room, took leave of him, and went to the meeting. As I came back, I called again and asked how he was, and was told by the nurse, 'He died as the clock struck three!'

W. A—t S—d

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 7 (1784): 308–09.

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<sup>1</sup>Titled: 'The Rev. John Godwin, Pastor of a Dissenting Congregation, at Wisbech, gives the following remarkable Account'. John Godwin (1723–72) was minister of the Presbyterian church in Wisbech from 1748 to 1758. No published source for this account has been located.

From Ann Bolton

Witney  
September 10, 1783

Reverend and Dear Sir,

It is an unspeakable pleasure to me that I have it in my power to add to your felicity. I know the news of Zion's prosperity is the joy of your heart, and this I have now the pleasure to communicate.

The effects of the late awful providence of God, in the tremendous voice of his thunder, are still visibly expressed.<sup>1</sup> He is thereby fulfilling his ancient promise, in causing the inhabitants of Zion to be neither few nor small—a promise which he vouchsafed me four or five months since, and the accomplishment of which I have been waiting to see.

Our congregations are large and serious; our prayer-meetings lively and well attended. In a class of nineteen, which I am appointed to meet, thirteen are new members, and I believe each of them more or less awaking to newness of life. My soul is greatly enlarged in faith and prayer for them. In this sense I do bear the burden of the Lord, and I can say it is my meat and drink to do his will, and to come out to his help in the good cause. Several who are not yet joined with us are very desirous of enjoying our privileges, and I believe will soon have strength to make a valiant stand against the world. Many adversaries are risen up, but the Lord instructs and leads his feeblest followers on. And I am fully persuaded we shall see greater things than these.

Many young ones enquire the way to Zion, and are put in separate classes.

I have been lately thinking how little we know or can understand of God's designs respecting us in future, and that we must patiently wait for events to discover the meaning of some of his secret instructions. All the beginning of the year, when I was closely confined in nursing my dear parent, those words very frequently occurred to my mind, 'I will find thee work to do.' I believed they referred to some spiritual work, but I generally applied them to some *one* person. Though I am now persuaded they were prophetic of the present time and season. Here is now a full harvest, plenty of employ, and I am only pained that I have not more leisure to give full scope to my desires. But I am resolved to make all I can for such a noble purpose.

Blessed be God, his mercy is still abundant toward me in strengthening and instructing me. Last Sunday, before sacrament, I was entreating him for an establishing portion and fresh seal of the Spirit in that ordinance (which is ever a precious means unto me) and I opened my Prayer Book on John 14:15–17, which were all applied with much power and sealed on my heart. At the moment of receiving the bread these words were given me with divine unction, 'I have sealed thee unto the day of eternal redemption.'<sup>2</sup>

O that I may walk as one whom the Lord hath redeemed and sealed for his own!<sup>3</sup> The words in St. John are the subject of my mediation and prayer, and (in some sense) the object of my faith and hope. I consider them as containing the great gospel privilege of believers. I have not a doubt but the Spirit of truth may, and will be, the constant resident of my heart (if I grieve him not) inspiring me with wisdom, strength, and consolation. I am, dear sir, with much duty and affection,

Your child and obliged servant,

A. B.

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 387–89.

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<sup>1</sup>See Bolton to JW, July 31, 1783.

<sup>2</sup>See Eph. 4:30.

<sup>3</sup>See 1 John 2:6.

From Ann Bolton

Witney  
September 16, 1783

Reverend and Dear Sir,

My heart is full of joy, and longs its glorious matter to declare. I am still favoured with being the messenger of good tidings unto you. The Lord is visiting his people with the blessing of peace.

On Sunday evening, while my brother [Edward] was preaching, an old member in society was made partaker of that grace that bringeth full salvation, and her testimony is undoubtedly received. It being our annual feast, he preached again last evening from John 15:5. At which time a sincere mourner found peace. Her mistress (who is an earnest seeker, but not in society), hearing of it, came to me in the utmost distress, her soul panting for a sense of pardon, as the hart for the water brook.<sup>1</sup> I took her into my room, endeavoured to comfort and prayed with her, then gave her the most suitable book I could and promised to bear her on my mind.

This morning, at my first waking, those words were given me, 'I will heal the broken in heart, and let the captives go free.'<sup>2</sup> My hope was greatly enlivened respecting my own enlargement of heart for the mourners in Zion. And this evening, while my brother was preaching, the above mourner was greatly comforted, and her sorrow evidently turned into joy unspeakable. Afterward, in meeting my class, another of our new members testified that the Lord had forgiven her iniquity while a friend prayed with her two days ago.

In conversing with several of our members, I find in them a thirst for the full redemption of God's Israel. There seems to be a peculiar dispensation of the Spirit gone forth, as a refining fire. The people see a great light and are attentive thereto, and I do not doubt but a much greater will be manifested unto them. One of our new members who was clearly justified a few weeks since now believes that God has purified his heart. His manner of expressing himself is thus, that he has an assurance that all he has is given up to God, and all that God has to bestow is *his*.

Among the young boys whom my brother meets, one of about twelve years of age gives an undeniable testimony of his having received pardon and peace. Such a class of youths and another of young maidens is rarely seen. Most, if not all of them, are under fifteen.

I praise God my own soul partakes largely of the refreshing dews of heaven, and sits under the shadow of the Almighty with renewed ardour and sacred delight. The word of truth is very precious, and in endeavouring to help others my own soul is fed with the bread of life. I hope to be remembered by you at the throne of grace, and to be instructed by you at your leisure. Which will be gratefully acknowledged by

Your ever obliged servant,

A. B.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 441–42.

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<sup>1</sup>See Ps. 42:1.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Isa. 61:1; Luke 4:18.



From Francis Asbury<sup>1</sup>

West Jersey  
September 20, 1783

Reverend and Very Dear Friend,

Since I wrote to you from [New] York,<sup>2</sup> I have been travelling through various parts of west Jersey. We have within these three years past made large strides east and west Jersey. In the most public and some of the extreme parts a few hundreds have joined us, of different denominations. We are much beset with a mixed people, warm for their own peculiarities in doctrines and forms. I could not have thought that reformed churches had so much policy and stubborn prejudices. No means are left untried to prevent us. But we know and feel that God is with us. I fear the prospects of peace and prosperity unnerve our zeal for God. There appeared to be a more visible work of God in the Jerseys last year than there is this; though I hope believers are in some measure faithful. It is a time of general sickness and mortality in most parts near the water.

I heard yesterday of the death of a man who twenty years ago was a Baptist preacher. By something wrong in his conduct he was silenced, and backslided from God; yet retained his Calvinian principles, and disputed continually with our preachers and people. Last spring he died, recanted his opinions, and desired it might be written. But the people around him would not do it. He confessed it was his resting upon, and disputing about, his notions that prevented his seeking and obtaining the restoring grace of God. I was told the Baptist minister refused to preach his funeral sermon, because he died a heretic to their faith.

I see clearly that the Calvinists on one hand, and the Universalians on the other, very much retard the work of God—especially in Pennsylvania and the Jerseys. For they both appear to keep people from seeking heart religion. Maryland does not abound with Calvinism. But in Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Georgia the Baptists labour to stand by what they think is the good old cause. I think you ought always to keep the front of the *Arminian Magazine* filled with the best pieces you can get, both ancient and modern, against Calvinism. They may be read by future generations.

Is Methodism intended for the benefit of all denominations of reformed Christians? Can a Quaker, as well as a member of any other church be in society, and hold his outward peculiarities, without being forced to receive the ordinances? It is well known that all Dissenters, when any of their members join us, turn them out. This is done out of policy, to get them from us altogether. But they will be tired of this when they suffer by it.

I reverence the ordinances of God, and attend them when I have opportunity. But I clearly see they have been made the tools of division and separation for these three last centuries. We have joined with us at this time those that have been Presbyterians (Dutch and English), Lutherans, Mennonites,<sup>3</sup> low Dutch, and Baptists. If we preach up ordinances to these people, we should add, 'if they are to be had; and if not, there can be no guilt.' If we do any other way, we shall drive them back to their old churches that have disowned them, and who will do all they can to separate them from us.

The friendly clergy are located and do but little for us. If young men of our connection should get ordained, it will not do well. No person can manage the lay preachers here so well, it is thought, as one that has been at the raising of the most of them. No man can make a proper change upon paper, to send one here and another [there], without knowing the circuits and the gifts of all the preachers, unless he is always out among them.

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<sup>1</sup>Asbury is writing JW fully aware that the war between Britain and the North American colonies was officially over, with the signing of the Treaty of Paris on Sept. 3, 1783. He is seeking (and offering) advice on how Methodists in the newly founded United States should proceed.

<sup>2</sup>Asbury was in New York Aug. 25–31, 1783; no letter at this time is known to survive.

<sup>3</sup>Orig., 'Menonests'.

My dear sir, a matter of the greatest consequence now lies before you. If you send preachers to America, let them be proper persons. We are now united. All things go on well, considering the storms and difficulties we have had to ride through. I wish men of the greatest understanding would write impartial accounts. For it would be better for us not to have preachers than to be divided. This I know, great men that can do good, may do hurt if they should take the wrong road. I have laboured and suffered much to keep the people and preachers together. And if I am thought worthy to keep my place, I should be willing to labour and suffer till death for peace and union. If I should be spared, I purpose to write and tell me your mind with great freedom, if your confidence is the same with respect to me as it formerly has been. I am, as ever,

Yours in Christ,

F. A.

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 385–87.

From William M'Cornock (autobiography)<sup>1</sup>

Clones  
October 1, 1783

Reverend Sir,

According to your request, I have sent you the following account of my progress through this howling wilderness. I confess it is with much shame and confusion of face that I do it, considering what a poor return I have made to him whose goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life.

I was born in the year 1746. My father perceiving I had a tolerable genius for learning, purposed to have me qualified for the Church. To that end he put me to learn Latin. But my master resigning the school, I desisted from making any farther progress in that branch of learning. And as I had an aversion to seriousness, my chief turn was to travel abroad, to see foreign countries, and to become rich in the world. But finding an unwillingness in my father that I should go abroad, it deterred me in some measure. Yet I could not content myself with living at home, as I feared it would be burdensome to him if I lived an idle life with him. I therefore opened a school about seven miles from Donegal. But my father, hearing some disagreeable accounts of me, caused me to leave that place.

Sometime after, I had been surveying land about twenty-four miles from my father's house when I met with a gentleman who had two sons whom he intended to instruct in the mathematics, who prevailed on me to stay with him for a time to instruct them. Accordingly I continued with him about a year and a half. For the first half year I scarce ever went to bed sober. I also found frequent temptations to other sins which I had not yet fallen into, which caused me often to retire and pour out my soul to God for mercy. But this conviction did not continue long, for drinking, and evil company soon destroyed it.

In April 1767, I went to Lord Sudley's, near Ballina, in order to get his interest for a commission in the Revenue—which he promised me, but requested that I would continue with him to instruct his brother in the mathematics till an opportunity offered of getting a commission for me. But as I did not like to stay there, I went from thence to Dublin. Having continued a few weeks there, and spent what money I had, I met a merchant from my own country, who defrayed my expenses back to my father's house.

The spring following I went with an intent to put Lord Sudley in mind of his promise. But he had set off for France. I then returned back, and in my way called to see a gentleman who lived between Sligo and Ballina. He had four sons and a daughter who lived at home with him, who expressed a desire that I should stay with them for some time. So I continued there half a year. But the young men being so extremely wicked, I did not choose to follow their example. I therefore left them and returned home in November 1768. As I intended to go to England, and from thence to the West Indies, I set off in the spring following with a cousin of mine, who was bound for England. But not letting my father know my design, I pretended to go only about twenty miles off to an astronomer, who had stationed himself at a place called Glenlee, to make his observations on the planets. My father consented to this, as he knew I had a desire to improve myself in mathematical studies. But after I was gone, thinking I intended to go farther, he followed me and found me on the road to Newry. On this I returned back with him, but my cousin went for England.

Soon after I went to Ballinamallard and taught bookkeeping for about a quarter of a year, and then returned home. The next year I went to Killaghtee, about eight miles from Donegal, and kept a mathematical school for about three quarters of a year. I then returned home again and amused myself for some time with making statues, which were very entertaining to myself and others. I had made some that would cause a person, at a few yards distance, to think they were alive. Some I made of cement and wood, others of lead. I made their eyes of glass, which appeared very natural, and for hair on the eyelids I had

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<sup>1</sup>William M'Cornock (1746–89), a native of Ireland, first appears in the *Minutes* in 1779, stationed on the Enniskillen circuit (see *Works*, 10:488). He served several circuits in Ireland before being sent by the 1788 Conference as a missionary preacher in the West Indies (10:668). He died there the following year; see John Crump to JW, Aug. 12, 1789.

some silver wire. While in the midst of these employments, I was sorely afflicted with a fever, and vowed to God to lead a new life, if he would spare me. But when I was recovered, I became more wicked than ever.

In April 1772 I again had a vehement thirst for travelling. I therefore set out to take another tour through Ireland, with a determination to commit wickedness with a high hand, for I thought I had been too quiet and sober. I also thought that if I did not take pleasure in my youth, I never should. Therefore I set off for Ballyshannon. But when I got there, I thought I was too near my father's house. I therefore resolved to go to Sligo. But when I had travelled about two miles, it began to rain, while the wind blew full in my face. I then resolved to return to Ballyshannon. When I got there, I met with a man who was going to Enniskillen the next day. I went with him, and took a liking to him, and proposed to become a partner with him in loss and gain while we remained in that town. He pretended to understand painting and gilding. But he was an extraordinary sinner. For he would drink to excess, then swear against it, and then break through all his oaths. At length I began to dislike his wickedness, and would not go such lengths therein. When I was going to the town I intended to teach writing an hour or two in each day. But he encouraged me to join him in drawing, etc. When the people of the town saw how wicked he was, they told me they would give me no business if I did not quit him. Accordingly I took their advice as soon as I could. Some weeks after, I set off for Clones races, and in my way, called at Macguiresbridge. I stayed there a few days, and fell into company with some spendthrifts, who heard me with pleasure ridicule the Methodists—as one who bore the name came into our company.

Notwithstanding this,<sup>2</sup> I went soon after to hear Mr. [Richard] Whatcoat, who preached at Lysederne. From thence I went to Clones. There I met with the man I ridiculed at Maguiresbridge. He took me to hear Dr. C— exhort. After that, I heard another exhort, who surprised me much when I was told he had but a small share of learning. This created in me a desire to converse with him. Soon after an opportunity offered, when he told me freely what manner of life he had lived, and what God had done for his soul. He told me that he had frequently gone to cockfights, horse races, etc., to join himself with the several sorts of wickedness that were to be found at such places; but not for the pleasure he saw in cockfighting or horse races, etc. He also told me he had heard the Methodists preach while he was in his wicked state, and that sometime after he began to think, if they spake the truth he must be damned. On which he resolved to turn from the evil of his ways. When the preachers came to Clones he was convinced more deeply that he was a hell-deserving sinner, and went out to desert places to weep and pray. At one time he went into a wood and prayed several times, but found no answer. He then resolved that if he did not get what the Methodists said was attainable, he would pray no more but become more wicked than ever. But soon after the Lord filled him with joy and gladness in believing, when all his troubles were done away.

When I heard this, I thought, if I should get such a blessing I should not think my journey here in vain. So I prayed to God for it with all my might. A little after, I heard Mr. [James] Perfect preach a farewell sermon at Clones. I never had seen people weep under sermons in such a manner before. I thought nothing, even the loss of all my relations, could make me weep. But under that sermon the word reached my heart with power. I sat on the ground with my soul deeply humbled, and got a discovery of my own sin and misery, and also of the riches of Christ. I now wept in great bitterness of spirit. Sometimes I grieved because I could not grieve enough for my transgressions, and found that nothing could satisfy me but the bread that cometh down from heaven. At times I had some hope that God would not cast me off forever, seeing he had given me a contrite heart. This I took as an earnest of future blessings, which emboldened me to continue importunate at the throne of grace. I usually went into the woods and lonely places, to pour out my soul in loud cries to God. One time a friend who lived in the country came to Clones and prayed with the society. I was exceedingly melted down. I never found so much distress for my sins before. I even sweat with a sense of the wrath of God abiding on me. I vehemently cried to him for mercy. But my grief only increased, until I was scarce able to rise from the

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<sup>2</sup>Note in original: 'My ridiculing the Methodists'.

ground. The next day I went with a friend into the country, thinking to find ease, but found none that day. Unbelief held me as fast as if I had been in an iron prison. I could say from the ground of my heart, 'O what is life without my God!' For I saw that ten thousand worlds without his friendship could not make me sound. Words cannot express the anguish and confusion I had.<sup>3</sup> All desire for meat and drink was gone.

Wednesday, October 21, I went into a wood, resolving not to leave it, neither to eat nor drink, till I found favour with God. While I was reading, and praying, and confessing my sins, it was suggested to me that I was well enough. I took hold of it, and went away to Clones. An acquaintance asking me how I was? I said, I am better. She desired me to examine myself whether I could love my greatest enemy? I found upon examination I could not, and resolved not to be satisfied in my present state. That night I prayed to the Lord to show me whether I was deceived, and soon found that I was not what I ought to be.

My distress was now so great that I even envied the brute creation, and looked upon all to be happy who found not the hell I felt. I was now incapable of following any business, and wandered about pressed down with guilt, so that I was scarce able to walk. Sometimes indeed I had endeavoured to commend myself to God by something I had done. But now I saw myself lighter than vanity, and all my righteousness as filthy rags. I saw my works were not sufficient to be my saviour, and that I was wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked. At night I was afraid to go to bed, lest I should open my eyes in hell-fire. But while I was meditating on my sins, these words came into my mind, 'If a son shall ask bread of any of you who is a father, will he give him a stone? Or if he shall ask a fish, will he give him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?'<sup>4</sup> I began to think I had either read or heard these words, but knew not where to find them. But ruminating a little, I thought, my earthly father would give me clothing if he saw me naked, though I had transgressed against him; and he would give me food if he saw me ready to faint with hunger. And will the Lord much more, or much readier, give his Holy Spirit to me? I believe he will. I now went to prayer in full confidence, and found it to be according to my faith. For I had not prayed long until the following words came unto me with power, 'I am thy righteousness.' I believed he was, and immediately all my distress was removed. The power of the most High overshadowed me, and the glory of the Lord shone into my soul. By faith I saw the Lord Jesus bleeding for me, and my sins were blotted out by his all-atoning blood, and I was enabled to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

If I had had the tongues of men and of angels I could not have expressed all the joy I felt. From this hour I began to live, and found the sanctifying influence of God's Spirit spiritualizing my nature. I had also a vehement desire to spend and be spent in the service of God. I was willing to go to and fro to call my fellow creatures to repentance, and thought nothing too hard to undergo for the sake of God, and those for whom Christ died.

The next day being the 23rd of October, I thought of going to Donegal to warn my neighbours to flee from the wrath to come. But my friends in Clones would not let me go till the 25th. I then set off, and called at a gentleman's house near Clones, and stayed there till the next morning. In the night there was card playing in the house; and I, being weary of such company, went out to the side of an orchard to pray. Instantly I heard a rushing as if robbers were shaking the trees. Immediately after, there was a great noise at my side, as if a log of timber was thrown into a pool of water. On examining, I found there was no pool near me. I then went to prayer, knowing that the Lord was on my side. From thence I went the next day to Pettigo, and called at a friend's house, where a servant girl mocked me when I came to it. While I prayed with the family she was convinced of sin, and soon after converted to God.

From thence I went to my father's house, when the people of the neighbourhood hardly knew me; as I was wasted almost to a skeleton, through grief of soul. The second night after I got home I told my mother and a young man (a cousin of mine) what the Lord had done for me, and exhorted them to seek

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<sup>3</sup>Orig., 'happy'; a misprint.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Luke 11:11–13.

the Lord, who was no respecter of persons. They both were deeply convinced of the evil of their ways, and wept exceedingly. The young man went away weeping. When he got home, he put the people into confusion by crying to God for mercy. He continued in great distress about six or seven months, and refrained from everything he thought was sinful, and betook himself to fasting, prayer, and reading the Bible. But his father took the Bible from him, and knocked him down with a club when he found him praying. But all to no effect. At last he got a popish priest to him, in order to cure him (for he supposed he was bewitched by me). The priest directed him to go to a holy well, and perform a station there, and from thence to Lough Derg, a place remarkable for performing stations. He did so. And when he came home he could ridicule the ways of God, curse and swear, and get drunk, as fast as ever!

A few days after I went to my father's house he sent for an old friar to cure me, thinking I was bewitched. But the friar did not come to me. It was the common report through the country that I was mad, seeing I would not get drunk and go on in folly like the rest of his neighbours. For some time they did not know what sect I belonged to. Some thought I was a Quaker, others that I was of some other sect. Until a man came to the town who was a Methodist and sent for me, then they found out what I was.

As there were none I knew of who were truly acquainted with God, for thirty miles on one side, and nine or ten on the other, I was like a sparrow on the housetop, without any to converse with. So that my soul was pressed down with grief.

When my father perceived such a change in my conduct, it grieved him much. For I could not give him and his guest a cheerful countenance, while I saw them crucifying the Lord who bought them with his blood.

As my father kept a public house, I had many temptations to drunkenness. But though even my father himself, and many of my relations, have often endeavoured to entice me, it was to no purpose. For the Lord still gave me the victory. Yet while I lived there I was almost continually distressed, on beholding such scenes of wickedness from day to day. And I wonder how I stood it for four or five years! Indeed on the Sabbath I frequently left home early, and in general did not return till night.

One Sabbath a travelling man asked me to put his burden on his back. I did so. But I found much condemnation for it, and thought I could never again reprove a person for sin after what I had done myself. But mentioning it to a friend, she was instrumental in restoring me to my former comfort before I returned home.

When I got there, though my study was to please my father in all things lawful, yet if I went to worship God according to my conscience, all my labour was in vain. My relations advised him not to give me anything, which he often threatened. One time he promised me a freehold if I would quit the Methodists. On asking one whom I looked upon as a Christian friend what I should do, he said, 'Stick close to your father. It is not easy to get such a settlement.' But as I was going away the word of the Lord came unto me saying, 'Escape for thy life! Stay not, lest thou be consumed!' On which, I determined to follow God at all events.

Several times my father discharged me from his house; on which I have gone away, and stayed till I grew hoarse with preaching. When I returned, I frequently reprov'd those who transgressed the law of God, which drove many of them away. Sometimes I would pray with them. And as I had an opportunity, every day I said something for God.

One night a stranger who was gone to bed, hearing me at prayer, came down and was convinced of sin that night. Two or three years after I met with him about forty miles from that place, and found him rejoicing in the favour of God. Soon after I heard that he died happy.

At another time, when I came home there was a poet repeating some of his vain songs and poems, and cursing most horribly. I asked him if he was going to storm the gates of hell, and to pull damnation down upon his head directly? As I spoke in a very harsh tone, he seemed as if he had been thunderstruck, while the tears flowed from his eyes. When I ceased speaking, he desired me to speak on; and said he had heard the ministers of the established Church, the Dissenters, and Methodists, but none ever touched his heart before. He also said he believed the Lord had sent me to turn him from the evil of his ways. He then went to bed very serious, and seemingly broken-hearted. But what became of him afterwards, I cannot tell.

I met with another one time and reproved him. He also was melted into tears, and said he would go with me wherever I went. But as I was travelling to a strange country, and knew not where to lay my head, I was obliged to leave him. This man was a papist.

As I was travelling from Newtownstewart to Brocksborrow, I stopped at a place called the Mountain-top, where there was to be a watch-night that night. I began to preach about seven o'clock in the evening. And when I had continued about three quarters of an hour I was obliged to desist, the cries of the people being so great. They continued weeping and calling upon God till about 5:00 in the morning. Then I finished my discourse, and they parted a little before sun rising. There were some convinced of sin that night, and I think, three or four converted.

About ten days after I went home, I met with one of the most wicked men in the country. As soon as I began to speak to him about godliness, he seemed surprised, and after a few minutes hastened away to tell his wife what strange things he had heard. His wife sending him for me, I went and spoke to her about our common salvation. In about a quarter of an hour she was convinced of her lost condition, and cried to the Lord for mercy; and in a short time was truly converted to God.

A little after, her husband told me that his mother and aunt wanted to see me. I told him they might come to his house that night, and if any of the neighbours would choose to hear me, they might come also. The people hearing that I was mad, about the number of three or fourscore came to see and hear me. While I exhorted them to flee from the wrath to come, they paid much attention—but in particular one who was resolved to know whether I was mad or not. In a short time he went away convinced that he was an unbeliever, and soon after found a sense of the favour of God. In about six weeks he began to preach the gospel, and about three years after, died in the favour of God.

The Lord having thus raised up such a notorious sinner to bear witness to what I had declared, encouraged me to speak boldly for him. Indeed I did not often trouble my neighbours to send for me, but went of my own accord to call them to repentance. And while some of them laughed at me, others were melted into penitential sorrow, and in about two years there were thirty of them converted.

When the society was in some degree established near Donegal, I went and preached at a place called Drimanerigh, and got a society of about twenty members; some of whom were converted to God. Then I went to a place about six miles west from Donegal, and raised a small society there, of about fifteen members. I then passed over a mountain about seven or eight miles broad, and preached to a congregation of papists, who hearing me with great attention, smote on their breasts, wept exceedingly, and went away returning me thanks for my instructions. I then went to Deoren, and preached there once a fortnight for about two years. In the third year, on proposing to them to join in society, I got a few at first. The number increased till there was above thirty, who in a short time were most of them converted to God. Then I went to a place called Ballycalone. After I had preached there three or four years about fifty were converted in that place.

In 1779, at Mr. Wesley's request, I travelled, part of the year in the Enniskillen, and part in the Sligo circuits. I had some trials in the beginning of this year. But towards the latter end my soul was exceeding happy, on seeing God adding to his church daily. While I was in the Sligo circuit I went to many places where the people never heard a Methodist before, and was kindly received. I also went out of the circuit above twenty miles to Ballina and Killala, where the people seemed well pleased to hear the word of the Lord.

That year we got some footing in Enniskillen; for there were a few joined in society. But though we were much threatened by the inhabitants of the town, they did us no harm. In a place called Drumbullion we got upwards of forty members in society, and in about seven or eight months thirty of them were converted. Our number increased that year at Florence Court from about twelve to threescore; and also near Sligo the increase was rather greater.

In 1780, I was appointed for Clones circuit, but was soon removed from that to Charlemont. A few days after I went there I was told that there was a family who had most of their furniture tossed to and fro, by an invisible hand; that some things were taken away for some days, and then returned; that some clothes had been taken away, and left hanging down from the roof of the house. They told me that once the crock was thrown at one of the women of the house, and also a noggin with water; also that a young

man was thrown out of bed in the next house. This continued for five or six weeks, until a neighbouring gentleman told them that they should be troubled so no more. The people supposed it was occasioned by that gentleman's servant, who declared that he and the devil would vex the people of that house.

In 1782 I was sent into the Lisleen circuit. In October I took a tour of about a hundred and thirty miles, in order to raise some new societies. But the weather being very stormy, I suffered much in a strange country. Once I had to swim my horse over two arms of the sea. And over one I went in a boat made of horse skins. Afterwards I had to ride about twenty miles. But my horse wanting both his fore-shoes, I could not get forward. So that I was benighted on a mountain where I did not see a house for many miles. At length I heard a dog bark, which conducted me to a house where I was comfortably entertained. I gave an exhortation, and prayed with the people of the house, and some strangers that lodged there that night, and have reason to hope it was not in vain.

In 1783 I was again sent into the Clones circuit. But nothing material has happened since I came here. However, the preachers and I are united to each other in the bonds of love, and we are agreed to do all we can to pull down the strongholds of sin and Satan.

As to myself, I have cause to adore the Author of my being, that ever since I knew him as a reconciled God, I have had a strong desire to press on in the way to heaven; and have also (though very imperfectly) endeavoured to say or do something for God daily. But yet I see how much I have left undone, which fills me with shame and sorrow of heart, and continues to humble me in the dust before him.

Thus sir, I have given you an imperfect account of myself; and in return beg an interest in your prayers, and hope you will believe me when I subscribe myself, reverend and dear sir,

Yours most affectionately,

W. M'Cornock

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 8 (1785): 16–19, 77–80, 135–39, 186–89.



From Jonathan Hern

Manchester  
October 14, 1783

Thomas Slater was from a child piously inclined. He constantly attended the service of the Church, and was diligent in reading his Bible and other good books. When he was an apprentice, he frequently stayed up great part of the night, or rose at four o'clock in the morning, to read and pray. For this and such like exercises he was persecuted by those about him. But this only tended to make him more diligent in what he believed to be his duty. So careful was he not to omit any known duty, that if at any time he had been called away by business in the morning, before he had time for prayer, he was sure to embrace the first opportunity, even though it had been in the open air.

About this time he began to attend the preaching, and about three years ago was convinced of the necessity of a change of heart; and that not all his reading, praying, and attendance upon the worship of God would be of any avail unless he was born again. He now began to seek the Lord in good earnest. And in order to have more frequent opportunities, he made application to be received into the society. He was permitted to meet in class a few times upon trial. But notwithstanding he had always been moral in his conduct, and was now convinced of the absolute necessity of an inward change, he had never been convinced of the sinfulness of following his business (hair dressing) on a Sunday. His class leader found this out, and told him he must lay it entirely aside or he could not be admitted as a member of the society. He was no sooner told of it than he saw into its sinful nature. And though he saw the consequence would be the loss of his business, he nobly resolved to sacrifice his all, for the sake of God and a good conscience. He therefore told his customers, one by one, 'I will not dress any hair on the Lord's day.' It happened as he foresaw it would, that most of them were offended and told him; 'Then you must not dress us at all.' But he, nothing moved, resolved rather to suffer the loss of all things than sin against God. A few days after he had made this sacrifice, the Lord spoke peace to his soul, and gave him the witness of the Spirit that he was born of God. He could now rejoice in the Lord with joy unspeakable, and from that day to the day of his death, he steadily pursued the one thing needful and adorned the gospel by a holy life and unblameable conversation.

He was now married, and as his business failed he was reduced to great straits. Nevertheless he still cast his care upon God, resolving rather to do the meanest drudgery than forfeit his favour. He therefore did the little business he had to do, and in order to procure a livelihood cheerfully submitted to assist a friend in mending shoes. But notwithstanding all his diligence, he frequently knew not where to get a meal to eat. However he still trusted in God. His usual expression in such cases was, 'The Lord will provide.'

One instance out of many may be sufficient to show how well his faith was grounded. Being in the room with his wife, she asked, 'What shall we do for a little food?' He replied, 'I do not know, my dear'; and then added, 'The Lord will provide.' Just then a stranger came in to have his hair dressed, and on going away gave him enough to provide food for that and the following day.

But the Lord did not permit him to be long in this situation. For having tried and found him faithful, he caused his business to return again, so that he had more than he could possibly do himself. He was frequently solicited to shave and dress on the Sabbath-day but he constantly refused, even when tempted to it by those on whom a great part of his living depended.

Since Christmas last, he had been unusually earnest for a nearer union with God. Sometimes he has prayed till his bodily strength was quite exhausted. His faith was strong and permanent, and his soul constantly panted after all the salvation of God.

A few months ago, he was seized with a diabetes, which threw him into a consumption. In his affliction he never murmured, but was perfectly resigned to the divine will, whether for life or death. A few days before his demise he was removed into the country for the benefit of the air. But his disorder becoming very violent, he was obliged to take his bed—still rejoicing in the God of his salvation. On the Sunday before his death his wife asked him, 'My dear, do you now love God?' He replied, 'I do. I love

him with my whole heart.' He then added, 'Sing that hymn',

Come let us join our cheerful songs,  
With angels round the throne.<sup>1</sup>

Many of our friends came to visit him that day, when his conversation was so full of heaven that it was made a blessing to their souls. Several of whom testified that they never had seen anyone so happy before. His body grew weaker and weaker. But his consolations grew stronger and stronger, till on Monday the 15th of August, a little before 10:00 in the forenoon, without a sigh or a groan, he sweetly slept in Jesus.

Jonathan Hern

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 8 (1785): 197–99.

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<sup>1</sup>Isaac Watts, 'Christ Worshipped by all Creatures', in *CPH* (1738), 34.

From an Unidentified Correspondent

Edinburgh  
October 25, 1783

Reverend and Ddear Sir,

I most sincerely congratulate you upon your recovery,<sup>1</sup> in being once more given to the prayers of God's people, I doubt not for wise and good purposes. I hope the Lord has much to do with you, and by you yet, before he calls you to receive your full reward. I am glad to find your excursion to Holland has been so comfortable and profitable.<sup>2</sup> How desirable is it to spend and be spent for God, and to be enabled to increase your labour instead of diminishing them, as you advance in years. Surely this must be of the Lord, and may well be wondrous in your eyes.

What cannot faith and prayer effect! Through mercy I feel much of the sweetness and profit of the latter, and pant to prove the utmost power of the former. For some time past I have not enjoyed much comfort, but have been struggling into God, following hard after him for all he is willing to bestow. To *this* I seem drove by a hasty necessity, feeling more and more of the emptiness of all created good, and being more and more full persuaded of the fullness that is in God. It seems as if I could not live at this poor dying rate. The small taste I have of the goodness of the Lord has quite spoiled my relish for worldly satisfactions. Indeed it is an enjoyment of such a superior nature to what earthly good can bestow—so much more delicate, yea exquisite, that is has proved a great preservative against the pleasing baits and dangerous temptations of the world.

Yet sometimes I have been tempted to think I was mistaken in this point, and that it was rather owing to great shyness of temper, and perhaps a degree of pride, that I was so little disposed to unite with the generality of people I met with, or to be made happy by those things that many others were perfectly satisfied with. It is no doubt of consequence to have this matter cleared up, and to be fully ascertained from which of the above causes these effects flow. But I feel quite unable to determine the point, nor do I believe any but God himself could fully satisfy me. I shall be glad to hear that all the effects of your late disorder are gone, that your soul prospers as the palm tree, and your labours grow more and more successful. I am reverend and dear sir,

Your faithful, humble servant.

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Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 161–62.

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<sup>1</sup>From his illness in early Aug. 1783.

<sup>2</sup>JW's trip to Holland ran fro May 12 to July 1, 1783; see *Journal*.

From Dorothy (Furly) Downes

Leeds  
November 5, 1783

Reverend Sir,

Blessed, forever blessed be the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who of the abundant love he still bears to his church, bought with the blood of his own Son, raised you up from the gates of the grave, and gave us of this place to enjoy once more the benefit of your ministry, and made it a particular blessing among us. May he still continue your useful life, and may you likewise receive of the reward promised to those who turn many to righteousness!

Glory be to the Lord, though as to the body I still live a dying life and in expectation of a *sudden* call into eternity, yet through the Spirit of my gracious Redeemer I live saved with respect to the inner man—saved from all fear that hath torment, either with regard to time or eternity. For though I find Satan, who well knows where I am weak and where he has so often overcome, levels most of his temptations to discourage; yet by looking unto Jesus, instead of reasoning with the enemy and my own heart, I am more than conqueror. For I have long observed that evil reasoning poisons the simplicity of the soul, damps the spirit of praise, and makes prayer a burden by strengthening unbelief. And though I am compassed about with innumerable mental infirmities and weaknesses that are very humbling and make it needful I should have more patience with myself than with any about me, yet blessed be the Lord, I find he looks with pity upon me, and does not disdain to bless me—when I might rather expect, did I not know the love he has to the workmanship of his own hand, that he would cast me off.

Thus tenderly and graciously does my reconciled Father in Christ Jesus deal with me desolate, and cause the broken heart to rejoice, yea oftentimes with joy unspeakable and full of glory, from foretastes of that glory that shall be revealed, and is already begun in present salvation. Then shall even unworthy I be your crown of rejoicing, and praise the Lord to all eternity that brought me under your ministry. Blessed Jesus, say amen! I am, reverend sir, with grateful esteem,

Your ever obliged servant,

D. D.

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 15 (1792): 276–77.

From Mary (Walsh / Leadbetter) Gilbert<sup>1</sup>

[St. John's] Antigua  
November 20, 1783

Dear and Reverend Sir,

I have just received your much valued favour, and desire to return thanks to heaven, and to you reverend sir, for being so good to remember a poor exile. I often marvel at the inextricable ways of providence, who hath been my support throughout the devious dreary path. O that I may be faithful unto death, and fill some humble place in those blest regions where you will doubtless shine as the stars forever and ever!

The care of the great Shepherd over the little flock in this place, was truly obvious in sending them so steady and affectionate a preacher, at a time when they were as those whom no man cared for.<sup>2</sup> If it had not been for so timely an interposition a few would have gone to the Moravians, others to their primeval darkness, and perhaps their last state had been worse than their first.

With respect to myself, it was my temporal affairs that impelled me to explore this coast again. Had the estate duly paid my annuity, etc., I should have rested in my native clime, and quietly enjoyed the means of grace which I so highly prize. But God hath his way in the whirlwind. I did not know that he had anything for me to do in his vineyard, nor could suppose that he would use so mean an instrument. But my work was provided. The preacher here is truly labourious, and spends every Sabbath in town [i.e., at St. John's] in preaching, exhorting, and instructing. But his secular employment circumscribes his sphere of action all the week besides at the English Harbor, which is twelve miles distant. I was therefore on my arrival immediately called upon to supply his lack of service on weekdays in town, not only in meeting Classes, etc., but for further instruction. It is not with the poor blacks as with the natives of Britain's favoured isle who, having the Bible in their hands and being able for themselves to search the sacred records, can scarce conceive the hunger and thirst for divine knowledge, expressed by a poor Negro when he has learned that the soul is immortal, and when he is under the operation of awakening influences.

My house is opened for any that will attend at family-prayers every day. And I have one evening in every week for public reading the Scriptures, when I have a very large congregation both of whites and blacks. The novelty brought many of the genteeler sort at first, and I have reason to believe that they are now impelled by a better motive. Before each great festival I set apart several days for reading, and explaining the meaning and end to which it points. Something of this kind appears to be necessary amongst a poor people, who have everything to learn, not knowing in these respects their right-hand from their left. And it may in a peculiar manner be said of this place that 'The harvest is plenteous, and the labourers few.'<sup>3</sup>

Mr. [John] Baxter preached for the first time on our own premises on the 8th of this instant, when the Lord gave a peculiar blessing and token for good. Many were so deeply affected that after service was ended they could not stir from the place, but continued, some in earnest cries, others in fervent praises, pouring out their hearts to God, while showers of tears ran down their black faces.

God does indeed hear prayer. He has exempted us from hurricanes, and given us plenty of fruitful showers at this season. Though we have had some awful and uncommon thunder and lightening, more dreadful than can be remembered here by the oldest inhabitants. And though the frequent shocks of earthquakes make them in general not so terrible to people of this place, yet this year we have had them severer than usual, so as to be taken notice of in the newspapers. All these things have their use on the

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<sup>1</sup>As she explains in this letter, Mary had returned from England to Antigua after the death of her husband Francis Gilbert in 1779, to insure she was supported by the Gilbert family estate.

<sup>2</sup>John Baxter; see his letters to JW of Apr. 16, 1778 and June 10, 1779.

<sup>3</sup>Matt. 9:37.

minds that have learned to fear that great and terrible name, the Lord their God. And doubtless some stout hearts have trembled.

Through the power of divine grace I hope my soul experiences some degree of establishment. Amidst the fluctuations of providence, and all the awful phenomena of nature, still Jesus is my shield and my defence. He is a tried corner of stone, and precious. Pardon, reverend and dear sir, this tedious epistle, too long to engross your valuable time, and permit me to subscribe myself

Your affectionate daughter in the gospel,

M. G.

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 443–45.

From William Collins

Sunderland  
November 21, 1783

Thomas Perks was a nailer by trade, and lived in the skirts of the city of Dublin. The outside of his house had but a middling appearance. But the inside was so neat, and everything in such order, that it led me to take notice of it to his wife. On which she said, 'Yes, things are greatly altered since my good man has turned to the Lord. We now enjoy comfort in soul and body, thanks be to God!' She then told me that her husband had so reduced her by drinking that she had no clothes to cover her, nor a pot to boil their victuals in (when she could get any); no, nor so much as a bed to lie on, save a little straw!

I then desired him to tell me how he was brought to God. He said,

My besetting sin was drunkenness, which was the inlet to all vice. Once I had made a promise to drink only half a pint of wine in a certain place. When I had drank it off, I found a very strong desire for more. I hesitated a little on the consequence of daring to break my promise to God. But evil desire prevailed, and I desperately called for another. Just as the last drop went down, the devil possessed me in an unusual manner. I went home like a fiend, and accused my own son (about fourteen years old!) of being vile with his mother. I then caught him by the throat, and would have strangled him, only his mother rescued him; for which I knocked her down, and used her in the most barbarous manner.

When I had wearied myself, I went to bed and fell asleep. My wife then took the opportunity to crawl in beside me. In the night I was awakened by a conversation around me, which terrified me exceedingly. I heard one distinctly say, 'Here is Beelzebub coming!' I then muttered a prayer, and looking up, saw over me a great light, and a smiling person looking down upon me. Presently I heard a loud voice, at a distance, saying, 'Why do you not fetch him away?' While others said, 'We cannot; for he is praying.' I then cried in earnest to the Lord for mercy, on which they all vanished. On this I turned to my poor wife and entreated her to forgive me, and got upon my knees to entreat God for pardon—and in that manner continued till daylight. I then dressed myself and went out. But my wife thought it was only the fumes of the liquor which occasioned this alteration in my behaviour, and that I went out to get more that I might return and kill her. At the thought of which she was almost dead with fear, and knew not where to go, or she would have fled for her life. In the midst of this distress I returned with a little bread, butter, sugar, and coffee; and desired her to get up and make our breakfast. This was exceeding strange to her, and what she had not experienced for many years before. She therefore concluded that something more than common had happened to me. Since then the Lord has pardoned my sins, and I love him with all my heart, and serve him with all my strength.

After this he lived some years, diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord night and day. He continued to work at his business till he could earn only twopence [and a] halfpenny a day; which some of our friends knowing, desired him to cease from labour and they would maintain him. This he refused, saying, 'The society has expense enough without me.' So he continued to work till they were obliged to pull down his bellows and settled a weekly allowance on him. But such was his real love for good works that, though his allowance was small, he saved fourpence a week out of it for two poor widows, who for three years were not able to come downstairs. When he first offered this to them, they knowing his case, refused it. But he insisted on their taking it. So laying it down he went his way, saying, 'You have more need of help than I. For I have my feet to walk on, but you are the Lord's prisoners.'

W. Collins

From John Haime<sup>1</sup>

Whitchurch  
November 21, 1783

This woman, who had long heard the gospel to little purpose, was taken ill after last midsummer. In her affliction, being greatly alarmed, she began to think seriously of her latter end and to pay more regard to the word of God than she had formerly done. By the blessing of God on these means, she soon saw what a deplorable condition she was in; as being without Christ, without hope, and without God in the world! This discovery so exceedingly alarmed her that she could not rest night or day. On this she sent for my wife, who spoke freely to her of the way of salvation. When she heard of the love of God in Christ Jesus, and that we are saved by grace through faith, she cried mightily to God to show her his mercy, and to save her for Christ's sake. In a short time the Lord answered her, by speaking peace to her soul. On this she rejoiced exceedingly, and praised God from the ground of her heart. She told all who came to see her what God had done for her, and exhorted everyone who did not experience the same not to rest till they did. And those who did experience it, she exhorted to go on in the good way, loving and praising God with their whole heart.

About five days before her death, she thought she was dying. On which she called the woman who attended her, and said, 'Come and see me die! Be not afraid!' When it pleased God to revive her a little, she raised herself up in her bed, extended her arms wide open, and seemed to be swallowed up in divine transport! She then lay down again, and said, 'The Lord has finished his work in my soul!' Then throwing her arms open again, she steadfastly looked upward, like St. Stephen, and seemed for some moments to be engaged in deep and solemn prayer. Presently after, she clasped her hands—and closed her eyes—and went to God!

John Haim[e]

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 7 (1784): 248–49.

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<sup>1</sup>Titled: 'An Account of a Woman who died in the Lord, Nov. 7, 1783, in Whitchurch, Hampshire'.



From B. C.<sup>1</sup>

Bedford  
December 9, 1783

About two months before [William Burton's] last illness I met him at his sister's, rather in liquor. On seeing me he was rather ashamed and wept much, saying he was in the way to hell, and knew he was undone if he continued as he was.

On his mentioning a remarkable dream, I told him it was a warning from God, whose Spirit was still striving with him; and that if he cried for mercy, God would hear him and give him power over sin. On this he desired us to pray for him, and said, 'By the grace of God, I will begin to seek him. Though I fear there is no mercy for such a wretch as I am!' I then opened the Bible and read him several promises to returning sinners, with which he was encouraged. From that time he was a true penitent.

In the beginning of his illness he earnestly besought the Lord for mercy, and cried out, 'O Lord, cut me not down till thou hast spoke peace to my soul!' And with bitter cries and tears he said, 'If he cuts me off as I am, what must I do! Oh what must I do!' About three weeks before his death, the Lord spoke peace to his soul. On this, his heart was so full of gratitude and love that he could not help praising God aloud. He cried out, 'I love everybody; and if my arms were long enough, I could embrace all the world!'

After this he was under strong temptations at times, and did not retain that degree of joy he at first felt' but gave way to evil reasonings. He was brought even to doubt of his interest in Christ, and desired all around him to pray that God would give him a clearer evidence of his pardoning love. When my brother came to see him, he asked if he should sing a hymn; he replied, 'A thousand if you please!' He then read a hymn himself, and went to prayer; in doing which he was much refreshed, and said, 'I now believe God will hear me!' On Sunday morning his mother asked him how he did? He said, 'I have had a good night, and am full of joy and love.'

A little after 12:00 he called his parents to help him to praise God, who had in such a gracious manner revealed himself to his soul. 'O what shall I do', said he, 'to praise him! I am full of transport! I want Betsey and Samuel to help me to praise him.' Betsey then went to prayer with him. When I came in, he said, 'I wish you had been here just now. I thought I was going, and I felt such transporting joy that I hope I shall die in the next fainting fit.' I said, 'Do you now feel yourself happy?' 'O yes', said he, 'my heart is all joy, and love. I feel God all around me. My joy is so great that it is almost more than I can bear!' I asked if he thought he was near his end. He said, 'I do not know. I am quite easy. The will of the Lord be done. I was never easier.' By this time he could hardly speak for want of breath, but he seemed to enjoy the silent heaven of love. When he was struggling for life, I asked him if he was in pain. He said, 'No. All joy! All love!' He then desired to be turned in bed. After which he said, 'O come Lord Jesus! Now cut the thread of life, if it be thy blessed will!' He then said, 'O what shall I do my Saviour to praise!' with which words his happy soul took wing, and fled away!

B. C—

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 7 (1784): 642–44.

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<sup>1</sup>Titled: 'Some Account of the Death of William Burton'.

From John Pawson<sup>1</sup>

York  
December 13, 1783

Reverend and Dear Sir,

In my last I informed you of my dear wife's heavy and dangerous affliction.<sup>2</sup> And now I must inform you that pain, and sin, and sorrow with her are no more. Last Tuesday morning about seven o'clock, she sweetly fell asleep upon the bosom of her Redeemer without a sigh or groan, or any other distressing token, only she ceased to breath.

Her sufferings before this were inconceivable, such as I never saw, which she bore with amazing patience and entire resignation to the divine will. Never did a hasty word drop from her lips, nor did she seem to think that time moved too slow. I was with her night and day during the last three weeks of her life, and for thirteen nights never was in bed, or had my clothes off. So that I was a witness of all that passed. She had uninterrupted peace from first to last, and a constant, cheerful hope of a mansion in the skies.

O sir, this is a painful dispensation to me, I do assure you. What I have already passed through, none but God can tell. My wife, sir, was a most amiable woman. I have lost in her a most faithful constant friend, and a most affectionate wife. Indeed I do not know my loss. But through the mercy of God I am hitherto supported. She thought she saw your brother come to her one night all in white, and she believed he had not long to live. The good Lord bless and be with you, dear sir; so prays,

Your afflicted son in the gospel,

J. P.

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 497.

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<sup>1</sup>On the death of his wife, Grace (Davis) Pawson (1743–83).

<sup>2</sup>This letter is not known to survive.

Samuel Wesley (JW's nephew) to Mary Freeman Shepherd<sup>1</sup>

[London]

Friday, December 26 [1783], St. Stephen [Day]

Madam,

... [the opening part of the letter concern's Freeman Shepherd's attempt to help Samuel recover his Cremona violin that had been stolen]

It is my firm intention to visit France, in a few years at the most. But I will tell you one reason for staying here a little time first. You may perceive that my father expresses himself violently averse to my becoming a Catholic. As I have before said, we never enter on the subject of religion together. Therefore my sentiments '*manet alta mente repostum*' (Virgil).<sup>2</sup> If I was to consent to go abroad, he would immediately conclude that I *wished to profess myself a papist openly*. This I know would give him extreme uneasiness. I know his rooted prejudice against the Roman Church, and therefore should not wish to occasion him a moment's pain on that account.

This objection is what I have not before disclosed to you. But the force of it I am sure you must acknowledge. You may imagine the situation of one of your dearest friends renouncing the faith of his parents and embracing one directly opposite. A father must feel such a step sensibly. A clergyman of the Reformed Church particularly. I cannot act in opposition to my conscience, but I will not distress the author of my being by seeking such a step as I know would rob him of his comfort.

Believe me, dear madam,

Yours very sincerely,

S. Wesley

*Address*: "Miss Freeman / Dr. Sharps / Leigh Street / Red Lyon Square."

*Source*: holograph; Paris, Archives Nationales, S//4619, dossier 5.

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<sup>1</sup>The excerpt of this letter is included in this setting as background to JW's letters to Samuel Wesley and CW's other children in 1784 related to Samuel's 'conversion'.

<sup>2</sup>Virgil, *Aeneid*, i.26; "deep in the heart remain."

From George Shadford

Hull  
January 12, 1784

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Blessed be God we are in a prosperous way in many parts of this circuit. I believe we had such a love-feast at Hull as they have not seen for many years, on Christmas day last—such was the liberty in speaking, and the enlargement of heart, and the word was attended by the energy of the Holy Ghost. The class leaders find much of the presence of the Lord amongst these people when they meet them, and perceive in many an earnest hunger and thirst after righteousness. We have added in Hull betwixt thirty and forty new members; ten or twelve have found peace lately, and one or two found perfect love a few days back. I give God the glory, several have been convinced, and found peace with God whilst I in my poor way have been holding forth the words of life. Above a hundred and fourteen new members have been added since Conference in the whole circuit.

These good tidings, dear sir, you have respecting the circuit. But the greatest comfort to me is a 'thriving soul in a healthful body'.<sup>1</sup> I am continually with God. I can with humble confidence declare, through the tender mercies of my God, I enjoy a glorious victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil. I never did continually feel such a tendency to goodness, and such a habit of holiness wrought in my soul. I trust the whole stream of my affections goes out after God, the fountain of happiness. I am sorry to say this is greatly neglected amongst some of our leaders, who should be in earnest for it themselves, and should also press it upon others. The reason why many grow cold and decay is because they are not going on unto perfection. Dear sir, pray for me and my yoke-fellow, that we may be more and more useful in our day, our short day of probation, that all our future days whether many or few, may be spent to the glory of God.

I am, reverend sir,  
your unworthy son,

G. S.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 496.

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<sup>1</sup>Philip Doddridge, *Some Remarkable Passages in the Life of the Honourable Colonel James Gardiner* (London: Buckland & Waugh, 1747), 123.

From Joseph Charlesworth<sup>1</sup>

[Birstall]

January 13, 1784

We cannot but acknowledge your goodness in promising the land, and the money towards paying our debt, which will be two very convenient articles at this place, as we are in great want of both.

I am, reverend and dear sir, for and on behalf of the trustees,

Yours very affectionately,

Joseph Charlesworth

*Source:* published transcription; Tyerman, *John Wesley*, 3:382.

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<sup>1</sup>Joseph Charlesworth was one of the trustees of the preaching-house in Birstall. He was among those reluctant to adopt the 'model deed' for the new preaching-house; see JW, *Journal*, Sept. 5, 1783, *Works*, 23:289. But JW's offer to pay off their existing debt and provide the ground for the new house finally persuaded him.

From William Moore

Redruth  
January 22, 1784

A few days ago I visited John Thomas, of St. Just, in Cornwall. He is about sixty-two years of age, and has been a notorious drunkard the greatest part of his life.

He told me, that on Sunday, December 21, 1783, about seven o'clock in the evening, he left St. Crete, in order to go to St. Just. That as it was dark he missed his way, and about midnight fell into a pit about five fathoms deep.

On his being missing, his friends made diligent search for him, but to no purpose. The next Sabbath-day as one of his neighbours was going to seek his sheep, he saw at some distance the appearance of a man sitting on the bank which had been thrown up in digging the pit. On drawing near, he saw the apparition go round to the other side of the bank. When he came to the place, he could see no one, but heard a human voice in the bottom of the pit. Thinking that some smugglers had got down to hide their liquors, he went on; but coming back the same way, he again heard the voice. He now listened more attentively. And as he could hear but one voice, he concluded it was John Thomas, who was missing. And on calling to him, he found he was not mistaken. On this he went and got help, and soon got him out of the pit. But as he had been there near eight days, he was very low when he was got out; but is now in a fair way to do well.

In the bottom of the pit he found a small current of water, which he drank freely of. This, in all likelihood, was a means of keeping him alive. It is said, that several other persons saw the apparition, but took no notice of it.

As I am not fond of crediting stories of this kind on common report, I resolved to get the account from his own mouth.

William Moore

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 8 (1785): 649–50.

From Mary (Walsh / Leadbetter) Gilbert

Antigua  
February 7, 1784

Dear and Reverend Sir,

Since I had the pleasure of answering your last invaluable favour, a peculiar circumstance has happened amongst us.<sup>1</sup> And I persuade myself that the relation of it will not be unwelcome to you. A very old member of society in the city of Waterford in Ireland, who was too far advanced in years to follow his business, was with his wife wholly supported by the labour of two of his sons—whom, with the rest of his children, he had brought up in the fear of the Lord. Since the peace with America, some persons had persuaded these young men to think that if they went to that place they would infallibly advance to great fortunes.

From this time they became restless and dissatisfied, and earnestly solicited their parents to let them go. But the aged father and mother entreated them to stay till they had closed their eyes. They had too great a sense of their duty to act contrary to a parent's command, and too much affection to leave them destitute; though all this clashed with their will and supposed interest. Therefore, to harmonize the whole, they prevailed upon their old parents to accompany them to that unknown region. To effect this, as they had no money, the two young men indent[ur]ed themselves to a captain bound for Virginia, by whom they were to be sold when they arrived there for such a limited time as would satisfy him for their passage. And as the same terms were to be agreed on for their parents, who were unable to labour, each young man indent[ur]ed to be sold for a double term of years—that so the old people might go free.

The captain was a great villain, and by many abominable falsehoods led them into a snare from which none but an Almighty hand could rescue them. And I am led to say, as upon many other occasions, 'Great indeed is his faithfulness.' He would not leave nor forsake his servants, nor let filial duty go unrewarded. When they were about to embark, another of the old man's sons, with his wife, came to take a long farewell, but was so affected at their going that he could not leave them, and his wife consenting, he also indent[ur]ed himself, and they all bade adieu to their native land together.

No sooner were they at sea than they were treated like slaves indeed, suffering hardships unknown to the poorest common sailor that ever ploughed the ocean. They had a dreadful voyage from their first setting out (the vessel a small schooner), and when they drew near their destined port there arose a most violent storm, which carried away their mast and rigging, and eventually drove them to the West-Indies. And having sprung a leak, they strove to get into St. Kitt's. But not being able to make that port, they came a-floating miracle to our harbor, after having been at sea thirteen weeks. I did not read the distressed circumstances of the vessel, as related in the paper, without the feelings of humanity, but did not know that there was anything further in this providence.

The vessel staid for repair, and the poor passengers came on shore. And as I was standing in my shop the old man, who was there by himself, came in. I saw he was a stranger; decent, though poor. He informed me that he was one of the passengers, and that having been informed there were Methodists in this island, he wished to be directed to their preaching-house. A very religious friend coming in, we together asked him many questions, and found union of spirit with him. And as far as we can penetrate, he seems an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile. Our opinion of him is corroborated by the character given of him and his family's behaviour on board, by a young gentleman who was passenger. Neither can the captain (though his own behaviour will not bear the light) say any manner of evil of him. It pleased God to open many hearts towards them, so that they were soon accommodated with lodgings and every thing necessary.

The old man spoke much to the glory of God in our love-feast on Christmas day, when he particularly related that, when in the violence of the storm, they were shut down in the hatch-way, and everyone despaired of life, as he was silently waiting upon God it was said in his inmost soul, 'Fear not, I

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<sup>1</sup>JW's letter to her is not known to survive.

will bring thee to Zoar.' And such indeed our little isle has proved to them. Some ladies and one gentleman—of whom it may be said that he fears not God, nor regards man—have<sup>2</sup> joined to pay their passage. Now they are released from the captain, with whom, if they had proceeded, they would have found nothing but poverty and slavery. And one of the single sons is already fixed upon a gentleman's estate, with a salary of £16 per annum; the married son upon another at £70 per annum; and the other son is going, through Mr. [John] Baxter's interest, to be employed in the king's yard; and a lady of my acquaintance tells me she will set up the old couple in a shop.

In the meantime the old man has gifts and zeal, and will discretionally be employed in instructing the Negroes under Mr. Baxter's care, exhorting and leading class, etc. We look upon this as a mercy to us, who are many in number, and therefore cannot but heartily welcome a labourer. I am, reverend sir,

Your affectionate daughter in the gospel,

M. G.

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 499–501.

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<sup>2</sup>Orig., 'has'.



From Samuel Bardsley<sup>1</sup>

Congleton  
February 16, 1784

Reverend and very Dear Sir,

May Jacob's God bless you in your body, soul, and labours, Amen.

I esteem it one of my great mercies that your valuable life is spared to us and that you permit me to write and favour me with your good advice from time to time.

When I received the account of my being stationed at Macclesfield I was thankful to the Lord and you. However, when I came and found our friends so divided I was grieved, scarce knowing what to do. In this strait I prayed unto the Lord for wisdom, and I trust he heard me. I was desired to join a party. But as I have seen the dreadful consequences of forming parties among our people, I determined to avoid it and to labour for peace. I therefore went to them who were prejudiced against Mr. [James] Rogers and endeavoured to remove their prejudices. I found their kinds very sore. However, I persuaded some to come to hear him; and blessed be God, their minds are greatly changed for the better. Though they do not often hear him, as they have said so much to the contrary. I am really sorry that these things should happen, as I am fully persuaded they greatly hinder the work of God. I hope, honoured sir, the storms will blow over, and I trust we shall see better days than ever in this circuit.

Our friends both at Congleton and Macclesfield who have been offended have done much for God's cause, and they still love it. And if you, reverend sir, will look over anything you have thought wrong in them, and send them such preachers the next year as they love and esteem, they will do anything for them; and all our differences will be made up. Amen. Even so Lord Jesus! The people behave very kindly to me, and blessed be God, he frequently helps me to speak to them. I beg, dear sir, you will pray for us that we may more than ever see the good pleasure of the Lord prosper in our hands.

My mind has been much exercised on account of the affliction of dear Mrs. Rogers. She has behaved so well ever since I knew her that I have felt much on the occasion.<sup>2</sup> I hope the Lord will sanctify this dispensation of his providence to us all. She seems to be very near her heavenly home. The Lord supports her in a wonderful manner. Mr. Rogers stays with her constantly. We do tolerable well, as Mr. Evans takes his circuit.<sup>3</sup>

I bless God I have reason to believe that he is carrying on his good work in my soul, and I do desire so to walk and please him that the gospel be not blamed.

I beg, honoured sir, that you will continue to watch over me in love, and advise me as the Lord directs you. Please to favour me with a few lines. Direct to me at the preaching-house, Macclesfield. I remain, reverend and very dear sir,

Your ever obliged, dutiful son and servant,

S. Bardsley

P S. I hope dear sir you will visit us ere long. And I trust the Lord will come with you and make it a means of great good both to us and your own soul.

I am much obliged to you for putting my likeness into the *Magazine*.<sup>4</sup>

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

*Source:* manuscript copy for records; MARC, PLP 5/6/54.

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<sup>1</sup>There is no evidence herein that Bardsley had received yet the letter of JW to him dated Feb. 13, 1784.

<sup>2</sup>James Rogers's wife, Martha (Knowlden) Rogers, had died the previous day.

<sup>3</sup>Likely David Evans, who desisted from full-time travelling at the 1783 Conference.

<sup>4</sup>Bardsley's portrait appeared at the front of the Jan. 1784 *Arminian Magazine* (Vol. 7, p. 1).

From John Heald<sup>1</sup>

[Dewsbury]  
c. February 18, 1784

If the Conference should neglect to supply the [preaching-]house with preachers, whether it would be understood to remain the property of Conference or the trustees would have a power to provide for themselves?

If any preacher sent them should be found guilty of immorality, whether the trustees would have a power of rejecting him?

*Source:* published transcription; *A Reply to what the Rev. Dr. Coke is pleased to call 'The State of Dewsbury-House': being a Vindication of the Conduct of the Trustees of that House* ([s.l.]: [s.n.,] 1788), 7–8.

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<sup>1</sup>Debate between the trustees of the preaching-house in Birstall and JW, when they remodeled the house, consumed much of 1782 (see JW to CW of May 28, 1782, *Works*, 30:48–49; and the circular letter of Jan. 3, 1783, 30:106–10). The trustees of the preaching-house in Dewsbury were now considering enlarging their building. They asked John Heald (one of their number) to write to John Atlay, raising a couple of questions for JW in light of the insistence that emerged in the earlier case on the right of Conference to appoint preachers for all preaching-houses in the connection. Heald's original letter is not known to survive; but when debate flared four years later, the trustees published a pamphlet in which they listed two questions for JW as comprising the 'substance' of the letter.

From James Rogers and Hester Ann Roe<sup>1</sup>

[Macclesfield]  
c. February 25, 1784

Martha Rogers was born February 14, 1755, in a village called Loose, near Maidstone in Kent. Her parents were Dissenters, and much noted for their singular piety, as were their parents before them. Her mother died many years ago, and her father in the year 1777: both in full assurance of a glorious resurrection. They had many children, the greater part yet living. Of those who are called away, there is ground to hope they are in Abraham's bosom. My dear wife would often thank God, with tears of gratitude, for the piety of her parents and the Christian education and example with which she was blessed in her youth, and believed her conversion and salvation were an answer to their many prayers. She had serious impressions from a child, and was early led to see into the plan of salvation by faith. When about six or eight years of age, her convictions were such as frequently made her leave her little companions and retire into private corners to pray, while they were taking their recreations. Yea, her love to the word of God and secret prayer appeared out of the common way! As she grew to riper years, she had at sundry times gracious visits from the Lord. But from a deep sense of her unworthiness, and a natural diffidence, she was long withheld from professing a sense of his pardoning love; although at times she was entirely happy in him, while her tempers, words, and works declared the deep piety of her heart.

My acquaintance with her began at Edinburgh, in 1775, and I have ever had cause to bless God for the day I first saw her. After a wonderful chain of providences, we were married at Shoreham in Kent, December 4, 1778. The year after our marriage we removed to Leeds, where both our souls prospered much. It was amongst that dear people the Lord fully convinced her of the necessity of a pure heart. She then saw clearly the blessing must be received by simple faith, or not at all. Her convictions of inbred sin were deeper than she had ever felt before her justification. Although at the same time she said she had no doubt of being a child of God. On New Year's Day, after returning from renewing her covenant with God, she was much distressed. Several of our friends came in till the house was near full. Three or four went to prayer, and the power of God was present to bless many. But still she felt herself as bound in chains, and wept bitterly. As soon as the company was gone I endeavoured to comfort her, assuring her that the Lord was with her. I also exhorted her to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ: to cast herself, just as she was, into his arms, who was standing ready to embrace her. On this, she begged of me to go upstairs with her. I did so, and on falling on our knees the Lord gave me power to wrestle mightily in prayer on her behalf. Presently all her chains fell off, and she declared, in an ecstasy of joy that her soul was set at perfect liberty. The Lord applied those words to her soul, 'Thou art fair my love; thou art all fair: there is no spot in thee!'<sup>2</sup> She believed, and praised God aloud, saying to me, 'Now I am sure he has heard your prayer for me. I now know he has purified my heart! My beloved is mine, and I am his.'<sup>3</sup> But her evidence did not remain long equally clear. Nevertheless, from that time to the day of her death, I believe no one who knew her had the least reason to doubt of the reality of the work.

The disorder of which she died was a consumption. At first I was quite ignorant of her danger, and when I began to suspect it, was a long time unwilling to think for a moment of being thus early deprived of so amiable, so valuable a jewel.

January 1, 1784. After renewing our covenant with God, I had it deeply impressed upon my mind that this affliction would be unto death. My fears were all alarmed. I retired to my room and poured out my distress before the Lord; but could get no faith for her recovery. I went to her (then gone to bed) and could no longer refrain expressing my distress in a flood of tears. God only knows what I felt in that

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<sup>1</sup>This is a account of the death of his first wife, Martha (Knowlden) Rogers.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Song of Sol. 4:7.

<sup>3</sup>Song of Sol. 2:16.

moment. She endeavoured to comfort me, and said, 'My dear, do not be distressed. Is it grief or joy that makes you weep? Have you had a good time at the love-feast?' After a little, I replied, 'My dear, it has been a good time to me. I am blessed. But you must bear with me. I cannot help fearing the worst. Your life, my dear, is surely in danger.' She answered with her usual sweetness, 'Perhaps not. You can remember the time when I was reduced much lower than I am now, and yet the Lord restored me. He bringeth down to the grave and raiseth up again.'<sup>4</sup> The Lord can do great things. Nay, he hath done great things. Fear not, my dear, and all shall be well.'

January 7. I found, by a conversation with her doctor that no hope was left of her recovery. And she seeing me deeply affected, easily imagined the cause, and with a most heavenly smile, endeavoured to comfort me and bear up my sinking spirit. I cannot recollect one half of what passed at that time, but many of her words made a deep and lasting impression on my mind. After many other things she said,

What pleasure should it afford us, my dear, that we can look back on more than five years that we have lived together, and can say we have been helps and not hindrances to each other in the ways of God! And what cause have you, as well as me, to be happy in the reflection that we never had one jarring string since we knew each other. That, notwithstanding we have had many trials from others, yet to each other we have never been the least cause of sorrow. And if the Lord should take me now, you will follow me; but not yet. No, my dear, you have more to do and suffer. But he who has hitherto supported will still be your helper. You will live to be more useful, and more happy than ever. You shall, my dear, I know you shall. The Lord knows you are upright before him. Therefore you have nothing to fear. He will lay underneath, and around you, his everlasting arms. Therefore go on and let nothing discourage you. I believe the Lord will prosper whatever you take in hand. And that he will bless the children and make them his children. You may be discouraged to think how you shall do with them when I am gone, but you need not. The Lord will raise you up friends where you do not expect. And what is best of all, I shall meet you in glory!

I replied, 'That is a pleasing thought!' She answered, 'It is.' But said I, 'My dear, you have greatly the advantage of me. You have got through the wilderness. You are just going to cross Jordan, and when you do there will be an end of all your woes forever! But alas! I am still in an evil world! And what may yet await me I know not at present. But I know a vast sea of trouble lies before me, through which I must pass. Yet, I bless God, I feel a strong confidence that all will be well in the end, although the way to it appears tedious and difficult. But I know the Lord is my strength, and all my hope is in him.'

In the evening she desired the children might be brought to her bedside.<sup>5</sup> She kissed them both, and prayed that the blessing of the God of Jacob might ever attend them; and added, 'I believe God will bless you, and make you blessings to many. I believe he will make you good men, and you will one day follow me to heaven.' She uttered many expressions of the same kind.

What now follows is the substance of what passed between her and a friend [Hester Ann Roe] who attended her during her whole affliction, and who was dear to her as her own soul.

January 2, 1784. Mrs. Rogers appeared so much altered for the worse that I plainly foresaw her approaching dissolution. I believe she perceived a starting tear, for she said,

My dear Miss Roe, pray tell me what you think of my state, and if you believe I shall recover; or if the Lord should call me away, whether you think it will be soon. I wish to know all the danger I am in, for I believe I can resign myself to the Lord if he pleases to take me. And though I cannot

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<sup>4</sup>1 Sam. 2:6.

<sup>5</sup>The Rogers had two sons Joseph (b. Nov. 5, 1779; bap. Feb. 1780) and James Jr. (bap. June 20, 1783).

speak on this subject to Mr. Rogers because he is so deeply affected, yet I wish you to deal plainly. The reason of my asking you is Mr. Rogers came to my bedside last night, and seemed overwhelmed with grief, thinking me in imminent danger. If the Lord had not wonderfully supported me, I could not have borne to see his tears. But surely I shall ever be thankful for the calmness and sweet peace I felt, so that I was enabled to become his comforter. But I have since thought a good deal about the nature of my illness, and though I dare not tell him so, I think there is little hope of my recovery. Do, my dear, tell me all your mind.

I then answered, 'You have no cause to fear death, my love. For you to live is Christ, and to die will be eternal gain.'<sup>6</sup> And therefore I will do as you desire. I must acknowledge I have had many fears a long time, and have now little hope of your recovery. Yet all things are possible with God.'<sup>7</sup> Though you were at the point of death he could easily raise you up again. But I think you will arrive at home before long.' 'Well my dear', said she, 'I thought you believed so. I could see it in your looks, and I thank you for telling me. It does not hurt me. I believe the Lord will save me, though Satan at times would distress me by suggesting that my evidence of pardon was never clear. But tell me, my dear, do you think persons can feel they love God if he does not love them?' I said, 'The Lord shall answer you himself. "Love is of God, and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God."<sup>8</sup> And again, "We love him because he first loved us."<sup>9</sup> Reason and experience too, teach us that love shed abroad in our hearts must be the work of the Holy Spirit.<sup>10</sup> It cannot be attained by any power of our own. Satan cannot give it. Nor can it be derived from any but God himself, who is the spring, the fountain, the ocean of love. And the love you feel is the very nature of God, and you will be with him to all eternity.'

'Well', (said she,) 'my love, what you say has done me good: I believe it is so. I do not love anything so much as God. With respect to the world, it is nothing to me, and though I am so weak a creature, and so very unworthy, yet it has been, and is my greatest desire to please the Lord. Mr. Rogers and the dear children lie nearest my heart of anything here. But if the Lord should call me away he will take care of them. I know he will. Yet it seems hard to nature to be parted from Mr. Rogers after living so happy in each other.' (Here I perceived a tear; but she checked it, and continued.) 'But I should be thankful that it has been so, and that we have always been a blessing to each other. And I do thank the Lord that I ever knew him. He is truly upright before God. He has had many trials, occasioned by his faithfulness to God and his cause, and especially for preaching holiness of heart—and I expect he ever will. But God will bring him through all. But my dear Miss Roe do me one favour. Contrive that the nurse may bring my little Jemmy to see me. It may be the last time I shall see him. But do not let Mr. Rogers know that I say so.'

She then recommended Mr. Rogers and the dear children to my friendship, especially little Jemmy; and spoke freely of all she wished to be done when she was gone. And then added, 'Now my mind will be easy and satisfied. I wish to have done with all thoughts about temporal things, and spend my last moments more profitably. I leave it to you, when you think Mr. Rogers can bear it, to tell him what I have said. My soul is now truly happy. I believe I shall be forever with the Lord. I hope, while I am spared, you will be with me as much as possible. Mr. Rogers I know will, and that is all I wish for.' After this, she often spoke freely, and with sweet composure, of her approaching dissolution, expressing strong confidence in the Lord and an humble resignation to his will.

On Saturday the 3rd, she was very ill, and at night took an emetic, which, though very gentle, almost overpowered her. But a more patient sufferer my eyes never beheld. No, nor one so thankful for

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<sup>6</sup>Cf. Phil. 1:21.

<sup>7</sup>Cf. Matt. 19:26, Mark 10:27.

<sup>8</sup>1 John 4:7.

<sup>9</sup>1 John 4:19.

<sup>10</sup>Cf. Rom. 5:5.

every little assistance given her. Sunday the 4th little Jemmy was brought, according to her desire, and an affecting scene followed! To see apparent struggles between the fondness of a tender mother, when taking her leave of a sick and darling infant; and the humble submission and determined resignation of the dying saint to the will of God. O how often did she forcibly restrain the trickling tear, and would not suffer her feelings to prevail over that noble fortitude with which the Lord wonderfully endued her spirit! It proved, as she had said, the last time she saw him. For just a fortnight after, the dear little purchase of redeeming blood, fled to Abraham's bosom!<sup>11</sup>

Tuesday, January the 6th. I found her disorder made swift advances. While Mr. Rogers was gone to preach at Shriglee, she was so very ill that I begged he would not leave her again, for I had fears of her dying in his absence. She begged I would stay that night. I did so, and afterwards left her as little as possible, till Jesus called her to his arms.

Wednesday the 7th She was very happy in her mind. And on my speaking freely of my own trials, how sweetly did she comfort me! All her words went with power to my soul, and made a lasting impression. I believe I shall never forget some words she then spoke. Mr. Rogers appearing much grieved on her account, she endeavoured to comfort him. At night she was so ill that I could not think of leaving her. She told me, when able, her soul was still happy and quite resigned to the will of God; that she never felt a murmuring, fretful, or impatient thought; for her confidence was in the Lord, and she knew he would do all things well. She asked me to pray with her, and it was a profitable season to us both.

On Thursday she tenderly inquired about my health, and said, 'I have only one fear, and that is, that your attendance on me will so hurt your body that you will be obliged to leave me before I am called away.' I said, 'My love, I am at present, wonderfully strengthened. The Lord hath hitherto given me the support I wanted on such occasions, and he will do it now. Fear not. I believe I shall be enabled to attend your latest moments.' She said, 'I know the Lord is good, and can do all things. And I am glad you believe it will be so. I am sure he favours me greatly in many respects. What a mercy is it that I have everything needful, and no pain! I think very few suffer so little as I do; and then to have Mr. Rogers and you with me in such a season is a great satisfaction. O that I could be sufficiently thankful!'

January 14. A part of the morning she was hardly able to speak at all. But her mind seemed quite composed, and a heavenly sweetness appeared in her countenance. Mr. Rogers and I prayed with her, and had much liberty. And about an hour after, being seated by her on each side the bed, she burst suddenly into tears. On being asked the cause, she said, 'O! It is happiness that makes me weep! I am thinking of Jesus, and how his name charms all the heavenly host. O he is a precious Saviour' (here she wept again with overflowing joy). 'I have many relations in heaven, who were near and dear to me: a father, a mother, and sisters, and brothers, and many whom I loved tenderly. But they are all nothing when I think of Jesus, whom I shall soon see and praise better than I can do now! Angels will be blessed companions above. But oh they are nothing! I can only think of Jesus! My sweet Saviour! I do love thee! Where is that hymn that speaks of Jesus as the subject of angelic songs?, etc.'

She was then much spent, but after a little she found herself better, and able to converse. Soon after being told cousin Joseph Roe was below, she desired to see him. He came at her request, and read the hymn she had mentioned; though with many tears. Indeed none could refrain. It was a solemn season to all present, while she seemed to rejoice with joy unspeakable. The following verses were peculiarly blessed to her.

Burst ye em'rald gates! and bring  
To my raptur'd vision,  
All th' ecstatic joys that spring  
Round the bright Elysian:  
Lo! we lift our longing eyes!  
Break ye intervening skies;

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<sup>11</sup>James Rogers Jr. was buried on Jan. 20, 1784.

Son of righteousness arise;  
Ope the gates of paradise.

Floods of everlasting light  
Freely flash before him:  
Myriads with supreme delight  
Instantly adore him.  
Angel-trumps resound his fame,  
Lutes of shining gold proclaim  
All the music of his name,  
Through eternity the same.

Four and twenty elders rise,  
From their princely station:  
Shout his glorious victories,  
Sing the great salvation:  
Cast their crowns before his throne,  
Cry in reverential tone  
[Glory be to God alone,]  
Holy! holy! holy One!<sup>12</sup>

To cousin Roe she said, 'The Lord favours me in a peculiar manner. I have no pain. And after all my unworthiness, he gives me to rejoice in his love on a sick and dying bed. His condescension is so great that at times a sense of it almost overpowers me. He is a precious Saviour! Indeed he is! And those who cleave to him, with a sincere heart, will ever find him so. He knows I am sincere, though very undeserving; and all that I have ever feared, or that has harassed my mind, was lest others should think me more than I am. I would not deceive anyone by professing more than I possess. No, it would be an awful thing to do that. I would be sincere. It is good to be sincere. We shall all find it so when we come to a deathbed. And I wish we all lived to God more than we have yet ever done. What is the world, or anything in it? Jesus is all! And I shall praise him forever; I *know* I shall!' I shall never forget her looks, as she spoke these words. She was more like an inhabitant of heaven just descended, than anything else. Such was her ecstasy of joy and praise, her sparkling eyes and outspread arms, that it appeared as if body and soul were just then taking flight to her immortal home.

When cousin Joseph Roe took leave, she gave him her hand, saying, 'I wish you well Mr. Roe. May the Lord bless you! I love my friends, and can pray for my enemies, if I have any. But perhaps I have no enemies. But if I should, I can pray for them.' About 7:00 at night she called to us to sing, 'He comes, he comes, ...', and sang with us so loud that we were amazed; especially at that verse,

From heav'n angelic voices sound,  
See the Almighty Jesus crown'd;  
Girt with omnipotence and grace:  
And glory decks the Saviour's face.<sup>13</sup>

The last verse also she was heard to sing by those who were below in the house. And many times that night she cried, 'Precious Jesus! Sweet Saviour! I do love thee!'

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<sup>12</sup>The hymn is by Richard Kempenfelt (1718–82). The first three of four stanzas are quoted. He published his hymns as Philotheorus, *Original Hymns and Poems* (Exeter:B. Thorn, 1777).

<sup>13</sup>CW, Hymn 37, st. 2, *Hymns of Intercession for all Mankind* (Bristol: Farley, 1758), 30.

January 18. She had a violent fit of coughing, and nature seemed in agonies. Mr. Rogers said, 'My dear, this is hard work.' On this she turned her face to him, and said with a heavenly smile, 'No, my dear, it is not! No, no, it is not hard! Jesus makes it sweet. He suffered much more for me!' At another time, in the like situation, she cried, 'Sweet Jesus help! O my precious Saviour! Thou wilt help me!' I said, 'What cause have you to be thankful my love, that you are enabled to bear all the afflictive will of God with such patience and resignation? This is a proof indeed of his love to you, and also of what he has done in you, and for you. And I believe you do not feel a murmuring thought at any time.' 'O, no my dear', said she, 'I should be very ungrateful if I did. For I am sensible it is the Lord's goodness, and am thankful it is so.' I told her those words are just now impressed on my mind,

In the last hour thou wilt defend,  
And love and save her to the end.<sup>14</sup>

She said, 'They are sweet lines; repeat them again.' I did so, and also that hymn, 'Happy soul thy days are ended ...'.<sup>15</sup> And that verse,

In suff'ring be thy love my peace,  
In weakness be thy love my power.<sup>16</sup>

And her soul seemed all the time lifted up to heaven in silent prayer and praise. When I had ended, she said, 'The Lord will reward you, my love. You are a great comfort to me. I am sure he will bless you for my sake.'

When he asked her, 'Is your mind composed and resigned?' she said, 'Yes. I am sure all is well. The Lord knows best what to do. I go but a little before you.' He said, 'O my dear, if it were consistent with the will of God, and the good of the dear children, how should I wish to go with you!' 'Nay, nay, my dear', said she, 'that would not be right! Your work is not done. The Lord will spare you, and make you more useful than you have ever been.' He asked, 'Can you believe that I shall meet you in glory?' She said, 'Yes. I have no doubt of your coming there. If I doubted of either, it would be of myself. But I cannot doubt we shall meet to part no more.' He asked, 'If your sister should not come in time to see you, can you be resigned?' 'Yes, my dear', said she, 'quite resigned. I wished her to come, that she might see I have been situated comfortably, and happily. And I thought it might be a comfort to you to have her here. But I am entirely satisfied. The will of the Lord is best.'

One morning, when I [Hester Ann Roe] first came into her room, she called me to her and said, 'I have had a sweet night my dear. The Lord has given me many precious promises, and I think my Saviour will not now tarry long. I wish to be gone. What think you? Is it not likely I shall soon be released?' I said, 'If we may judge from appearances, you will soon be with him. But all depends on his good pleasure. Perhaps he protracts your stay, and suffers you to continue here so much beyond all our expectations, that you may be a greater blessing to us, and that your own crown may be the brighter.' 'Well', said she, 'let him do as he pleases. But if it were his will, I should be glad to be released.' Another time, as I stood by her, she said, 'My dear, do you think there is anything in heaven like beautiful gardens, green fields, or sweet flowers?, etc.' I answered, 'We cannot judge with certainty about this. But we know whatever will yield delight, or any way tend to the happiness, either of our souls or bodies, we shall surely enjoy. It may be a question whether we shall have the sense of smell, etc., But if we have, or whatever appetites or desires we are capable of, we are sure they will all be satisfied.' She said, 'I have such views of this kind as I never had before. I see sweet flowery prospects before me, quite delightful. And in the night I heard the ringing of bells, and a sound of music quite ravishing!' I said, 'I have often

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<sup>14</sup>Cf. CW, Hymn on Isaiah 46:4, st. 5, *Preparation for Death* (London: 1772), 11.

<sup>15</sup>CW, 'For One Departing', *HSP* (1749), 2:75.

<sup>16</sup>Paul Gerhardt, 'Living by Christ', st. 16, as translated by JW in *HSP* (1739), 159.



heard of God's dear children, who died rejoicing, having such prospects, and hearing the like. But it is enough that we know we shall enjoy God to all eternity, and that all our desires shall be satisfied in him.' 'Yes, my dear', said she, 'this is all, and I shall soon see him, and know even as I am known!'

When I told her my mother had desired me to dine at home, she said, 'Well, pray do so, and give my kindest respects to her for letting you be with me so much. Tell her my prayer is that the Lord may reward her, and I know he will.' When I returned to her, she called me to her bedside and inquired after my mother's health, and said, 'I hope she is not displeased at your being with me so much.' When I told her she had sent a very kind message, she praised the Lord and said, 'How tenderly does he order all for me! He is good indeed! I think I have more reason to praise him than anyone. For he permits those I love best to be with me, and I have everything they can do for me. And my little Jemmy too is gone to heaven before me, out of a miserable world.'<sup>17</sup> Dear creature, it was kind indeed of the Lord to take him: he would have been a suffering little fellow, if not a cripple; and yet I believe the Lord would have made him a good man. But heaven is best, and I shall soon be with him.' A little after, being obliged often to call upon me for assistance, she said, 'My love, I am sorry to trouble you so very much; though I know you do it willingly. But the Lord will surely reward you, for my heart is engaged with him on your account. Yes, my dear, I pray for you in my dying moments.'

Thus far her friend [Hester Ann Roe]. What follows was written by Mr. Rogers.

After this she remained constantly happy, and frequently appeared as one ready to fly away. Seeing her so amazingly supported, I said, 'My dear, the Lord is gracious to you indeed! Though your greatest temptation during your whole life was to doubt of your acceptance, yet I have observed since that conversation with Miss Roe you have been constantly happy; so that

Not a doubt doth arise to darken the skies,  
Or hide for a moment your Lord from your eyes,<sup>18</sup>

for the enemy is not even permitted to show himself.' She answered, 'No, my dear, I am sure I have done with him. He has no more power over me. He has no business to come near me any more. I will have no more to say to him.' I said, 'My dear, he is a bold adversary. He ventured to attack even Christ himself, though he could say he hath nothing in me. I mention this, that you may not be surprised if he should assault you, as he hath done many of God's dear children, even in their latest moments.' She said, 'I know, my dear, you do it for my good. But I am quite sure he shall torment me no more. He would, but my dear Saviour will not let him. The Lord sees my extreme weakness, and he loves me too well to lay any more upon me. My precious Saviour is all I want. He knows I love him. Yes my Jesus is my all, and I believe he will be so. He will never, never leave me!' And so it was; for I do not remember that she had one gloomy moment after, though she lived a month!

One day, while several friends were standing round her bed, she broke out in praise to God, saying, 'How many mercies hath the Lord bestowed upon me, of which I am unworthy!' She then turned her face to Mr. W—r, and said, 'O sir, what cause have I, above all creatures to be thankful! Especially in this time of need! How indulgent is the Lord in sending me such a kind friend as dear Miss Roe. I am far from my own relations; but I have in her all I want. She does indeed act the part, not only of a loving sister but of a tender, indulgent mother! I pray the Lord to reward her! I cannot, but I believe he will. Nay he does reward her. And I believe he will bless her more than ever. And I thank you, sir, for all your regard and friendship to me and mine. You have been a faithful and steady friend. But you know your reward is with the Lord. The Lord does bless you, and he will bless you more and more. I know he will. You have gone through many trials, and you will have more to pass through. But you know the way to the kingdom lies through many tribulations. Your exercise may yet be great, but be not afraid. Trust in the

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<sup>17</sup>Roe's account is running ahead here to near the end, as James Rogers Jr. was buried on Jan. 20, 1784.

<sup>18</sup>Cf. CW, 'Hymn for Believers, #18, st. 5, *HSP* (1749), 1:221.

Lord, and you will be supported. Yes, yes; he will bring you through all. I believe I shall meet you in heaven!' She then prayed for him, after which he took his leave.

The day after, being very comfortable, she looked up with a smile, and said, 'Do, my dear, tell me something about my Jesus. O he is a precious Saviour! I love him indeed! But I am very weak. Do you speak, my dear, and tell me some of his sayings.' I then repeated the following texts:

In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am ye may be also.<sup>19</sup>

Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go out no more.<sup>20</sup>

Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.<sup>21</sup>

And they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads.<sup>22</sup>

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away.<sup>23</sup>

'All these', said I, 'my dear are yours.' She answered, 'Yes, I believe they are. Jesus is mine! That is a sweet word, which is just come to my mind, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."<sup>24</sup> These words were never so sweet to me before.'

In the evening, Mr. [David] Simpson called to see her, and sat by her about three-quarters of an hour; and often spoke to her when she could bear it. After which he prayed by her, and it was a solemn season to all present. As soon as he was gone she said, 'I am glad Mr. Simpson came. He has done me good. I could not say much to him, but I am greatly comforted. Thank the Lord, who is so kind to me!'

I asked her (if the Lord should then take her) whether she chose that Mr. Simpson should preach a funeral sermon for her in the new church? She replied, 'Yes, if it will not make me appear of too great consequence. I am afraid of being thought more than I am. I would not have much said of me. I feel I am a poor unworthy creature. I truly respect Mr. Simpson and if it might be of any use to the living, I had rather he did.'<sup>25</sup>

January 16 was a happy day to her. While I stood by her bedside, she looked at me and said, 'The Lord bless you my dear! He will bless you. What cause have I to thank God for the first day I knew you! But for you I might have been cast into the way of a gay world. But the Lord made you the instrument of snatching me from it. I hope I shall be one diamond more in your crown, and shall praise God to all eternity for you! Go on, my dear, and the Lord be with you!'

She begged I would give her dying love to her dear sisters, and write a particular letter to her sister Sally, saying, 'It will comfort her and do her good. Do bid her be very serious, and give her heart to God. Then I shall meet her in a better world.'

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<sup>19</sup>Cf. John 14:2–3.

<sup>20</sup>Cf. Rev. 3:12.

<sup>21</sup>Cf. Rev. 22:14.

<sup>22</sup>Rev. 22:4.

<sup>23</sup>Rev. 21:4.

<sup>24</sup>Ps. 116:15.

<sup>25</sup>Simpson did preach her funeral sermon, which was published (incorporating some of this narrative): David Simpson, *The Happiness of Dying in the Lord* (London: C. Dilly 1784).

After this (speaking of Mr. [John] Wesley), she expressed her usual veneration and regard for him, and desired her sincere thanks to him for the care and tenderness of a father which he had always shown her. She earnestly prayed the Lord to reward him for it all. Adding she believed God would bless him in his latter days, and that in a short time she should see him again in her Father's house.

She then began to offer up fervent prayer to God to support her in her latest hour, and to give her patience and resignation, and arm her with the same mind that was in her suffering Lord. To bless the dear children, and to comfort *me* in the awful moment when she should be called hence, saying, 'I have often thought of this, and always feared if the Lord should take me from you, you would not be able to bear it. But I now believe he will support you. You must look to him. I shall leave you, but Jesus will not. No, no! You know you have been closely tried since you came to Macclesfield; but you can say, hitherto hath the Lord helped me. And he is the same to help you still! Trust in him and fear not! I am sure the Lord hath rewarded you for all. You have lost nothing by suffering in his cause, but have gained much more experience by those things. How clearly is that word fulfilled, "All things shall work together for good to them that love God."<sup>26</sup>

When at any time things of a trying nature had happened among the people, while others would have been repeating grievances, her method was to retire instantly to secret prayer, where she generally left her burden with the Lord. She was no tattler, no busybody, but a keeper at home. She carefully refrained from speaking evil of anyone. But when any used her unkindly, she would bear it in silence and recommend them to God in prayer.

January 23. George Pearson called to inquire after her, and by her desire we asked him upstairs. When he was come, she gave him her hand, and said, 'Well George, I am glad to see you. I love to see the Lord's children, and I believe you are one. You have known the ways of God a long time George. The Lord has done much for you. Yes he *has* blessed you, and he *will* bless you still. He is a good and faithful God. I have ever proved him so, and especially in this time of need. He does greatly bless me and comfort me, and will save me to the end! I believe you have had many trials since you first set out in the ways of God. You now grow near the end of your journey. You will not forsake the Lord now, and I am sure he will not forsake you. No, no. The Lord never forsakes his people. You see he does not forsake me, unworthy as I am.'

The next day she was much composed and given to slumber. She had no pain except when her cough came on. She looked at me wishfully for sometime, and then said, 'Pray with me, and ask the Lord (if it be his pleasure) to take me. I long to be gone!' I replied, 'My dear, I cannot ask the Lord to do that. I wish you to stay longer.' she answered, 'Why, my dear, cannot you yet give me up? *You must. You must be resigned*, my dear. It is the Lord's doing, and you know you have often said whatever he does is *well-done!*'

Having called the servant to her, she said, 'Phoebe, be sure to be a good girl. Serve the Lord. Give him your heart. Religion is the best thing Phoebe. Nothing else will do. Be truly religious, and you will be fit to live or fit to die! O it is a blessed thing to be devoted to God in our youth! Do not forget what I say. I am dying. You may live many years, or you may follow me soon! We cannot tell. The Lord knoweth! O think on these things, and you will see me again in heaven.'

Miss Roe having assisted her in what she wanted, she looked her in the face and said, with a peculiar emphasis, 'God bless you my dear, and reward you for all your kindness to me! He will reward you. I believe he will.' Miss Roe answered, 'To be of the least use to you is to me a sufficient reward. I can truly say I am blessed in being with you. I only wish to be like you when I come to be in like circumstances.' She answered, 'O my dear, you will make a glorious end, whenever you go! But I hope the Lord will spare you many years. Your work is not done! You will do much more good before you follow me.'

A friend from Buxton, coming to see her, said, 'You are much altered since I saw you last.' On which she said, 'Yes, I am very weak. But my Lord is very precious to me, and deals very tenderly with

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<sup>26</sup>Cf. Rom. 8:28.

me indeed.' She then inquired after his family, praying God to bless both him and them.

The day after, being asked how she felt herself, she replied, 'Very comfortable. I feel the Lord is good to me. And notwithstanding all my unworthiness, I believe he will accept me. Nay, he *does* accept me. I know that Jesus is mine and I am his! I am indebted to his merit for all! I am saved through Christ alone! I leave all my concerns with him, and am sure he will keep what I have committed to his care. My husband, my children, my friends, my all, I leave with Jesus! I fully believe he will preserve them all, and we shall meet above!'

January 26. She was very weak, but quite resigned and much comforted. Being almost spent with coughing, when she had recovered a little, we heard her speak to herself thus, 'Well, but I know my reward is with the Lord, and my God will be my help. Glory be to his dear name! I feel he *doth* help me!' She then lay silently breathing prayer and praise; and often saying, 'Come! Come! Come Lord, Jesus! Do come, blessed Saviour! Come! Come away! I long to be with thee! I shall be with thee very soon. ...'

January 27. Her cough was so violent all the night that she got no rest. But towards daybreak the Lord abated it, and gave his beloved sleep. On waking from a gentle slumber, being asked how she felt her mind? she replied, 'My trust is in the Lord. He is near to me at all times.' Soon after this she said, 'Do, kneel down and pray; and if you please, ask the Lord to release me. O how I want to be with my dear Lord!'

Mrs. Simpson calling to see her, asked how she felt?<sup>27</sup> She said, 'Weaker and weaker; but quite resigned. I have cause to be thankful that the Lord supports me. And I believe he will support me to the end.'

The night after, she had much sickness, and no sleep at all. In the morning she turned her languid face towards Miss Roe and with a smile said, 'Well, my dear, I think my Lord will not tarry long now. O, he is a sweet Saviour!' Miss Roe said, 'I believe he will not tarry long. But you must remember, every *moment* you suffer here is adding to the brightness of your crown in glory.' She said, 'Well, that is a blessed thought indeed!'

While Miss Roe repeated the following verses, she rejoiced exceedingly.

He looks from the skies,  
He shows us the prize,  
And gives us a sign  
That we shall o'ercome by the mercy divine.

The Saviour of all,  
For us he shall call,  
Shall shortly appear;  
Our day of eternal salvation is near.

For us is prepar'd,  
The angelical guard,  
The convoy attends;  
A minist'ring host of invisible friends.

Ready wing'd for their flight,  
To the regions of light,  
The horses are come,  
The chariots of Israel to carry us home.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>David Simpson married Elizabeth Davy in 1776.

<sup>28</sup>CW, Hymn 15, st. 5–7, *Funeral Hymns* (1746), 23.

For several days, being exceeding weak, we could scarcely hear her speak, only by short intervals. On perceiving her whisper, we attended, and her words were, 'O, my precious, precious Lord! Thou wilt not tarry long! I shall soon be with thee! What a day will that be! I shall praise thee forever!'

At another time, after Miss Roe and I had both been at prayer for her, she looked at us and said, 'I am obliged to you both, and thank the Lord for you. What a mercy is it that you can pray for me thus! It has done me good. I heard you say the other day, the Lord had given you the spirit of prayer, and I am sure I have proved it true. For I never heard either of you pray as you have done lately. I thank my Lord for it all. I am sure God is with you.' She added, 'O what sweetness! What happiness I feel! I am quite resigned. For all the Lord does is well done indeed! I am *glad* it is just as it is. All is right. Do you pray for me, and I will pray for you. God *will* bless you. I shall meet you both again, after a little while. We shall all get to heaven. I have not a doubt but we shall.'

February 6. She had a violent fit of coughing, and got up some blood. On hearing us mention this, she said, 'Well, it is all right! My Deliverer is drawing nearer and nearer. He will not tarry long. O my gracious Lord, thou wilt come and set me at liberty! Come Lord Jesus!'

February 8. Conversing with her as she could bear it, [I] was saying how many profitable moments we had spent together! She replied, 'Well, my love, they will be renewed again!' Seeing me affected and in tears, she said, 'What is the matter? My dear, do not grieve. A moment cannot *always* last! You and I are sure to meet again on Mount Sion! And it will not be long! Be of good comfort.'

At another time, being called suddenly upstairs, I found her in a severe agony, occasioned by the stoppage of the phlegm. As soon as she could speak, she cried out with uncommon fervency, 'Come Lord Jesus! O come quickly! O come my dear Jesus! O come and help me! Thou wilt come soon! I shall soon be with thee!'

The day before her death she was more cheerful and conversable than for a fortnight before. Having long expected her dissolution every hour, we did not inform her of the death of her child [James Jr.]; for we feared the surprise might interrupt her. She now however inquired particularly about him, and we told her the whole. Then lifting her eyes to heaven, with a sweetness inexpressible, she cried, 'My dear Jemmy! My precious! My darling! Has my sweet babe indeed got to heaven before me! Well, though he has a little the start of me, it is not much. I am going quickly. Yes, I shall soon see him again. O how good is the Lord!'

A little before three o'clock in the morning she had a severe fit of coughing. I said, 'You have had a hard struggle; but this also is permitted by him who loves you tenderly. God has some good end to answer in thus lengthening out your affliction. Only have faith and patience a few minutes longer. So shall you be perfect and entire, lacking nothing. You are this moment suffering all you ever shall suffer to all eternity! You shall never—never—never suffer again. Methinks I hear Jesus now saying, "Lo! I come quickly to wipe away all tears forever from thy eyes! *It is done!* Thou shalt sorrow no more, neither shalt thou feel any more pain!'"<sup>29</sup> She replied, 'These are precious words. And I believe they are all true, and that I shall prove them so. Yes, I shall! I shall! I shall! The Lord bless you!' After this she lay composed for about a quarter of an hour, silently breathing prayer and praise to God. Then the cough came on again. On this, I and Miss Roe, one at each side, lifted her up in bed. But in vain were our attempts. A most severe struggle ensued, which threw her into the agonies of death! She was convulsed all over in a moment. A more moving scene never presented itself to me. It was nature's last effort!

For a time, while the agony was at the height, we thought she was delirious, and were thankful to think her insensible of her pain. Just as it seized her she cried, 'Pray! Pray! Pray! O pray for me!' We did so, and felt God was present indeed. The agony abated a little, and her reason returned in a moment. She instantly cried out with uncommon vehemence, clasping her hands, 'My God! My God! My Saviour! My King!' And repeated this many times. I said, 'Yes, my dear, your Saviour is coming to you. He is here! Jesus is now standing by, and all his holy angels with him. They are all waiting for you. See! See their wings are spread out to bear you away!' She cried with a loud voice, 'I know it! I know! I know it well! I

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<sup>29</sup>Cf. Rev. 21:4.

know it well!’ repeating the same words at least ten times over. She was then silent a little. When I could speak, I repeated these lines,

Hark they whisper! angels say,  
Sister spirit come away! ...<sup>30</sup>

And told her these, her favourite verses, were now completely fulfilled in her—that she was just in effect saying,

Cease fond nature, cease thy strife,  
And let me languish into life.<sup>31</sup>

I meant to have gone on to the end. But just as I repeated

Heaven opens on my eyes!<sup>32</sup>

She stopped me short by crying out so loud as to be heard downstairs, and through every room in the house, ‘See! See! See! What a fine man!—See! See! See! See! what a fine man!’ Never was there a more awful scene! In that moment such a solemn awe fell upon us all, as if the Lord Jesus Christ was visibly present, from the uncommon vehemence and unshaken confidence with which she had just before used the prayer of her dying Lord, ‘My God! My God!’ We had not a doubt but as she was then drinking of the same cup Christ drank in the garden (for she was bathed all over in a cold sweat) so in like manner was an angel sent, or Jesus himself appeared to strengthen her in her last agony. She continued with her eyes fixed, repeating the same words, ‘See! See! See! What a fine man!’ for fifteen or twenty minutes without intermission, till her strength was quite exhausted. Then with a lower voice she cried, ‘Come! Come! Come!—Saviour! Saviour! Come! Come! Come!’ And gently leaning back, she sweetly sunk into his arms, at half past five o’clock on Sunday morning, February the 15th. Having just seen her birthday, and ended her twenty-ninth year in a world of sorrow, she began with her Lord in paradise that Sabbath which shall have no end.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 8 (1785): 20–24, 81–85, 139–43, 189–94, 244–47, 302–04, 359–61.

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<sup>30</sup>Alexander Pope, ‘The Christian to his Departing Soul’, st. 1 [JW included an earlier version in *MSP* (1744), 2:185].

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, st. 2.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, st. 3.

From William Percival

[Manchester?]  
c. March 10, 1784

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I think it a duty incumbent upon me, which I owe to you and the cause of God, to give you any intelligence which may have a tendency to promote it. About two months ago the Rev. Mr. [Edward] Smyth<sup>1</sup> came down from London to this place, as we supposed by your permission. He preached five or six times and delivered the sacrament likewise, and sold many of his books,<sup>2</sup> with no little applause, and I suppose was useful to several. Some of our friends amongst the trustees at the same time made him an offer of giving him 70 or 80 pounds a year to settle as their minister, in order to officiate ?? arising from tithing(?) of money given for their seats in our chapel, devoted toward his maintenance. I thought it necessary to apprize you of this before [...]

*Source:* incomplete copy for records; Drew, Methodist Archives (written on JW's letter of Mar. 4).

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<sup>1</sup>Orig., 'Smith'. Edward Smyth was still in England, preaching at various Methodist setting; cf. JW to Samuel Bardsley, Feb. 13, 1784, *Works*, 30:213.

<sup>2</sup>Smyth had published such works as *Twelve Sermons on the Most Important Subjects* (Belfast: James Magee, 1778); *A [poetic] Paraphrase on the Story of Dives and Lazarus* (Bath: S. Hazard, 1780); and *Short Hymns, to be used before and after meat, with morning and evening hymns for a family* (Bath: S. Hazard, 1780).

From Francis Asbury

Halifax [North Carolina]  
March 20, 1784

Reverend Sir,

My last letter was from Edenton, in answer to one I had the pleasure of receiving from you.<sup>1</sup> From that place I came to Bertie circuit, which lies between Chowan, and Roan Oak rivers. There is not now such a prospect of religion as we saw in the beginning. But yet I trust there are some who continue faithful, while a few more are added to the societies.

My next remove was to Brunswick, the oldest and best circuit in Virginia. Many faithful people joined us at our first coming here, having been convinced by the powerful preaching of our worthy friend Mr. [Devereux] Jarratt. I found the labours of those two men of God, James Kelly,<sup>2</sup> and Joseph Cromwell,<sup>3</sup> had been blest to the awakening and conversion of souls.

I next came to Mecklenburgh, but the deep snow and sever frosts prevented the people from attending. However, I was enabled to pursue my journey—and under the necessity of so doing, as my appointments were all made out long before. From thence I came to Halifax, a circuit newly formed. It lies between Dan and Stanton rivers, which together form the great river Roan Oak. Here some have been brought to God; a few Presbyterians and Baptists, lifted out of the Calvinian and antinomian quicksands.

From thence I came to Caswell, in North Carolina. Here are a few souls who love God. And as it is in part a new-formed circuit, there may be much good done. From Caswell I came to the Guildford circuit, which lies up and on both sides the Dan River. Here we had some revival of religion, and an ingathering of souls. The land is good, and may come to something great in time. But the present preachers suffer much—being often obliged to dwell in dirty cabins, to sleep in poor beds, and for retirement, to go into woods! But we must suffer *with*, if we labour *for* the poor. One thing may be said in their favour, they have very few Negroes,<sup>4</sup> and they put their children early to work. I would have gone to the Yadkin, but was prevented by an inflammation in my foot. However in about a fortnight I was able to travel again.

I have formed a plan for the next year (if the Lord spares me) to stretch along to Salisbury, Pee-Dee, Santee, Charles Town in South [Carolina], and Wilmington in North Carolina. We expect the south will give up largely.<sup>5</sup> I came to a place called New Hope, which I found to be a place of very small hope. From thence I went to Tar river, and spent eight days there very comfortably. The congregations were large. Some have found the Lord, and others are groaning for redemption. I am now in Roan Oak circuit. The people here are much in the spirit of moving to the new lands in Georgia. There are a few faithful souls among them, but nothing great.

Dear sir, we are greatly in need of help. A minister,<sup>6</sup> and such preachers as you can fully recommend will be very acceptable. Without your recommendation we shall receive none. But nothing is so pleasing to me, sir, as the thought of seeing you here—which is the ardent desire of thousands more in

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<sup>1</sup>Asbury received JW's letter of Oct. 3, 1783 on Dec. 24; he was in Edenton, NC. the following day. See Asbury, *Journal*, 1:450–51.

<sup>2</sup>I.e., James O'Kelly (1735–1826), who had been appointed by the American Conference to a circuit in North Carolina starting in 1777.

<sup>3</sup>Joseph Cromwell, a native of the Baltimore area, was admitted to the Conference of Methodist preachers in America in 1777 and served until he located in 1793.

<sup>4</sup>I.e., they keep few slaves.

<sup>5</sup>Asbury may mean that the last remaining holdouts of Loyalists in Georgia and Florida will concede to the northern colonies. See Thomas Taylor to JW, June 8, 1753.

<sup>6</sup>I.e., an ordained clergyman.



America.

As to myself, I can say the Lord gives, and wonderfully preserves, my natural, and spiritual health. My soul is daily fed, and I find abundant sweetness in God. Sometimes I am ready to say he hath purified my heart; but then again I feel and fear. Upon the whole I hope I am more spiritual than ever I have been in time past. I see the necessity of preaching a full and present salvation from all sin. Whenever I do this, I feel myself, and so do also my hearers. I find it is good to use frequent fervent prayer, without which a man cannot continue qualified to preach the gospel. You know, sir, it is not easy to rule. Nor am I pleased with it. I bear it as my cross; yet it seems that a necessity is laid upon me. O pray for me that I be filled with light and power; with zeal and prudence; and above all, with humility and a single eye. In so doing you will greatly oblige

Your dutiful son in the gospel,

Francis Asbury

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 9 (1786): 680.

From Ann Bolton

Witney  
March 23, 1784

Reverend and Dear Sir

With pleasure I inform you I found my dear father [Edward] better, and through mercy yesterday was enabled to get down stairs. If it should go off, as we hope it will, it is a more favourable fit then he has had for many years. And the good will of him that dwelt in the bush seems to be with him, comforting and cheering his mind. It was an inexpressible pleasure to him, and the whole family to receive me so speedily after their request. Through mercy I have been favoured with health and strength for my day

Much cause have I to adore my maker and preserver, 'for his goodness endureth'.<sup>1</sup> Yet daily I think the last month has been the most trying and yet the most advantageous part of my life. I have been taught more perfectly the happy art of living dependant on the divine bounty. I never was so weaned from creature expectations, nor so fully convinced that 'the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof'.<sup>2</sup> I am wonderfully preserved from all doubtful reasonings and perplexing cares. Heaven is always open to my prayers, and I can come to the Ruler of the skies with a child-like confidence and simplicity. It seems when I retire to vent my wishes and complaints that he draws near with a propitious look and emboldens me to consider him as my confident and friend. A friend in whom is invested all the properties that character implies.

O what a privilege it is to have free access to the King of kings! This enhances the worth of my Redeemer and sets forth his value to my admiring soul! It is through his amazing condescension in taking our nature, and bleeding on the cross, that we can come near to a just and holy God. In this respect I glory in the cross, and triumph in the love of an exalted Saviour, who is more then ever precious to me.

I rejoice in hope of seeing yet a much greater work at ingathering to the church in this place. Our hearers are many, and our members steady and discipline attended to, and the preachers seem to have the work at heart. I thank you for your every help. I believe my soul has been strengthened of late through your prayers. Your advice will ever be gratefully received by

Your obliged and affectionate servant,

A. B.

*Source:* Bolton's letter-book; privately held (a transcription provided by Cindy Aalders).

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Ps. 136:1.

<sup>2</sup>Ps. 24:1.

From S. Saunders

Borehamwood  
March 25, 1784

Sir,

If the following comes, in your esteem, under the class of extraordinary anecdotes, it is at your service. I had it from a person who well knew both the man and the fact.

I am, sir, your most obliged,

S. Saunders

Jedidiah Buxton, a poor man, of Elmtun, in Derbyshire, well known to several eminent and many curious men for his uncommon talents for numbers and extraordinary natural powers of arithmetical calculation, died about six years since—who was as famous for the exact prediction of the time of his death as for his curious enumeration of every incident in his life while living. This man was firmly persuaded that his death would happen on a certain day, which it precisely did. From this conviction he took a formal leave of all his friends and acquaintances, who all equally joined in the laugh at his infatuation.

He first waited on the Duke of P[ortland], who had been kind to him and esteemed him as an honest and singular man. He told the butler that he *must then* see his grace, or he should never see him again. The duke being informed of his request, ordered him into the parlour and desired to know the cause of his earnest desire to see him. His reply was to this effect: 'I am come to thank your grace for all the favours you have bestowed on me. For I shall never see your grace any more.' On the duke's inquiry into the reason of that declaration, he answered, 'I must never see you again. I must come here no more.' 'Why Jeddy?' replied the duke. He said, 'Because I shall die on Thursday next.' The duke endeavoured to persuade him that he was only vapourish, and that there was not the least intimation of his death; and withal charged his servants not to give him much beer, adding, 'For the old man's brain grows weak.' In the kitchen, the laugh circulated freely concerning the *old man's prediction*. However he stiffly maintained his certainty of its accomplishment. The intervening days were spent in taking leave of his friends, none of whom believed him either in earnest or in his right mind.

The predicted day arriving, the old man was still equally assured of his death on that day—and after having dined, sat himself down in his easy chair and expired; to the astonishment of all who had ridiculed his testimony.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 8 (1785): 577–78.

From Adam Clarke

Norwich  
March 29, 1784

Reverend and Very Dear Sir,

I have for a long time entertained a desire of writing to you, but could not prevail upon myself (till the present) to put this desire into practice. Indeed, I believe that my troubling you with this will be an intrusion upon your time, which is devoted to more excellent purposes than in reading what I write; or in what I esteem a privilege twofold greater—in returning an answer to one who is truly conscious of his unworthiness to put you to that trouble. But if to instruct the ignorant and support the feeble-minded be matters, the practice of which you esteem a part of your duty while here below, these things indeed render me an object of your compassion. I can unfeignedly say, from painful experience, that my ignorance is such that I am prone to err concerning those thing of which I need to have the most perfect knowledge; and the right understanding of which I esteem my most precious privilege.

Mostly since I was justified, I have in general expected and prayed for that inestimable blessing, a heart in all things devoted to God; which soon after I received pardon, I found to be indispensably necessary. But meeting with little encouragement in my pursuit after it, I obtained it not, and so spent that time in offering a maimed sacrifice, which if I had been encouraged and rightly directed, might have been spent in serving God with a perfect heart and a willing mind. I continued mostly in this state, or at most advancing very slowly, till I came to this kingdom, when you ordered me into the Bradford circuit. Here the good Lord was pleased to give me a sight of the unspeakable depravity of my heart; and one time in particular, in such a measure, that the distress I felt was as painful in sustaining as it would be difficult in describing. I suppose at that time, had there not been a sea between me and my native country, and a want of money to have carried me there, it is probable I should have made a speedy departure from the work in which I was engaged. I now regarded nothing, not even life itself, in comparison of having my heart cleansed from all sin, and began to seek it with full purpose of soul.

Thus I continued looking for it, and frequently in much distress, till December 1782, when I opened my mind to a local preacher, who I had heard was a partaker of this precious privilege. From him I received some encouragement and direction, and so set out afresh in quest of it, endeavouring with all my strength to believe in the ability and willingness of my God to accomplish the great work. Soon after this, while earnestly wrestling with the Lord in prayer, and endeavouring self-desperately to believe, I found a change wrought in my soul, which I endeavoured through grace to maintain, amidst grievous temptations and accusations of the subtle foe, who seemed now determined either to spoil me of my confidence or to render me as miserable by reiterated temptation as I was before when mourning the inbeing of his infernal offspring. But my indulgent Saviour continued to support and encourage me, and enabled me with all my power to preach the glad tidings to others, so that I soon saw more of the effects of the travail of my Redeemer's soul than ever I had seen before. Glory be to God through Christ! Amen.

But to this day I am in doubt respecting the work in my own soul, not being able with propriety either to affirm that it is done or to deny it as undone. Indeed, I am in a strait betwixt two, and fear almost constantly rests on my mind of denying it, lest thereby I should forfeit what I have received, or grieve the blessed Spirit. And again, I am afraid to affirm that it is done, lest I should deceive myself in a matter of such great importance. When this [is] considered, dear sir, you can easily perceive how much I stand in need of your advice and direction. I know indeed that from God knowledge and wisdom are to be received, and that he gives to all liberally who ask such blessings from him. But again, I remember a sentiment in one of your sermons, in which you inform me that God usually helps 'man by man'.<sup>1</sup> This I believe to be exactly right, and therefore entertain a hope that if you will be so very kind as to spend a few minutes in directing one concerning these things, the good Lord will make your advice abundantly profitable, and I am sure will reward the labour of love.

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<sup>1</sup>JW, 'On the Education of Children', §4, *Works*, 3:349 [published originally in *AM* 6 (1783)].

Our congregations in this circuit are in general enlarged, and several through the mercy of God, are much quickened.<sup>2</sup> O may God abundantly increase the flame, till it becomes universal, for Jesus' sake! Several of our people in this city have no great affection for the doctrine of entire sanctification. However, whether they will hear or will forbear, we declare it unto them, well knowing that unless we do this we preach not the whole gospel of God. Some who had before denied it, are now not only convinced of the attainableness of it but are earnestly contending for it. And some have received a token of good.  
*Gloria Deo.*

Earnestly praying that the Lord God may be your sun and your shield, and that he may make your latter days still more useful than the former, and spare you many more years for the profit of his people, and give you every degree of grace requisite to prepare you for eternal glory, I remain, very dear sir,

Your unworthy, though truly desirous of being in all respects your obedient son in the  
gospel of our common Lord,

Adam Clarke

*Source:* Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Eng. lett. c.12, f. 201.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Clarke was assigned to the Norwich circuit at the 1783 Conference.

<sup>3</sup>An abridged version was published in *Wesley Banner* 1 (1849): 110–11.

From the Rev. Dr. Thomas Coke

Near Dublin  
April 17, 1784

Honoured and Very Dear Sir,

I have met the classes, and have no doubt but there is a considerable revival in this society. One of sister [Dorothea] King's classes evidences it more than any class I think I ever met. We have not yet met the Gravel Walk classes, so I cannot speak positively concerning the numbers. I am now in the boat returning from Prosperous, a place eighteen miles from Dublin, where a brother of Mr. Harry Brooke carries on a large cotton manufacture: the Parliament has lent him £25,000 for twelve years without interest.<sup>1</sup> I had a large congregation in the house of Mr. Ogdon, Mr. Brooke's partner, in the evening, and about 80 this morning at 5:00. The preachers intend to preach there weekly. The labourers, they inform me, amount to above two thousand; and as most of them are papists, Mr. Brooke has given the priest a room to perform mass in, on condition that he neither says nor does anything to prevent his people's attending the preaching of the Methodists—with which condition the priest has promised to comply. I really do not know one preacher in Ireland, of those who are to remain behind in this kingdom, who appears to me every way qualified to be assistant of the Dublin circuit. I sincerely wish you would send one from England. But he should be<sup>2</sup> a thorough Methodist. What do you think of James Rogers? If you would make him a promise that he shall return to England after he has been two years in Dublin, I think he will come. And Andrew Blair can fill his place for a month or three weeks, whilst he steps over the channel and marries Miss Roe.<sup>3</sup> Henry Moore would do; but London is of still more importance, and our Corke friends would be angry if he was removed to any other place in Ireland.

I intended to trouble you no more with anything about my going to America. But your observations concerning the letter of Capt. [Thomas] Webb's friend incline me to lay before you a few more syllables on the subject.

If someone in whom you could place the fullest confidence, and whom you think likely to have sufficient influence and prudence and delicacy of conduct for the purpose, were to go over and return, you would then have a source of sufficient information to determine on any points or propositions. You may very probably survive me many years. And I may also be destitute of the last-mentioned essential qualification for the business (to the former indeed I will beg claim without reserve). Otherwise, the possibility of my surviving you would render my taking such a voyage expedient besides (if we both live here below for many years): First, that you might have fuller information concerning the state of the country and the societies than epistolary correspondence can give you. Secondly, that there may be a cement of union remaining after your death between the societies of preachers in the two countries. And thirdly, because (if the awful event of your death should happen before my removal of the world of spirits) it is almost certain, for many reasons which might be given, that I should have business enough of indispensable importance on my hands in these kingdoms.

You remember the woman, when we were in Dublin who pretended to be possessed. Soon after I left Ireland, the papists had appointed a solemn day when the devil was to be expelled in their chapel in Lazar Hill.<sup>4</sup> Exorcists were prepared for the purpose, and it was to be one of *the* most notable days of this century. The Sieur Palmi was desirous to make a trial of her sincerity beforehand. The papists consented to it. A few days before the grand miracle was to be performed, a few eminent persons of every party met

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<sup>1</sup>In 1780, while on sick leave from the military arm of the East India Company, Robert Brooke (1744–1811) set up a cotton mill on his lands in north Kildare, calling the new village Prosperous. It failed within six years, and he went on to become Governor of the island of St Helena.

<sup>2</sup>Orig., 'should to be'.

<sup>3</sup>Rogers and Roe were married on Aug. 19, 1784.

<sup>4</sup>The Chapel of St. James.

in the Sieur Palmi's house. The woman was admitted, but her husband excluded. She told the company that when she was touched with a cross or with holy water, the evil spirit was outrageous. A messenger was immediately dispatched to Lazar Hill for a cross and holy water, and they were accordingly brought and laid upon a table. The woman was ordered to kneel down with her back to the table. 'Now', says the Sieur, 'we will try the experiment of the cross.' On which he took a large key which he had concealed for the purpose, and laid it on her neck—on which she instantly fell into violent convulsions. When these were over, 'Now', says the Sieur, 'we will try the experiment of the holy water.' On which he took up a basin of common water which he had also concealed for the purpose, and leaving the holy water on the table, and sprinkling a shower of the common water upon her, she instantly fell into more violent convulsions than before. The Sieur then asked the company whether they were fully satisfied of the imposture. They all confessed they were. 'Then', says the Sieur, 'if you will keep the woman and her husband in your custody, till I return, I will instantly wait on the Lord Mayor for a warrant.' they consented, and the warrant was brought. But on the return of the Sieur Palmi, the indiscreet company had suffered the impostors to escape, and the gentry of Lazar Hill chapel hushed up the whole business as well as the (first?).

I am, dear sir, your most dutiful and most affectionate son,

Thomas Coke

*Addressed:* 'The Rev. Mr Wesley / Edinburgh'.

*Source:* published transcription; MARC, MA 1977/461 (typed transcription).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>A note suggests the original was once at Epworth Press, London. An extract was published in Tyerman, *John Wesley*, 3:428; and the entirety appears in Coke, *Letters*, 51–54.

From Mrs. Martha Ward

Passage, near Cork  
April 17, 1784

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I have for some time purposely omitted writing, till I could again make one in our meetings. I know you too well, how deeply you are interested in whatever tends to promote the cause of God, not to give you an account of our society and preachers. I have not, in the twenty-one years that I have been in society, seen such times. Our Cork Methodists have the power and life of religion increasing daily among them. Their only contention is to provoke each other to love and good works. The fire not only spreads from heart to heart, but Cork and the county of Cork is growing almost too small for it. Five new places have been visited. The people here receive the word gladly, and there is a prospect of much good being done among them. They are growing in grace and in the knowledge of God in the other country societies, and well as in number.

Were you among us, my dear sir, your heart would rejoice to see us of one heart and mind. Much of this great good is owing to those servants of God who labour among us.<sup>6</sup> No time, no weather makes any interruption in their plan. Their labours are abundant, and the blessing on them as great. They love and prefer each the other to himself, while their ministry, instead of growing stale, increases daily in power and usefulness. My dear sir, do not think I exaggerate. I speak rather short of the truth. I am not partial to any man, but God continues to bless their united labours, and the work spreads and deepens in their hands.

God's dealings to me are still full of mercy and truth. This winter has made me more than once take a view of the chambers of death. But did he leave me in the hour when my flesh and heart failed? No, he was with me in all my complicated trials! And I have, through the mercy of God, lost nothing in the fire of affliction but myself; for glory be to my Saviour, I feel him *all* in me.

As you often bade me to write freely, you see I have no restraint. My boldness is great, but you have emboldened me. Your letter are precious, and have often been a cordial to me. May God, who has given you along life spent in his work, make you, before he takes you to himself, a witness of its prosperity and widening influence, till the whole earth is filled with the knowledge of God! I am,

Your loving daughter,

M. W.

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 553–54.

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<sup>6</sup>Those currently assigned to the Cork circuit were Henry Moore (Assistant), Andrew Blair, and Lawrence Kane.



From an Unidentified Woman

c. April 20, 1784

1. I was born at Ashton, of parents who had much of the form of religion, and brought me up in the fear of God. My father was a Dissenter, my mother of the Church [of England]. I could read the Bible when I was five years old: and the threatenings therein made such an impression upon me, as to deter me from outward sin. Yet many times I was afraid of the devil's fetching me away. This drove me to read the Scripture more carefully, as well as other good books. Hereby many times I was sorely distressed in my mind, and sometimes found a degree of comfort. But all this I kept to myself, scarce opening my mouth about it.

2. When I was about fourteen, my father died. I then grew more careless, though I had often strong convictions. But I put them away, and thought myself good enough. I was about nineteen when it pleased God to take my mother from me. At this I was sore troubled. And I had need: for though I was a child of affliction from my infancy, yet my main troubles were but beginning. For now those who had been my greatest friends became my greatest enemies. I could get no work whereby I could earn my living. Then I went to live with a relation, where I got work. But I was used so ill that I could not stay. Thence I went to Wigan, where I heard the Methodists twice, but it made no impression upon me. Getting nothing to do here, I went back to Ashton, where I learned the cotton business. Here I had a fall which nearly killed me. This drove me to prayer, for I was afraid to die. But when I recovered I forgot it all again, and was as careless as before.

3. After this, I went to Warrington to work, where I heard Mr. Johnson preach. I thought it was right, and longed to have some talk with the people. But none of them spoke to me. I went three summers to work at Warrington, and heard him constantly. The last time I was there, one night there was an eclipse of the moon. In the middle of it, I thought, 'the world is at an end! What then will become of *me*?' I retired into a place by myself, in one corner of a garden. All my sins were set in array before me. I thought I must be sent to hell directly. I expected the Lord would quickly appear as a just judge, and earnestly cried for mercy. After a while the moon shone again, and my fears abated. So much of them however remained that I slept little that night.

4. From this time I made many good resolutions. But they could not stand, for I made them in my own strength. A little after this I removed to Park Lane, near Wigan, where I was many times assaulted by wicked men: out of whose hands I narrowly escaped twice. I was now surrounded with trials. I was almost naked. I had no work. I had no friend. So I resolved to give myself up to the Lord. But I knew not how to do it. And having no one near that could instruct me, I gave myself much to reading and prayer. God then raised me up a friend, who put me to teach a school, and I had soon plenty both of scholars and work. Out of school I read much, and made many resolutions. But I broke them again and again. The more I read, the more sensible I was of my wants, but could find no help. I read, and prayed, and shed many a tear. But it seemed to be all in vain.

5. Thus it was till it pleased God to make a way for me to hear Mr. [Jeremiah] Brettel preach.<sup>1</sup> Then I found what I wanted. The next time he came he talked with me, and ordered one of the leaders to take me into his class. The night after, I heard an exhortation, every word of which came home to my conscience. I found myself a guilty, lost sinner, and was afraid God would send me straight to hell. The next night the class met. When I came in, such a power met me at the door, that I was a sinner stripped of all. And when the leader told me, 'Jesus Christ came to save lost sinners', I knew not how to bear it. I went home, though I scarce knew how I got thither. But I durst not go to bed. I cried to God. I pleaded his promises. I wrestled with him in mighty prayer. In a moment all my burden was gone, and all my soul was peace. As I was musing on this the next morning, those words were impressed on my mind, 'Thy sins

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<sup>1</sup>Jeremiah Brettel was stationed on the Manchester circuit in 1781, which served Wigan.

are forgiven thee.’<sup>2</sup> I believed they were, and my heart was filled with love and joy unutterable. I rejoiced, in a manner not to be expressed, in the God of my salvation.

6. But now Satan raised up all his hosts to devour my newborn soul. Some of my neighbours tried me with fair words; some with sharp and bitter ones. But I kept close to the Lord, and was not hurt, either by one or the other. Others came to dispute. But the Lord so filled my mouth with arguments that they could not withstand. It was on the 26th of June, 1782, that my soul was thus set at liberty. Towards the latter end of summer I got the preaching at my own house. Then the people took every one of their children and their work from me, so that most part of that winter I had little to do, and but little to eat. Many times I wanted necessary food. But the Lord supported me. When I was hungry and had nothing to eat, I went to prayer. And the Lord so blessed me that I have been as happy and as well satisfied as if I had had a houseful of food—many a time when I have been almost two days without meat. I would not have changed state with any Lady in the land. And though the Lord permitted me to be deprived of bodily food, none could deprive me of that bread wherewith the Lord fed my soul daily.

7. When I was in my greatest straits, a woman that was my neighbour laboured to persuade me to leave the Methodists, telling me, ‘You have disobliged your best friends, and exposed yourself to much want. But you may gain them again and want nothing. Otherwise you will be worse off than ever you were.’ I answered, ‘Nay, I am better off now than ever I was in my life. And if the Lord sees fit, he can provide for me. But if it be his will I should perish, I am content. I know he will save my soul.’ She said, ‘Then go your own way’, and said no more to me ever after.

8. Not long after I removed to Wigan. And now it was that God discovered to me the evil of my heart. While Mr. [John] Wesley was preaching, such a light came into my soul, that I saw my inward parts were very wickedness.<sup>3</sup> I saw I must be wholly changed. On Saturday evening I went to the preaching, but found no comfort. I went home, wept sore, and prayed till I could not speak a word. I was surrounded with temptations, till on Wednesday night while I was at prayer with two of my friends, they all vanished away. The next night, when I was going to bed, Satan furiously attacked me again. I directly went to prayer. He threatened me, if I did pray, he would take me away body and soul. He seemed to be in the room in a bodily shape. But the more he stormed, the more earnestly I prayed, till those words were applied with power, ‘He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.’<sup>4</sup> In an instant he was gone, and I saw myself surrounded by angels, so that I was ravished to behold them. They were gone in the twinkling of an eye, and left me so happy that I could not sleep for some time.

9. After this a predestinarian set upon me, and gave me one of their tracts. I read a little of it, but found it hurt me and would read no more. He then began to argue with me himself, and laboured to show me that I could not fall from grace. But he could not get me to believe it. Yet I was grievously tempted about it for a week, till in a prayer meeting it all vanished away and I have never been troubled concerning it since. But I had many other both inward and outward trials. The heaviest of all was from an intimate friend. This caused me to weep before the Lord continually for almost three days. But glory be to my God, he turned this also to my good.

10. About this time I heard Mr. [Zechariah] Yewdell preach, on ‘Blessed are the pure in heart.’<sup>5</sup> He exactly described what I experienced, and what I wanted. This was the latter end of summer 1783. All that winter I had sore conflicts with the enemy and my own evil nature. Many times I could neither eat nor sleep, though all the time I knew I was a child of God. But the love I had to him, and a sense of his goodness to me, made it worse than death not to love him with all my heart. All this while I was supported with many great and precious promises, or I could never have stood. Toward the end of the winter I was in continual expectation that God would come and take possession of my heart. But many

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<sup>2</sup>Luke 5:20.

<sup>3</sup>JW preached in Wigan May 15, 1783.

<sup>4</sup>Ps. 91:11.

<sup>5</sup>Matt. 5:8.

times I put it from me by unbelief.

11. In the beginning of April 1784, I had some business at a friend's house in the country, who desired me to stay all night, in order to have a prayer meeting. I was sorely tempted all the day, and at night when the meeting began I found myself full of all evil, but had a strong hope of deliverance. I said, 'Lord, I cannot save myself. Do thou with me what thou wilt.' That moment I was as if every bone in my body was pulling asunder. I roared out, and the tears ran plentifully down my face, while my friends were praying for me. But in a moment my roaring ceased, my tears were dried, and my mind was quite calm, while those words came with power to my soul, 'Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.'<sup>6</sup> After they had joyfully praised God on my account, the service was concluded. It was on the 3rd of April, 1784, that God wrought this great change in my soul.

12. The week after I was sorely tempted, feeling I was still a very weak, ignorant creature. And indeed I found more need of Jesus now than ever in all my life. The Thursday night was our monthly prayer meeting. Having a great cold, I thought I would not pray for they could not hear me. I was then full of temptation. And many were much tempted against me, because I did not pray. It was at last strongly impressed on my mind, 'Pray, and I will bless thee.' I answered, 'I will, whether they can hear me or not.' At once all my temptations fled away, and I was filled with joy unspeakable. So that when I broke out, I could do nothing but praise God my Saviour. And all in the room were so blest that I do not remember we had ever such a meeting before. The next day was Good Friday. I spent it in fasting and in prayer and meditating on my Lord's sufferings. In the evening, I thought, 'I will pray again, before I light a candle for my work, when such a glory was opened to my mind as humbled me to the dust. I was filled with love, and constrained to cry out,

If all the world my Jesus knew,  
Then all the world would love him too.<sup>7</sup>

But after this Satan strove all he could to rob me of my confidence. I truly proved the depth of those words, 'Without me ye can do nothing.'<sup>8</sup> But I proved likewise, 'I can do all things through Christ strengthening me.'<sup>9</sup>

13. April 16, Mr. Wesley came, and preached on 1 Corinthians 13:1ff. His word was blessed to my soul. Glory be to God, that ever he raised him up to preach the whole gospel. O may it prevail till the earth is filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord! May his servant see more and more fruit of his labour, till he has finished the work which was given him to do! And then may he receive a starry crown, and be forever with the Lord!

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 11 (1788): 298–301, 352–55.

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<sup>6</sup>Ps. 81:10.

<sup>7</sup>Cf. Isaac Watts, 'The Description of Christ the Beloved', st. 10, *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* (1709), 60: 'His worth if all the nations knew, / Sure the whole earth would love him too.'

<sup>8</sup>John 15:5.

<sup>9</sup>Cf. Phil. 4:13.

From Rachel Bruff<sup>1</sup>

Talbot County, Maryland  
c. May 1784

In the month of February 1768, I was brought under deep distress of soul, being made sensible of my undone estate by nature, and was constrained to implore the aid of the blessed Spirit, knowing that I could do nothing of myself. Not having the advantage of hearing the gospel preached in its purity, the Lord pointed me to his blessed word, in which I read and meditated day and night; and found that it was by grace I was to be saved. I betook myself to constant prayer, which I considered as a great weapon against the enemy of my soul. I saw that Jesus was my advocate with the Father, and that I could have access to God in no other name. My heavenly Father showed me that his dear Son tasted death for every man. From the time I was brought to see the need of a change, I was sweetly drawn by the cords of love, having the precious promises opened to me.

One night under deep distress, after addressing the throne of grace, I fell into a kind of sleep, or rather doze. I seemed to be in a small house, waiting on a woman that was dangerously ill. A person appeared in the other part of the house as if he came out of the wall. His countenance was very comely, his dress plain and grave, and he had a towel tied round his waist as white as snow. I looked earnestly at him, and knew him to be the Son of God: on which a sacred awe rested on my mind. O how awful the place seemed to be, because of the presence of the Lord! He then came straight to me, untied the towel, and gave it me with these words, 'Do as I have done', and then vanished in a moment. When I awoke, I was more determined than ever to devote the remainder of my days to the service of God. I grew weary of the world and all its vanities. I could find no happiness in anything beneath the sun, but prayer was my constant delight. I was now strongly impressed on my mind to withdraw from the world and spend the remainder of my days in retirement, where I had an opportunity of employing much of my time in reading, prayer, and self-examination.

One evening I was much drawn out in prayer, and received a blessed visit from my Lord and Master! My soul seemed to be filled with the love of God. Another night I walked out to praise the Lord. The night was beautiful and clear; the stars seemed as so many seraphs, shining forth their Maker's praise, and I saw a beauty in the whole creation. The very air seemed to breathe sweetness, and my soul glowed with love divine! As I was looking up to heaven, praising my great Creator, I felt that my sins were forgiven. At this my soul was wonderfully transported. I shall never forget the time and place where I received this great manifestation.

Shortly after I had found the pearl of great price, I covenanted with my dear Lord as follows: I choose God the Father, to be my God and father forever. I choose God the Son, to be the rock of my salvation, and advocate with the Father. I choose God the Holy Ghost, to be my sanctifier, and preserver. Lord grant that I may never break this solemn covenant!

After this, I met with many trials, from various quarters. But blessed be God, he stood my friend, and led me on from month to month, and from year to year!

In the year of our Lord 1776 there were great troubles in this country, occasioned by the unhappy war. My friends persuaded me to leave my quiet habitation. I did so to my sorrow, and went and lived in a family where great care was taken for the bread that perisheth but very little for that which endureth to eternal life. The blessed Lord permitted many enemies to rise up against me here. I lost my peace. But glory be to God, I kept my confidence. I continued here but one year, when God made a way for my return to my former habitation. I then covenanted with him to double my diligence, and found my soul as much drawn out as ever, and had as great a degree of sweetness in his service as ever.

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<sup>1</sup>Rachel Bruff, of Talbot County, Maryland was Quaker by birth, but drawn into Methodism. She would become the second wife of Richard Bassett (1745–1815), a lawyer and leader in the Revolutionary War who became a senator from Maryland and later governor of Maryland.

In the year 1778 the people called Methodists had been preaching in different parts of the country, sometime before I went to hear them. They were much spoken against. It being much pressed on my mind, in the month of February I went to hear Mr. [George] Shadford. I liked his doctrine exceeding well. But I had no mind to join the society till it was made known to me that they were the servants of God, sent to show us the way of salvation. However, I went from time to time to hear, and grew more and more happy every day. After some time I again covenanted with God in the following manner: Lord, as I have chosen thee to be my God and guide, I now choose thy people to be my people. I then joined the society, for which I have much reason to praise God ever since.

About this time the Lord began to pour out his Spirit upon my neighbours, many of whom were brought to experience the goodness of God. Shortly after this the preachers began more fully to insist on Christian perfection. At first I did not so fully understand them. But after making a more diligent search into the oracles of God, I found the doctrine clearly set forth therein, and was determined to seek the blessing with my whole heart. I had not done this long before I found myself sweetly drawn out, and sometimes was almost ready to conclude the work was done. In November I went to a love-feast. I thought I never before saw such a loving people. At this meeting the work was much deepened in my soul. But still, as I had not that witness which others spoke of, I was determined not to rest without it.

From the time I was convinced of the necessity of this blessing, there was a struggle in my soul. I was sensible the promise was to be received by faith, and the language of my heart was, 'Lord, help me!' About this time the enemy of my soul broke in upon me, and wanted to rob me of my confidence. But I was determined to wrestle with God until he set my soul at liberty. This struggle continued for eight days. All this while I groaned in secret, and entreated God to destroy the last remains of sin.

One day I bowed myself at the Redeemer's feet, and determined not to let him go without the blessing. And glory be to his name, in a moment my burden was gone! My soul was now so enraptured with a sense of his love that I was constrained to praise his name aloud. From that time he has been constantly with me, and has borne me up above all my sins, temptations and sufferings.

In May 1781, I was laid under the afflicting hand of God. I could scarce call it an affliction, as my soul was so exceedingly happy. For though my body grew weak, my faith was strengthened every day. I could look into the world of spirits, and view a God reconciled in Jesus Christ. On this I longed to be dissolved, and be with him whom my soul loved.

On Whitsunday I went to bed, weak in body but happy in mind. In my sleep I dreamed that I heard a band of angels singing around me in a most delightful manner. On this I awoke with my heart full of love, and quite transported. O if a blind world did but feel what I then did, how would they also love and adore the God of their salvation! How would they run in the ways of wisdom, and partake of the felicities of thy chosen! Lord open their blind eyes, and show them their undone condition by nature. Then show them the blood which bought their peace, and help them to wash therein, that they may be cleansed from all their filthiness, both of flesh and spirit, and perfect holiness in thy fear, O God!

In the month of August 1783, being greatly distressed on account of my friends, and neighbours, I was drawn out in prayer in an uncommon manner. Soon after this, there was a glorious revival of religion among them, and many were brought to a sense of the dying love of Jesus. One night in September I went to bed deeply humbled. I had scarce closed my weeping eyes when the 15th verse of the 57th chapter of Isaiah was brought to my mind: 'Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity. I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite, and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.' When I awoke, my soul was greatly refreshed. Since then I have been constantly happy.

At present, whether I go out or come in, lie down or rise up, Jesus is precious to me.

On August 2, 1783, I saw by faith my blessed Redeemer praying for me, till he sweat, as it were, great drops of blood, falling down to the ground. O what an agony was my soul in! My heart was so melted, that I mourned, and wept at his feet most bitterly!

January 1784. I praise God that I am spared to see another year! My soul was happy every day the last year; but I trust I shall be more so the present, and abundantly more devoted to God.

February 12. I awoke this morning, at the dawning of the day, and blessed my gracious God for his parental care of me. My soul is happy at present, and it is my meat and drink to do his will.

March 2. Glory be to God, he is still with me! I have many comforts without, and much peace and joy within.

March 5. This evening Jesus is precious to my soul. I seem as if I lived in heaven. O the sweet name of Jesus! How it charms my soul! He is my beloved and he is my friend, oh daughters of Jerusalem!

March 21. My dear Jesus so showers his blessings upon me that I find his yoke easy, and his burden light.

March 30. In the evening (a delightful season for prayer) I was much drawn out to God for the prosperity of Zion. Whilst I was viewing the sun, moon, and stars, as the work of God's fingers, my soul was drawn up to him in heavenly raptures. O my blessed, and glorious Saviour, who hast purchased so many comforts for me. How shall I praise thee worthily?

April 2. While I was under the word, my dear Lord visited my soul. O how precious are his ordinances to my poor soul! The feet of his servants are indeed beautiful on the mountains. While I see their footsteps, and hear their voice, my faith and love grow stronger and stronger.

April 4. The eve of Good Friday (a time to be remembered by all the lovers of Jesus) as I was meditating on my weeping, wounded Saviour, I thought, ere long I shall see him all glorious, shining in his Father's kingdom, amidst ten thousand saints and angels! Then all tears will be wiped away from his people's eyes, and they will view him without a veil between.

On Easter Day, going to see the sick, it was made a great blessing to me. When I returned home, my soul was overwhelmed with a sense of the love of Jesus. Glory be to God that my lot was ever cast in a gospel land, and that the joyful sound every reached my ears! Jesus is precious to my soul indeed! At present I rejoice that he is no longer a man of sorrow, in this vale of tears, but rather seated at his Father's right hand in glory everlasting, making intercession for the heirs of salvation.

Now hallow'd flames, help to adorn that head,  
Which once the blushing thorns environed;  
While crimson drops of precious blood hung down,  
Like rubies to enrich his humble crown.<sup>2</sup>

Blessed be God, he is my shepherd, and feeds my soul day by day with the bread of life! There is a precious treasure in my heart, that is dearer to me than all the world. Jesus is everything I want, by day and by night.

Some may think it strange when they read these lines, but glory be to God, these things are faithful and true. I speak in humility. My happy soul seems sometimes to be taking its flight to the mansions of eternal glory. My little cottage is a paradise. Angel bands pitch their tents around it. O that I could invite all the world to come to Jesus, and taste how good he is! He is the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valley. He is the fairest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. O for the tongue of an archangel to set forth his praise! O Jesus—words fail—time is too short to publish all I feel! But I am waiting to be released from time, and all its impediments. Was this the moment of my release, how would I rejoice! How would I

Clap my glad wings, and tower away,  
To mingle with the blaze of day!<sup>3</sup>

R. B.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 10 (1787): 135–37, 191–92, 243–46.

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<sup>2</sup>Cf. Abraham Cowley. 'Davideis', i.21–24.

<sup>3</sup>Thomas Parnell, 'A Night-Piece on Death', ll. 90–91.

From an Unidentified Correspondent

c. May 1784

John Appleton was a native of Shropshire, and served his apprenticeship to an eminent currier, in the town of Shrewsbury. During his youth, he practised too much the vices of the age, as he often mentioned in his public discourses with deep repentance and humiliation, and most grateful acknowledgments for the mercies and goodness of his Saviour, who had called him out of darkness into light, and from the power of Satan unto God. During these thoughtless times he had frequent and severe checks of conscience, so that he was very unhappy in his mind. He often resolved to leave off sinning, and to seek in earnest, to secure his salvation. But it was not till he went to Bristol that he experienced a thorough conversion, which was confirmed by the following awful judgment.

He had been conversing with religious people called Methodists, whom he highly approved. But one Sunday he happened to go into a church where a minister was to preach, who had before exerted himself in two other churches to preach against the Methodists, using the same text, which was, 'Having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof'.<sup>1</sup> He inveighed very much against the novel sect, the upstart Methodists, as he called them; adding, these are the men, whom St. Paul foretold would come, 'Having the form ...'. He then laid many grievous things to their charge, without any colour of truth, and warned his flock to turn away from them. Shortly after, he preached at St. Nicholas' church. But when he had named the above text twice, was suddenly seized with a rattling in his throat, attended with a hideous groaning, and fell backward against the door of the pulpit, burst it open, and fell down the stairs. He was then carried home, and on the Sunday following died.

Mr. Appleton being in the church, was greatly struck with this solemn event. When he returned to Shrewsbury he took a house, where he fitted up a room, in which he preached for many years, as long as his health would permit, and had full congregations. He constantly preached two days in the week at 7:00 in the evening, after labouring hard at his trade all the day, and twice on Sunday. He had great power in prayer, and his petitions were so constantly granted that he said he was almost afraid to ask, for fear he should ask amiss. His experience was very extraordinary, as will appear from the following extract of a letter which he wrote to a friend, giving him some account of the same.

You ask, first, did God testify to me that I was saved from all sin? If you mean original sin, or the corruption of the heart, I answer that God's Spirit did testify to my heart and my spirit that I was cleansed from all these sins. You ask secondly, in what manner? I answer, first by showing me some of my outward sins, and making me feel trouble of conscience, and giving me a measure of inward sorrow, and outward amendment and true repentance; and after a season, at a time of prayer, by making me feel a weight of unbelief upon my soul, which made me cry, 'I believe, Lord help my unbelief.'<sup>2</sup> This had no sooner ascended out of my heart and lips to God than the angel of the covenant, or the blessed Spirit, poured into my heart faith, love, peace, and joy unspeakable and full of glory.

I remained in this my first love, or espousals to Christ, for a season, not perceiving that either men or devils could do me any harm. But afterwards the battle commenced. My topsail of self-confidence fell down, and I saw I wanted the strength of God, and that nothing else could preserve me from sins without, and legions of sins within. But the Lord delivered me out of my temptations. Besides the daily visits of his grace, one day it was impressed on my mind that the Holy Ghost was come upon me. And whilst the Lord thus spake, I believed not for joy and wonder, till at last grace overcame my unbelief, and I then was filled, as I apprehended, with the Holy Ghost, after I had believed.

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. 2 Tim. 3:5.

<sup>2</sup>Mark 9:24.

Now prayer and praise flowed out of my heart without meditation. And I had light given me, to show what was grace and what was the depravity of my own heart. This remained on me as a refiner's fire. But as consolations did thus abound, I thought all manner of temptations did abound also. After a season of great conflicts, both within and without, at a time of public prayer I thought my mind was on a sudden enlightened to see three persons, which it was revealed to me were the holy Trinity. I saw them all joined together, and become as one. I saw one with a seal in his hand, which he impressed on my breast. My heart was now filled with such happiness and glory as tongue cannot express, which gave me to believe that I was sealed by the Spirit to the day of redemption.

You may say with me, 'Surely I shall find an inward war no more.' But although sin and Satan was thus foiled and conquered, he was not willing to quit the field, or wholly to give up his claim, for some of his seed still remained in my heart. He again rallied all his forces, though inwardly weak and as a dying man ready to give up the ghost, yet outwardly fierce as a roaring lion. Whilst losing his prey, the soul, he seemed as if he would tear the body to pieces. But all in vain, when the Lord is on the side of both body and soul. Now I cried, 'It is finished.'<sup>3</sup> At last, sin has given up the ghost.' Yet still I remained praying for light to see whether sin was wholly destroyed or not; and to my great surprise, found it struggle in my breast, and gasp for life. But then I believe it was the last. It stirred me up to pray day and night that God would satisfy me, and give me the indubitable seal, until at last my strength of body decayed so that it seemed impossible I could recover. But in this my weak state, the Lord again showed his mighty power.

Once in a public meeting, when at prayer, something, as I apprehended, came in the likeness of a spirit, and passed through me, from head to foot, and for a short time moved up and down through my whole body, whilst I cried, 'Is this the seal?' In the meantime it was applied again, again, and again. It was applied until I firmly believed. And after I believed, it left, as I thought, the image of God in my bosom, of a small size, which was to increase in growth until it came to the image of a man, which I thought was to be a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. I then found such strength, such faith, such peace and joy, without any doubt or fear, that it as far exceeded the former visits of God's good Spirit, as the sun at noon exceeds his appearance and effects in the morning, in warming and nourishing the earth.

Thus far is Mr. Appleton's own account, written by himself. He seemed always to enjoy communion with Christ, and a heart full of love and devotion. And his countenance, as well as life, testified the truth of his experience. When Mr. Wesley's preachers came to Shrewsbury about the year 1761, he took for their use a place, and fitted it up as a neat chapel, where they preached several years. But before his death, he built a commodious, elegant chapel, entirely at his own expense, which was opened by the Rev. Mr. John Wesley, on March the 27th, 1781.<sup>4</sup>

On Good Friday, 1784, he was taken ill, and retiring to his chapel alone. The Lord manifested himself to him in such a manner as filled his heart with love and joy unspeakable. He was seized with an intermitting fever. The fits were very severe every other day. Two days before his decease, a friend asked him, how he felt his soul. He said, 'Very comfortable.' When asked if he was free from the fear of death? He answered that the fear of death had been taken away from him many years since. He died without a sigh, about 11:00 at night, on Saturday the first of May 1784.<sup>5</sup>

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 636–40.

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<sup>3</sup>John 19:30.

<sup>4</sup>See *Journal, Works*, 23:196.

<sup>5</sup>Appleton was buried May 6, 1784 in Shrewsbury; JW preached a memorial sermon for him on Aug. 5, 1784; see *Journal, Works*, 23:325.



From Richard Rodda

Birmingham  
May 7, 1784

Reverend and Dear Sir,

On Easter Monday about twenty [class] leaders and stewards attended our quarterly meeting, and we went through our business in much peace and love. The work at Wednesbury is still going on. Several have been added to society since you left us. One Sabbath evening four young women came to me after preaching, in very deep distress. I have not seen any in such anguish of soul for many years. But one or two of them have found the Lord, and the others are seeking him with all their heart. The last time I was there, four praised God for his pardoning love.

The week before, a man who had been in society three or four years, and had been an ornament to it, was nevertheless convinced of the need of a farther work of grace. He therefore cried to God, pleaded his promises in faith, and obtained the blessing. He can now rejoice in the Lord all the day long. What is remarkable, the very same day, and about the same hour, his apprentice, a lad about fourteen years of age, found peace with God. Oh sir, it did my heart good to hear first the master, and then the lad, speaking of the wonderful works of God! The tears ran down the lad's face while he spoke, and his look was expressive of the heaven he felt within. It brought to my mind the 11th of June 1758, when God spoke peace to my own soul, and what he has done since for an unworthy wretch.

Five weeks ago I went to Yenton, and formed a little society there. Four or five have found peace with God, and I believe the rest are earnestly seeking it. Last Sabbath morning I rode to Halesowen. A rumour prevailed that there would be persecution, but I felt the love of Jesus warming my heart, and had not the least fear of either men or devils. I preached in a house at 9:00, and all seemed to drink in the word with greediness. I published preaching out of doors at half past 1:00. I went to Church and heard an excellent sermon on the only sure foundation;<sup>1</sup> and then preached near the church-yard, at the appointed hour, with great freedom, and no person attempted to make the least disturbance. From a persuasion that good will be done, I published preaching there again, and hope my fellow-traveller will be there at the appointed time.

A few at Wednesbury, who are enabled to rejoice in the Lord always, desired I would join them in a select band. I told them I rejoiced at the proposal, and exhorted them to use every means for gaining and retaining all the life of God. Begging you will not forget us at the throne of grace, I remain, reverend and dear sir,

Your dutiful son in the gospel,

R. R.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 554–55.

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<sup>1</sup>See 2 Tim. 2:19.

N. L.

May 12, 1784

In April 1784, hearing that M. D. was sick, I went to see her. The first thing I did was to convince her of her fallen condition; which, by the blessing of God, I soon did. As soon as she saw herself, she wept exceedingly! When she was alone, she poured out her soul before the Lord in fervent prayer. Once when she was in the house alone, and thought no one nigh, I heard her at a considerable distance, as in an agony, pleading with God for his pardoning love!

The Sunday before she died, I and several others went to see her; and finding her deeply wounded on account of sin, and much afraid of death and judgment, we endeavoured to point her to the wounds of Jesus as her only refuge. We also sung and prayed by her for a considerable time. At last, while W. J. was at prayer, she felt his words come with power, and said, 'O how do I love that young man!'

She now rejoiced with joy unspeakable, and cried, 'O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory!'<sup>1</sup> How little hurt canst thou do me now!' We then left her for the present. But on Tuesday returned again, and found her quite happy. She said, 'I envy not kings their crowns. Nor would I exchange my present condition for anything on earth.' The day following she cried out, 'Let me go! Let me go! See my Saviour! See my Saviour! See my Saviour!' and then expired.

N. L.

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 9 (1786): 198–99.

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<sup>1</sup>1 Cor. 15:55.

From James Toole<sup>1</sup>

c. June 1784

About the month of August, 1781, I became acquainted with Thomas Plummer and his family, by moving into the neighbourhood where they lived. And having frequent opportunities (through Christian instruction and conversation) of being together, I plainly discerned that he had lost that faith which, I was informed, he formerly professed—insomuch that he was in a state of despondency. This gradually increased upon his mind, so that by the latter end of October he was a mere spectacle of misery, being burdened with a sense of the wrath of God.

From this time he shunned all company and conversation, even that of his most intimate friends and acquaintances; so that when they would come to see him, he thrust them from him by opprobrious speeches and abusive words.

Notwithstanding things went thus far, there were a few in the neighbourhood who mourned for him as a dove for its mate. But above all the partner of his bosom was concerned. She was a loving and affectionate wife, a tender mother, a kind neighbour, and a humble follower of the *meek and lowly* Jesus. I have often heard her express such a lively sense of the gracious dealings of the Lord with her (although under the distressing circumstances of her family) that she was made a blessing to many of her friends, and unbelievers were struck with amaze. Indeed it was enough to pierce the hardest heart, to hear her in her family, and in class meetings, pouring out her cries and tears to the Lord in behalf of her husband and her children, who were going the broad road to destruction.

But he was so fearful of seeing any person, and lest any should come to his house and have an opportunity of seeing him, that he would frequently arise from his bed by the break of day and go into the mountains or woods until it was night; by which he was so far wasted by fasting, and his mind filled with horror, that he was reduced like unto a skeleton.

He continued in this distress, without seemingly any intervals of quiet, until late in the spring following, when his wife applied to some physicians for their advice. They gave her some medicines for him to take, which he, being apprised of, ran away unknown to the family. When he was missed they expected nothing else but that he was gone to put an end to his wretched life. Whereupon the neighbourhood was alarmed, and many persons went in search of him. But all in vain, for two days and two nights. It happened that the second night his daughter, a young woman, dreamed that her father was found in his barn; whereupon, when it was morning, some neighbours and the family going to search for him called at the barn and there found him in an empty cask covered over with boards. I was one of the company who was in search of him and saw this. His poor wife with cries and tears clinging round her husband, and his children in like condition, made it a very moving and affecting sight to me.

After this he was kept confined in his own house. But the horror of his mind was in no ways abated in appearance, until about the latter end of the month of April 1784, when he again ran away from his family.

Diligent search was made but to no purpose. His poor distressed wife bore up under her troubles as well as could be expected, and it was the general opinion of people that he had put an end to his wretched life.

Eleven days had elapsed, when late in the night, as the family was in bed, he knocked at the door. For some time they thought that thieves were at the door, and wanted to get into the house (his speech being altered). When, after some questions asked, to their amazing surprise they found it to be him whom they judged to be dead, the surprise was so great, and his wife was in such an ecstasy, especially when she found her husband to be restored to his former reason and judgment, that a pain struck her heart from which she got not free to her departing hour.

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<sup>1</sup>Titled: 'A Strange Account of Thomas Plummer, of Frederick County in Maryland'.

The news of his return was quickly spread abroad. I soon went to see him and he joyfully received me, whereupon I requested of him to give me an account of his recovery, and in what manner he was restored to his judgment and reason. He told me that for some time before his last departure from his family, he was inwardly anxious to go to some place where he was not known, and never to return again to his family: whereupon he took the best opportunity, and set off without any money, and was very bare in clothes. He told me he travelled generally about thirty miles a day, until he came to a river at Juniata, where he found himself so much recovered, that he bent his course homeward. He likewise told me that from his first setting off from home he perceived himself to amend, and says, through the mercy of God, he is as a man in another world, towards what he was some time past. 'Providence', said he, 'has been very kind to me. For although I had no money with me, yet at each house where I called they refreshed me kindly, although an utter stranger. And as to my health, I am in and do enjoy as good a degree of it as ever I did, except my feet, which are a little sore through walking so much.'

His wife, being present at our discourse, said to me, 'My brother, the Lord has heard and answered my prayers. This I was made to believe for a short space about three months ago, but through my trials and troubles I lost a sense of it. Yet a remembrance of it is still on my mind. And now I know that my Lord will not let me stay long here. He is my comfort and hope by day and night, and I do believe ere long, he will wipe all tears from my eyes, and sorrow from my heart. And even now I know no sorrow but for my children. And although I may not see them turn to the Lord (and I have been praying for them these eight years past and see no amendment), yet I will not be discouraged, but persevere in it to my latest day.' 'This pain', added she, 'which I feel around my heart is, I believe, the messenger of death.'

On the next Sabbath day she sent for me to our meeting (being unable to come there herself). I went, and with me a few friends. I found her lying on her bed very sick, and said to her, 'Sister, I believe the Lord is about to refine you as gold in the fire. Faint not, the everlasting arms are underneath you.' 'O!' said she, with tears of love flowing down her cheeks, 'I bless him! It is his dear hand, let him do what seemeth him good.' 'Do you believe', said I, 'that God for Christ's sake has saved you from all sin?' 'I do', said she. 'That loving faith that he has given me particularly under my present affliction of body, enables me to look into the dear Jerusalem, where my Jesus is, and I hope to be with him ere long.' We were much comforted together. And when I said, 'We will leave you in the Lord's hand!' 'I know you do', said she, 'and I trust we shall meet above.'

During the next week she was somewhat recovered, and rode out with some of her friends to take the air. On the next Sabbath day, as she was preparing to go to meeting, there fell a heavy rain. Yet she was very anxious to go, and could scarcely be prevailed on to stay at home and not venture out in the wet. However she consented at last, and sent her family. But on their return home from preaching, they found her very ill, being taken with a violent vomiting which continued for four hours. After that she strove to sing part of a hymn, 'Still out of the deepest abyss / Of trouble I mournfully cry'.<sup>2</sup> But while she was striving to do this she fell into a doze. And as it appeared to those present that she was dying, they strove to awake her but could not. After continuing about three hours in this doze, she was observed to breathe her last, and then fell asleep in Jesus.

There was but three weeks between the Lord raising him as a father to his family and that pious woman's decease. And since that time her eldest son has got a great concern for his soul, which I trust will end in a sound conversion.

James Toole

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 412–16.

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<sup>2</sup>CW, Hymn 46, *Redemption Hymns* (1747), 58–59.

From an Unidentified Correspondent<sup>1</sup>

[London]  
c. June 1784

Sarah Powell, of Windmill Street, Piccadilly, was in a deep decline, when her situation was made known to the Amicable Society. Upon the report of her case, a female visitor was appointed to attend her on Thursday evening, April 22, 1784; at which time the following conversation took place:

*Visitor:* 'How do you find yourself?' *S. P.:* 'I am very bad.'

*Visitor:* 'What hope have you of being happy in a future state?' No answer.

*Visitor:* 'Are you a sinner?' She replied, 'We are all sinners.'

A Bible being brought, the visitor read the third chapter of St. John's gospel, and endeavoured to explain the nature and necessity of the new birth.

*Visitor:* 'God in his holy word claims the heart: "My son, give me thy heart."<sup>2</sup> Now can you solemnly say, you have given him your heart?' She made no reply.

*Visitor:* 'There is no acquittal at the bar of God for any sinner dying without an interest in Christ. Remember your time is, apparently, very short, and eternity is long! Therefore, pray to the Holy Spirit to show you your sinful state by nature; and to lead you to Jesus Christ, who is the Saviour of sinners.' She made no reply; but heard attentively.

*Visitor:* 'Shall I go to prayer for you?' *S. P.:* 'If you please'.

After commending her to the Lord, the visitor left her until the Sunday following, when she was informed that S. P. had been inquiring who the visitor was, and where she could be found? The visitor then asked her the following questions:

[*Visitor:*] 'How do you find yourself now?'

*S. P.:* 'Much better all night, but not in body.'

*Visitor:* 'In what manner are you better then?'

*S. P.:* 'I had no rest for my body all night; but I have found rest for my soul.'

*Visitor:* 'How have you found rest for your soul?'

*S. P.:* 'Thinking upon the words you read and spoke to me, particularly the prayers you offered up, I felt as if the words went to my soul. I now find I have given my heart to the world, instead of God.'

The visitor then read two or three chapters out of the New Testament. And when these words were read, 'Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out' (John 6:37<sup>3</sup>) and, 'The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth from all sin' (1 John 1:7), she said, 'They are promises I can rest my soul upon.' At the same time the visitor read the 51st and 102nd Psalm; the 53rd, 55th, and 63rd chapters of Isaiah's prophecies, which treat of the work and sufferings of our blessed Lord; during which she prayed earnestly, and seemed to be much humbled.

After prayer, the visitor left her, until Thursday, April 29, when, as usual, she asked her how she found herself.

*S. P.:* '*I find*', said she, '*my burden grow lighter as I am enabled to lean on the Lord Jesus Christ.*' The visitor, not having much time to spare, left her soon. After exhorting her to look to Jesus, and to continue to pray, she added, 'The Lord Jesus be with you!' To which she replied, with much apparent happiness, '*He is with me!*'

On the Lord's day, May 2, the visitor asked her, 'How do you find yourself?'

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<sup>1</sup>Titled: 'A brief Account of the Lord's Dealings with Sarah Powell, who departed this Life, on Friday, May 21, 1784, aged Twenty-eight Years'.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Prov. 23:26.

<sup>3</sup>Orig., '6:36'; a misprint.

*S. P.*: 'My blessed Saviour', said she, 'is working a good work in my soul, and will soon take me to himself. I find that Jesus Christ hath not left me a moment; nor have I left him.'

*Visitor*: 'What! Can you say you have not left him a moment?'

She replied she had not; but added, 'Not that I am sufficient of myself. My dear Lord will not suffer me to leave him a moment.'

The visitor, after saying many other things to her, read a few portions of God's word, commended her to the Lord in prayer, and left her.

On Tuesday, May 11, she was visited by another member of the society who asked her the following questions:

*Member*: 'How is it with your soul?'

*S. P.*: 'I am a sinner, sir!—a great sinner!'

*Member*: 'Do you know anything of Jesus Christ?'

*S. P.*: 'I have cast my all upon him.'

*Member*: 'Have you any doubts of your eternal happiness?'

*S. P.*: 'I have doubts; but I find the firm reliance I have on the Lord is a great comfort to me.'

*Member*: 'How long have you known anything of Jesus Christ?'

*S. P.*: 'Never till I saw that dear woman', pointing to the first visitor, who was then present; and said, with tears, 'I have lost much precious time, and have neglected everything that is good.'

*Member*: 'Had you rather live or die?'

*S. P.*: 'As the Lord pleases. But submitting to his will, I had rather die and be with him.'

*Member*: 'Shall I go to prayer with you?'

*S. P.*: 'O, pray do, sir!'

*Member*: 'What would you have me pray for?'

*S. P.*: 'That my sins may be washed away in the blood of Jesus.'

On Wednesday, May 12, she was visited by another member, who gives the following account:

I found her very weak in body, but apparently very earnest about her eternal salvation. On asking if she had heard anything of Jesus, previous to her being visited by the society, she answered, no; but had misspent many an hour at a church she occasionally went to. She seemed at intervals to use earnest ejaculations to the Lord; and was heard to mention frequently, though with a low voice, 'O, the precious blood of Christ! The precious blood of Christ!', etc. Being asked why she thought that Christ had shown any love to her? She answered, 'Not for anything in me, for I deserve nothing but wrath.' As she had not been used to gospel language, this answer gave great satisfaction; and I willingly hoped, flesh and blood had not taught it to her.

On Friday, May 14, another member of the society asked her the following questions:

*Member*: 'How do you find yourself?'

*S. P.*: 'I am very happy in my dear Lord Jesus.'

*Member*: 'How long have you known him?'

*S. P.*: 'Never till that dear woman visited me from the society'.

*Member*: 'What sort of a life have you formerly lived?'

*S. P.*: 'Rebelling against God, and ignorant of myself.' But she said the Lord Jesus had shown mercy to her, and her whole trust was in him. She also said she was fully assured that the sufferings of her dear Lord had satisfied for her sins, and blessed God that she had found mercy in him so late in life. Being asked if she had any fear of death, she answered, 'No! For when I die I shall go to my blessed Lord'.

Lord's day, May 16, she was visited by two other members of the Amicable Society, who asked her the following questions.

*Member*: 'How is it with your soul? Your body seems very weak.'

*S. P.*: 'Jesus Christ is very precious to me, and has not left me a moment.'

*Member*: 'Dare you then venture your soul on him?'

*S. P.*: 'O, yes if I had twenty souls!'

Being asked if she found herself a sinner, she answered, 'Yes, the chief of sinners!' She said, 'I thank God that he ever, in his good providence, sent any of the society to visit me; for if I had died in the state I was in before, I should have perished forever.'

*Member*: 'You said just now you were a sinner; are you not then afraid to die?'

*S. P.*: 'No. My Jesus has answered for me.'

*Member*: 'Do you wish to recover?'

*S. P.*: 'If it is the Lord's will, I had rather not.'

*Member*: 'Why have you no desire to recover?'

*S. P.*: 'For fear my evil heart should lead me from the Lord'. They then went to prayer with her, and before they left her took her by the hand and said, 'The peace of God be with you!' She answered, 'His peace is with me.'

On Monday, May 17, she was visited by Mr. G. and another member. Upon their entering the room she seemed so intense in prayer as not to observe them. After several questions put to her, she answered, in the language of the most exalted faith, that she knew Jesus to be *her* Saviour—that she had not the *least doubt* of her interest in him—that his blood had *cleansed* her—that he was *very precious* to her—that death was *no terror* to her—and that *her desire* was to be with him.

It was then said to her, 'You may yet suffer much more in your body, are you willing to bear it?' She replied, 'Yes.' 'Would you not be ready to think hard of Jesus, was he to lay heavier sufferings upon you?' After a short pause, she said, 'No.' Being then asked, 'Why? What would you think if such was the Lord's will?' She replied with amazing firmness, 'I should think he did it to increase my blessings.'

Wednesday, May 19, she was visited by a member of the society, who had visited her before with Mr. G. who asked the following questions.

*Member*: 'Well, sister, how do you find yourself?'

*S. P.*: 'Happy!—happy!—very happy!'

*Member*: 'What, is the Friend of sinners still precious in your sight?'

*S. P.*: 'O yes! He is indeed very precious!'

*Member*: 'What makes him so to you?'

*S. P.*: 'Because he hath loved me, and washed me in his own blood.'

*Member*: 'Do you think it is in consequence of your loving him that he has loved you so?'

*S. P.*: 'Oh, no. I should never have loved him, if he had not loved me first.'

She was this morning very weak, and hardly able to answer any more questions; but her soul seemed happy in the love of Jesus. She was frequently offering up prayers and praises to her blessed Lord, and in a low voice often singing. Being asked by her attendant if she would have something to moisten her mouth, she declined it, saying, 'Nothing will do my perishing body any service.' When asked if the member should spend a few moments in prayer, she smiling, thanked him and begged he would.

The following are a few of the many expressions she used in her last moments, taken down in writing by a lady who visited her, who communicated them to the society. She said she was all sin, but her Saviour had washed her in his precious blood. That his grace was sufficient for her, and she should want it to the last moment. She spoke about Lazarus and the rich man,<sup>4</sup> and said, 'If the Lord Jesus had not opened my eyes, I should have gone to hell; for I deserved it.' She said, 'The wisest of men are as ignorant of God as the most foolish, until their eyes are opened.' And added, 'O, who would have thought my blind eyes should see my dear Lord so clearly, and my heart be opened to him!—I am very weak, but I can hear if you will talk, though I cannot speak.' She then had a convulsion fit, and struggled hard. As soon as she recovered she said, 'One step more to my blessed Lord! But I could take a thousand steps. Yet I can wait his time, and I am ready to go this minute.' She prayed continually, and said, 'I praise God for sending the person who first visited me. O, I am happier than a king or a queen, because I am washed in my Saviour's blood.' Upon leaving her, she began to sing—'Jesu, lover of my soul, / Let me to thy

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<sup>4</sup>See Luke 16:20–31.

bosom fly, / ...',<sup>5</sup> a verse of a hymn she had learned since first visited.

Being asked if she freely forgave a person who had used her very unkindly? She answered, 'O, yes. I am now praying for him.' And added, 'Do you pray for him, and desire the Lord's people who visited me to pray that the Lord would change his heart.'

A little before her death, she said to her attendant, 'I am now going to leave you. I leave the washing of my dying body to you, but my blessed Jesus hath washed my soul in his own precious blood. I would be clean within and without.' She then sent for one to come to her, and desired him to go to prayer. And after taking an affectionate leave of those who attended her, like holy Stephen, she sweetly slept in the arms of her beloved Jesus, 'calling upon the name of the Lord'!<sup>6</sup>

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 8 (1785): 404–07, 458–61.

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<sup>5</sup>*HSP* (1740), 67, st. 1.

<sup>6</sup>Cf. Acts 7:59.



From an Unidentified Correspondent<sup>1</sup>

[London]  
c. June 1784

Ann Roylands was born January 8, 1766. She lost her mother when she was about ten years old. This was the occasion of many serious reflections, young as she then was. It seemed to lay the foundation of what often appeared in her life and conversation afterward. She frequently showed much tenderness of spirit in family prayer, and also when spoke to on account of her soul.

Thus she went on, till about the middle of April 1784, when she was seized with an illness which ended in death. Her disorder was a consumption, and it made swift advances to hasten her end. Her father sent her to the country, to see what a change of air would do; but she was uneasy till she returned to London.

As her illness increased, so did her trouble of mind. In this situation I found her on the 7th of May. I conversed some time with her, and concluded the conversation with prayer. When I arose from my knees, I had a strong conviction that God would soon visit her soul. I encouraged her to come to Jesus just as she was, and to cast her burdened soul on the Lamb of God. I told her father and mother-in-law<sup>2</sup> not to fear, for ere long she would see the salvation of God. In this confidence I left her, and from this time she called upon the Lord night and day.

On Monday the 10th of May a Christian friend called on her, and conversed with and prayed for her. After prayer she cried out, 'It is done! It is done!' The friend that was with her said, 'What is done?' She replied, as well as she could for tears, 'The Lord has pardoned all my sins!' Just at that instant her father (who had been at a prayer meeting) came in, and to his unspeakable joy, found her overwhelmed with tears of love, and praising God. 'Now', said she, 'I shall go to heaven! Now I am not afraid to die! O, I have been a wicked sinner. But God has pardoned all my sins! Now I shall go to see my mother, brothers, and sisters in glory!'

All the ensuing week she enjoyed a constant sense of the peace and love of God. In this spirit I found her when I called to see her. She calmly told me what the Lord had done for her soul. She was much delighted with the hymns, but particularly with the funeral hymns. Her disorder now increased very fast, and at seasons Satan was permitted to try her faith. About a week after she found peace with God, she thought she saw the devil coming towards her with a fierce countenance, and looked as if he would have torn her in pieces. But she lifted up her heart to the Lord, and found him near to save. She then cried out, 'Thou dog of hell, thou canst not stand prayer!' Immediately her soul was so filled with the love of God that she could scarce contain herself. She longed to be dissolved and to be with Christ. But in the midst of her earnest desires to be gone, she would frequently say! 'Thy will be done! Thy will be done!'

The week before she died she was violently tempted by the powers of darkness; but in every temptation the Lord made a way for her escape. She had many consolations mingled with her trials both of body and mind.

She would cry out, in the midst of all, 'Come Lord Jesus! Let me love thee with all my heart! I am but a young, ignorant creature. But oh let me love my God and die!' Some thieves having broke into the house, and stole several things, and among the rest a cloak of hers; she said, 'I shall soon be clothed with a white robe, white as snow, washed in the blood of the Lamb!' Sometimes she would say, 'I am in great pain, but I scarce feel it. I am so happy in my Redeemer. I am weak, but he is my might. He is my love, my God, my all!'

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<sup>1</sup>Ann Parsons Roylands (1766–84), was the daughter of Thomas Roylands (c. 1734–1820) and Ann (Parsons) Roylands (d. c. 1776). Thomas was a class leader at the Foundery and City Road Chapel for over 50 years. Ann was buried at City Road Chapel on 28, 1784. Her father is buried there as well. See Stevenson, *City Road*, 189, 584–85.

<sup>2</sup>Thomas Roylands married his second wife, Ann Ashton, in Dec. 1776.

As her time drew near to a period, how did she wrestle with God in prayer for faith and patience to hold out unto the end! Some of her words were, 'Come Lord Jesus! Come quickly, and take me to thine everlasting arms! I love my Jesus! Thou wilt not leave me, sweet Jesus! Only give me patience, and make me like thyself, and then take me to glory!'

The day before she died Satan was permitted to make his last attack upon her. For some time she was in an agony. But prayer was made to God for her, and it pleased the Lord to still the avenger. After lying a while, when the conflict was over, she broke out in an ecstasy of love and joy, and cried aloud:

Come Lord Jesus! Take me to thyself! Dear Jesus, how I love thee! O, I love my Jesus! I love my father! I love my mother! I love you all! and I love all the world. But I love my Jesus a thousand times better. I shall soon be with him! I shall soon be in his arms! Do not leave me. Stay and see me die. Before the morning, Jesus will take me to himself! I shall be in his arms forever and ever! I shall sing the song of Moses and the Lamb forever and ever! Hallelujah! Come sweet Jesus! Why are thy chariot wheels so long in coming? And why tarry the wheels of thy chariot? O, come quickly, and let me be thine forever!

She then lifted up her feeble voice and sung,

For me my elder brethren stay,  
And angels beckon me away,  
And Jesus bids me come!<sup>3</sup>

Ah my dear Jesus, I shall soon be with thee! I shall soon be happy in thine embrace! I shall soon be with him whom my soul loveth! I shall join the hundred and forty, and four thousand, with the innumerable company, which no man can number; and there a heavenly harper stand, and sing the song of love to all eternity!

In this solemn triumph of faith she continued for an hour and half, and her words were like those of a spirit sent from paradise. After lying some time composed, she was seized with convulsions, and cried out, 'Father, I am struck with death!' She continued for some hours with her eyes and hands lifted up to heaven, and with smiles of love and joy on her countenance. Her father said, 'My dear, you are not afraid to die.' She hastily replied, 'O, no, no! I am not afraid to die!'

After continuing for some hours in a transport of love and joy, she quietly fell asleep, on May the 25th, in the nineteenth year of her age.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 8 (1785): 247–49 , 305–06.

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<sup>3</sup>CW, 'The Pilgrim', st. 8, *Redemption Hymns* (1747), 68.

From Thomas Wride<sup>1</sup>

Croxton [Cambridgeshire]  
June 3, 1784

Reverend Sir,

I judge that duty calls upon me to write. Yet constitution and other difficulties bid me spare myself.

I know not how to direct immediately to you, nor have I known all the year; otherwise I should have wrote months ago. But I was told that you had left a discretional power (to whom I was not told) to open your letters in your absence, and to forward or suppress them as judged best. Therefore I could by no means think it safe to expose my affairs in the hands of *some* whom I may call my friends; much less to pass the view of *any* whom I should not so name.<sup>2</sup>

I cannot *now* inform you, sir, of what I think you ought to be *fully* informed. My reason is already given. But if this comes unto you, and you are pleased to tell how I shall direct immediately to you; or if you choose to defer it until it may please God to bring you to Lincolnshire; or if you choose it to be laid open at the Conference. I am absolutely at your disposal. For I will not insinuate more than I can defend.

But sir, if you call for my private information, I have to entreat that you make it a privacy; unless you think fit to make it a matter of public charge. Then I am willing to defend what I shall (when you please to direct) give you account of.

This morning I left Skillington [Lincolnshire]. I find that sister [Ellen] Christian has lately had a letter from you out of Scotland.<sup>3</sup> But as neither that letter nor any other information gives me to know when I may see you, I trouble you with this—hoping that you will excuse my cautious method, however obscure, and believe me to be, reverend sir,

Your devoted servant,

T. W.

P.S. You will please to direct to Gainsborough, as we are there oftener than any other place.

*Source:* Wride's manuscript draft; Duke, Rubenstein, Frank Baker Collection of Wesleyana, Box CO9, Thomas Wride papers.

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<sup>1</sup>Wride had been suspended from itinerant ministry at the 1780 Conference, but reinstated in 1782 (see *Works*, 10:520). He was currently stationed on the Gainsborough circuit.

<sup>2</sup>See Wride's subsequent letter of July 3, 1784.

<sup>3</sup>This letter, in early to mid May, is not known to survive.

From Robert Raikes<sup>1</sup>

Gloucester  
June 5, 1784

I have not had leisure to give the public an earlier account of my plan for a reform of the rising generation, by establishing schools, where poor children may be received upon the Sunday, and there engaged in learning to read, and to repeat their catechism, or anything else that may be deemed proper to open their minds to a knowledge of their duty to God, their neighbours, and themselves.

The utility of an establishment of this sort was first suggested by a group of little miserable wretches whom I observed one day in the street where many people employed in the pin manufactory reside. I was expressing my concern to one at their forlorn and neglected state, and was told that if I were to pass through that street upon Sundays, it would shock me indeed to see the crowds of children who were spending that sacred day in noise and riot, to the extreme annoyance of all decent people.

I immediately determined to make some little effort to remedy the evil. Having found four persons who had been accustomed to instruct children in reading, I engaged to pay the sum they required for receiving and instructing such children as I should send to them every Sunday. The children were to come soon after 10:00 in the morning, and stay till 12:00. They were then to go home and return at 1:00, and after reading a lesson they were to be conducted to church. After church they were to be employed in repeating the catechism till half after 5:00, and then to be dismissed, with an injunction to go home without making a noise; and by no means to play in the street. This was the general outline of the regulation. With regard to the parents, I went round to remonstrate with them on the melancholy consequences that must ensue from so fatal a neglect of their children's morals. They alleged that their poverty rendered them incapable of cleaning and clothing their children fit to appear either at school or at church. But this objection was obviated by a remark that if they were clad in a garb fit to appear in the streets, I should not think it improper for a school calculated to admit the poorest and most neglected. All that I required were clean faces, clean hands, and the hair combed. In other respects they were to come as their circumstances would admit.

In a little time the people perceived the advantage. Many children began to show talents for learning, and a desire to be taught. Little rewards were distributed among the most diligent.<sup>2</sup> This excited an emulation. One or two clergymen gave their assistance, by going round to the schools on the Sunday afternoon to hear the children their catechism. This was of great consequence.

Another clergyman hears them their catechism once a quarter publicly in the church, and rewards their good behaviour with some little gratuity.

They are frequently admonished to refrain from swearing; and certain boys, who are distinguished by their decent behaviour, are appointed to superintend the conduct of the rest, and make report of those that swear, call names, etc. When quarrels have arisen, the aggressor is compelled to ask pardon, and the offended is enjoined to forgive. The happiness that must arise to all from a kind, good-natured behaviour, is often inculcated.

This mode of treatment has produced a wonderful change in the manners of these little savages. I cannot give a more striking instance than I received the other day from Mr. Church, a manufacturer of

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Raikes (1725–1811) inherited from his father the role of editor of the *Gloucester Journal*; he would be particularly remembered for championing Sunday schools. These were schools, initially nondenominational in nature and often supported by Church of England priests, held on Sundays, to teach children who had no other access to schooling how to read, etc. See JW's account of a visit to such a school in Bingley on July 18, 1784, *Journal, Works*, 23:323. JW published this letter as a means of supporting the effort.

<sup>2</sup>Note in original: 'The rewards are books, combs, shoes, or some article of apparel.'

hemp and flax, who employs numbers of these children.<sup>3</sup> I asked him whether he perceived any alteration in them since they had been restrained from their former prostitution of the Lord's day?

Sir, (said he,) the change could not have been more extraordinary, had they been transformed from the shape of wolves and tigers to that of men. In temper, disposition, and manners they could hardly be said to differ from the brute creation. But since the establishment of the Sundays' schools, they have shown that they are not the ignorant creatures they were before. When they have seen a superior come, and kindly instruct and admonish them, and sometimes reward their good behaviour, they are anxious to gain his friendship and good opinion. They are also become more tractable and obedient, and less quarrelsome and revengeful.

From this little sketch of the reformation which has taken place, there is reason to hope that a general establishment of Sunday schools would in time make some change in the morals of the lower class. At least it might in some measure prevent them from growing worse, which at present seems but too apparent.

R. Raikes

P.S. The parish of St. Nicholas has lately established two schools; and some gentlemen of this city have also set up others. To some of the school mistresses I give two shillings a week extra to take the children when they come from work, during the week days.

*Titled:* 'An Account of the Sunday-Charity Schools, lately begun in various Parts of England'.

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 8 (1785): 41–43.

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<sup>3</sup>Luke Church (b. 1738) and his brother Matthew Church (b. 1744) appear in the 1784 editions of Bailey's *Bristol Directory*, as flax dressers and rope makers in Gloucester.

From Ann Bolton<sup>1</sup>

[Manuscript Version]

Witney  
June 22, 1784

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I have long wished to write to you but could not find out where to direct.<sup>2</sup> And as it appeared one of my letters in your last year's journey miscarried, I feared to venture, so enquired of Mr [John] Atlay.

I much wish to vary my subject, and not fill my letters always with doleful news, such as the weight of the cross, the pain of suffering, etc. But how difficult it is to avoid that which so naturally offers as having most powerfully affected the heart. The last three months I think have not afforded me one day that has not had some thing peculiarly exercising in it: one of other of the family ill, and myself very often poorly, low, and tempted to dejection. None but God know what my sufferings have been from this quarter. Neither have I found it available to discover them to any, unless I could have met with persons more suitable. In this respect I seemed in a peculiar sense to be called to follow him 'who drank the bitter cup',<sup>3</sup> 'the wine press trod *alone*'.<sup>4</sup> To him I applied myself as to a friend in need. I struggled and laboured in the exercise of faith to lay fast hold on his strength, 'who was touched with a feeling of my infirmities'.<sup>5</sup> The beholding him as my great High Priest, who 'suffered being tempted'<sup>6</sup> was the means of administering the greatest consolation I had. Providence, mysterious providence, is oft the subject of my pensive thought, and I hope I am learning some profitable lessons from my contemplations.

I have lately purchased Miss Talbot's *Essays*, and have received many useful hints from them.<sup>7</sup> The new word she begs leave to make (which is 'accommodableness') has oft occurred to my mind with instructive influence.<sup>8</sup> The temper it implies or comprehends is a very suitable, and a very needful one, in such a world and such a state as this. To accommodate oneself to everyone's cross humour, to everyone under trials and distress, and to every painful afflictive circumstance we meet, is I apprehend a sure way to promote and establish peace of mind. I want to learn how to pass through the world to the best advantage, in all respects wisely to improve time for eternity. In this science or art I know you are able to help me, and the favour is most humbly and fervently solicited by,

Your ever obliged and affectionate servant,

A. Bolton

*Source:* manuscript copy for records; privately held.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>This letter is given in two forms. The first is a manuscript that remains among Bolton's papers, that was apparently for her records (not posted). The second is the form published by JW in *AM*. There are both small stylistic changes and larger differences of matter missing from one form or the other. JW has likely added some of the rhetorical flourishes. But it is also possible that Bolton's record copy did not contain everything that was in the holograph. Annotations added to the first version are not repeated on the second version.

<sup>2</sup>The last surviving letter from JW to Bolton was Apr. 1, 1784, *Works*, 30:224–25.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Matt. 26:39 and parallels.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Isa. 63:3.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. Heb. 12:15.

<sup>6</sup>Heb. 2:18.

<sup>7</sup>Catherine Talbot, *Essays on Various Subjects*, 2 vols. (London: Charles Rivington, 1772).

<sup>8</sup>See *ibid.*, 1:25ff.

<sup>9</sup>Transcription provided by Cindy Aalders.

[Published Version]

Witney  
June 22, 1784

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I am sorry ever to delay writing to you, because I know the loss is considerable to myself. The source of all grace does help my needy soul to persevere, through your instructive, animating counsel.

I much wish to vary the subject matter of my letter, and not fill it with doleful news, such as the weight of the cross, the pain of suffering, etc. But how difficult is it to avoid that which so naturally offers, as having most powerfully affected the heart? Besides, I glory in my being permitted to open to you my weaknesses and wants.

I have lately passed through many severe exercises, both of faith and patience. I have been taught daily to give up all dependence on the creature for happiness, and avowedly to acknowledge Jesus as my chief good, as my all in all. Not a day has passed for several weeks that has not yielded me something peculiarly trying; one or other of the family ill, myself poorly, and much tempted to dejection. None but God knows what my sufferings have been from this quarter. It is true, 'a friend is born for adversity'.<sup>10</sup> But a suitable one is not always at hand. For though I have *much* union with the dear children of God here, yet I seem sometimes to be called to beat the trackless path, and follow him 'who drank the bitter cup', 'the wine-press trod alone'. To him I have applied myself as to a friend in need, secretly and minutely spreading all my wants before him, and labouring with the most vehement desire and intense earnestness of soul, to take fast hold of him, who was 'touched with a feeling of my infirmities'. The beholding him as my great High Priest, who 'suffered being tempted', has been the chief means of administering consolation and joyful hope.

Providence, mysterious providence, is oft the subject of my pensive thought. And I trust I am learning some profitable lessons in my contemplations, and can justify the ways of God with man. You have oft enough encouraged me to trust the Almighty when his footsteps are in the deep, to believe on him where I could not discern his way, and I still find it *must be so*, I must venture (like the priests of Joshua) to wet the soles of my feet, before the waters part, and *then* see the glory of God, in the displays of his providence.<sup>11</sup>

I have lately (from the hint you gave me) perused Miss Talbot's *Essays*, with much pleasure. The new word she begs leave to make, which is 'Accommodableness', has oft occurred to my mind with instructive influence. The temper it implies, or comprehends, is a very suitable and needful one in such a world, and such a state as *this*. To accommodate oneself to everyone under trial and distress, to everyone's caprice or cross humour, and to every painful afflictive circumstance one meets with is, I apprehend, a sure way to promote and establish peace of mind. I want to learn how to pass through this world to the greatest advantage—in and through every occurrence, wisely to improve time for eternity. In this science, or art, I know you are able to advise, and the favour is most humbly and earnestly solicited by, dear sir,

Your ever obliged and affectionate servant,

A. B.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 588.

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<sup>10</sup>JW's addition; Cf. Prov. 17:17, 'A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.'

<sup>11</sup>See Josh. 3:15.

**An Appeal to the Reverend John and Charles Wesley;  
to all the Preachers who act in Connection with them;  
and to Every Member of their respective societies  
in England, Scotland, Ireland and America<sup>12</sup>**

[c. July 1, 1784<sup>13</sup>]

Men and Brethren,

A very alarming circumstance has taken place, by virtue of an enrolment of a deed in his Majesty's High Court of Chancery; entitled, 'The Rev. J. Wesley's Declaration and Establishment of the Conference of the People called Methodists.'

Some years ago it was thought expedient in order to prevent divisions and dissensions amongst the people called Methodists, *after* Mr. Wesley's *decease*, that a plan should be formed under the sanction of Conference for the future carrying on of the work; and such a plan as might meet with the general concurrence of Conference. Hence the matter was taken into serious consideration from time to time, and the following plan agreed to, which Mr. Wesley printed in 1772, in the 15th Volume of his *Works*, Pages 348–49; and also in 1780, in the large *Minutes*, page 41.

On notice of my death, let all the preachers in Britain and Ireland repair to London in six weeks. Let them seek God by fasting and prayer. Let them draw up Articles of Agreement, to be signed by those who choose to act in concert. Let those who do not choose it be dismissed in the most friendly manner possible. Let them choose by votes, a Committee of 3, 5, or 7; one of them to be Moderator. Let this Committee [...] propose preachers to be tried, admitted, or excluded; fix the place of every preacher, and the time of the ensuing Conference.<sup>14</sup>

This plan of settlement met with so general and hearty an approbation, both amongst the preachers and people, that it was generally understood that it would make our union, under God, perpetual.

On the 28th of February 1784, Mr. Wesley executes, and enrolls in Chancery a Deed which invests 100 itinerants, or any 40 of them, with all the powers of Conference; such as to choose a President and Committee out of themselves; to call and dissolve Conference; to receive into and expel from the community; to appoint the preachers when, where, and how to employ their time and labours; restricting the lay preachers from staying in any circuit above three years, and exempting clergymen from such a restriction! In a word: By virtue of this Deed, all *their* acts, and no other are to be had and taken for the acts of Conference. Hence the yearly collection, the preachers' fund, the direction of Kingswood School, the liberty of the press, and liberty of conscience will, we apprehend, all be subject to their control!

But these matters will receive additional light, by contrasting the old plan with this Deed.

1. The old plan gave all the preachers in Britain and Ireland a right to come to Conference, and choose by votes a Moderator and Committee. — The new Deed gives this power to 100, or any 40 of them! And the President, or Moderator, must be one of the Committee; and by this Deed 91 itinerants are excluded from any voice in these matters!

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<sup>12</sup>The moves JW took in 1783 to insure that deeds of preaching-houses require preachers to be appointed 'by Conference' created a legal question of what constituted 'Conference'—particularly after JW died. This eventuated in a 'Deed of Declaration', that limited the 'legal Conference' to one hundred preachers—out of nearly two hundred currently active. (The text of the Deed can be found in *Works*, 10:949–56) This sparked concern among those omitted from the 'legal one hundred', especially seasoned travelling preachers like John Hampson Sr.

<sup>13</sup>The date is suggested in part by the postmark of the copy sent CW.

<sup>14</sup>This was part of a longer paper JW read at Conference on Aug. 4, 1769; see *Works*, 10:377–78. It was then placed in the 'Large' *Minutes* (1770ff) as Q. 78, *Works*, 10:903–04.



2. The old plan gives the Committee and Moderator a power *to propose* persons to be received into, or expelled from the Connection. *But they could only propose; Conference alone was to decide.* — The new Deed gives any 40 of the 100, or even a majority of this 40, absolute power to receive into, or exclude from the connection!

3. By the old plan, every member of our community is amenable to Conference. — By the new Deed there is a partial exemption in favour of clergymen, which bids fair to create much trouble!

4. By the old plan, in case any charge is brought against any member, he is tried by his peers. — By the new Deed, if any of the excluded 91 has a dispute with two or more of the 100, his adversaries are his judges; and will finally decide on him!

5. By the old plan, if a preacher, his wife, or children wanted anything out of the public stock, and their wants were not attended to by the managers, he could bring his case before Conference and have redress. — By the new Deed, 100, or any forty of them can keep us from Conference; and give us anything, or *nothing*, as they please!

6. By the old plan, if anything controversial arose in Conference, every member had liberty to give his sentiments, and vote. — By the new Deed, anyone of the 100 can bid either of the 91 sit down, or walk out, how interested soever he may be in the question; telling him he has nothing to do with it!

7. By the old plan, if any preachers could not sign the agreement entered into, after Mr. John Wesley's decease, he was to be dismissed '*in the most friendly manner*'. — By the new Deed we are dismissed *unheard*; and consequently with contempt!

8. The old plan was fairly and openly brought into Conference, and obtained its sanction for 13 successive years, without one dissenting voice! — The new Deed was procured by interested men, who gave a false account of its design, and so deceived us!

9. The original design of the old plan was to unite us, in case of Mr. Wesley's death; and it was well calculated for that purpose. — The new Deed has effectually divided us into nearly equal parties even while he is alive! — 'God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, in all the churches of the saints.'<sup>15</sup>

10. The old plan holds out Mr. Wesley and Conference as a respectable body of men, united by the sagest councils. — The new Deed sullies his fair fame, and entails dishonour upon all who act under it, or submit to it!

Hence it appears that the new Deed subverts the old plan; is fraught with oppression, partiality, and injustice; and was unfairly obtained. — And can this be of God?

What can the advisers of Mr. Wesley mean by entirely subverting the old plan and establishing a new one without the concurrence of Conference? Can they be considered as friends to the Methodist cause? Or rather might it not be said, 'An enemy has done this'?<sup>16</sup> — Especially when it is known that they have thereby excluded a number of Mr. Wesley's old tried friends, who have weathered out many storms with him, for many years; and put young untried preachers, who have never been received into connection, over their heads. — Brethren, they have disunited us; and will probably make it a crime that we complain when we feel ourselves hardly treated! We are men: we are not angels! Remove the cause and the effect will cease.

If they are disposed to a reunion, they know how to remove the grievance. Let them act like brethren and Christians, and put us upon an equal footing, and they will have demonstration that we are not vindictive. We think undue advantages have been taken of Mr. Wesley's years, and it would hurt our feelings to grieve him. But it is necessary *they* should know that everything short of this will be construed into an attempt to defend what they know is indefensible and unjust!

Need we hesitate a moment to submit it to the Rev. Mr. John and Charles Wesley whether it be for their credit, or for the advantage of religion, that Conference should be divided? And may we not reasonably hope for their influence to set aside a scheme so replete with manifest injustice, and so likely

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<sup>15</sup>1 Cor. 14:33.

<sup>16</sup>Matt. 13:28.

to hurt the cause of God?

It has been reported that some of our brethren whose names are inserted in the Deed wish to suspend their judgment till it has had a public investigation. But can the projectors of the new Deed wash the Ethiopian white? Can they convert unjust actions into just ones? Can they defend the usurpation of other people's property? Let them beware that they do not give reason to suspect that they are biased by the love of power. They have a better way of convincing us how dead they are to the love of that power the new Deed invests them with than mere words can convey: Let them renounce their trust; legally renounce it. Till this is done, we cannot but entertain doubts and suspicions. Their characters are at stake. They have more eyes upon them than their own. We have done them no injury; and they owe the satisfaction we demand, both to us and themselves. If any of them refuse to give this satisfaction to their injured brethren, they must not be surprised that their protestations against the love of power will have no weight with us.

To our much injured outcast brethren we say, Come to Conference and help us to support a cause which (should we fall in defence of) will cover us with honour! — Think not the worse of your master, your employment, or your brethren (save the projectors, who were very few in number) till they give you reason, by accepting the trust. The ministry is not so light a matter that we can take it up and lay it down at pleasure. If we were the servants of men, we might act as interest, convenience, or inclination dictated. But we are the servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God! And it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful. The great Head of the church will shortly say, Give an account of thy stewardship! And how can we do this with comfort or honour, if in a cowardly manner we desert our brethren, or our calling? Let us remember him who endured the cross, and despised the shame. One of the greatest—if not the very greatest—minister of Christ in the world had, after all his labours and sufferings, to complain, 'That he was forsaken of all men!' Thank God that is not yet our case!

If we stand united in our affections and sufferings, and do not desert our cause, or each other, but keep together for mutual defence; this struggle will issue well. It will forever emancipate us; and we shall leave the fair inheritance of religious liberty to our successors. Many of us are old and grey-headed in the service; we have very little in view for ourselves. It is highly probable that neither the old plan or new Deed may ever greatly affect us. But we are indebted to those who come after. We do not live here for ourselves; neither are we called to fight our own battles. But we are called to fight the battle of the Lord, and to take care of the cause he has committed into our hands. If we faint in the day of adversity, our strength is small. In that case, we shall be despised and condemned; and indeed we shall deserve it. 'Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.'<sup>17</sup> We may depend upon it, the Lord will be our support; and the people will never desert us, unless we are weak enough to desert each other, and our cause.

We want nothing but the re-establishment of the good old plan, and security for its continuance. If this just request is not complied with, we shall consider ourselves as driven out from our brethren, and called to preach wherever we are invited. It is not our design to join other communities, nor to raise societies, while there is a hope left of our reunion. But if this should ultimately be refused us, we hope to meet with that justice from God and good men, which we may be denied by our brethren!

*Address:* 'The Revd C Wesley / New Chappel City Road / London'.

*Postmarks:* 'Bristol' and '15/IY'.

*Endorsement:* by CW, 'Hampson's Appeal / 1784'.

*Source:* published leaflet.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>1 Cor. 16:13.

<sup>18</sup>The only known surviving copy was once held at Duke University. It is now missing, but a copy had been made available to Eighteenth Century Collections Online, where it can be viewed.

From Thomas Wride<sup>1</sup>

Scotter [Lincolnshire]  
July 3, 1784

Reverend Sir,

The bearer of this is John Cawkwell, on whose information brother Corbet accused me of preaching about sparrows going to church without being converted.<sup>2</sup>

Brother Cawkwell remembers his speaking about it to brother Corbet. But it was in a way of free conversation, not as any fault in me. Much less did he think that it would be made an article of accusation.

If you, sir, please to be at the trouble to ask, then will you from his own mouth be informed which bears the highest place in the esteem of brother Cawkwell—whether it be brother Corbet, or him who in sincerity subscribes, reverend sir,

Your dutiful son,

Thomas Wride

[The document enclosed]

[At the top of the page are financial accounts of payments to the preachers on the Grimsby circuit for the appointment years 1776–77 (which concludes ‘The deficiencies from Conference’) and 1777–78 (which concludes ‘Received the rest of our deficiencies from a friend’)]

The above is extracted from the general steward's book of accounts for the Grimsby circuit. The occasion was: at the last Bristol Conference two wives were proposed for Grimsby. As I thought it was more than they could bear, I told my thoughts. Brother Brown said they could maintain two very well ‘for I was there two years and they maintained me and two families very well’.<sup>3</sup> The fact silenced me, and the alteration astonished me. For I knew that we had been pretty close held with a wife and half; and so little in hand that I was desired that in case either preacher was moved to any great distance to beg for assistance of Conference.

On my return I was willing to so see how the assertion of brother Brown agreed with the accounts. And as it appeared to be unfairly represented, I extracted the above. By which it appears that the report of brother Brown is not just. So far from it that the deficiencies of the first year amounted unto £13.13.2; and of the second year, £5.0.6.

The last year's deficiency was supplied by a private ‘friend’. But this deserveth to be well enquired into. The book is silent about particulars, therefore tradition must be appealed unto. I am told, and believe it is the truth, that Mr. J[ohan]n[e]s Lill of Marsh Chappel, once a remarkable scraping worldly man, being visited by God with somewhat of a dead palsy in his arm and a shaking one in his conscience, he became in many particulars a new man, doing several liberal things. Among them, he gave Mr. Brown £20. Out of this £20 Mr. Brown supplied the last year's deficiency, £5.0.6 as above. This is the best light in which I can set the matter.

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<sup>1</sup>A follow-up on his letter of June 3.

<sup>2</sup>Thomas Corbet was admitted ‘on trial’ as an itinerant preacher in 1774 (see *Works*, 10:427). He remained active until his death, prior to the 1789 Conference (see *Works*, 10:676) Corbet was currently the Assistant for the Gainsborough circuit, on which Wride was serving.

<sup>3</sup>Isaac Brown (d. 1815), a native of Hawkesworth, began itinerating in 1760, appearing first in the *Minutes* in 1765 as already an Assistant (*Works*, 10:303). He continued to travel until illness led him to desist in 1803. His obituary was included in the *Minutes* of 1815, the year of his death. Brown was stationed at Grimsby 1776–78.

But it will not appear so favourable when what follows is considered, for I am told that Mr. Lill, when he gave him the £20, told him that he might give it to the school at Kingswood, or do what he would with it. If this be true, in my opinion Kingswood ought to have had it. That brother Brown was not a proprietor but a trustee, and that he violated his trust by this method of supplying 'deficiencies'.

Mr. Robinson's hymn-book is much used in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, whatever it may be in other counties.<sup>4</sup> But Mr. Spence's makes *great* way among our societies.<sup>5</sup> I have seen six at a time in a private house. I suppose the pretty recommendation in the titlepage may go a great way [to explain this]: 'A Constant Companion for the Pious'! Who would be without it?

The sale of such books must proportionably lessen the sale of Mr. Wesley's, and render Mr. Wesley less able to help such as for years past have been helped by the profit of the books sold for Mr. Wesley.<sup>6</sup>

I have been long grieved by seeing, without being able to remedy, those grievances, believing them to be fruitful seeds for a plentiful harvest of mischief. If *one* may sing and print his own hymns, so may *everyone*. It is true there is an express rule of Conference against it.<sup>7</sup> But (interpretatively) it appears that the rule was received to be looked at only, not to be kept. For it was broken in the face of the whole Conference in the year 1783 [by Spence].

If all who call themselves sons of Mr. Wesley would act like what they call themselves, not only would they forbear publishing from pulpit and press their own hymns, but soon would Mr. Robinson's and Mr. Spence's [hymn-books] be out of date, like an old almanac.

I would wish that ever preacher, whether itinerant or local, be made solemnly to promise that he will not in any company or congregation, great or small, under the direction of Mr. Wesley sing any of his own hymns or of any other beside those published and republished by Mr. Wesley. And that every leader of a class or a band be under the same obligation.

I often find that when I begin a hymn, out come the 'Constant Companion of the Pious' instead of one of Mr. Wesley's books. But I can often disappoint them, when the sense will admit to *transpose* or to *omit* the first verse—they seeking in the index, seek in vain.

I think it would answer a good end to publish a little hymn-book, suppose about the size of Kempis.<sup>8</sup> The margin toward the stitching being very narrow would leave the page wide enough for all-eights. The tens and elevens may conveniently be made into two lines, and the book may be cut so close that it may be something narrower than Thomas à Kempis, and may serve for a 'constant companion' as well as for public use where and when the great book [i.e. the 1780 *Collection*] may not be at hand.

I would not wish to increase the toil of Mr. Wesley by this. It might trouble him no more but to write a title page and twelve or fifteen lines by way of preface; the rest may be done by anyone of

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<sup>4</sup>Thomas Robinson (1749–1813), *A Collection of Psalms and Hymns from Various Authors; chiefly designed for the use of public worship* (London: Richard Hett, 1783)

<sup>5</sup>Robert Spence (1748–1824) was born at Stillington, near York. He became active among the Methodists and received a sense of pardon in 1765. He apprenticed as a bookbinder in London, at JW's printing operation, and rose in the profession to become a leading citizen in York. See *MM* 48 (1825): 375–81, 411–18; and *Memoir of the Life and Character of Mr. Robert Spence, of York, late bookseller: With notices of the early introduction of Methodism into York* (York: Richard Burdekin, 1827). Spence, now competing with JW's London press, issued *Pocket Hymn-Book, designed as a constant companion for the pious; collected from various authors* (York: Printed for R. Spence, in Ousegate, 1783).

<sup>6</sup>Wride is warning of the impact on sales of the 1780 *Collection of Hymns for the People Called Methodists*.

<sup>7</sup>See *Minutes* (1765), Q. 24, *Works*, 10:311; and *Minutes* (1781), Q. 25, *Works*, 10:516;

<sup>8</sup>JW took this suggestion, publishing his own *Pocket Hymn Book* (London: Paramore, 1785; *Bibliography*, No. 438).

common understanding. I suppose the *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* will do very well.<sup>9</sup> And if the number of sheets will admit, to add a few of the more lively hymns from the book *For Those to Whom Christ is 'All in All'*.<sup>10</sup> I am persuaded that it will answer a good end, and perhaps prevent more being printed and obtruded on the Methodist societies.

If a reasonable small letter be used, and the lines moderately close, a sufficient number of hymns may be inserted to please a reasonable purchaser at a shilling (bound in sheep[skin]); fourteen pence with clasps; and eighteen pence plain calf[skin] and clasps. And if they are diligently spread by all the preachers, or if it was done in earnest by one preacher in every circuit, Mr. Robinson and Mr. Spence might soon be fast asleep.

It obliged many of the Christian world to see Mr. Wesley's answer to Dr. Taylor.<sup>11</sup> If any have will and skill to disprove what Mr. Wesley there lays down, he has doubtless a right to take the field and try his strength. But I cannot think it right for any who calls Mr. Wesley by the name of 'father' or 'friend' to visit him in seeming friendship and with a short dagger secretly prick him under the rib. Yet such (to me) appears to be the conduct of Nicholas Manners: preaching among Mr. Wesley's friends and selling of books containing bare-face Pelagianism.<sup>12</sup>

Source: Wride's manuscript copy for his records; MARC, PLP 115/9/35.

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<sup>9</sup>I.e., JW's collection *Hymns and Spiritual Songs, Intended for the Use of Real Christians of all Denominations* (London: Strahan, 1753; *Bibliography*, No. 199).

<sup>10</sup>This collection was by CW, *Hymns for Those to Whom Christ is All in All* (London: n.p., 1761; *Bibliography*, No. 243).

<sup>11</sup>I.e., JW, *The Doctrine of Original Sin: According to Scripture, Reason, and Experience* (1757), *Works*, 12:155–481.

<sup>12</sup>A couple of earlier publications by the Methodist itinerant Nicholas Manners had sparked concern (and led to revisions), but Wride is drawing attention to his most recent volume: *An Attempt to Illustrate the Following Subjects: I. The 13th chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians. ... VIII. Despising the goodness of God, and treasuring up wrath* (York: R. Spence, 1783). Concern about this volume led to criticism of any who deny the doctrine of original sin at the next Conference; see *Minutes* (1784), Q. 20, *Works*, 10:562. In response Manners severed his relationship with the Methodists and began to publish works critical of them.

From [Marie Judith (Adams)?] Leuliet<sup>1</sup>

Hague  
July 16, 1784

My Reverend and Dear Brother,

How surprised, but at the same time how rejoiced was I to receive a letter from your dear hand.<sup>2</sup> I who am the unworthiest of all your sisters, you thought of me! O how thankful ought I to be. But I am ashamed that I find so little thankfulness. O God, give me a thankful heart, and I shall be so. I find more and more that without thee, O Lord, I can do nothing.

You say, dear brother, that I constrained you to love. But how should we not love, when the grace of God puts love into our hearts. I must love you. But thanks be to him that gave it me. He that once loved me, and will forever, is the truth, and his word never failed. He can still fill our hearts with love.

You kindly take notice of my hospitality. But I look upon it as a great blessing that the Lord was pleased to bestow upon us, to give you a heart to come to us. And indeed we find it so, for it rejoices our heart to think what a blessing you have been to us. O may the God of grace preserve you many years. And may he give you a heart to come and see us again, and send his blessing along with you. I find this moment the bands of love tied faster and faster to you and all God's dear children, and my heart entirely united to them. O may the God of grace give me strength to walk before his face in holiness and righteousness. O what a blessing is it to me that I believe I am a young plant, and he that planted me will make me grow up from grace to grace. Pray, my dear brother, pray to God for me, to preserve me that I may never run astray.

I should be very glad, and beg it as a favour, to have now and then a little of your advice; and I really believe it would be a blessing to my soul. Another favour I have to ask is if you would be so kind as to send me your *Journals* from the first to the last. I believe the reading of them will do me some good. And when I know the price of them, I will pay it with the greatest pleasure.

If it is not too much trouble, I would be glad you would be so good as to give my love to all the brethren who accompanied you on your journey hither.<sup>3</sup> I hope they will not forget us, for I can assure them we do not forget them. My dear mother desires her kind respects to you, and hopes you think on her. You are hardly a moment out of her mind, and she finds it a great blessing to her. My brother, sister, and cousin A\_\_\_ and all my children and family desire to be remembered to you. They join with me in praying for you. I remain, with due esteem,

Your most affectionate sister in the Lord Jesus Christ,

M. T. L.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 15 (1792): 50–51.

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<sup>1</sup>JW dined with this woman (likely a widow) on June 17, 1783 at her home in The Hague (see *Journal, Works*, 23:275; correcting fn. 96). Assuming the editor of *AM* misread an initial, she was probably Marie Judith (Adams) Leuliet (1746–1834), who married Mattieu Leuliet in Rotterdam Oct. 1768, and resided at The Hague.

<sup>2</sup>This letter is not known to survive.

<sup>3</sup>Robert Carr Brackenbury, John Broadbent, and George Whitfield had accompanied JW on his trip to the Netherlands.

From Thomas Wride

Leeds  
July 26, 1784

Reverend Sir,

You have work enough at present, and I would not willingly increase it by things needless. Yet I think it convenient that you should know that you may expect Nicholas Manners at the Conference.<sup>1</sup> He was at Gainsborough last Friday. I believe that his errand was to gain a critical translation of some Hebrew words, particularly the word which is translated 'iniquity'. I suppose that he is preparing for the defence of his doctrine—i.e., Pelagianism.<sup>2</sup>

What little I have extracted I herewith send, lest you should not have the opportunity of seeing his books. I know the contents of the letter herewith sent.<sup>3</sup> I had rather it had come by another hand, as the person complained of is one whom on various accounts I respect. But if I had not brought it, it would have been posted. However, sir, you may think of the letter, I hope you will excuse the poster, who am, reverend sir,

Your dutiful son,

Thomas Wride

*Source:* Wride's manuscript draft; Duke, Rubenstein, Frank Baker Collection of Wesleyana, Box CO9, Thomas Wride papers.

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<sup>1</sup>See Wride to JW July 3, 1784. Manners was the particular focus of the injunctions against preachers who reject original sin adopted at the upcoming Conference; see *Minutes* (1784), Q. 20, *Works*, 10:562.

<sup>2</sup>Manners was working on his pamphlet: *An Attempt to set the Doctrine of Original Sin in a Right Light* (York: R. Spence, 1785).

<sup>3</sup>Neither enclosure is known to survive

From the Rev. Dr. Thomas Coke<sup>1</sup>

London  
August 9, 1784

Honoured and Dear Sir,

The more maturely I consider the subject, the more expedient it appears to me *that the power of ordaining others, should be received by me from you*, by the imposition of your hands; and that you should lay hands on brother [Richard] Whatcoat, and brother [Thomas] Vasey,<sup>2</sup> for the following reasons:

1. It seems to me the most scriptural way, and most agreeable to the practice of the primitive churches.

2. I *may* want all the influence in America which you can throw into my scale. Mr. [Robert] Brackenbury informed me at Leeds that he saw a letter in London from Mr. [Francis] Asbury, in which he observed that he would not receive any person deputed by you with any part of the superintendency of the work invested in him—or words which evidently implied so much.<sup>3</sup> I do not find the least degree of, prejudice in my mind against Mr. Asbury; on the contrary, a very great love and esteem. And [I] am determined not to stir a finger without his consent, unless mere sheer necessity obliges me; but rather to lie at his feet in all things. But as the journey is long, and you cannot spare me often; and it is well to provide against *all events*, and an authority *formally* received from you will (I am conscious of it) be fully admitted by the people, and my exercising the office of ordination without that *formal* authority may be disputed, if there be any opposition on any other account; I could therefore earnestly wish you would exercise that power, in this instance, which I have not the shadow of a doubt but God hath invested you with for the good of our connexion.

I think you have tried me too often to doubt whether I will in any degree use the power you are pleased to invest me with farther than I believe absolutely necessary for the prosperity of the work.

3. In respect of my brethren (brother Whatcoat and Vasey), it is very uncertain indeed whether any of the clergy mentioned by Mr. [Thomas] Rankin will stir a step with me in the work except Mr. [Devereux] Jarratt.<sup>4</sup> And it is by no means certain that even he will choose to join me in ordaining. And propriety and universal practice make it expedient that I should have two presbyters with me in this work. In short, it appears to me that everything should be prepared, and everything proper be done, that can possibly be done *this side the water*. You can do all this in Mr. C[astlema]n's house, in your chamber;<sup>5</sup> and afterwards (according to Mr. [John] Fletcher's advice) give us letters testimonial of the different offices with which you have been pleased to invest us. For the purpose of laying hands on brothers Whatcoat and Vasey, I can bring Mr. [James] Creighton down with me, by which you will have two presbyters with you. In respect to brother Rankin's argument that you will escape a great deal of *odium* by omitting this, it is nothing. Either it will be known, or not known—if not known, then no *odium* will

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<sup>1</sup>The 1784 Conference had been held the previous week. Although there is no mention of it in the official *Minutes*, there was a discussion (perhaps only among the smaller group of 'the Cabinet') about how to provide the Methodists in North America access to the full means of grace, with the demise of the Church of England in the colonies (see *Works*, 10:549–50). At the forefront of this discussion was a means of providing them with ordained clergy, since no Church of England bishop was willing to ordain them for JW. This letter continues the discussion, leading up to the ordinations that took place Sept. 1–2, 1784, in Bristol.

<sup>2</sup>Whatcoat and Vasey volunteered and were approved at the 1784 Conference for appointment to North America; see *Works*, 10:557.

<sup>3</sup>The letter that contained this suggestion is known to survive.

<sup>4</sup>These would be clergy ordained in the Church of England who remained in North America.

<sup>5</sup>John and Letitia (Fisher) Castleman kept a room for JW at their home in Bristol; see *WHS* 2 (1899), 99–109.



arise; but if known, you will be obliged to acknowledge that I acted under your direction, or suffer me to sink under the weight of my enemies, with perhaps your brother [CW] at the head of them. I shall entreat you to ponder these things.

Your most dutiful,

T. Coke

*Address:* 'To the Revd. Mr Wesley / at Haverford West / S. Wales'.

*Endorsement:* by CW, 'Copia vera'.

*Endorsement:* by William Pine, 'A true copy. Witness: Wm Pine'.

*Source:* manuscript copy by CW; MARC, DDWes 4/85.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>The holograph is not known to survive. CW copied it because he considered the letter evidence that Coke pushed JW to the regrettable act of ordination (or at least to formalizing it with laying on of hands), and to elevating Coke essentially to the level of a bishop! See CW's allusions to Coke in four of his manuscript collections: 'Assorted Verse on 1784 Ordinations', 'MS Brothers', 'MS Ordinations', and 'MS Revd. —'. The first publication of this letter by Coke (drawing on CW's copy) was in Whitehead, *Life*, 2:415–17. See also Vickers, *Letters of Coke*, 57–58.

From Mary Bishop

Keynsham  
August 10, 1784

Reverend Sir,

I have this evening been reading over the letters with which you have favoured me, and found my heart warmed with gratitude for the fatherly care of me which you have shown.<sup>7</sup>

It is pleasing and profitable to trace the dealings of providence, and to remember the way by which the Lord hath led us in the wilderness. I often say with David, 'I am a wonder unto many, but my sure trust is in thee.'<sup>8</sup> The complaint in my lungs is so removed that I can sit in my schoolroom and read without injury; and my health, notwithstanding my great confinement, is better than for twenty years past. God hath graciously given me a comfortable abode, faithful steady servants, and a good school of orderly affectionate children. They love to hear the word, and approve things that are excellent. But I fear their minds are not really awakened, and this discourages me. Yet I have lately been comforted by hearing of some who have joined the society since they left me.

My chief exercises with their parents arise from want of dancing. Some were to have been removed on this account at the last vacation. Through mercy I was enabled to 'keep innocence',<sup>9</sup> and simply told them my plan: That I wished to maintain a consistency of character and conduct, which could not be done if I admitted a Methodist preacher one night and a dancing-master another. That I had counted the cost, and was fixed in my choice. Providence so overruled their minds that they wrote to beg the children might be readmitted without my yielding a hair's-breadth. Yet others are still pressing me on this subject, and I wish to be favoured by you, sir, with some arguments against their specious reasonings. You know all that can be said *for* and *against* dancing.

As I find it needful to mix instruction with delight, and in a measure to gratify my young folk's love of *variety*, I wish to enlarge my school library. But I can meet with few books that please me. Will you, sir, oblige me by recommending me some, either French or English, calculated to improve young persons from twelve to twenty? Are there any unexceptionable novels, besides the *Fool of Quality*?<sup>10</sup>

We have cause to be thankful that there is a pleasing prospect of good days here. Our preaching-house is crowded with attentive hearers, and the few who meet are I believe upright, and simple-hearted. I have cause to be thankful that the Lord does not put me off with temporal good things, but continues to bless me with the light of his countenance.

Hoping to be favoured with your company when you come to Bristol, I remain, dear sir,

Your obliged friend and servant,

M. B.<sup>11</sup>

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 15 (1792): 51–52.

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<sup>7</sup>Bishop had launched a new school in 1781, which helps account for a three-year hiatus in the correspondence between her and JW that had started in 1769. JW's most recent letter to her had been July 17, 1781 (numbered '37th' by Bishop). JW's reply to this letter, on Aug. 18, 1784 was endorsed by Bishop as his '38th'.

<sup>8</sup>Ps. 71:7.

<sup>9</sup>Ps. 37:38 (BCP)

<sup>10</sup> Henry Brooke's *The Fool of Quality; or, The History of Henry, Earl of Moreland*; likely as abridged by JW under the subtitle *The History of Henry, Earl of Moreland* (1781).

<sup>11</sup>Orig., 'A. B.'; a mistake.

From George Story

Whitchurch  
September 1, 1784

On the 18th of August [1784] died John Haime, in the seventy-eighth year of his age.<sup>1</sup> For more than a twelvemonth past, his health was visibly upon the decline. But although a hectic fever was continually increasing, and wearing him to skin and bone, yet his zeal for God and concern for the salvation of souls abated not in the least. He preached as long as he was able to speak, and longer than he could stand without support.

The Sunday before his death he requested the society to attend him in his own room, and for several minutes powerfully and affectionately exhorted them to persevere to the end in that faith which worketh by love and purifieth the heart.

The morning before he died, in attempting to get out of bed, he fell down and was much hurt, which occasioned violent pain. In about two hours after, the pain being a little abated, he desired to be raised up in bed. And after shaking hands with five or six friends who were with him, he prayed for the divine blessing upon them separately, next for the church in general, and lastly for the little flock over which he had long been overseer. He then leaned back in bed, and although the pain was not so intense, yet there were evident tokens of his approaching dissolution. His strength gradually decreased, and his sight and speech in great measure failed. Yet he frequently broke out in prayer, in these and such like sentences: 'O Lord, in thee have I trusted, and have not been confounded. In thee do I *now* trust, let me *never* be confounded.' 'Salvation is of the Lord. I have nothing to bring, nothing to offer unto the Lord, but "God be merciful to me a sinner!"'<sup>2</sup> 'When my soul departs this body, a convoy of angels will conduct me to the paradise of God.' His last prayer that could be understood was to this effect: 'O Almighty God, who dwellest in light which no mortal can approach, and where no unclean thing can enter, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts. Grant us continually sweet peace, quietness, and assurance of thy favour!' About an hour before his death he was heard to say, 'This is a good way! O that all may tread this path in the important hour!' Presently after, he departed so quietly that it was scarce perceivable when he drew his last breath.

George Story

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 8 (1785): 19–20.

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<sup>1</sup>John Haime (1710–84), the former soldier and Methodist itinerant.

<sup>2</sup>Luke 18:13.

From Elizabeth Ritchie

Otley  
September 2, 1784

Reverend Sir,

Many thanks to my ever dear and reverend father for his welcome and truly profitable letter.<sup>1</sup> The language of my heart to God and man is, 'What I know not teach me'.<sup>2</sup> And glory be unto his name, I hear my Saviour's voice by his Spirit, his word, and through his servants. Some weeks ago, while waiting upon my Lord for direction respecting what lay before me, that word was given me from above, 'I will guide thee by mine eye.'<sup>3</sup> My soul embraced it by faith, and has since found such nearness to my Lord, and intimate communion with him as it inexpressible. Never did I feel a stronger desire to do and suffer all my master's will. O that my power was adequate to my will! I may say with Gambold, in regard to the degree,

Practice grovels far behind.<sup>4</sup>

My manifold weaknesses tie me down. It is true I feel that faith in my precious Lord which bringeth constant victory, and a measure of that love which is the fulfilling of the law. What I see before me draws out my soul in strong desire, more deeply to sink into the unbounded ocean. My life is but in embryo: 'When I awake up after thy likeness, I shall be satisfied therewith.'<sup>5</sup> Let me more fully behold they transforming glory, O my God and king!

At some of my seasons of nearest approach to the mercy-seat I have lately had peculiar power and freedom in prayer for you. My dear sir, your welfare both in public and private life lies near my heart. My spirit longs for you, as the father of a people whom God has graciously given you, to increase in comfort and usefulness to your latest moment. As a private Christian, may you be filled with a plenitude of God, and continually anticipate glory by dwelling beneath the directest ray of that Sun whose blessed beams distil a Gilead's balm! This morning I felt much power in prayer respecting the intended voyage of our friends.<sup>6</sup> They embark on a blessed errand. The angel of the Lord's presence will accompany them, I trust, and give them power to serve the royal heirs of heaven. Continue to remember and pray for, my dear sir,

Your truly affectionate though unworthy child,

E. R.

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 15 (1792): 216–17.

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<sup>1</sup>JW to Elizabeth Ritchie, Aug. 19, 1784.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Job 34:32.

<sup>3</sup>Ps. 32:8.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. John Gambold, 'The Mystery of Life', st. 2, included by JW in *HSP* (1739), 7; and in *AM* 3 (1780), 508.

<sup>5</sup>Ps. 17:16 (BCP).

<sup>6</sup>The departure of Thomas Coke, Thomas Vasey, and Richard Whatcoat for North America.

From Christopher Watkins<sup>1</sup>

Coleford  
September 7, 1784

In the year 1772 a mischievous cow fell upon her, and beat and bruised her to such a degree that she lost the use of her limbs. In this situation she remained for four years. In this time she was thirty weeks in the infirmary at Leicester, where her wounds and bruises were cured; but not being able to restore her to the use of her limbs, they turned her out incurable.

While she was in the infirmary it pleased God to send some serious people to pray with the sick, by which means her eyes were opened to see her fallen condition. She also saw that if she died as she was, she must die eternally. On this, she began to cry to God for mercy, and was determined not to rest till he answered her prayer.

One day when she was meditating on her miserable condition, she thought, 'How can I attend the means of grace, and get a livelihood in the world, without the use of my limbs?' She then endeavoured to believe that God was *able* and *willing* to restore her to her former soundness, if she sought him with all her heart. She also believed that he *would* do it, and on that account promised to serve him all the days of her life.

Soon after, being left alone in the house one Sunday evening, it was impressed on her mind to pray for deliverance from her infirmity. But how to get on her knees, and rise up again, she knew not. At last she strove to believe that God would help her. And so it was; for by endeavouring to use her hands, she kneeled down, and continued in prayer for a considerable time, and then rose up again. Thus she continued praying and acting faith on God till Tuesday evening, when an excruciating pain went through her feet and legs, which caused her to cry out aloud. But when the pain was over, she found she could move, first her toes, and then her feet and legs. She then got up and walked over the room, blessing and praising God for what he had done. And from that time she has enjoyed the perfect use of her limbs.

A little after this she came to me and desired to be admitted into the society, and seemed fully determined to fulfil her promise in serving her great Restorer all the days of her life.

I met with her about two months ago, and found her happy in God. She then told me that about a year after the Lord had restored her to the use of her limbs, he spoke peace to her soul; and that she has continued to hold fast a sense of his favour ever since, and earnestly desires to love him with all her heart.

This account may be depended on. For Jane Wildbore, who truly fears God, and can have no worldly motive in view in declaring a falsehood, is still alive, and ready to attest it to any judicious person.

C. Watkins

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 8 (1785): 200–02.

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<sup>1</sup>Titled: 'A Remarkable Account of Jane Wildbore, of [K]nighton, near Leicester'.

From Dorothea (Garret / King) Johnson<sup>1</sup>

Dublin  
September 17, 1784

Dear and Honoured Sir,

How shall I express my gratitude for your most affectionate letter!<sup>2</sup> I was ready to ask pardon for not sooner acquainting you with the happy event which has taken place. But, you, like your dear Master, prevent<sup>3</sup> me with the most tender congratulations on the occasion. From the divine hand of my Lord I receive it, and look up to him for power to improve it to his glory, and my future good.

I sink before the God of my life, deeply sensible of my total unworthiness—less than the least, yet how rich, how abundant in blessings! My heart centers in him as it's rest, its centre of happiness. I find him at all times present to my mind, a loving, gracious Father, who prevents me with his goodness.

How amazing that he should look upon such dust with approbation. Yet so it is, for God is immense love! I feel, I taste his goodness in all around me. O that I could praise and serve him as I ought! It is frequently the language of my heart, 'What shall I render to him for all his benefits?'<sup>4</sup> But I must be content to be a bankrupt here, for I have nothing to return but what is his own already by the strongest ties.

I long to see the salvation of souls taking place, that many may be brought to love the dear Redeemer. And this encourages me to hope there may be some work for me at Lisburn.

I entreat you will bear me on your mind before the throne of grace, who am, with strongest affection,

Your obliged

D. J.

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 15 (1792): 387–88.

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<sup>1</sup>Dorothy (Garret) King married the retired itinerant John Johnson on Aug. 31, 1784 in Dublin.

<sup>2</sup>JW to Johnson, Sept. 9, 1784.

<sup>3</sup>I.e., 'come before'.

<sup>4</sup>Ps. 116:12.

From Elizabeth Ritchie

Otley  
September 23, 1784

Often have the visits of my ever dear and reverend father unto this part of the vineyard been much blest to my soul, but never more than the last.<sup>1</sup> Indeed it was to me an added proof of the faithfulness of God. May he still lengthen out your life, increase your usefulness, and fill you with every spiritual blessing. May you, my dear sir, enjoy in time and in eternity all my full heart prays for you to receive. Then will every truth you so encouragingly hold forth to others be in all its blessed fullness unfolded in your own soul. Your parting words in the congregation at Birstall have frequently been sounding in my heart since you left us.<sup>2</sup> Yes, I hope to 'Go on and meet you there.'

I should not greatly wonder if we next meet in our Father's kingdom. But if my dearest Lord sees meet, willingly would I take my flight to procure your longer stay. So insignificant a life as mine might well be spared, compared with one that stands where you do, and fills that place in the church your Lord honours you with. But blessed be his name, 'The issues of life and death are in his hand.'<sup>3</sup> All things serve his will, 'The Lord God omnipotent reigneth',<sup>4</sup> and much as we feel ourselves concerned for his glory, he is abundantly more so.

I am often comforted to think that the concern my spirit feels for the welfare of those precious friends to whom his love unites me is but small, compared to what he feels both for them and me. 'As the Father hath loved me, even so have I loved you.'<sup>5</sup> What a depth did my soul discover in this love one day last week, while reading these blessed words! I was sweetly penetrated therewith, and blessed be my Lord, he gives me to feel a power to continue in his love. I long more deeply to experience its fullness and enjoy present peace. My soul rejoices in hope of future glory.

The present posture of my soul is 'astonishment and love'.<sup>6</sup> This draws out all my powers in desire to love him more and serve him better, to whom my more than all is due. My soul breaks out in ardent longings after the fullness I see before me. Help me, my dear sir, as you often have done, to gain my glorious hope, to be all my Lord would have me be. Lately I have had sweet fellowship with the Holy Trinity, and felt such a sense of the Father's love as has sunk me in depths of self abasement at his feet, through whom I have access to the grace wherein I stand.

I have hardly left room to subscribe myself what my heart feels,  
Your truly affectionate, though unworthy child,

E. R.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 15 (1792): 108.

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<sup>1</sup>JW's most recent visit to Otley had begun July 15, 1784. He preached there and at surrounding societies leading up to the Conference at Leeds.

<sup>2</sup>This sermon was July 25, 1784, on Acts 9:31.

<sup>3</sup>An elaboration of 1 Sam. 2:6 in Thomas Haweis, *The Evangelical Expositor: or, a Eommentary on the Holy Bible* (London: Dilly, 1765–66), 1:293.

<sup>4</sup>Rev. 19:6.

<sup>5</sup>John 15:9.

<sup>6</sup>See CW, Hymn on Ezek. 36:23ff, st. 26, *HSP* (1742), 264; and CW, Hymn on Isa. 52:15, *Scripture Hymns* (1762), 1:363.

From the father of Abishua Mayo

c. November 1784

My son Abishua Mayo was born March the 6th, 1767. From a child his constitution was very tender. When he was very young he discovered a hatred to evil, and a love to that which is good. He loved school, and improved in his learning. He showed much affection to his parents, and was not inclined to play with wicked children. He could not bear to hear an oath. Nor was he guilty of telling lies: and whenever he did amiss, he would not deny it. On the other hand, he was very willing to attend public worship and seldom stayed at home.

When he was fit for business, he would not choose a dirty one, being always ambitious of being clean. At several places where he occasionally was, he was careful not to do anything which might give offence. And thereby he gained the esteem of those he had to do with, who frequently showed a great regard for him ever after.

A tradesman in London hearing of him, desired to have him for an apprentice; which, for a time, I refused. But as it was a family that feared God, I consented to his going upon trial. On his being approved of, he was bound. But being of a tender constitution, the winter tried him much, as he was obliged to stand in an open shop where there was no fire. The first winter he endured it pretty well; but the next, being very severe, brought such disorders on him as in all probability occasioned his death.

His disorder appeared first in a swelling in one of his knees. But as he thought it might go off, he acquainted neither his master nor me with it for a considerable time. At last his sister, going to London, informed us of his case, on which his master provided a surgeon. But finding his complaint no better, I sent for him home, and tried many means, but to little purpose.

In the beginning of his illness he did not see his danger. But as I had my fears, I put him in mind of his condition, and admonished him to make a proper use of his time. Accordingly, a few weeks before his death, he began to think that he should die. On this, conviction took faster hold on him, while his weakness greatly increased. Now he began to complain, 'I cannot pray! O pray for me!' Finding a great concern for his soul, I laid his case before God, hoping that he would be pleased to make himself known unto him. One day he cried out, 'I am in darkness! I am afraid I shall be lost forever!' At another time he said, 'The enemy is very busy with me indeed!' And many expressions of like nature, from time to time dropped from his lips.

In this illness, many ministers and Christian friends came to see him, to whom he seldom said much. But the Lord's day before he died, two friends coming to see him, when they were gone, he began to bless God that they came. From which time his confidence greatly revived. When I came home, I found him happy. And the next morning as I was sitting with him, he cried out, 'Father! Jesus is precious to me!' On my answering, 'Then praise him', he said, 'The angels are waiting for me; but they will not wait long.'

On that and the following days, I asked him many questions concerning the state of his soul, to which he answered with great freedom. At one time he said, 'I shall soon be with Jesus! I shall go to heaven, die when I will!'

On Saturday evening he cried out in a rapture, 'I see Jesus, and a number of angels! But you cannot see them'. Then with a smiling countenance he said, 'I cannot go! I long to be gone!' On my saying, 'Be patient, wait the Lord's time. Remember, when Jesus bore our griefs and carried our sorrows, how he resigned himself to his Father's will.' He answered, 'I shall never suffer what Christ suffered!' One in the room saying, 'Intercede for me', he answered, 'May Christ intercede for you!' On his calling to see his brother and sister, his mother asked him if he would see them all? To which he answered, 'Yes.' On their coming to him one by one, he kissed them and prayed that God would bless them—saying to some of them, 'Do you know where I am going? Would you like to go with me? I am going to heaven!'



On my saying, 'You have read the account of Thomas Hitchens, who said, "Come see a Christian die!"',<sup>7</sup> he answered, 'Yes, I have; and come you now and see a Christian die!'

Looking at me he said, 'Father, I shall only go into the parlour. You know what I mean?' I answered, 'I do.' (He here alluded to what a minister said sometime ago; viz., that death to a Christian was only like going out of the kitchen into the parlour.) He then repeated it again, 'I shall only go into the parlour.' When I was afraid that so much speaking would quite exhaust him, he said, 'I will praise Jesus!' and then closing his eyes, went to him whom his soul loved, October 30, 1784 and in the 18th year of his age.

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 12 (1789): 523–25.

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<sup>7</sup>This is not a quote from, but apparently a summary of, James Hitches, *A Short Account of Thomas Hitchens* (1747), 11.

From Christopher Hopper

Bolton  
November 2, 1784

Mrs. [Elizabeth] Standring was born at Newry, in the north of Ireland. Her parents were credible people, and brought her up in a moral way. She had, from a child, some serious impressions on her mind. The third Methodist sermon she heard was preached by Mr. [John?] Hampson, under whom she was deeply convinced of her lost condition. She was overcome by the power of God and dropped down in the marketplace at Newry, as if she had been dead. Three months after the Lord set her soul at liberty. From that time she was a remarkable pattern of every good word and work: doing good to all, according to her power. She had compassion on the wicked. She loved the saints; but in an especial manner the preachers of the gospel.

About twenty years ago she was married to Mr. John Standring.<sup>1</sup> They lived very happy together for four years. It then pleased God to call him home. He died at Bolton, in perfect peace.

The last sixteen years she went through various and great afflictions. She was blind for nine months, and could not discern betwixt night and day. She used various means, and applied to the best physicians; but all to no purpose. One day the Lord applied these words to her mind: 'Dost thou believe I am able to do this thing for thee?' From that time she gave up all outward means, and in a little time the Lord restored her sight. About three weeks after, the Lord convinced her of the need of a farther work of grace. She then cried to him to cleanse her from all sin. It was not long before he heard her and set her at perfect liberty.

Her last afflictions, which lasted about twenty weeks, were very severe. But she was supported in a remarkable manner. She was frequently carried on the wings of love, and could rejoice in God her Saviour without doubt or fear. When a friend spoke to her about her great afflictions she repeatedly cried out, 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.'<sup>2</sup> He has promised to be with me through the valley of the shadow of death, and therefore I will fear no evil. His rod and his staff comfort me.'<sup>3</sup> She held fast her confidence to the end, and died full of faith and love.

Last Sabbath day her corpse was attended by many of our Manchester friends to this place, and interred by her late husband, in the midst of multitudes.<sup>4</sup> May my latter end be like hers!

C. Hopper

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 8 (1785): 80–81.

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<sup>1</sup>John Standring married Elizabeth Audus in Doncaster, Yorkshire in 1766. He also first appears in the *Minutes* of Conference that year, appointed to York (see *Works*, 10:318). Standring's last appointment was to Lancashire in 1769 (10:354). He apparently died around 1771, with his wife listed as supported by Conference in following years until her death.

<sup>2</sup>Job 13:15.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Ps. 23:4.

<sup>4</sup>Elizabeth Standring was buried in Bolton, Lancashire, Oct. 31, 1784.

From Elizabeth Ritchie

Halifax  
November 10, 1784

Within this last fortnight I have often wished to write to my very dear and reverend father, and have been obliged to use some self-denial in giving my time to persons, etc., rather than employing it in conversing with him. You have been much on my mind lately, and my soul rejoices in hope of that day, when without any interruption we shall 'range the field of light, and climb the mount of joy'<sup>1</sup> in our Father's kingdom. The blissful prospect of which seems so nigh my soul almost overlooks what lies between, and while conversing with unseen realities, plumes her wings afresh. What an inheritance! 'Incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them, who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation.'<sup>2</sup> My soul is filled with holy triumph, while contemplating what lies before me, and is ready to cry out, as it has often done before, 'Nothing is too dear to forego, or too hard to undergo to attain unto it.' But the love of my adorable Saviour makes hard things easy, and rough places plain. My soul abides in him, and feels his will is my delight.

I have had a profitable season since I came here. My Lord deals very bountifully with me. Deeply sensible of my utter helplessness, I feel him near to save. He condescends to admit me into the Holiest, through the blood of the covenant, and my soul has free access to that throne where not a thought is kept from my God. I feel the simplicity of a little child with a tender Father. And the compassion with which he bears with my weakness, the love he manifests toward the feeblest of his followers in inexpressible. I long more fully to put on the whole armour of God. Every day—nay every hour and moment—my soul would begin to live. Glory be unto my Lord, his love keeps me free from every desire that does not center in his glory. And my soul sweetly rests in, 'Father, thy only will be done.'<sup>3</sup> This I know is my greater salvation, and all within me goes out in strong desire after the fullness of his love. In somewhat a different sense from what I used them formerly, I now use those words

My soul breaks out in strong desire,  
The perfect bless to prove;  
My longing heart is all on fire,  
To be dissolv'd in love.<sup>4</sup>

Then I wanted to be saved from the contrarieties to love, this was the mark on which my eye was fixed. But now, blessed be the God of my salvation, this I daily feel, and now my soul sees 'a wide unbounded prospect lies before it'.<sup>5</sup> Salvation into all that fullness of divine love the human soul is capable of, is the mark I am aiming at. I am thoroughly persuaded God knows no measure in giving, but our capacity of receiving. O that mine was increased a thousand fold! Often my soul breathes itself out in ardent prayer for this; and as ardently longs that you, my dear sir, may feel all that our adorable Lord waits to give, made eternally your own. O that your soul may be filled with love, as your life has been and is with labours! Then late, very late, may you receive a full reward, and 'enter into the joy of your Lord'.<sup>6</sup> There, though lower far my place, I hope to meet you, and as a lesser star, glorify our common Lord for

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. CW, Hymn 6, st. 7, *Funeral Hymns* (1759), 12.

<sup>2</sup>1 Pet. 1:4–5.

<sup>3</sup>See CW, 'The Last Wish', closing line of each stanza, *HSP* (1749), 2:24.

<sup>4</sup>CW, Hymn on Acts 16:31, st. 11, *HSP* (1742), 96.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. Joseph Addison, *Cato*, V.i.13.

<sup>6</sup>Matt. 25:23.

everyone that shines with superior brightness. I am, and ever shall be,  
Your much obliged and truly affectionate,

E. R.

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 15 (1792): 329–30.

From Elizabeth (Verney) Henson<sup>1</sup>

Whittlebury  
November 30, 1784

My dear mother was released from the body on the 26th instant, about nine o'clock in the evening.<sup>2</sup>

The last five days she lived, she said, 'The enemy is constrained to withdraw, for the Lord knows my weakness and does not suffer me to be tempted.' She had a great desire to see Mr. Wesley. But when he came, she could speak but little to him.<sup>3</sup> However his words and prayers were a great comfort to her. One day when I thought she was dying, I asked her if she had any doubt of her acceptance with God? On which she answered, 'No. I feel no doubt. Christ is precious to me.' Afterwards she said, 'Perfect love casteth out all fear that hath torment.'<sup>4</sup> I have nothing to do now but to fear offending my good and gracious God. He is the good shepherd, and careth for his sheep. What a good shepherd have I? But oh how little have I laboured for him! But the precious blood of Christ is all my dependence now. O what a Saviour is he! Why art thou cast down, O my soul! And why art thou disquieted within me? Trust in God, for I shall yet praise him.'<sup>5</sup>

Some friends coming to see her, she told them she had no doubt. She then said to me, 'O my dear child, I long to be with him whom my soul loveth!' The rest of the day she was frequently heard to say, 'O precious Christ! O blessed Jesus! O what a Saviour have I!' Her last words were, 'God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.'

E. Henson

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 8 (1785): 249.

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<sup>1</sup>Titled: 'Elizabeth Henson's Account of the Death of her Mother'. This is most apparently an account of the death of Elizabeth (Winterborough) Henson, who married John Henson in 1742; written by Elizabeth (Verney) Henson, who married William Henson (son of John and Elizabeth) in 1769.

<sup>2</sup>Mrs. Elizabeth Henson was buried in Whittlebury, Northamptonshire on Nov. 28, 1784.

<sup>3</sup>JW had been hosted in the Henson home when he preached at Whittlebury on Nov. 23, 1784, and notes in his *Journal* that his hostess was ill; see *Works*, 23:336.

<sup>4</sup>See 1 John 4:18.

<sup>5</sup>Ps. 42:11.

From Joseph Benson

Sheffield

December 24, 1784<sup>1</sup>

Reverend Sir,

Among many instances of happy deaths which occurred during the two last years I was at Halifax,<sup>2</sup> perhaps an account of the following, which happened in July last, may not be unworthy of a place in your magazine.

Robert Dennis was from a child often concerned for the salvation of his soul.<sup>3</sup> He was remarkable for obedience to his parents, and was of so tender and loving a spirit that he entered into all their joys and sorrows, and seemed quite unhappy if he thought anything troubled them. He was so diligent in his employment that his parents never had need to urge him to it, being always forward, according to his ability. His behaviour was so good that he was never heard to utter an oath, or to use any foul or wicked language. So far from this that when a younger brother once happened to take the name of God in vain, he seemed deeply concerned and took the first opportunity of desiring his mother to speak to him.

About six years ago (when he was about thirteen years of age) he had, in a dream, an awful view of the day of judgment, and was exceedingly alarmed to find himself destitute of that religion without which he could not be admitted to glory. This he told his mother, and seemed to be much affected with it.

He had regularly gone with his parents to hear the word, and had joined with them in family worship, but did not appear to be benefited any further than that he was preserved from outward sin and felt frequently good desires. And indeed as his disposition was rather close, this was in a great measure hid from his parents till a little before his death. Nor were they apprized of the concern he had during the greatest part of his long and painful illness.

This begun about two years ago, and he seems to have been under very deep impressions most of the time—but kept it chiefly to himself. At length, about eight weeks before he died, he was constrained to reveal his inward trouble to such as talked to him about eternal things. He was deeply sensible of his want of faith, and very desirous that the people of God should both pray for him and advise him. He attended the means of grace, both public and private, longer than he was well able. But still he did not find rest to his soul.

At length, about three weeks before he died, having been at the preaching with his father, after they returned home, he attended seriously while his father read to him the 8th chapter to the Romans, out of which the text was taken. When they came to the passage that speaks of the glorious privileges of the children of God,<sup>4</sup> his father said, 'Well Robert, and dost thou think that thou hast any part in these matters?' 'Yes father', said he, 'I hope I have.' His mother said, 'Robert, thou must endeavour to resign thyself up to the Lord, body and soul, and thou wilt find peace.' He answered, 'Mother, I have done that long since.' 'Well then', said she, 'dost thou not find peace?' He said, 'Yes I do.' His father then read forward, and the young man seemed quite thoughtful, till at length he broke out in a kind of rapture and said, 'O, praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! He has given me glory!' with many other expressions to the same purport. His countenance, which shone with visible brightness, bore testimony to the truth of what he uttered. A serious friend happening to come in, they all kneeled down and solemnly returned the Lord thanks for this display of his goodness. He continued unspeakably happy all night, and next morning spoke of the goodness of God to all that came in. The comfort wherewith the Lord refreshed his soul had an effect even upon his body, so that he seemed to himself to have no pain or sickness. In the afternoon he

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<sup>1</sup>Orig., '1785'; a misprint, since it was published in June 1785.

<sup>2</sup>Benson was assigned to the Bradford circuit, which included Halifax from Aug. 1782 to Aug. 1784.

<sup>3</sup>Robert Dennis was baptized in 1766 in Halifax, his father's name was John.

<sup>4</sup>See Rom. 8:17 and following.

walked out into the garden of a friend, with *The Christian Pattern* in his pocket,<sup>5</sup> and stayed there reading and meditating some time. As he returned home he met with a serious friend, who inquired into the state of his soul. When he answered, according to his former expression, 'The Lord has given me glory', she was struck with the unusual phrase, and knew and felt that it was glory indeed.

The day following he said many blessed things to one that called to see him. Among the rest, he signified what cause he had to be thankful for this affliction, which he believed would be the means of saving his soul, and seemed joyful at the thoughts of his approaching dissolution. An aunt, being present, and hearing this conversation, was much struck and shed many tears; having rarely, if ever, heard a dying person, especially one so young, speaking of death with such cheerfulness. Now friends came to see him every day, and he spoke to all, as his strength would permit, of the loving kindness of the Lord—and seemed wonderfully directed to speak to all as their state required. To a backslider he said, 'Robert, I am sorry for you. O return to the Lord, and he will return to you!' And it seemed to be a word in season. To another who was under some trials, he said, 'George, your troubles are many. But look to the Lord and he will be your refuge.'

But it would be endless to repeat all his heavenly and blessed expressions during the remaining three weeks of his affliction. I will relate a part of what occurred within a day or two of his death. He had manifested the greatest patience and resignation to the divine will during the whole time of his illness, though it was very severe and painful: he being full of sores, and wasted to a skeleton, insomuch that they were afraid his backbone would come through the skin. But amidst all this he praised God with joy unspeakable, and only seemed concerned because he thought his parents were unwilling to part with him, begging of them, with many tears, to give him up, that he might go to his Saviour.

Observing a picture upon the wall he said, 'Does not that picture represent the last supper of our Lord with his disciples?' Being informed it did, he replied, 'And I shall be with him very soon.' This was on the Thursday. The day following he seemed to experience still more of the divine goodness, and said, 'Oh, mother! I thought the Lord had done much for me when he pardoned my sins. But he has now done abundantly more! My heart is whole! My heart is whole!' And added, 'Such is the love I feel to the Lord Jesus, that wasted and sore as my whole body is, I think I could bear to lie on a bed of nails for him who has endured so much for me.' His countenance now seemed more sweet and heavenly than ever, and his mother was ready to flatter herself that he might yet recover; and said, 'Bobby, I never saw thee so beautiful before.' He replied, 'O mother, but I shall be yet more beautiful soon!' Towards the evening, when three of his cousins came to see him, though he was very weak and hardly able to speak, yet being revived a little by the sight of them, he began to tell them what God had done for him, and assured them that he would do as much for *them* if they would look to him—but added, 'You *must* look to him.'

That night he endured much in body, and the time of his departure approached fast, while his hope and joy increased. Thus exemplifying in his experience Dr. Young's description of the death of the righteous,

The chamber where the good man meets his fate  
Is privileg'd beyond the common walk  
Of viruous life; quite in the verge of heaven!<sup>6</sup>

Spreading his arms abroad, and looking as if he would take flight to the heavenly regions, he cried out, 'O, what glory do I see!' And then clasped his arms together as if he would have embraced it. His pain was great, but his confidence was strong all night. And he seemed every moment to be expecting his release from the body, and was disappointed that it was delayed so long. At last he cried out, 'O why delay the wheels of his chariot? Why is his chariot so long a-coming?' Thus he continued till within half an hour of his departure, when he called out to one that stood by, 'Betty, sing a hymn. But let it be a

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<sup>5</sup>JW's abridged version of Thomas à Kempis, *Imitation of Christ*.

<sup>6</sup>Edward Young, *Night Thoughts*, Night 2, ll. 631–33.

*glorious* one.' Seeing him so full of joy and heaven, she knew not at first how to suit him. But the following verse occurring to her mind, she gave it out,

Jesu, lover of my soul,  
Let me to thy bosom fly,  
While the nearer waters roll;  
While the tempest still is high,  
Hide me, O, my Saviour hide,  
Till the storm of life is past,  
Safe into the haven guide,  
O, receive my soul at last!<sup>7</sup>

When they had done, he said it was a blessed one; and added, 'Do not you see, Betty, what glory! Do not you see that beautiful angel beside the bed!' His strength was now gone, and he was just departing. But before he quite expired, he spoke so loud of Jesus and *glory* that he might have been heard in the street.

I am, reverend sir, your most obedient son,

Joseph Benson

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 8 (1785): 309–12, 366–68.

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<sup>7</sup>CW, 'In Temptation', st. 1, *HSP* (1740), 67.



From an Unidentified Correspondent

c. 1785

Hannah Kay was born at Butterley in Yorkshire, and brought up with her parents. Her mother being a holy woman took care that her daughter was made well acquainted with the Scriptures even in her youth. At the age of eight or nine years, the thoughts of death and eternity made such deep impressions on her mind that she often retired into some secret place to pour out her soul in prayer. But the follies of youth at last stifling her convictions, she gave way to the world, and lived in a carnal, thoughtless condition till the eighteenth year of her age.

About that time she heard Mr. William Moorhouse,<sup>1</sup> and under the first sermon was brought out of darkness into God's marvellous light. From that time she saw herself in a poor, lost, miserable condition; and never rested till God spoke peace to her soul. At this her fears and sorrows vanished away, and she was filled with peace and joy in believing. In this comfortable state she lived many years, frequently going six or eight miles to hear the word; and in all things found it to be her meat and drink to do the will of her Father which is in heaven.

About six years after her first conversion, it pleased God to show her that, though she was justified freely, yet there was a further work to be wrought in her. This made her cry mightily to God to give her a clean heart, and to renew a right spirit within her. At last the Lord heard her prayer, and witnessed to her conscience that he had cleansed her from all unrighteousness.

From that time she had a full and constant communion with God in all things, and a full persuasion of her acceptance with God. At the same time her zeal for God was such that hardly any difficulty or danger could daunt her. She would go through all weathers to hear the word, and at such seasons as were enough to have hindered most persons. Her love to the Holy Bible was such that she counted it her only treasure, and often by taking it up and looking into it (which was her usual custom when she was in any trouble) it seemed as if the Lord had sent her a blessing according to her present want! Her love to prayer was also very great. Hence she counted it her highest privilege to continue instant therein, and whether she was sitting, standing, or walking, it made no odds to her, as she was always in the spirit of prayer. As to what is called the gift of prayer, she was excellent for a person of her age and sex; for her fervency therein, when praying for herself, her family, the church of God, and the whole world, astonished all who heard her.

With regard to her natural disposition, her courage and zeal were very remarkable. She was also very diligent in business, being always employed and ever willing to be the servant of all, whether relations, friends or neighbours. In particular she was a kind, tender, and dutiful nurse to her aged father.

For about two years before her death she appeared to be in a decline. But though she had no fear of death, yet in the beginning she seemed rather desirous of recovering, for the comfort of her old father, as well as that she might be more useful in the church of God. But when her expectations of life were cut off, she was entirely resigned to the will of God, being rather desirous to die and leave this world, in hopes of a joyful resurrection.

When her Christian friends visited her, they often found her triumphing exceedingly in the God of her salvation. Once when I visited her I asked her what she thought of the doctrine she had believed for so many years? She said, 'I am immovable in my belief thereof. And as to the doctrine of Christian perfection, I bless God that ever I heard it. For I have experienced the truth thereof for these last ten years—without which, perhaps the difficulties I have met with, might have overturned me.' Presently after this, she ended her days in the full assurance of faith, and greatly triumphing over all her enemies.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 11 (1788): 355–57.

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<sup>1</sup>Rev. William Moorhouse (1742–1823) was the first pastor of Highfields Independent Chapel, Huddersfield, which was established in 1772.

From John Pritchard (autobiography)

Coleford  
January 17, 1785

I was born in December 1746, at Arthbay, in the county of Meath, in Ireland. My father was a Protestant; my mother was of the Romish persuasion: and both were zealous for their religion.

My father brought up his children according to the best light he had. One evening, while I was playing with the other boys, he heard me swear. On this he took me by the hand, led me into the house, laid me on his knee, and whipped me till the blood came. From that hour to this I believe I never swore one profane oath.

While very young, I was put to school. While learning to read, I met with these words, 'Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth.'<sup>1</sup> The impression they made on me never wore off, till I knew experimentally what they meant.

Whilst I was a lad, I prayed earnestly night and morning. I also prayed at other times when my mind was drawn out after God, as it very sensibly was from the age of five or six to that of fourteen. During these years I could weep and pray for hours together.

About this time I was much awakened by a horrid murder committed near Castlepollard, in the county of Westmeath. The manner was nearly as follows: Three men, Gerrouhty, Hughes, and Murray, with two women, went one dark and tempestuous night, about eleven o'clock, to the house of one Mr. Nangle. Upon their entering they found the cook-maid, kitchen-maid, and scullion-boy, whom they killed on the spot. From thence they went upstairs, entered the chamber where the master and mistress lay, and finding them asleep, Gerrouhty with an iron bar, of an inch square, made a blow at Mr. Nangle's right arm, which broke it in two. On this Mrs. Nangle rushed out of the room, and in the hurry, the candle which Murray held went out, and he fainted away (for Murray was compelled by the other two to go with them). Hughes ran downstairs to light the candle, whilst Gerrouhty and Mr. Nangle were engaged with each other. And although his arm was broke, he got his antagonist under him, and had but Mrs. Nangle stayed to assist him, he would probably have conquered them. All this time, Gerrouhty was calling upon Hughes to come and help him; who coming at last, stabbed Mr. Nangle nine times before he left his hold. Gerrouhty then dispatched him with a blow. Their next work was to go in pursuit of Mrs. Nangle, whom they found with the child and nurse in the nursery. They cut hers and the nurse's throat. Then they came to the child, about five years old, who cried out in the Irish tongue, 'James! James!' (Hughes had lately been a servant in the family; and his mother nursed Mr. Nangle and him at the same time, so that the child knew him well) 'surely you will not kill me, as you have killed my mamma!' The words so penetrated the savage's heart that he would have spared him. But Gerrouhty would not, saying, 'What he says today, he can say tomorrow.' So he caught him by the legs and dashed his head against the wall. Returning to the maid, and striking her with the iron bar, he left her (as he thought) for dead. After this they went in search of the menservants, but found none.

They had now only to plunder the house, handing out what they found to the women that waited to receive the plunder, after which they set the house on fire. At that time there was a gentleman, a relation to the family, lying in one of the upper apartments. But they did not think it worth their while to lose any time upon him, concluding he would be consumed in the flames. And so he must have been but for a greyhound that was in the same room with him; which, when the fire came toward it, got upon his master, who was fast asleep, and tore off the bed-clothes from him. When he awoke, he climbed up to the window, and sat there till help should come.

Soon after, a servant that was abroad, returning home, found the house in flames. He concluded the family were asleep, and getting in through one of the windows, ran upstairs to his master's chamber. But on opening the door, and going in, fell over him, while he lay gasping out his last. Hence he was

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Eccles. 12:1.

convinced the house was not accidentally set on fire. On this, he carried his master out and laid him against the wall, and went in search of his mistress. Not finding her in her own bed, he went to the nursery, where he found three of them in a deplorable condition. But the child and the maid were not quite dead. These he carried out also. He then went to seek the maids, but in vain, being murdered in the kitchen, which was by this time almost in ashes. He then ran better than a mile to awaken the adjacent village. When he returned, he found the good, old man sitting in the window, whom he just saved by reaching him a ladder. All this time the murderers were in the garden.

The next day, the country being alarmed, the inhabitants came together, found the house in ruins, the master and mistress dead, the child half dead, but who yet lived thirty hours after. The two maids and the kitchen-boy were dug out of the ruins; the nurse only was in a possibility of recovery. But God would not suffer the wicked to go unpunished. For Hughes got drunk on the very day of the funeral, and wanting to be rude with the servant of the public house, on his offering her a purse of money, she told her mistress, who sent a young man to the room who knew him. On this he strove to escape, but was quickly taken and carried before Lord Longford; to whom, after a while, he related the whole affair, and impeached his accomplices, who were soon apprehended and sent to Mullingar, and at the next assizes were condemned, and hung in chains near the place where the murder was committed. This awful event made a deep impression on my mind, and was a means of stirring me up to seek the Lord with greater earnestness.

I was about fifteen when providence led me to Longford. My father being a builder, was employed by the lord of the place to carry on some buildings for him. It was here I first knew the Methodists, of whom I took particular notice. Their going to church constantly pleased me much, being myself regular in attending all the ordinances. Yet I was often uneasy, which I strove to cure, by doing something more. But afterwards, by going into loose company, I was soon led away from my former exercise of prayer and receiving the sacrament. In a while I could walk the streets at night, and run from one excess of folly to another. Yet I could find no rest. There was a bitter herb mingled with all my sweets. Nay, the concern of my mind still increased, and every method I took to satisfy it proved abortive.

About this time I was sent to the Academy for Drawing, in Dublin. And through it I got a new set of acquaintances, which gave me a disrelish to everything in the country. So that nothing would now do but a city life, and yet I was not happy.

From my earliest years I had a strong inclination to travel. I took the first opportunity. And with some more wild than myself, I left my native soil, without acquainting father or mother, sister or brother, with my intentions, and set off for London. I was not long here before the Almighty found me out again. Being visited with a violent fever, I came to myself and said, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.'<sup>2</sup> I now found myself in a strange land, and among a strange people. I knew none save one man, a distant relation, who proved a friend indeed. The Lord's hand was heavy on me. My body, soul, and substance felt the weight thereof. He cut off every comfort at a stroke. He smote me with a fever, a consumption, and a guilty conscience. My sickness continued so long as not to leave me a groat in the world, and hardly a morsel to eat. For three weeks I had to live upon two-pence a day, and this at a time when just risen out of a fever. I could say in the words of Job, 'Terrors are turned upon me; they pursue my soul as the wind, and my welfare passes away as a cloud. My bones are pierced within me, and my spirit is poured out. I go mourning without the sun; a brother to the beasts of the field.'<sup>3</sup> In this condition I sought unto the Lord, but had no answer. He smote me with astonishment. He scared me and terrified me with dreams, and made the night to come upon me at noon, and my sun to go down in the morning of my life. He covered me with shame, and caused me to cry out, 'A man may bear his infirmities, but a wounded spirit who can bear? I am vile. I am oppressed. Lord undertake for me!'

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<sup>2</sup>Luke 15:21.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Job 30:15–17, 28–29.

I now saw my whole heart polluted, my understanding darkened, my will corrupted and destitute of its native freedom. I therefore made my bed in sorrow and watered it with my tears. The multitude of sins whereof my whole life was full, the heinousness of them I feared would one day be laid open before him that is to judge the quick and dead. My confusion increased as I dwelt upon what God had done to bring me to heaven, and what I had done to oppose his gracious design. I wept to see his goodness which I had abused. The great day of trial appeared full in view; and that the rich man could not then save himself by his riches, nor the mighty man by his might, nor the crafty man by his wiles. Only the just shall stand before him with joy. The just appeared to me as sitting upon their thrones, condemning me by their holy lives. Together with many of those who had committed equal sins with myself, because they knew their time of repentance, which I had despised and rejected. The just Judge pronouncing the sentence, 'Go ye cursed....'<sup>4</sup> Which sentence must remain, when once passed, unalterable. This appeared most terrible of all—and I trust, profitable, in that it led me to the fear of the Lord.

I now appeared as one waking out of a dream in which I continued all my days. My sins stared me in the face. The consideration of my estrangement from, and opposition to God was set home on my mind. So that I was tried, cast, and condemned in my own breast. Under this sore burden and distress of mind I called upon the Lord. I also inquired after the Christians. I went to Church, and to the Dissenters of almost all kinds, but still found no peace. I then went to the people called Quakers, and under their testimony I found a little consolation. At last I dropped into the old Foundery, in Moorfields, and heard a man who told me all that was in my heart. And now it might be said of me, as Milton said of our first parents,

Thus they in lowli'st plight repentant stood,  
Praying; for from the mercy seat above,  
Prevenient grace descending had remov'd  
The stony from their hearts; and made new flesh  
Regen'rate grow instead; that sighs now breath'd  
Unutterable, which the spirit of pray'r  
Inspir'd and wing'd for heav'n with speedi'r flight  
Than loudest oratory.<sup>5</sup>

I now, both night and morning, sat under a powerful and faithful ministry, which led me gradually through the hidden mazes of corrupt nature, into grace. I found it instrumental in turning me to Christ, the true shepherd, the lawgiver coming out of Sion, that turns away ungodliness from Jacob. I soon found my understanding enlightened, my judgment informed how to find favour with God. But my sense of sin was so great I could not think of finding mercy so soon. Years, yea my whole life I thought was too little to repent and weep before I could with any face expect pardon. Thus I often rejected the counsel of God. *I would not be yet healed* until I heard Mr. [Peter] Jaco preach from these words, 'There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God!'<sup>6</sup> O, how did my heart bound! It was like the hart upon the mountain. 'My chains fell off at a stroke! My soul was free and found redemption Lord in thee!'<sup>7</sup> My wilderness soul became a pleasant field, and my desert heart like the garden of the Lord. The promises flowed in upon me. I found, in consequence of this, great tenderness of mind and much peace and joy through believing. I now began to taste the sweets of religion, and was enabled to pity those who were curious in their inquiries after many things but *that* the most needful to know. What I counted gain before, I now counted loss. For doubtless I esteemed all things but as dung, in comparison of

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<sup>4</sup>Cf. Matt. 25:41.

<sup>5</sup>John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book XI, 1–8.

<sup>6</sup>Ps. 46:4.

<sup>7</sup>Cf. Acts 12:7.

Christ and him crucified. My daily study and contrivance was how I might manifest my love and thankfulness to him who had called me out of darkness into his marvellous light. My every meal was a kind of sacrament. The food I ate was life to my soul, as well as marrow to my bones. I found a double sweetness in all I possessed. In private the Lord poured his blessing upon me. He washed away my tears when weeping at the throne of grace, and called me his child; enabling me comfortably to look up and call him Father. I read his word daily, and wept over it. I looked into my heart (for fear a plant of unbelief should spring up) and beheld the lineaments of God's image, the transcript of his laws, the harmony of his gifts and graces, the witness, earnest, and foretaste of eternal joys.

Soon after this I met with many things to try my patience, but none of them moved me. I had my room robbed one evening while I was at the Foundery. But I could say, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord.'<sup>8</sup> I rejoiced exceedingly in that they could not rob me of Christ, and the privileges of the gospel. Immediately I joined the society. And the first night of meeting class, I thought it the greatest emblem of heaven of any meeting I was ever in. My soul was much humbled under a deep sense of my great unworthiness, and of being permitted to sit and hear such as feared God relate his loving kindness to them. I was now united to a happy people, who walked (the general part of them) in the light of God's countenance, and counted it all joy at any time to suffer for his name's sake—where discipline was for walls and bulwarks, and where his doctrine dropped as the rain, and his words distilled as the dew. Yet I saw the need of watching and praying, that I might maintain the life and power of God in my soul. I saw that the best way to be free was to lay the axe at the root of the tree, and to spare neither root nor branch, but cut asunder all the cords which would tie the soul to earth. To deny every temper, passion, and gratification that had the least tendency to indulge the evil nature; seeking, intending, and desiring nothing during my long or short stay in this world but to find in Christ what I lost in Adam: holiness of heart and heavenly tempers which become those who are called by grace to be children of God and heirs of glory.

When you [i.e., JW] appointed me for a class-leader, and would not excuse me from undertaking that office, I gave myself up to do all the good in my power to those you appointed to meet with me. Soon after this, I got a band of single men. It increased every month, until I was forced to divide it into four bands. But being unwilling to be parted, we appointed to meet altogether once a month, and to make it a prayer-meeting. In these meetings God was with us of a truth. We had a heaven among us, and a paradise within us! We lived as the Christians of old, having all things common—so that few, if any, counted anything that he possessed his own.

It is true we had some wild-fire among us, which made Mr. John Pawson fearful of us. Mr. [John] Allen also seemed fearful of us likewise, though he loved us much, and strengthened us both in public and private.

For between three and four years this blessed work went on among near a hundred young men, besides what were at the west end of the town, until one and another of them went into the highways and hedges to be more useful to the world.

It is with pleasure I call those days to remembrance, when we ran our circle of duty both to God and our neighbour, visiting sick-beds, hospitals, gaols, workhouses, and garrets. O how did we then harmoniously stem the tide, swim against the stream of evil examples, and with labour and strife, self-denial and patience, fortitude and resolution, watchfulness and diligence, resist every temptation to forsake God and his ways!

Young men have the greatest opportunities for usefulness, before they get entangled in the cares of the world. If they do not, they are never likely to make any progress in the best way. This is the seed time for usefulness. O that all young persons, male and female, who read these lines may bestir themselves, under a sense of the importance of this great work, to all assiduity while they are in the vigour of life!

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<sup>8</sup>Cf. Job 1:21.

Having spent five years thus, with this happy people in London, you sent Mr. [Thomas] R[ankin] to inquire if I would accompany you to Ireland. After a few moments consideration, I gladly accepted of your offer. Accordingly we left London the first Sunday in March 1771.<sup>9</sup> When we got over to Ireland, I went to see my relations and friends. After staying some days with my parents, I overtook you at Coolly-Lough. From this place we travelled round the kingdom, and in July arrived safe in Dublin. During this journey I found my mind enlarged towards God and man. Many desires were kindled for the furtherance of the gospel. At times, I purposed to give a word of exhortation but my heart failed me, which brought on me much distress, and sore conflicts with the enemy. I then fasted, and also prayed that God would remove the burden. But to no purpose; for it grew more and more heavy upon me. The amazing value of souls weighed much with me towards putting in my mite for their salvation, especially when I considered that the everlasting God himself came down not to reign over princes, but to wear out his life in the form of a servant! These thoughts made me cry out, 'Lord, what is a kingdom! What is the earth, with all the planetary worlds, compared to one soul!' During this time, in which my soul hung in suspense between heaven and earth, the following lines were often brought to my mind,

Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were a present far too small:  
Love so amazing! so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all!<sup>10</sup>

After travelling from March to September, I found I could not continue to travel with you in your long and painful journeys. I therefore purposed to return to business again. On consulting you, your answer was that I was not called to be a hewer of wood, or a drawer of water: that the Lord had something else for me to do, but for the present, you would have me go to Kingswood. I accordingly went, and while I was there my heart was drawn out in prayer for the whole world. My soul grasped the habitable globe. I felt as if I could spend my life in cries and tears for Zion's welfare. During my stay here I came to a resolution to try the Lord—to put him to it, and to see what he had for me to do in this world. I was conscious that though all Christians were not called to be public speakers, yet all are called to be a common blessing, a public good, and thereby prove themselves the children of their heavenly Father, who is good unto all and whose tender mercies are over all his works. But as I was uncertain how to act, I thought that by exercising the little ability I had I should in time know the will of God concerning me. I therefore gave myself up to do all possible good, and to extend my usefulness to all around. Accordingly I resorted to prayer-meetings among the colliers in different parts of the wood, and exhorted the schoolboys daily, which often proved a means of quickening me in the ways of righteousness.

After some time I began to preach at Keynsham, and found much encouragement to proceed until I fell into reasoning upon the necessity of human qualifications: such as a knowledge of the languages, and episcopal ordination. But I made this matter of prayer, and in a short time met with Mr. Baxter's 'Answer to Mr. Johnston's Four Arguments' for an uninterrupted succession in the ministry and the absolute necessity of episcopal ordination. in which answer Baxter refers his readers to the Epistles of Paul to Timothy and Titus for a description of the persons qualified to speak in public, which was a great relief to my mind.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Orig., '1776'; a mistake, JW's trip to Ireland, prior to the time Pritchard became an itinerant, was in 1771.

<sup>10</sup>Isaac Watts, 'Crucifixion to the World', st. 4, as in JW, *CPH* (1738), 39.

<sup>11</sup>Richard Baxter, *The Successive Visibility of the Church, of which the Protestants are the soundest members; Defended against the opposition of Mr. William Johnson, ...* (London: Nevill Simmons, 1660).

After being at Kingswood some time, I received a letter from you, desiring me to go immediately into the Wiltshire circuit.<sup>12</sup> This threw me into a fever, and brought on me much trouble of mind—seeing I was weak in grace, and in gifts, and young in years, as well as of a shy disposition. However, I ventured. But though God gave me the hearts of the people in general, and I had for my Assistant one of the best of men (Mr. Richard Bourke, now in Abraham's bosom), yet my fears and sorrows so increased that my appetite failed, my sleep departed, and my body so wasted that I became a very skeleton! Nevertheless I went on, hoping it might be better with me hereafter.

August 1772, I was received into full connexion at Leeds, and appointed for Norwich.<sup>13</sup> Here I stayed but one week, and could not think of staying any longer, from a sense of my unfitness to preach to so large a congregation. During my stay I was led to expose antinomianism, which prevailed much here, to the great scandal of the gospel. Many of my hearers were much enraged against personal holiness, and him that preached it. And at one time in particular they ran down the gallery-stairs like madmen, crying out, 'False doctrine! False doctrine!' I cannot say I was ever before so much inclined to speak against the popular doctrines of the day as at that time. And it since appeared there was need of it then, for some of those very persons became the most abandoned wretches in their lives afterwards.

When I came to London, I knew not what to do. My mind was like a troubled sea, tossed upon every wave of temptation; not through guilt or condemnation, but on account of my not preaching against sin. At last I ventured again, in consequence of Mr. [Alexander] Mather's advice, and went into Sussex. Here I saw my need of wisdom—that as a servant of God, I might heal divisions, and unite in one, those that fear God. I was now afraid to turn my thoughts towards home, and therefore gave myself to reading, meditation, and prayer, that my profiting might appear to all.

Towards the close of this year I was much tried for myself and others, and went to the London Conference in 1773 with a heavy heart. My former resolutions were now broke, and I concluded I was not fit to stand up and speak for God. But dear Mr. Charles Perronet, knowing my trials, spoke to me in an affectionate manner, and encouraged me all he could to persevere.

After some days spent in Conference I saw the zeal of many of the preachers, who had borne the burden and heat of the day, and the desire which appeared in all to promote the Redeemer's glory. On this I saw my trials altogether unworthy of notice. Never did the things of sense appear so inconsiderable as at present. On this, the zeal of the Lord of hosts kindled afresh. And in this day of almighty power my mind was lightened of its load, and made willing to go through honour and dishonour, for the sake of Christ. Fain would I have been excused aforetime from this work. But now I believed the Lord laid this burden on me, and therefore I durst not throw it off. I beheld the dear servants of my Master who, through many dangers and labours, were still willing to spread the saving truth far and near; and strongly desired to bear a part with them, and saw myself happy that my gracious Lord assigned me a place among them.

Finding a desire to visit my native country, I no sooner asked but you granted me my request, by appointing me for the Newry circuit. Here we gathered in some hundreds from the barren mountains. In Lisburn, we built a house and added seventy souls to the society.

In 1774 I was stationed for Charlemont, where I found the Lord had blessed the labours of his servants the year before. Here also he blessed his people and increased their number this year also.

The first half year I met with great discouragements. The person appointed to labour with me had married a gay, young lady, and consequently could not come. My horse also died, and I was left alone without a man to help me, or a horse to carry me. As a great fear rested on me, lest the work should be hindered through these things, I cried to God in the anguish of my spirit, and poured forth my complaints and tears to him that called me to the work. However, I laboured to fasten every stake and strengthen every cord; and as much as in me lay, to build up the tabernacle of David wherever it was fallen. And in doing this I continued travelling on foot the greatest part of the year.

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<sup>12</sup>This letter is not known to survive.

<sup>13</sup>See *Works*, 10:405.

Such was the love I bore for truth that I forgot everything else in comparison of it. I longed for the Spirit to shine out upon all my ways, and sought it with great diligence. I also sought an increase of grace, well knowing this to be the most likely means of making me useful in my day and generation, and was fully determined that whatever gifts or graces God gave me, they should all be used in his service and spent for his glory.

July 1775 we met you in Conference at Dublin, when I was appointed for the Athlone circuit. I was thankful to a kind providence for giving me an opportunity of seeing and being with my first acquaintances in religion at Longford, who first showed me the way of worshipping God in the spirit. But we had no remarkable work among us this year, only that we lived in peace and that the God of peace was with us, which we esteemed a very great blessing.

August 1776 I was sent to Londonderry. In this circuit we had an increase. When I went to visit Coleraine, we had not one in society. But after preaching in the streets a few evenings we joined together about sixty souls, got a room in the barracks, and continued to go there regularly from that time.

This year we lost a most valuable friend in Londonderry, viz. Mr. John Smith, who was a pattern to all that believed: who for years stemmed the tide, and swam against the stream of corrupt customs and sinful examples, and who now enjoys the crown prepared for him and sees him whom his soul loved.

Our circuit was large and painful to travel, having to go to Coleraine on the one hand and to the dreary county of Donegal on the other, and round by Lough Derg to Lisleen—to which the papists resort from all parts of Ireland, England, and sometimes from foreign countries, to expiate their sins, as they imagine.

In the depth of winter I was taken very ill at Mrs. [Margaret] Johns[t]on's. Great was the love, and multiplied were the favours I received from her. For all the time I was ill at her house she was to me as an affectionate mother and a tender nurse. Her example increased my desires for holiness, and wrought in me a greater degree of zeal to promote the interest of our Saviour wherever I came. In this visitation I found the truth of those words, 'Blessed is the man whom God scourgeth, and teacheth out of his law.'<sup>14</sup> Scourging and teaching I observed generally go together. I found it was a means of improving my grace, and an evidence that I was not a bastard, but a son. I also found that it tended to wean me from the world, and to prepare me for a greater reward in my Father's kingdom.

July 1777 I returned to England, after spending four years in Ireland—and three out of the four in the north—during which time my mother died, which left me more free to preach Christ wherever the Lord pointed out my way. I came to Dublin and embarked for Liverpool in company with Mr. John Hampson, Mr. [John] Floyd[e], and others. But the high winds which are frequent in St. George's Channel, and which are fatal to many vessels in the passage from Ireland to this kingdom, were near proving so to us. For we were driven on the coast of North Wales in the night. But by the blessing of God, with some difficulty we landed at Beaumaris early in the morning, and about the third day we arrived safe at Bristol, which was the day before the Conference began.

During this meeting I experienced much self-abasement, being conscious of my unworthiness of the connexion I was in. Everyone there appeared as a bright light compared to me. However I was appointed for Bristol that year. When I came to preach to such a great body of people my soul fainted within me. But the Lord strengthened me, and gave me to see that nothing of consequence could be achieved with a faint heart, nor great matters undertaken without resolution. Accordingly I applied myself to reading, meditation, and prayer, and found a blessing in so doing.

In August 1778 being appointed for Northampton circuit, I left the dear people of Bristol with reluctance, and came to London, the place from which I first set out to travel. With tears I surveyed the interval of time since I betook myself to the highways and hedges, and changed my quiet habitation for a public one, and the silent shades for troubled seas! Since then I have not been without such difficulties, as unavoidably attend us. And though I had not been wanting to count the cost, yet I have often been like the widowed dove when I thought upon the time, the place, and people among whom I drew the warmest

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<sup>14</sup>Cf. Ps. 94:12.



breath after heaven. But surely the time will come when we shall forever enjoy the company of those most dear to us.

After a few days I set off for Northampton, where I soon found the preaching of the cross but coolly received by the inhabitants in general, where Christ is much talked of, but I fear is kept at too great a distance. There is much said of outward things, but little of the inward washing of regeneration and universal obedience. Many speak great swelling words about imputed righteousness, promising to others liberty, while they themselves are the servants of sin. I was much distressed to see the antinomian ministers and doctrines carry the multitude after them, which made me cry, 'How long O Lord God, holy and true, will it be ere thou wilt come, and maintain thy own cause!'

In the winter my horse fell ill, and I being poor (for a Methodist preacher is likely so to be as long as he lives) and the people poor also, I travelled the winter and spring quarters on foot, about twelve hundred miles. Meantime whatsoever I parted with on earth was amply made up to me in Christ and his people. My love to them was so great that I could willingly have died to promote their welfare. Through this love I could keep nothing as my own, but freely communicated what I had to others. And thus, through perseverance under the cross, I found the truth of those words, 'The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more to the perfect day.'<sup>15</sup>

August 1779 I went to Lynn circuit, in Norfolk. This took in Colchester, the Fens of Cambridge, and all along the coast to Wells, Walsingham, and Fakenham: in which towns, and many of the villages, we gathered many into societies, who were careless and wicked before. But in the towns along the sea-coast we met with much trouble, especially from the smugglers. We applied to the justices, who were more afraid of them than we were, and who told us if we would preach on Sundays they would protect us, but not on other days!

I was much blessed with two faithful colleagues, who counted not their lives dear, so they might win souls to Christ.<sup>16</sup> Yet in Lynn we did but little good, which was principally owing to some imprudent professors, by whom such as were feebly inquiring after truth were hindered from going forward in the good way, and from pressing into the kingdom of Christ.

August 1780 I was stationed at Taunton, in Somersetshire, and went thither in much heaviness of spirit. I had for my fellow labourer James Skinner, who travelled with me in Norfolk the year before, to the great edification of many. But his poor state of health would not admit of his continuing long in the work. Through much affliction he weathered out this year, and part of the next in Nottingham, and then returned home.

I found here but little of that warm and lively affection for the gospel, which I had known in other parts. Here also I was seized with an ague of a long continuance, which exercised my spirits much. I sought for submission to the rod, but found not so much of it as I could wish. However, I found a measure of the love of God, which at last enabled me to break through all difficulties.

My dear Mrs. P—, and a few others, proved kind to me. May the God whom I serve in the gospel of his Son, reward them! May the angel of his presence give them victory in this life, and a crown of glory in the next!

We visited some new places, and endeavoured to break up fresh ground, but to little purpose. This is one of the most fruitful counties in England for good eating and drinking; but most unfruitful as to religion. However, there are a few resolutely bold to stop the tide and swim against the stream of evil examples. But among the few in society, I knew but one that had attained the whole mind that was in Christ; namely, J— S—, of N—, who walks worthy of his profession, and is a light in a dark place. This year, with assistance from the Conference, we paid off a debt of near two hundred pounds, which was on the Taunton house.

August 1781, from Leeds Conference I came back again to Taunton, and had for my fellow traveller, Mr. [Charles] Boone. But we both were *very* ill of the ague, which hindered our usefulness. I

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<sup>15</sup>Cf. Prov. 4:18.

<sup>16</sup>His colleagues were John Moon and James Skinner.

used the cold bath, and took bark in abundance. I walked and rode. I tried electricity. But the most effectual remedy I could find was the cobweb pills.<sup>17</sup>

August 1782 I went to the London Conference, but was so ill I could not attend. From London, after taking a tour round Norfolk, and from thence to Bristol, I went to Newcastle-upon-Tyne, in hopes the north country air would prove effectual for the recovery of my health. It did so till spring, and then I had the ague about ten weeks more. Here I found an old experienced people who have stood many storms. During my illness, which was at Alnwick, I found many friends, who spared neither cost nor pains to make me comfortable. Here I could spend my days cheerfully among a loving, tender, and affectionate people, who received my testimony with thankfulness and love.

On the 21st of July 1783, I was married to Hannah Day, of East Brent, in the county of Somerset, for which I hope to bless God to all eternity.

August 1783 I was appointed for North Wilts, the first circuit I ever laboured in. We soon had a fair prospect; particularly at Allington, Castle Cary, Bradford, and Brumham near the Devizes.

In Allington we joined about forty members this year; and our good friend Mr. John Horner built us a comfortable preaching house in Castle Cary, where but a few years ago they threw Mr. Samuel Wells into a pond for preaching.<sup>18</sup> At Bradford the work of God broke out by degrees, and the society increased, to which but few had been added for many years. At Trowbridge God was at work on many hearts, but in a more silent and deep manner than is common at the first. O what a glorious gospel is this! And how much do I owe to a kind providence who has called me, a sinner, to publish it! O what reason have I for thankfulness on this occasion! And how ought I to be humbled under a sense of his goodness to such a weak and ignorant creature. I find God increasing my desires after himself, and exciting in my heart a growing zeal for his cause. But truly a sense of the importance of my work is sometimes more than I am able to bear.

July 1784 I went to the Leeds Conference. But it proved to me a very sorrowful one, such as I trust I shall never see again.<sup>19</sup> From this I came back to Wilts circuit, where I am at present. The work which last year began, has broke out into a glorious flame: so that before the year is out I expect to see some hundreds in connexion, and happy in the love of Jesus!

Having thus, sir, given you a brief account of myself, and of the great goodness of God in bringing me to himself, and in sending me out into the highways and hedges to call sinners to repentance, and who hath thus far stood by me; I now praise his holy name, and pray that as he has hitherto blessed us, as a people, he may continue his loving kindness towards us, and bless us more and more. I also pray, that as we believed in him, we may ever walk in him, and be able and willing to testify of him to the world, and never more return unto folly.

O sir, let us remember with gratitude and deep humility what God has wrought among us from the beginning! When were we hungry, and he fed us not? Sick, and he came not to us? When we went out without purse or scrip, lacked we anything really necessary? When were our calamities so great that we found no consolation in him? Can we not to this day say, 'Hitherto he hath helped us!'<sup>20</sup> Can we not read the witness, the seal, the earnest of his Spirit, and foretastes of joys to come written on our hearts! O that he may remain amongst us, and that it may be our constant desire to glorify him, which some have neglected to do! May the words of our Lord to his disciples be ever sounding in our ears, 'To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne, as I overcame and am sat down on my Father's throne!'<sup>21</sup> O may we all be like the messenger returning to the Athenians in the day of battle, who just

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<sup>17</sup>See *Primitive Physic*, §2, receipt #8, *Works*, 32:124.

<sup>18</sup>John Horner (1729–1801) was a gardener in Castle Cary.

<sup>19</sup>This Conference was torn by debate over the Deed of Declaration; see *Works*, 10:546–49.

<sup>20</sup>Cf. 1 Sam. 7:12.

<sup>21</sup>Cf. Rev. 3:21.

cried, 'We are conquerors!'<sup>22</sup> and then died.

John Pritchard

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 8 (1785): 454–58, 512–16, 566–70, 622–24; 9 (1786): 15–18, 75–78.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Referring to the Battle of Marathon.

<sup>23</sup>This account is reproduced in Jackson, *EMP*, 6:249–72; with the statement published in the Conference Minutes at the time of Pritchard's death.

From the Rev. James Creighton (autobiography)

London  
January 20, 1785

The following account was written about a year ago, when I was in a bad state of health, and was intended only for the use of my own family when it should please God to remove me from them. But I had no intention that it should be made public. Because I know, however interesting many little circumstances of our lives may be to those who are nearly connected with us, yet they prove insipid to others unless they are attended with something remarkable. But it being observed by a judicious person that we ought publicly to acknowledge the loving kindness of the Lord, even in *little* circumstances, I have consented that the following short account should be made public.

I was born at a place called Moynehall, near Cavan, the chief town of the county of that name, in Ireland, in the year 1739. My ancestors, both by my father's and mother's side, were of Scotch descent, and settled in Ireland, I believe, in the latter end of the last, or the beginning of the present century. They were dissenters from the Church of England. But my father, having seldom an opportunity of going to the dissenting meeting (as there was none near him), generally attended the Church with his family.

My mother endeavoured early to impress my mind with the principles of the Christian religion, and urged me much to the reading of the Scriptures. Pity but all parents would 'train up their children in the way they should go',<sup>1</sup> and particularly make them acquainted with the oracles of God. For though they often turn aside from them, yet the scripture truths which have been warmly urged upon the mind will generally recur sooner or later, especially in the hour of sickness or affliction, and may be a means of bringing them acquainted with their own hearts, and with Jesus Christ and him crucified.

While very young I was sent to school, where I excelled most in such things as were taught there. When I was pretty well fitted for business, and was about to quit the English school, a clergyman who was master of a grammar school in Cavan, hearing a favourable account of me from my old school master, requested my father that I might be sent to him, in order to be taught the languages. My father having consented, I went to him, where I made a considerable progress. In a year after my going to this school I was put to learn Greek. And in four years and an half from my entering it, I was admitted into Trinity College, Dublin. Here I did not make any extraordinary progress, though I was far from being idle. And having naturally a bad utterance, I could not express myself so readily or clearly as others, though I understood things as well as they did. Indeed I thought sometimes I was not fairly dealt with in respect to premiums which are given in that college. However I got through my undergraduate course with decency, and at Shrovetide commencement, in the year 1764, was admitted to the degree of Bachelor of Arts.

After leaving the college, I was an assistant for two years at the school where I had been bred. I was much inclined to have remained in a private station, conscious that I was not calculated to appear in public. Yet during my stay in the college, and also for near a year after I left it, I often reasoned concerning entering into orders, and could not reconcile myself to it. The chief difficulty lay here—I was conscious that I was unqualified for so important a work; neither was I clearly satisfied that I was *called of God*. I often prayed earnestly that God would give me light, or some token whether it was his will or not. But I received nothing that I could look upon as an answer till a little before I went into orders. In the beginning of October, in the year 1764, the gentleman in whose school I assisted came and informed me that the bishop was shortly to hold an ordination, and that I must go to him in a few days to be examined for orders. This news threw me into great distress of mind, and I told him I could not think of it, as I had told him before that I looked upon myself as scarcely fit for any business in life.

I then applied myself to fervent prayer; in consequence of which, being a little more satisfied, I was on the 28th of October admitted to the order of *deacon*, and to that of *priesthood* on the same day of

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Prov. 22:6.

October in the following year, in the Cathedral Church of Kilmore, by the then bishop of that see.

But though admitted into this sacred office, yet was I totally unfit to teach *others* the way of salvation; not having learned what should be the first lesson with every man, but especially every preacher—viz., to *know myself*. I often formed good resolutions, especially on my taking priest's orders. But alas! I kept them not. And no wonder, for I was still a *natural man*, and consequently could not discern spiritual things. I had not power to keep that law which I delivered to others. I found by experience the truth of what St. Paul said, when personating a natural man, 'The good that I would, I do not. But the evil which I would not, that I do.'<sup>2</sup> I had, it is true, been by preventing grace kept from many outward evils to which youth is generally prone; so that when in the college I was looked upon as somewhat singular. I generally attended the public means of grace in the college, and sometimes prayed earnestly in secret. I struggled frequently against sin, especially those which most easily beset me. But this was commonly of short duration. As I advanced in years, and got acquainted with the world, I conformed more and more to it than in my youth. Being of too easy a temper, I was often persuaded to do things contrary to my conscience; particularly to drink more than I could well bear (though I was seldom what the world calls drunk), and to partake of foolish amusements.

From my earliest days, as God had been frequently convincing me of the sinfulness of my heart and life, I was fond of reading and of singing the penitential psalms, and was often constrained to shed tears when repeating them in private. After many efforts, I almost fell into despair of ever gaining the victory. And indeed the last spark of preventing grace seemed to be almost extinguished, when God, who is rich in mercy and willing that 'all should come to the knowledge of his truth',<sup>3</sup> was pleased, in the latter end of the year 1776, fully to open my eyes.

I was not at this time acquainted with the writings of the people called Methodists. Nor did I choose to read them, except just glancing my eye over some few that fell in my way. Because I heard they spoke much of *faith*, I thought they held antinomian principles. But when I came to inquire candidly into the matter, I found it was quite the reverse; and that no people insist upon holiness as consequent on faith, and a life devoted to God, more than they do. In my youth I had heard some of them preach at a friend's house. I had no particular aversion to them, but was indifferent about them. After my entering into orders, my aversion to them increased; which was partly occasioned by an advice given me by my bishop, who was a great enemy to them. For on my commencing curate immediately under him in the cathedral, he gave me this caution: 'Say nothing at all about *faith* in your sermons.' This coming from one whom I looked upon as a father in the Church had great weight with *me*. So that after this I was rather an opposer, though not a persecutor, of the people called Methodists.

In the year 1772, when Mr. Wesley was expected to preach at Swadlinbar, where I was then curate, I was meditating a sermon to preach against him. But this I postponed, and wrote down some queries to send him. I was, I know not how, prevented from sending them at *that* time. But when he came to Swadlinbar the following year, I sent them to him privately, though I did not subscribe my name. However he guessed from whom they came, and returned a concise answer, and with it sent his *Appeals*.<sup>4</sup> I was pretty well satisfied with his answer, and had a more favourable opinion of him afterwards. Though I still retained an aversion to lay preachers. His *Appeals* I did not then read, but laid them by till a more *convenient season*. I read them carefully in the following winter. Some parts of them I did not understand, particularly what he said of *faith*. Other parts I did comprehend, and approved of, and in his last *Appeal*, in reasoning with the Bishop of London, I saw clearly that he had the advantage of his lordship in the argument. However, I threw by the pamphlet again, and took little notice of it till three years afterwards.

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<sup>2</sup>Rom. 7:19.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. 1 Tim. 2:4.

<sup>4</sup>*Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*; and *Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*.

In the end of the year 1775 I read Mr. Fletcher's *Appeal*, but without any great effect.<sup>5</sup> I liked his style and the perspicuity of his arguments; and I was in a kind of rapture in reading his address and the appendix. Yet still I did not bring the question home to my own heart, whether *I* was in that fallen state he so clearly described? I looked upon myself as *some* kind of a Christian from the time I had been baptized. But whoever is fully acquainted with his own heart will readily acknowledge that the picture of man, in his fallen state, cannot be drawn in too black colours. His heart is 'desperately wicked'.<sup>6</sup> Yea, 'every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is evil', and that 'continually'.<sup>7</sup>

I had two old Latin books, one a comment on our Articles, the other a summary of the heads of divinity; both written in the last century by presbyters of the Church of England. These I sometimes perused, and they had a considerable weight with me. I had often before this applied in private to the 'Father of light',<sup>8</sup> if I was in error, to let me know it. This prayer was at length answered. For reading a passage in one of these books concerning justification and sanctification, I was struck with this thought: 'This is not a *new* doctrine.' I then had recourse again to Mr. Wesley's *Appeals*, together with the Bible. Having read these with fervent prayer, my eyes were thoroughly opened, and I gained more spiritual knowledge in six days than I had before in six and twenty years.

I now clearly saw the plan of salvation, and perceived my own soul in its true colours. Wherever I was, either riding, sitting, or walking, the words of the heathen emperor, 'My friends, I have lost a day',<sup>9</sup> went like a dagger to my heart. 'Will not this heathen', said I, 'rise in judgment and condemn *me*, who have lost the whole of my time?' And the reflection of having done no good distressed me more than even the burden of my sins. Every prop being now removed, I saw I must be saved by *faith only*, or perish everlastingly. When I had sought mercy for a fortnight, without success, I thought I must repent more. This set me back for some time, for I had none to converse with who knew the way of salvation. But God himself gave me encouragement by dreams, and I had firm hopes which supported me under my heavy burden. When I had been about six weeks under conviction, on reading the first chapter of Isaiah in the church, being the first lesson appointed for the day, I was much affected by it, thinking it very applicable to our times, and to the then state of the British Empire: the American rebellion having now advanced to a considerable height. After my return home I read over the chapter again, and determined to write a discourse from some text in it for the following Sabbath; which I accordingly did, taking the second verse for my text. On the Sabbath when I was to preach it, about the middle of the service, a man came into the church and handed me a form of prayer and a proclamation, for observing a general fast on the Friday following. I had but two or three minutes till I was to read the proclamation. Soon after, I went into the pulpit, where I delivered the said discourse with more than ordinary energy. I was so affected with a sense of what had occurred, and of my own unworthiness, that towards the conclusion of my discourse I burst into tears; the whole tenor of my sermon being calculated for the fast-day, as if I had been previously apprized of it, whereas I knew nothing of the matter till the moment when the packets were handed to me into the reading desk. It was the thought of this, and the tenor of my discourse which, besides the burden of my sins, served to sink me to the dust. And the language of my heart then was, 'Lord, what am I? What have I to merit thy favour? I am the vilest of the vile; yea, worse than nothing!' But how did my poor neighbours account for my tears and distress? Why, by spreading a report that the packets I received contained press warrants, on account of a threatened invasion, and that I was weeping through fear of the impending dangers of a war in Ireland.

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<sup>5</sup>John William Fletcher, *Appeal to Matter of Fact and Common Sense; or, A Rational Demonstration of Man's Corrupt and Lost Estate* (Bristol: W. Pine, 1772).

<sup>6</sup>Cf. Jer. 17:9.

<sup>7</sup>Cf. Gen. 6:5.

<sup>8</sup>Cf. James 1:17.

<sup>9</sup>Suetonius, *Life of Titus*, Bk. VIII.

I was in deep distress the remainder of that day and night, and did not sleep till about one o'clock. Whether sleeping or waking I am not certain, I felt a kind of impression which is not easily described. On the night following, about the same hour, being I believe asleep, I felt another impulse somewhat similar to it, which seemed to be accompanied with a dawn of light. On the third night, having sat up till two o'clock in the morning writing, I went to bed, but did not sleep for a considerable time. I then slept about two hours, and awoke out of a remarkable dream. Whilst I was meditating a few minutes upon it, I felt a third impulse, which shook my whole frame—even every nerve and fibre in my body. It was as quick as lightning, so that I can compare it to nothing but the shock of electric fire. And it left me very weak for some hours. What seemed to me most remarkable in these impulses was that, though they varied a little, yet they all were somewhat similar to a sensation which I felt about eighteen years before, in the night, after I had been hearing John Manners preach. I do not recollect that I was any way affected by his preaching or conversation. But I have sometimes thought since that perhaps that good man's prayers were heard for me. For I doubt not but he prayed for me *particularly* in private, knowing that I was then about to enter the college. This impulse (I mean the thoughts of it) often impressed my mind, though I never discovered it to anyone, fearing lest it should be only the effect of imagination. Though I believe now that God was reconciled to me at the time when I felt the last of those three impulses, yet I could not then believe it, nor for a month or six weeks after. When I was enabled *fully* to believe that God was at peace with me, I was so collected, and my ideas so clear, that I think I could have written a sermon and conversed with five or six different persons at the same time. So that what is related of Julius Caesar did not seem to me incredible. But this did not continue more than a month or six weeks; which I believe I might have retained, had I not been unfaithful to the grace given, and grieved the Spirit of God by doubting of my call to preach the gospel.

It was now that the father of lies began to spread many idle reports concerning me. And these excited many out of curiosity to come from distant parts to my church. Several of my old acquaintances, meeting me in public places, stole a glance at me to perceive whether I was really mad, as they had been informed. Meantime I wrote many letters to those clergymen with whom I was intimate before. But though they had been formerly free, they scarce vouchsafed me any answer; yea, and stood aloof from me as one infected with the plague. So that I was indeed as a sparrow sitting alone upon the housetop. Yet glory be to God, I was not 'ashamed of the gospel of Christ, knowing it to be the power of God unto salvation'!<sup>10</sup> But I published the glad tidings, first in the church and from house to house, then in the parishes adjoining, as afterwards in more distant places. And this I did, though at the same time I laboured under the most distressing conflicts with respect to my call. Two things served to keep me in the work: first, these words of St. Paul, 'let every man abide in that calling, wherein he is called';<sup>11</sup> and next, the thought of Jonah, and a fear lest God should pursue me with vengeance if I should fly from the work. Thus was I kept as it were between two fires, not knowing which way to turn, and was dragged into public view in a manner so contrary to nature so that condemned malefactors going to execution could not find more anguish than I did when going into the pulpit.

Some time after, I began to use divine service and to preach in a barn in a part of my parish which was about four miles from the church, and where the greater number of Protestant inhabitants lived. It was, I believe, on the third or fourth day that I read the service here, when the sixth chapter of Judges was the first lesson. In reading this I was wonderfully affected—the doubts and fears of Gideon being exactly similar to my own at that time. But when I came to these words: 'Oh my Lord, wherewithal shall I save Israel? My family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house',<sup>12</sup> they were applied with such power that I almost sunk down upon the floor, and with difficulty could read out the chapter. Soon after I began to preach at this place, the people near it proposed building a small chapel of ease. This, after some time, was carried into execution. But not without difficulty, for the people who were eager for

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<sup>10</sup>Cf. Rom. 1:16.

<sup>11</sup>Cf. 1 Cor: 7:20.

<sup>12</sup>Cf. Judg. 6:15.

it at first were soon slackened by a report, that I would shortly be removed by my superiors. So that I was obliged to get the building covered in and finished chiefly at my own expense. Hearing that a magistrate in the neighbourhood said he would pull it down or burn it, the next day I went to his house and dined with him, to see if he would say so to my face. But he said not one word about it. As the owner of the barn could not spare it any longer, I was soon obliged to preach in the chapel for some time before it was glazed, and whilst the floor, which was of clay, was so wet that my feet would sink near two inches in it.

The doubts concerning my call to the ministry bore hard upon me still, and the thought of my insufficiency for so important a work weighed me down, and caused me to go heavily; and frequently does even to the present moment. The parish was very extensive, being I think not less than sixteen miles in length, a great part of it mountainous, and the whole so dreary, especially in the winter season, that no language can describe it. The wet bogs, drains, and mountain rivers which rise suddenly rendered many parts of it impassable. There is a stratum of yellow clay lying very near the surface of the ground, which is impervious to the rain that falls, and therefore lies upon the surface during the winter months. Insomuch that I have been wet over my shoe when walking on the tops of the highest hills. I have frequently walked as well as rode through most parts of this parish in all kinds of weather. And often when the most violent storms were beating in my face, these words used sweetly to cross my mind, 'Your life is hid with Christ in God.'<sup>13</sup> Near the centre of this parish stands a high and remarkable hill called Knockninny, from which is the first prospect, for wood and water, to be seen perhaps in all Ireland.

On St. Stephen's day, in the year 1778, I rode about six miles to a place noted for wickedness, where people generally assembled on idle days (by some called holy days), and spent them in drinking, and various diversions. Here I purposed to preach on the ruins of an old church if I could get any hearers. But not finding any, I rode on a little space, and then alighting, spent some time in meditation. On opening my Bible these words first appeared, 'Is the seed yet in the barn? Yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree hath not brought forth. From this day will I bless you' (Hag. 2:19). On opening a second time, these words in the same chapter struck my eye, 'and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts'.<sup>14</sup>

Three days after this I went to the quarterly meeting of the Methodists held near Enniskillen, where I was pressed and prevailed on to preach. And though it was so weak, yet it pleased the Lord to show some token for good. At the next quarterly meeting, held at Clones, I preached in the open air, and after preaching administered the sacrament in the house to three hundred persons, where the power of God was such as the most experienced Christian there had scarcely known before. A few days after, on Easter Sunday, I gave notice in the church that I intended to preach the Tuesday following on the hill of Knockninny. This I did, partly to counteract in some measure the works of the devil, who was then to have a large concourse of his servants assembled at a cockfight in a neighbouring town. I went to the place precisely at the time, and having first spoken concerning the occasion of our assembling, and the precedent for it; and then showed that going from the church walls was not separating from the church; I read my text in Greek, then in Latin, and afterwards in English. 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to day, and for ever'.<sup>15</sup> This I did with a view to the papists who attended, and took occasion to show them how useless my speaking and their attending there would have been, had I continued to speak to them in an unknown tongue. The congregation was pretty large and behaved with decency. But the poor papists who attended were compelled by their priest to do penance for having gone to hear a mad heretic.

On the Whitsun Monday following, I preached on the ruins of the old church before mentioned, on those words, 'He taught the people out of the ship.'<sup>16</sup> Here close to the old church walls lived a man who excelled in all kinds of wickedness. When I came the next time he offered me his house to preach in.

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<sup>13</sup>Col. 3:3.

<sup>14</sup>Hag. 2:9.

<sup>15</sup>Cf. Heb. 13:8.

<sup>16</sup>Cf. Luke 5:3.



I preached in it a few times, and then in houses adjoining. After this I was invited to preach in many distant places, which though directly contrary to my natural inclinations and old prejudices, I reluctantly complied with.

The old cry about false prophets being now revived, and many of my parishioners being hurt by it, I thought it needful to point out to the people the marks of a false prophet, and gave public notice a fortnight before of my intention to preach on that subject. The congregation on the day appointed was very large, and many papists attended. I was remarkably struck in reading the first lesson for the day (the 13th chapter of Ezekiel) to find it so expressly written against false prophets. The substance of this sermon I afterwards published, and it was distributed through most parts of Ireland.

In the latter end of March 1780 a woman was deeply affected in the church, and seemed in an agony whilst I was preaching. Some of the people carried her out, contrary to her desire, before the sermon was finished and sprinkled her face with water, supposing it to be a fainting fit. But on the next Sunday, being Easter Day, the true Physician healed her sickness, whilst I was praying with her in the church after the congregation was dismissed. This was one of the first clear seals to my ministry which I had in the church. But I was more blessed in my own soul, as well as in my labours abroad. And it pleased God by me to open a door for preaching the gospel in several places where it had not been preached before.

July 16, 1780, I preached in the church on 'Gallio cared for none of these things.'<sup>17</sup> I had this text on my mind for a considerable time, but did not determine to speak from it till this morning. When a gentleman entered the church, with whom I had had some dispute four or five years before, whose character resembled that of Gallio, I almost resolved to speak from some other text, lest he should think I pointed particularly at *him*. But having prayed fervently and cast my care upon the Lord, I was enabled to speak with freedom. In the evening of the said day I baptized an adult person, who had before experienced the pardoning love of God.

August 20th and 27th, I preached in the open air in an old Danish fort near the chapel, to a large congregation, some of whom were papists, who being convinced set out to seek the Lord, and soon renounced the errors of popery. In October following, being informed that one who lived near a place, where I preached occasionally was greatly prejudiced though he had not heard me, and had complained both to the minister and the popish priest concerning my preaching in their parish, I went to his house and told him I desired to talk with him. He replied he did not choose it, and ran out of doors. Some time after, I went to his house to visit his father-in-law, who was sick. He came into the house, raging like a lion, with a hatchet in his hand, threatening to cut off one of my limbs, and calling me many names. But his family dragged him away. I then kneeled down and prayed with the old man. So the devil was permitted to show his teeth, but could go no farther.

January 23, 1781, I preached at Ballyconnell to a large congregation. Whilst I was meeting the society afterwards, two persons were set at liberty, and a backslider healed. Shortly after, I preached again at the same place, there being then a great revival there.

April the 25th, I preached in the open air near the old walls of the Castle of Enniskillen, to a careless people. Some ladies strolled about and diverted themselves in talking aloud; and one gentleman kept his hat on, and seemed utterly insensible of what was saying. 'God hath made foolish the wisdom of this world; it hath pleased him by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.'<sup>18</sup>

In June following, at the bishop's visitation, two doctors in divinity, entering into conversation with me, passed some encomiums which I did not expect on the two sermons which I had published. They said that my doctrines were scriptural and entirely consentaneous to the doctrines of our Church, but they disapproved of my preaching them anywhere out of my own cure. I took occasion shortly after to write to them upon that subject, and received their answers. One of them was calm and friendly. After reminding me that I had a family, and that he, in a conversation with a nobleman who was allied to a certain bishop,

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<sup>17</sup>Cf. Acts 18:17.

<sup>18</sup>Cf. 1 Cor. 1:20–21.

had spoken favourably of me to his lordship, he said I might shortly expect promotion in the Church. The other doctor was very warm. But though his letters concerning irregular preaching are voluminous, yet they did not contain any convincing argument. I told both the gentlemen I never saw any fruit of my labours until I became irregular. And I still am persuaded that were I to confine myself to one congregation, I should not only soon become useless, but also lose the life of God in my own soul.

About this time, I began to preach at a place called D[rumanarragh], near Cavan, and generally did so once a fortnight, whilst I remained in the country. When many began to be awakened, I explained to them the nature of a society, and joined fourteen of them together the first night; to whom more and more joined almost every week, till after some time they were about fourscore. The greater part of these, in a little time obtained remission of sins. Meantime the vicar of the parish sent for me and threatened to complain to the bishop, adding moreover that if I and those fellows who were itinerants continued to go on thus, the churches would soon be deserted. I replied our preaching tended rather to bring men *into* the Church; that I must obey God rather than man, and therefore was determined to preach whenever and wherever it suited my convenience. Shortly after, many who had been Dissenters, attended at his church, and received the sacrament from him. I also sent two papists to him to read their recantation, as a proof that I was bringing men into, not driving them out of the Church. Satan seeing now that he was likely to lose some of his subjects, opposition arose from another quarter. Some papists one night waylaid my brother,<sup>19</sup> who acted as a leader to those that were awakened, in order to murder him. But having intelligence of it, [he] returned by another way, and escaped them. The work flourished more and more after this, and I trust many of them stand fast to this day. Whilst the work here was at the height, after I had preached one day at noon, and was riding to a town about two miles distant in order to preach in the evening, I was most violently attacked with my old temptation about preaching, and resolved to consult with my friends whether I should preach *any* more. But as notice had been given of my preaching that night, I was obliged to do it, and found more than ordinary liberty.

In August 1781 I thought it necessary to bathe in the salt water for some time near Ballyshannon, and preached sometimes, whilst I was there, in the cabins on the sea-shore, and also in a Methodist society at some miles distance. Whilst I was preaching here in a popish woman's house, several of her neighbours who were papists assembled in the kitchen, threatening to come and beat out all that were in the room. But the bridle was in their jaws.

In the years 1781 and 1782, I preached occasionally in seven different counties, and rode and walked about four thousand miles during that time. Herein I did the utmost violence to my natural inclination, and went through such fatigue and hardships, and bore such contempt and mockery, as I would not have done for all that this world can bestow. But I was kept in this way, partly by fear lest I should offend God if I desisted, and partly by a desire of doing some good to the souls of men.

In May 1783 I was invited to come over to London, to labour in conjunction with Mr. Wesley. As I saw reasons both for and against this, I laid them before my Christian friends, and with their advice, after I had received a second invitation, I consented to go in the strength of the most High. To part with my parishioners, among whom I had laboured near fourteen years, was trying work both to them and me. Indeed to myself it felt as if body and soul were parting, for my bowels yearned over even those who were still hardened. But I was convinced the time was come, and concluding it was the will of God, resolved to comply.

Having settled my affairs, I parted with my parishioners on the 28th of September. I met and administered the sacrament to one part of them early at the chapel, then went at the usual hour to church and administered it there. Thence I returned and preached in the chapel in the evening. Whilst I was preaching, the cries of the people were so great that my voice could scarce be heard. I trust some of them will remember that day, even to eternity.

It was my usual custom, chiefly for the five or six last years that I was among them, to meet them three times every Lord's day (not indeed the same congregation, for they could not all conveniently

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<sup>19</sup>Robert Creighton.

assemble at any one place, the parish being extensive, and the roads bad). Some of them I met, exhorted, and prayed with early at my own house, or some other house most convenient for them. Then I went to the church. And afterwards returned, read the service and preached in the chapel in the evening. The week days I spent chiefly in visiting from house to house, and in preaching in other parts of the parish, or in more distant places.

October 3 I arrived in Dublin, very weak in body and with a heavy weight upon my mind. I seemed like Abraham, when being 'called', he 'obeyed', and 'went out', to 'sojourn in a strange country, not knowing whither he went'.<sup>20</sup> But what cannot an Almighty arm effect? And nothing less than this could have supported me, seeing difficulties great and various stared me in the face, and were painted to my view in such direful colours! In Dublin I met Mr. and Mrs. F. both shining lights and flaming with the love of God, and love to all mankind.<sup>21</sup> October 9, I landed safe with my family at Chester, and on the 14th, after much fatigue arrived in London. May I ever adore and serve that kind Protector, who has conducted me thus far, and delivered me from many impending dangers!

I can never indeed sufficiently love and praise that God who hath done such great things for me; who hath brought me 'out of darkness into his marvellous light',<sup>22</sup> and given me a relish for spiritual enjoyments. Whatever deists or devils may say, I not only believe, but experimentally *know*, that true religion, the religion of Jesus Christ, is ἐπιζομένων ὑπόστασις, 'the substantial reality of things hoped for'.<sup>23</sup> That it does not consist in speculative notions, or opinions; no, nor in any external thing; but in 'righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost'.<sup>24</sup> I see that the ways of this religion are 'ways of pleasantness, and her paths peace'.<sup>25</sup> I see that the 'commandments' of God 'are not grievous' to him that 'believeth'.<sup>26</sup> I see that those things which ten years ago I thought impossible, are not only 'possible', but easy to be done 'through Christ strengthening us'.<sup>27</sup> I believe that Jesus Christ came to 'destroy the works of the devil';<sup>28</sup> to *save us* from pride, from every wrong temper, and every evil desire; to eradicate sin, and implant in its stead the *mind* that was in himself.<sup>29</sup> I believe it is our privilege to be made 'partakers of his nature, partakers of his holiness',<sup>30</sup> and to become 'one spirit with the Lord'.<sup>31</sup> That we must absolutely be 'renewed' here 'in the spirit of our mind',<sup>32</sup> and recover that 'image of God'<sup>33</sup> which we lost in and through the first Adam. I believe we must become 'new creatures'<sup>34</sup> in Christ Jesus, living 'branches' in the living 'vine'. And that in order to live and bring forth fruit, we must 'abide in the vine'.<sup>35</sup> I believe

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<sup>20</sup>Cf. Heb. 11:8–9.

<sup>21</sup>Likely James and Jane Esther (Lee) Freeman.

<sup>22</sup>1 Pet. 2:9.

<sup>23</sup>Cf. Heb. 11:1.

<sup>24</sup>Cf. Rom. 14:17.

<sup>25</sup>Cf. Prov. 3:17.

<sup>26</sup>Cf. 1 John 5:3.

<sup>27</sup>Cf. Phil. 4:13.

<sup>28</sup>1 John 3:8.

<sup>29</sup>Cf. 1 Cor. 2:16.

<sup>30</sup>Cf. 2 Pet. 1:4.

<sup>31</sup>Cf. 1 Cor. 6:17.

<sup>32</sup>Cf. Eph. 4:23.

<sup>33</sup>Cf. Gen. 1:27.

<sup>34</sup>Cf. 2 Cor. 5:17.

<sup>35</sup>Cf. John 15:5.

that the remedy which God hath found out 'for healing the nations',<sup>36</sup> was intended by him to extend as far as the malady. I never was fond of controversy. I think and let think. And yet I see it is necessary sometimes for those who have time and abilities, to 'contend for the faith once delivered to the saints'.<sup>37</sup> I see what havoc that notion hath made in the church, both in the present and former ages, that 'A man cannot fall from grace when once he hath received it'. Satan hath by many other artifices slain his *thousands*; but by this, I believe, he has slain his *ten thousands*, nay, his millions. As angels fell in heaven, as Adam fell in paradise, so I believe a man may fall from the highest pinnacle of holiness attainable upon earth; and so fall, as to perish everlastingly. And that we are never beyond the possibility of falling on this side the grave. I trust, were I called to it, I could seal these truths with my blood. I wrote them chiefly for the use of my own children. And I hope this will prove profitable at least to *them*, when I am removed hence, and my body lies slumbering in the dust!

James Creighton

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 8 (1785): 241–44, 297–302, 354–59, 398–403.

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<sup>36</sup>Cf. Rev. 22:2.

<sup>37</sup>Cf. Jude 1:3.

From Thomas Tattershall

c. January 20, 1785

Thomas Spear, was the son of Charles and Grace Spear, of Kilkenny, in Ireland, and was born October the 4th, 1777. His mother too sensibly felt that curse entailed on woman, 'in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children.'<sup>1</sup> For like Rachael, she gave life at the expense of her own, leaving behind her a little daughter and this son.

The Lord began to work on his mind very early, and these divine impressions discovered themselves even before he could speak, by his frequent pulling of his father to pray with him. When about four years old he began to converse much, and with great delight, about the invisible things of God. And the strong conceptions he had of heaven often elated his soul, and made him frequently say, 'Nothing is true wisdom but to love and serve God, and it is worth all our striving to gain heaven and escape hell.'

When he was about five years old, he was one day with one James Cahil (a bricklayer) setting a range, when another person came in. And as they were conversing, old James called on God to d[am]n his soul! The child observed him, but did not speak till the other was gone, and then seriously asked him why he swore? He answered, 'Did I swear, child?' He said, 'Have you forgot that you did?' James said, 'Sure I did not swear? What did I say?' 'You called on God to d[am]n your soul. But if God should d[am]n your soul, who can save it? And if you be not saved, you must go to hell. If God was now to grant your request, you would go to hell immediately.' The man threw down his trowel and said, 'Lord have mercy upon me! Am I come to these years to be reproved by *thee*?' The child added, 'Now take my advice and repent, or the devil will have you.' James told the child's father that this reproof struck him more forcibly than anything he ever heard before. After this, James went home, sickened, and died in a few days.

Thomas Spear was a child of few words. Yet if he heard any say what he knew to be wrong, he reproved them generally with scripture words, saying to the swearers, 'Our Lord said, "Swear not at all."<sup>2</sup> To the liars he would say, 'All liars shall have their portion in the lake that burneth with brimstone.' If he heard anyone sing foolish songs, he would ask, 'Why do you sing songs? St. James saith, "If any be merry let him sing psalms."<sup>3</sup>

Meantime his temptations were very extraordinary for one so young. For when he was between five and six years old, he was tempted to disbelieve the being of a God. His sister once reproved him for speaking of it, saying, 'God will be with you.' But he said, 'There is no God.' She told her mother of him, and when she questioned and chastised him for it, he begged her's and God's pardon, and said he did not know what made him say so at that time; for he did not think so, though he was often tempted to think so.

Before he was six years old he began to sicken, and had much pain at times in divers parts. On the 15th of December 1785, it settled in his left leg. From this time his life was one scene of affliction. For the inside of his ankle swelled, then burst, and then the flesh rotted away all round the sore, till the bones dropped out. For nine months it continued running, until he was reduced to a mere skeleton. When his mother dressed his sores, she often wept over him, beholding the torture he was in. But he lovingly reproved her, saying, 'Do not fret for me. Do not cry. This pain will soon be over. My Lord will not let me suffer much longer. But we have need of patience. O let us pray for patience, that we may do and suffer the will of God.'

About the beginning of this illness he dreamed that he was praying, and that God came and asked, 'What canst thou want, child?' He said, 'Lord wilt thou cure my leg!' But the Lord said, 'Hush child! I am going to take thee to myself. Thou shalt die and go to heaven.'

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Gen. 3:16.

<sup>2</sup>Matt. 5:34.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. James 5:13.

For the three last months, if possible, he suffered more than he had done before. But he bore all with astonishing patience. He often told his parents, 'You wait on me night and day. The Lord knows if you were sick, and I capable of it, I would wait on you. But as I cannot, you ought to pray that God may take me away.'

When they asked him if he wished to die? He said, 'Surely it is better for me to die, and go to heaven, than to stay here. There is nothing in this world that I see worth living for. But a little longer, a little while longer, and then my Lord will take me, and then I shall have no more pain, nor hear cursers or swearers to grieve me. No cursers or swearers will ever come there.'

He was confined to his bed for near a year. And when he heard people sin, and could not get up to reprove them, he prayed for them, and often repeated, 'Lord, how long will thou leave me here to be grieved by the wicked?'

He took great delight in repeating these words, "'Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.'" <sup>4</sup> This, he said, 'is a certain evidence of God's love to me.' He often requested those about him to read the Scriptures to him. And when he heard any promise he thought applicable to himself, he would lift up his hands and say, 'Amen.' And then requested them to repeat particular passages several times, and tell him where they were, that he might remember them. And though he was in so much pain he often sung praise to God. The following were some of his favourite lines, Psalm 18:1–3.

No change of times shall ever shock  
My firm affections Lord to thee;  
For thou hast always been my rock,  
A fortress and defence to me.

Thou my deliverer art, my God!  
My trust is in thy mighty power:  
Thou art my shield from foes abroad;  
At home my safeguard and my tower.

To thee I will address my prayer,  
To whom all praise we justly owe,  
So shall I by thy watchful care  
Be guarded from my treach'rous foe.<sup>5</sup>

One day he called his sister to him and said, 'Jenny, I have three things to tell you to mind when I am dead. First, mind and learn your book. Secondly, keep out of the streets, and from bad company. Thirdly, fear and love God, then you will follow me to heaven.' After this he laid his hand on his younger brother, who was a little above two years old, saying, 'The Lord bless you, child! Amen! The Lord bless you!' When he spoke of heaven, he said he should see Mr. [Thomas] Payne there. And he hoped Mr. [Zachariah] Yewdal and Mr. [Robert] Davis would come after. He prayed, if the Lord pleased, to see me once more in this world; but if not, he was content to go and wait till he met all his friends in heaven.

During his last month he evidenced a great desire to be in heaven—often praying, 'Surely Lord, thou wilt not leave me long! Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly! O come and take me to thyself!'

The day he died he said to those about him, 'Put away that soul man from the bed's foot.' In the evening he called his mother, and said, 'That, mother! See that!' She said, 'What must I see child?' He answered, 'That glorious sight! Did you ever see such a glorious sight in all your life?' He then prayed, 'Lord wash me, and put me with the rest of thy servants!' Then he asked his mother to give him a kiss,

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<sup>4</sup>Heb. 12:6.

<sup>5</sup>Nahum Tate and Nicholas Brady, Psalm 18, st. 1–3, in *CPH* (1738), 3.

and soon after departed, without a struggle or groan, on the 15th of January 1785, aged seven years and a quarter.

Thomas Tattershall

*Titled:* 'A short Account of Thomas Spear'.

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 11 (1788): 18–21.

From Joseph Wells<sup>1</sup>

January 22, 1785

Sir,

By Mr. [George] Story's advice I have lately communicated to the society at Bath instituted for the encouragement of agriculture a method which I take to prevent blighted crops of potatoes. As it is a matter of consequence to the public in general, and to the poor in particular, you may perhaps think it worth a place in the *Arminian Magazine*; as thereby it may be more extensively useful.

For the first five or six years of my being in the gardening business I sustained very great losses in my crops of potatoes, by what is called the blighted or curled potatoes. Many people have endeavoured to find out the cause, as it has been a general complaint throughout the kingdom. But I believe, as yet, without success. Although very great has been the loss to the nation for want of an effectual remedy to prevent it. I think that nothing can be applied to alter the nature of the seed that is infected with this disease (for I have proved by repeated experiments that the fault is not in the soil). Nor can it be known which is bad until it is planted. I therefore have made use of the following method to select with certainty a sort of seed that is good.

Soon after Christmas I make a hotbed in the following manner. I lay horse dung, etc., about eighteen inches thick. Over this I spread fine mould about five or six inches thick, and then lay (of different sorts of potatoes) such as I intend to plant, in different divisions so that I may tell distinctly to what sort they belong, and lightly cover them up with mould. By reason of the warmth of the bed they soon come up, and if there does not appear to be above one in thirty or forty bad (for some will surely prove so in the hotbed, as well as in the field, if they are infected), I then plant of that sort with the greatest safety. When I find they are too bad to plant, I look out for others from various parts of the country, and try them. This I am enabled to do by making the experiment so early.

They who cannot make a hotbed might plant them time enough in a warm border of rich mould, and be pretty sure of success. But the hotbed is best, for I have never known the experiment fail in one instance, either in my own or my neighbours' practice, for near a dozen years.

Joseph Wells

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 8 (1785): 215–16.

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<sup>1</sup>Titled: 'Of Planting Potatoes. To the Editor of the *Arminian Magazine*.' Editor's note: 'For the good of the Public, I insert the following Account.'



From John Hampson Jr.<sup>1</sup>

Chester le Street  
January 25, 1785

Reverend Sir,

As I do not frequently trouble you with letters, it will be the less necessary to offer an apology for the present. And as it will probably be the last time, I shall leave it to the occasion to apologize for itself. I am just returned from attending my father at Leeds. His fits are now periodical, and so violent that I think he can never travel again.

Several friends have favoured me with a sight of their correspondence with you relative to the Declaration Deed, and the satisfaction proposed to the ninety-one.<sup>2</sup> As the arguments of several persons of piety and ability have not been able to produce any change in your opinion of that matter, I shall decline advancing anything in that way from myself. Only I shall observe that your account of the nature of the satisfaction which was promised surprised me extremely. I will tell you, sir, what I know of it.

A very worthy man (Joseph Bradford) told me that if we made such concessions as were admissible, you would give us any security we could desire; that a writing should be executed putting us all on an equal footing. This we construed with an assurance that we should have in all respects an equal portion with our brethren. As to the other construction, excuse me sir if I say it carries absurdity on the face of it. It was not likely we should make so much stir about obtaining what we were certain no one could take from us—a right to preach after your decease. We well know that as long as our morals were irreproachable, and we preserved the esteem and affections of the people, no power whatever could injure us in this respect. For my own part, the idea never once entered my mind. I will say no more.

I have so good an opinion of the majority of the preachers in *Conference* that I verily believe they would be extremely averse to taking any advantage against us. But sir, it is possible they might, and that possibility is too much. For instance: If the deed should stand good in law, then the nomination of preachers to the circuits is in their hands. Consequently they will have it in their power to appoint each other to the best circuits, and leave us what they rejected themselves. What is still worse, if worse can be, they may take and thrust us out of the Conference by the shoulders, and tell us we have no business there! Now sir, this appears to me a great grievance.

Another thing which has given me much concern is that the doctrine of Christian perfection is and has been frequently preached and professed among us in such a manner as is equally unscriptural and absurd, and productive of the most deplorable consequences. I know a man, of whom you have the highest opinion, whose conduct I can prove—upon oath, if it be necessary—from the most unexceptionable witnesses to have been for these two years past, in many instances, not only immoral but infamous. This man is one of the greatest professors in the connection, and your support of him has

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<sup>1</sup>The moves that JW took in 1783 to insure that deeds of Methodist preaching houses require preachers to be appointed 'by Conference' created a legal question of what constituted 'Conference'—particularly after JW died (for he had always controlled who was invited to Conference). This eventuated in a 'Deed of Declaration', filed in early 1784, that limited the 'legal Conference' to one hundred preachers (out of nearly two hundred currently active), with the initial corp named by JW. This sparked concern among those omitted from the 'legal one hundred', especially seasoned preachers like John Hampson Sr. In response Hampson led in publishing *An Appeal to the Reverend John and Charles Wesley, to All the Preachers who act in Connexion with Him, and to Every Member of their Respective Societies in England, Scotland, Ireland, and America* (n.p., 1784), seeking to set aside this change. Debate over this issue was intense at the 1784 Conference, where the Deed was upheld. Some preachers, including Hampson and his son, withdrew from the connexion as a result. See *Works*, 10:546–49.

<sup>2</sup>The 'satisfaction' promised was that those excluded from the legal hundred would 'be treated the same' by Conference as those included.

astonished many of us beyond expression.

Another subject of complaint is that there are some persons appointed almost constantly to the office of Assistants who are totally unfit for any kind of rule or authority. I have particularly in my eye a man whose passions, after a professor of religion for many years, are the most violent I ever saw; and who has in kind so much of the tyrant that he has rendered miserable almost every preacher who has laboured with him for many years. Add to this, he cannot bear a competitor. As a preacher he is confused to the utmost degree, and many of his expressions are upon the verge of blasphemy. But if the person who labours with him be acceptable, he cannot bear it and will do everything he can, by innuendoes and insinuations in the pulpit and elsewhere to destroy his character. Now sir, if you should know any young man of good sense and promising talents, I beseech you, do not put them under the wing of such a person. It may destroy them entirely. I say this not for my own sake, but that of others. It can affect me no more, as I do not intend to travel any longer.

I beg, sir, you will excuse the freedom of this letter, and not attribute it to want of respect. Though you have done some things which I could wish had never taken place, yet I greatly respect you as an instrument of great good to mankind. I return you many thanks for every instance of your kindness to me, and am reverend sir,

Your affectionate humble servant,

John Hampson

N.B. you will see the necessity there is that a preacher should be sent here as soon as possible.

*Addressed:* 'The Revd John Wesley / London'.

*Endorsement:* by JW, 'Jo Hampson Jun. / Janu. 25. 1785 / something true / more false'.

*Source:* holograph; Middletown, Connecticut, Wesleyan University.

From Adam Clarke

Port Isaac  
January 31, 1785

Reverend and Dear Sir,

The persons who lately joined, continue seeking the kingdom. And though we had some reason to fear a relapse of some who had before borne infamous characters, yet we are agreeably disappointed, and they continue, blessed be God, walking worthy of their vocation. The congregation is so much increased that we have been obliged to build a new gallery, and have purchased a small piece of ground for steps to it on the outside. At St. Austle, the Lord has bared his arm in a very eminent manner, especially within these eight or ten days. On Sunday, 23rd, after I had preached at Mevagissey and Trenarren, I came to St. Austle, where I found a vast multitude of people gathered together. The house was so crowded that I had great difficulty to get to the pulpit. We were obliged to make those within to stand on the seats. And notwithstanding this was done, and every interval filled, scores were obliged to return home who could gain no admission, and numbers waited around the house the whole time. Such a death-like solemnity and profound attention I scarcely ever saw before. Every soul seemed to hear for eternity, and departed without noise or confusion. The next morning I preached at six o'clock and had nearly two hundred people; several of whom, being truly awakened, I gave permission to meet in class. The same evening I preached again, and the house was so thronged that the people were obliged once more to stand on the seats. But the good Lord did not suffer me to speak in vain, but sent the convicting Spirit to attest the truth of his word, and many, both of the high and low, were much affected. Next morning I preached at 6:00 again, and the congregation was computed to be nearly three hundred. So mightily does the word of God grow and prevail. Nor is this amazing work manifest among the poorer and more wretched kind of people only, as at Port Isaac, but several of those who are called the better sort are induced to cast in their lot among us; insomuch that curled, tied, and powdered hairs, and high heads, which were before idolized, are now detested and abandoned, and the lofty looks are brought down.

Nor is the revival confined to St. Austle alone. Several of the adjacent placea have partook of the same spirit. On the 25th, I held a love-feast at St. Ewe. There were about forty persons present, among whom the power of God was eminently displayed, two or three finding redemption in the blood of the Lamb. I believe there was not one person present but spoke less or more of the loving-kindness of the Lord. Among whom was a little boy, I suppose about eight or nine years of age, whom I had admitted to Sticker society the Friday before. He declared with divine boldness and confidence that he felt the love of Jesus in his soul. After speaking was ended, we had some earnest prayers offered to the throne of grace in behalf of the world in general, the prosperity of the cause of God universally, and in particular for you, reverend sir, to whom, under God, as the principal instrument, we owe our spiritual existence. At Mevagissey there is a revival also. Many, high and low, flock to hear, so that our house cannot contain them. Many of these are convicted, and some converted. Indeed, there is an increase of hearers almost through the whole circuit. The houses will not contain them, so that we have been and are yet obliged to preach out of doors through frost and snow. But this, instead of being the burden, is the pleasure of the Lord to us all. My soul joins with this verse: 'Jesus, ride on, till all are subdued.'<sup>3</sup>

We are now about building a house at St. Austle. Had we one capable of containing them, I suppose nearly all the inhabitants of the town would come to hear. Dear sir, let us have an interest in your most earnest prayers, that this house of the Lord may be built, and this blessed work carried forward. Amen. Was I not confident that this is the work of God, and had it not present pay connected with it, I believe I could not go through it. From my present disposition, I think I can truly say that all the money on earth could not induce me to bear the bodily distressing exercises which I am now enabled by the grace of God to go through—among the rest, that of preaching four times on Sundays, three times often

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<sup>3</sup>CW, 'After Preaching to the Newcastle Colliers', st. 12, *HSP* (1749), 1:312.

on week-days, and every morning wheresoever it is practicable. I think it not a small miracle that my very weak constitution is able to bear these fatigues. But with God there is nothing impossible. Blessed be Jesus, who gives me a hearty desire to devote every particle of my strength to that work, to which in his mercy he has called me. May I be more faithful in it than ever!

We labour together in a blessed unity. Mr. [Francis] Wrigley is indefatigable in enforcing our excellent discipline, and spreading the gospel in several places where Christ has been but little named. Mr. [William] Church goes on with much sincerity and zeal. I endeavour, through the grace God has given me, to preach with earnestness the doctrines of the gospel; particularly universal redemption, justification by faith through the blood of the Lamb, together with a present, free, and full salvation from every evil temper, desire, and affection—and this to be the privilege of every child of God, and to be attained by simple faith in the same Jesus.

These things, through the grace of God, I as cordially believe as I do my existence. O that God may make me a more abundant partaker of that complete salvation which I endeavour to preach to others! Let me have an interest in your prayers that I may not stop short of the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of peace. Praying that the good Lord may lengthen out your little span, make you a blessing yet to thousands, and at last bring you into his eternal glory, I remain, reverend and dear sir,

Your steadily affectionate and obedient son in the gospel of Jesus,

Adam Clarke

P.S. I met the children at this place today, and was surprised to find them so sensible and so much in earnest. There is a glorious work among them. Their number is upwards of twenty. Three or four profess faith in Jesus. They are very punctual in their class meetings, and can leave their food to come to preaching. Some of them are opposed by their ungodly parents.

*Source:* published transcription; Dunn, *Clarke*, 16–19.

From Christopher Hopper

Bolton  
c. March 20, 1785

Mary Crosdall was born on the 19th of June, 1760. Her father died when she was about ten years old. Before she was six, she had serious thoughts about a future state: and at times would weep and pray in secret. She constantly attended the established Church, and was sincere in all she did. One time she had a strong desire to receive the sacrament, but her mother thought she was too young. She continued simple, serious, and humble till she was about nine years of age. She then had deeper convictions, and began to see her danger.

One night she dreamed that her father and two of her brothers, who had been all dead before she knew them; came to her, linked arm in arm. They were clothed in long, white robes. As she thought herself in deep distress, her father advanced, with a look of tender affection, and wiped away her tears from her eyes. 'My dear child', said he, 'you must return again, and live better than you have done; and when you are *twenty-five years of age*, you shall come and be with me forever.'

When she was about fifteen she was awakened, and saw the absolute necessity of an interest in the blood of Christ. About a quarter of a year after, she believed in Jesus and found peace with God. She then went with her sister, Betty Parkinson (a pious young woman) to Manchester, to hear the Methodist preachers, but much against her mother's mind. Soon after she joined the society, and was a pattern of meekness, humility, and patience. She had many trials, and met with great opposition from her mother!

Some time after her conversion she found her inbred corruptions very strong, and was convinced of the necessity of a farther change. She now laid aside everything she thought was contrary to her Saviour's will, especially her gay apparel. Her mother then told her if she would not wear her clothes, she should have none. But she did not care for that. After she had struggled some time in prayer, with sighs, tears, and resignation, the Lord was graciously pleased to remove all the enemies of her tranquillity, and to give her constant peace and pure love. She then went on her way rejoicing, and was filled with love to God, the saints, and all mankind. She was very humble, modest, and diffident. She made no great noise about what she enjoyed. She thought it most prudent, and most to the glory of God, to express the happy state of her mind by her holy and prudent behaviour. It grieved her much when any made high professions and discovered great weaknesses.

These last ten years she has been a daughter of affliction. But her consolations, through the Spirit, have not been small.

A few months ago she removed from Manchester to Bolton, where she took her last illness. When she was so weak that she could follow her business no longer, she was removed from a friend's house, where she lodged, to her sister Parkinson's. Her body was now so emaciated and full of pain that she could not move without assistance. Sometimes she doubted whether her faith and patience would hold out to the end. When she thought of her mother's severe behaviour towards her, she found her mind a little uneasy. But she overcame this also by the blood of the Lamb.

When I visited her on Friday morning, the 4th instant she found perfect peace, and could say, 'The Lord hath done all things well.'<sup>1</sup> The Lord is my Rock and portion forever, and is worthy to be praised.'<sup>2</sup> Her countenance was heavenly, and her mind serene. She lived several days after this, and suffered much. But the Lord supported her, and kept her soul in peace. She was now so weak that it was with some difficulty she could speak. Her sister was a little troubled at this, and told her that her Christian friends expected to hear her speak more of the loving kindness of our Saviour. To which she replied, 'You know I always preferred walking to talking.' The enemy still assaulted her and vexed her sore. But she was heard to say, the last night before she died, 'Thou art not of God. Thou hast long afflicted my

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Mark 7:37.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. 2 Sam. 22:2, 4.

body and mind, but I bid thee now depart in the name of the Lord, and trouble me no more.' From that time it was so. And she was kept, in silent prayer, with her mind stayed on God, waiting and longing for her final exit. On the 16th instant about four o'clock in the morning, she said, 'I am now happy, happy! It will all be over before nine o'clock.' About six she fell asleep in the Lord. About nine she was laid out, and all was over with her on the stage of this mortal life. Note. She died in *the twenty-fifth year of her age*, according to the words of her father which he spake unto her in a dream, when she was only nine years of age! We may well say, God's judgments are unsearchable, and his ways past finding out!

Christopher Hopper

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 8 (1785): 626–28.

From Mary (Bosanquet) Fletcher

Madeley  
March 22, 1785

About Christmas last, Michael Onions, of Madeley, then about sixteen, began to sicken of a decline. To that time he had been very carnal, and often expressed a dislike to the means of grace. His uncle said, 'Michael, thou seemest to be ill. Perhaps the Lord is about to take thee. What thinkest thou of another world? There are but two places, a heaven and a hell, and thou must go to one of them.' He answered, 'If I knew I should go to heaven, I should not be unwilling to die.' 'Well', said his uncle, 'there is such a thing as knowing our sins forgiven *here*.' 'What'! replied he with some emotion, 'while we are alive can we know that?'

His desires for life being very strong, he made many promises how good he would be if the Lord would spare him. His mother-in-law<sup>1</sup> often talked with him about his future state. After a little time his heart was much softened, and he would often weep because he had offended so good a God. In a few days the Lord revealed himself unto him. On which he cried out, 'O, mam! what do I feel? O, what love is this! My heart is full! brim full! O, it is sweet! What would I give, mam, that you could feel it too! O, how sweet!' She said, 'What! Sweeter than honey and the honeycomb?' He replied, 'O, far away! far away above it'!

From this time he appeared much changed. His desire for life was gone. He wanted nothing now but to die and be with Jesus. His bodily sufferings were very great. He often cried out, 'O, I am afraid I shall be impatient! But I cannot help it. Lord give me patience.' He would beg of those who visited him to help him by their prayers to be patient. To his mother-in-law he expressed great thankfulness, saying, 'I wish I could carry you with me. If God would let me, mam, I would take you in my arms. But if not, I should like to die in your bosom.' He had now frequent visits from the Lord; particularly three manifestations, each of which seemed to exceed the other. But as he was very ignorant, being brought up in a coal pit, and having never read the word of God, nor conversed with serious persons till the time of this illness, he had some difficulty in explaining his meaning. And at times, when the Spirit of God was poured out afresh upon him, he would cry, or rather groan, 'Oh! Oh! What is coming to me! What is this! What is this!' Then with his eyes fixed up, he seemed to be lost in deep contemplation.

One Sabbath-day some people came into the house and were talking of worldly things. He looked at his mother and said, 'I would go to bed.' As she was helping him into bed, he lamented the hurt the company had done him. But his adorable Redeemer did not long leave him to mourn, for in a few moments he was so overpowered with love that his weak body was ready to die beneath the weight thereof.

About six days before his death his spirit seemed wholly taken up with prospects of glory. Sometimes there seemed to appear before him beautiful crowns. Sometimes companies of glorified spirits who appeared to him as men, women, and children walking in a glorious place. 'There is', said he, 'in that place something like a table, and angels sitting round it. And there is one taller than the rest who seems to be teaching the others. But I can't hear what he says.' One day he said, 'I see a river, over which I am to pass, and two angels standing on the other side, ready to receive me.' Being quite overpowered he cried out, 'O, what's a coming!' Then panting, as for breath, he called his mother to come and see too. Then with his eyes fixed upward, with a deep solemnity he said many times, 'What do I see! What do I see! O, what do I see! I see the gates of heaven! They stand wide open! How glorious! O, how glorious! Why, they are brighter than gold! Brighter than the most fine gold. And there stands a woman in white.' One present said, 'Who is she like?' He answered, 'I do not know; but she is a large, tall woman,<sup>2</sup> in a white

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<sup>1</sup>This may mean 'step-mother' as his birth mother had died.

<sup>2</sup>Note in original: 'His own mother was a large and tall woman, who died before he could remember: her last words were, "I must go and meet Jesus."'

dress. But O, mam! how much whiter than anything here on earth, you cannot think! And I see Isaac and Polly too!<sup>3</sup> O, how pretty they look! How bright Polly shines! And now', said he, 'I am going over that river, and see such a beautiful green pasture beyond it as I cannot describe!'

Another time he mentioned a river so clear that the clearest glass on earth was not so bright. This he told them was in heaven, and that he must be washed in it. With the sight of this river he seemed quite ravished, saying, 'I am washed! I have on that white robe! I am whiter than snow. And now', said he, to his uncle, 'what do I stay for!' Then throwing open his arms, he said, 'O, I long to be gone! Why do I stay! Nobody can think what pain I feel! Why do I stay!' His uncle said, 'Perhaps there is more to be done in thee.' 'No', said he, 'Christ hath washed me! I am whiter than snow!' 'But perhaps', continued his uncle, 'there is yet something for thee to speak.' With that he seemed quite content. After lying still some time he seemed afresh overpowered, and said, 'Call my mam, that she may see too.' Then, as if just swallowed up with the power of God, he said, 'O, the glory! O, the glory! Don't you see!' They answered, 'No; what is it like?' After lying silent some moments he said, 'Why ten thousand, thousand, thousand instruments of music, sweeter than I ever heard! O, this is *most glorious of all!*' He then for three hours believed he was out of the body, and thought he was actually there, and said, 'It is time now for this bit of clay to go down to D—ly' (their parish church). During these three hours he complained of no pains. But afterwards though he found them in a measure return. Yet he was quite calm, waiting for the happy moment. Soon after, with a low voice, he said, '*There is the most glorious place of all!* And I am going up the ladder into it!' And then, in a few moments [he] stepped into eternity, and took possession of the glory prepared for him in the presence of God.

Mary Fletcher

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 8 (1785): 522–25.

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<sup>3</sup>Note in original: 'Two children who died a little before: the boy was killed in a pit; Polly died very happy since I came here.'



From an Unidentified Correspondent<sup>1</sup>

Sligo  
March 30, 1785

On the 17th instant, John Henry was attacked with the symptoms of a pleurisy. I visited him on the 19th and 20th, and found him striving to say to God, 'Thy will be done.'

On the 22nd I visited him again, and found him in a dangerous state. On this I advised him to settle his temporal affairs. But he seemed confident he should not die. Here I was at a full stand.

In this frame of mind he continued till the night of the 23rd, when the arrows of death sunk so deep into his mortal part as to force him to yield to the evidence of his approaching dissolution. I was then sent for in all haste, and having settled his temporal affairs, endeavoured to strengthen him for his solemn change.

The rest of the night he spent in the agonies of death; now and then groaning out his soul in ardent, though short prayers to God. About 8:00 the next morning, he fell into the most dreadful agony of soul I ever saw! His eyes glared with terror! His countenance looked wild and ghastly! While the sweat poured in streams down his hair and face! His anguish was so great that he frequently attempted to force himself out of bed, and his groans were sufficient to wound a heart of stone! Thus he struggled in the extremity of woe, for the space of five minutes. Then raising himself up as in frantic despair, he cried out, 'I am damned! I am damned! I am damned after all!'

For two hours before this dreadful agony began he spoke, when his strength would permit, of the blessed privileges of true believers, and of his own peace with God, and of his assurance of eternal happiness. But oh who can fathom the mystery of divine providence, or tell why God permits such strange trials to befall his servants?

I ought to observe that before, in, and after this dreadful conflict, he had the use of his reason as perfect as ever he had in all his life. But oh how vain, how impotent is reason in the hour of such darkness?

After a while this dreadful conflict yielded to those healing promises: The Lord shall give thee the desire of thine heart upon thine enemy.<sup>2</sup> The Lord will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,<sup>3</sup> etc. His countenance now changed from the wildest horror I ever saw, into the most evident signs of peace and joy. While, from the fullness of his heart, he joyfully proclaimed his deliverance from the hellish oppressor; often crying out, 'Jesus! My God and my all! Yes, Jesus will give me the desire of my heart upon my enemy! O how far did the enemy exact upon me, and the son of wickedness afflict me! He made me believe I should not die. He came to me as an angel of light. O how far did he deceive me! He then brought six texts of scripture to prove that I was not a child of God, and that I had deceived myself. But glory be to God! Jesus brought ten to prove him a liar. O thou cruel enemy, Jesus will give me the desire of my heart upon thee! Now I know that my Redeemer liveth.<sup>4</sup> Jesus, thou art my God! My life! My light! My joy!' Thus he went on without bounds or measure glorifying God for his deliverance, and expressing his astonishment at the delusions the devil had led him into, and at God's great goodness in saving him from the hand of the destroyer.

From this time he began to weaken every hour. And now knowing the hour of his departure drew nigh, he called his friends around him, and took an affectionate farewell of them all, giving a kind advice to each as he saw need. While he could speak his conversation was heavenly, and when his tongue began to falter, his eyes and countenance spoke the joys and pleasures of his soul. In the evening his speech

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<sup>1</sup>Titled: 'A Short Account of the Death of John Henry, of Killtycohel [Kiltyclogher?] in Ireland'.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Ps. 59:10.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Heb. 13:5.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Job 19:25.

failed, and death's dread work was visible in every part. About midnight he began to cease breathing, sometimes for near a minute together, and then would revive again. And so continued till 5:00 in the morning, when, with a deep sigh, he breathed out his last!

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 9 (1786): 18–20.

From an Unidentified Correspondent<sup>1</sup>

c. April 1785

In the early part of life he had some serious impressions on his mind, when the Spirit of the Lord very sensibly strove with him. The death of the righteous and his final state became the object of his wishes. At that time he constantly attended on the Church service, and frequently heard the Methodist preaching—which the Lord was pleased to make useful to him. But having no root in himself, no deep conviction of the evil of his heart and the necessity of an interest in Christ, his serious reflections were of a short duration. And when sent to a boarding-school, the follies of childhood prevailed upon him. His schoolfellows assisted therein, and he soon lost all serious concern for his salvation. The evil propensities of his heart gained ground upon him daily. He thirsted after pleasure, and sought happiness in the amusements of this life. Yet though he was surrounded with temptations to evil, and his serious thoughts were gone, the advice and example of his parents, by the restraining grace of God, kept him from gross immoralities. He still retained a peculiar sweetness of temper, and discovered a generous and humane disposition of mind.

In this state of soul he continued till 1782; at which time he had thoughts of paying his addresses to a young person of considerable fortune in that place, who was a member of our society. In order to succeed, he attended preaching at the Methodist chapel. This was his confessed motive in his first coming. But God, who is rich in mercy, overruled it for a better end. He soon found that his heart was not right in the sight of God, that he was unconverted and consequently not prepared for heaven. Conviction took place, sin became hateful, and he determined to give up his gay acquaintance, and to seek an interest in Christ. But being drawn by the cords of divine love, he was not much convinced of sin, till in autumn, when at sea he awaked one night in great distress. The sins of his life were as fresh in his memory, as though they had been but just committed. The remembrance of them was grievous, and the burden of them intolerable. Deeply conscious of guilt, and knowing himself condemned by the righteous law of God, the fears of death compassed him about, and the dread of eternal misery overwhelmed him. While in this distress, it was strongly impressed on his mind to rise and read the forty-third chapter of Isaiah. Which he immediately did, and found a springing hope that the God of Jacob would extend mercy and relieve his oppressed soul. And though he did not then find a sense of pardoning love, he diligently sought it as the pearl of great price. No opportunity for hearing, prayer, or Christian conversation was omitted. And every place seemed to him to be a place of prayer. While he was thus labouring after rest, and was truly weary of his state, as he was walking in the garden, he who suffered in the garden of Gethsemane appeared as with his vesture dipped in blood, and by the application of a portion of scripture released the captive soul. The peace which passeth all understanding was then his blessed portion, and the love of God abundantly filled his heart. Before this deliverance, a natural modesty made him, in a considerable degree, reserved in speaking to his religious friends (except a very few) of the state of his mind. But now grace triumphed over nature, and constrained him to say with David, 'Come hither unto me all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul.'<sup>2</sup> Humble love gave him a simplicity of spirit in reproving sinners, and in persuading them to taste of redeeming goodness. A vehement thirst for the salvation of his fellow mortals appeared in the whole of his deportment. And when he found anyone inquisitive to know the way of salvation, it rejoiced his spirit more than the acquisition of earthly treasure. And more especially did he intensely desire that his dear relatives might enjoy the kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy, which he found in his own soul.

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<sup>1</sup>Titled: 'Memoirs of Mr. Henry Haddick, Captain of a Custom-House Shallop, at Rye, in Sussex, who was shot by some Smugglers on the 19th of August 1783'. Henry Haddock (b. 1765) was buried on Aug. 22, 1783 in Rye.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Ps. 66:16.

This joy and peace continued for several days without any considerable diminution. He was then (as I believe most are) tempted to think it was only the power of imagination. By which means, and also by reasoning with the tempter, he was brought into great distress. But he again sought help from God and obtained comfort, being persuaded that whatever imagination may produce, it can never raise the soul to love and fear God. That this must certainly flow from the Giver of every good and perfect gift, and that it strongly evidences a work of grace in the heart. Afterwards, he in general walked in the fear of God and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost. And the whole of his outward behaviour strikingly displayed the power of that grace he was a happy partaker of.

Last spring he complained to me of a propensity he had to a trifling spirit, though I believe no one perceived it but himself. Indeed from the first of his conversion to God, he appeared to be jealous of himself, lest he should grieve the Holy Spirit. This led him to watch and pray, and give all diligence that he might make his calling and election sure. His growth in grace was obvious to many, particularly to those who sailed with him.

When I saw him in June last, he informed me that he had been exceedingly harassed with deistical thoughts. These he laboured at first to overcome by argument. But though the authenticity of the Scriptures seemed certain to his judgment, the temptation was not removed. He then made use of fervent prayer, and soon found Satan bruised beneath his feet. Such a confidence did he enjoy that the Scriptures are indeed the word of God that he ventured his whole soul on the gracious promises. He had accustomed himself to read this precious word daily before this conflict. But afterwards it was more abundantly the delight and joy of his heart. It was sweeter to him than honey, or the honeycomb. So graciously did the Lord fulfil his promise, 'All shall work together for good to them that love God.'<sup>3</sup>

When he first applied to the person above mentioned, he was refused. But when such a real change appeared, and there was not the least room to doubt the genuineness thereof, his offer was accepted. This was satisfactory to relatives on each side, and the way of providence seemed clear unto them. An union was agreed upon, and promised much mutual felicity. The time of its commencement drew near, and a house was furnishing to receive the happy pair. But it soon appeared that God's ways are not as ours, and that it is his prerogative to dispose.

Having been in harbour a few days, he went out on Monday evening the 12th of August. The next evening he was reading his Bible in his cabin when some of the men on deck discovered a shallop at a distance, which they supposed to be a smuggling vessel. The captain being informed of it, ordered his men to make towards her, and to inquire what she was. Meantime they got their small arms ready, and then endeavoured to get alongside of her. As soon as they came near, before the captain had hailed her, the smugglers daringly fired their small arms. The captain ordered his men not to fire, but they inadvertently did. Upon which the smugglers fired their great guns. The captain with his men crouched down in order to escape the shot. While in that position they fired a second round. A ball came through the upper part of his vessel, which went through his left thigh, his body, and his right arm. He was just heard to moan, and expired immediately. Thus fell that amiable youth, just turned eighteen years of age.

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 9 (1786): 162–64, 219–21.

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<sup>3</sup>Cf. Rom. 8:28.

From Joseph Taylor<sup>1</sup>

Gretton  
April 2, 1785

When he was about fifteen years of age, he caught a violent cold by sleeping on the grass. This so affected his health that it was thought he would not recover. But proper means being used, he was in a great measure restored. He had at that time little or no concern for his salvation. When he was about seventeen he was deeply awakened to a sense of his lost condition, and never rested till he had a clear manifestation of pardon. From that time he was an exemplary follower of his Redeemer, striving to keep a conscience void of offence towards God and man. He was but just entered upon his twenty-first year when he again caught a violent cold, which alarmed all who had any regard for him. Yet he was not apprehensive of his danger, but used to say, 'In a few days I shall be as well as ever.' One of his friends answering, 'Suppose you should not, are you resigned?' He replied, with great cheerfulness, 'I think I cannot be unresigned to the will of God, be it whatever it may.' When he was advised to take the advice of a physician, he answered, 'I have no desire to live, but for the sake of one person whom I love above all the world. Yet if the Lord is pleased to remove me, I shall be enabled to resign all that is dear to me.' When one asked him if death appeared terrible, he answered, 'No; though I do not enjoy that lively exercise of faith which I desire. Nevertheless I can give myself into the hands of God, and trust him for all I want.' As his weakness increased, his graces were more conspicuous; for his patience, meekness, and humility excited the admiration of all who saw him.

After he was confined to his bed, he gave up all hopes of recovering, and made a full surrender of everything below the sun. His soul was now all life and vigour. He seemed on the borders of heaven, and longed to depart and be with Christ. Yet he would frequently check his ardent desire, and say, 'I want more patience to wait the Lord's time.' Instead of complaining, he used frequently to say, 'I bless God that I am about to be taken home, without anything grievous to be borne.' He talked of death with the greatest pleasure, and wondered that his emaciated body should so long keep him a prisoner below.

At seeing his friends weep, he said, 'Let us rejoice the little time we have to spend together: and though we shall be separated for a season, we shall soon meet to part no more!' When any asked how he did, he answered, 'I am happy!' or, 'I am just got home!' or, 'I am weak in body; but comfortable in my mind! O how precious is Jesus! I did not know that so much of heaven could be experienced on this side the grave.'

At one time, being almost strangled by a fit of coughing, and seeing his friends much affected, as soon as he could speak he said, 'The will of God be done! That is best! Do not weep, for you never see me weep! I am not suffering much! I could suffer much more!' He then exhorted all who were with him to make sure of heaven.

To an acquaintance at a distance he sent the following message, 'You must prepare to meet the Lord. If you do not alter your present course of life, you are undone forever!'

He expressed a great satisfaction in seeing the children of God. 'O', said he, 'how do I love those who love God, though I have not seen some of them before!' When his friends repeated any portions of God's word, he seemed to lay hold upon them all by faith, and then would express the peace and comfort they brought to his soul. He used to repeat the text he had chose for his funeral with inexpressible pleasure, 'The redeemed of the Lord shall return to Zion with singing, ....'<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Titled: 'Some Account of the Death of Mr. John Tregellas, of St. Agnes, in Cornwall'. Joseph Taylor (1752–1830) was admitted 'on trial' as an itinerant in 1777 (see *Works*, 10:464). Taylor would serve for 44 years, before settling in Derby. He was one of three preachers JW ordained for Scotland in 1785, and he was elected President of Conference in 1802. See *Minutes* (post-Wesley, 1830), 6:555–56; and Vickers, *Dictionary*, 345.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Isa. 51:11.

When one asked him, 'What if the Lord should make you an example of patience, and leave you longer for a pattern to those around you, could you be willing?' He answered, 'Yes. I think I am willing for the Lord to do with me as he pleases, so I may be kept from dishonouring him.' He was always thankful for the least kind office that was done him, and expressed much concern lest he should weary his friends. When one said, 'I have reason to bless God that I have seen such an example of piety, both living and dying', He answered, 'I would not have my friends think too highly of me, nor speak too much about me when I am gone.' After taking a cordial, he said, 'I have not vinegar and gall given me, as my blessed Master had.'

The day before he died, the breaking of a blood vessel almost suffocating him, he seemed as in an agony. But as soon as he could speak, he said, 'I am suffering a great deal!' On being asked, 'Are you happy?' He answered, 'Yes.' A friend coming to his bedside asked how he was. He answered, 'Happy! happy! John', said he, 'will you make my coffin?' He answered, 'Yes.' 'Well', said he, 'and will it not give you much pleasure to work upon it, now you know I am going safe to glory.'

The evening before he died the doctor was with him, to whom he said, 'What do you think of me now?' The doctor answered, you will not be many hours here. He then smiled, and invited the doctor to stay and see him die. But though the doctor went away, he told me after that what he had seen and heard had confirmed him in one point wherein he had been wavering—viz., whether a person could in this life be wholly delivered from the fear of death?

The night he died he advised some of his friends to go home, lest their sitting up should injure their health, saying, 'It appears as if I should not die tonight, seeing one symptom has not taken place which the doctor expected about ten o'clock.' However, about one o'clock in the morning he turned over, as if going to sleep; and at 4:00 his spirit returned to God, April 28, 1784.

Joseph Taylor

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 9 (1786): 249–52.

From an Unidentified Correspondent<sup>1</sup>

April 5, 1785

Mary Parkinson feared God from her childhood, and often lamented her sinful state, though she was ignorant of the nature and method of salvation! About eleven years ago, as one was giving out the following hymn in her father's house,

O let no gloomy crime,  
Pollute the rising day!  
Or Jesu's blood, like evening dew,  
Wash all those stains away!<sup>2</sup>

she felt her need of Christ, and the same night found a clear sense of her acceptance with God. That night, while asleep, she was in a kind of trance and saw the glory of heaven. Being waked, she cried out to those about her, 'O come, and taste the waters of life. for they are now running!' She also gave thanks for the comfortable sleep she had had, and seemed grieved that she awoke so soon.

From this time she was much in prayer for herself, the success of the gospel, and the world in general. In this employment she frequently spent whole nights, never taking rest till she found power to believe. Though for a long time she had been dreadfully afflicted with rheumatic pains, she was supported under them by faith and prayer.

About nine years ago (having now lost the use of her limbs) she was carried to a love-feast at Mr. G—'s, at which time her soul was filled with the pure love of God. From that time she was never heard to complain that God dealt hardly by her, but rejoiced evermore, prayed without ceasing, and in everything gave thanks.

Being asked a little before her death if she found any temptation, she said, 'I am sometimes tempted to think that God deals hardly with me. But these temptations all vanish by looking unto Jesus!'

For some years, her knees being drawn up to her breast, she was forced to lie constantly on one side, till her bones came nearly through her skin. Accordingly she was so contracted that, when dead, her whole length was not quite two feet. She had also (besides constant pain) been quite blind for some time, and experienced very great poverty. Yet in all this she was so supported that she could praise the Lord continually.

Sometime before her death she said, 'I see the gate of heaven open to receive me, and hear the Lord say, "Come up, my love, my dove, my undefiled!" He assures me I shall enter in, seeing my robes are washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. I shall soon mount up as on the wings of an eagle, and be where pain and sickness, sorrow and weeping shall be no more!' Having said this, she fell asleep in Jesus, in the 50th year of her age.

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 9 (1786): 248–49.

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<sup>1</sup>Titled: 'A short Account of Mary Parkinson, of Lisburn, in Ireland'.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. CW, 'A Morning Hymn', st. 4, *CPH* (1741), 51.

From Joseph Pescod<sup>1</sup>

Bedford  
April 12, 1785

John Wynn was about twenty-four years of age. He had been a soldier in the third regiment of foot guards, and had deserted thrice. The last time he did this he received three hundred and fifty lashes. He said he might have come off with fewer if he would have asked pardon, but he would not. His frequent deserting was one cause of his coming to an untimely end, for thereby he entangled himself in bad company, which led him into other sins both against God and man.

The crime for which he suffered was robbing the house of Captain Ball, a crime to which he was strongly solicited by his mother! Twice he withstood her temptation, but the third time she prevailed over him. For the captain's family being abroad, and the house locked up, she knowing where the most valuable part of the property was, not only directed him where to seek it but likewise assisted him in conveying it away, and afterwards had the principle part of it for her trouble.

Being apprehended and sent to Bedford gaol, he was tried at the Lent assizes, when he pleaded guilty to the indictment. When the judge passed sentence of death upon him, he seemed unconcerned, being in hopes that he should be reprieved before the judge left the town. But when he was left for execution on that day fortnight, he began to be greatly terrified.

On the third day after his condemnation I visited him, and found him much alarmed, yet very ignorant of the way of salvation. On this I spoke plainly and closely to him, as did Mr. Ingham the next day.<sup>2</sup> Several others of the society, visiting him, dealt faithfully with him. And as we all spoke the same things, telling him that the time was short and that if he sought the Lord with a broken and contrite heart he was ready to pardon him, the words sunk deep into his heart.

For some days, such was his distress that once, overcoming his bodily strength, he fainted away. But the time of his extremity was God's opportunity, who made his mercy known to him that night, and filled his soul with peace and comfort—on which he declared he was not now afraid to die.

When I returned to town, I found him very happy and entirely resigned to his fate, expecting to die on the Saturday following. As I stayed in town great part of the week, I visited him every day.

Friday night (the night before he should have suffered), I and several of the society were with him till between nine and ten o'clock, when we had a blessed season! We left him full of comfort, and very willing to die next morning. He said, 'My greatest trial will be to part with my Christian friends, who have taken so much care of me and to whom I find myself so much united.' That night, about eleven o'clock, there came a respite for him for nine days, procured by the prosecutor. Some gentlemen of the town going to him with this news thought it would be joyful tidings; but, to their great surprise, it appeared more like a disappointment than a pleasure to him.

After this, being frequently asked if he retained his confidence in the mercy of God, his general answer was, 'I bless God, I am comfortable! I have no fear of dying! I trust he will take me to his mercy.' When he was asked if he did not wish to be reprieved? He said, 'I had rather die than go to Africa, for there is nothing but examples of wickedness, which I fear would draw me aside again.'

The evening before his execution I and several of our friends visited him again, and were so overwhelmed with the divine presence that we could scarcely know how to part. Indeed, three or four of

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<sup>1</sup>Titled: 'An Account of John Wynn, who was executed at Bedford, April 4, 1785'. Joseph Pescod (1750–1805) does not appear in the *Minutes* until Aug. 1786 (see *Works*, 10:451). But he is listed then as accepted in full-standing as an itinerant, so he had already been active at least as a local preacher. He remained active in itinerancy for 28 years. See *Minutes* (post-Wesley, 1805), 2:271.

<sup>2</sup>John Ingham was admitted 'on trial' as an itinerant at the 1781 Conference (see *Works*, 10:507); he was expelled from the connexion in 1786 (10:597n). Ingham was currently assigned along with Pescod on the Bedford circuit.



our friends watched and prayed with him all night, and were blessed with a remarkable outpouring of the Spirit.

Next morning about six o'clock I returned to him, and found him very cheerful, and quite willing to die! At eight the ordinary gave him the sacrament, when I and three more received it with him! After this we continued singing, praying, and conversing with him till about ten, when the gaoler (who was as tender of him as if he had been his own brother) came to tell him he must go down to have his irons taken off. After turning his face to the wall, and lifting up his heart to God in prayer for about two minutes, he walked down and had them taken off. When he was at liberty, he took leave of the felons, putting his hand through the iron bars where they were in the meantime confined, and shook hands with them. He then went to all the debtors in the yard and shook hands with them.

After this, he returned into the chapel, where the time was spent in singing and prayer, till he was called down to have his arms bound. It was very moving to see him go round a second time to all the debtors and felons, and take an affectionate leave of them, while most of them were in tears. He then took leave of those of the society who were present, desiring as many of them as could bear it to go with him to the place of execution. He desired a person present to give his love to Captain Ball, and to tell him he freely forgave him and returned him many thanks for his endeavours to get him a reprieve. 'I believe', said he, 'I should not have lost my life if the evidence had not falsely sworn that I had firearms about me, which I had not. But I freely forgive him.' Being told the sheriff had allowed him his full time, he willingly sat down to be bound. He kissed the turnkey and the other person who came to bind him, and said, 'God bless you!' He then stepped into the cart, and Mr. Ingham and I went along with him. His continual prayer in going to execution was, 'Lord, have mercy upon me! Lord save me a poor sinner! Lord Jesus into thy hand I commend my spirit!' When we came near the awful spot, I said, 'John, you are now within a few moments of your end. How do you feel?' 'I bless God', said he, with a cheerful smile, 'I feel myself happy. I have no fear of death. I believe it is the Lord that has taken it away. And I hope and trust he will take me to himself.' When the ordinary read the prayers to him, he kneeled down and joined him in a very devout manner. After which he shook hands with him and thanked him for his kindness. When he rose from his knees he desired us to sing a hymn, and Mr. Ingham gave one out suitable to the occasion. He likewise desired us to tell the people that he died in peace with all men, and that he enjoyed peace with God and was not afraid to die. He then desired us to sing that hymn which had been so much blest to him. Accordingly I gave out,

And am I born to die,  
To lay this body down, ...<sup>3</sup>

He sang this under the gallows with great cheerfulness, and it was observed by the spectators that his voice was louder than ours. We then both of us went to prayer, and commended his spirit to God. When we rose from prayer he went to the end of the cart, sat him down, and took leave of our friends who were present. He then very affectionately embraced Mr. Ingham and me, thanked us for our care of him, and hoped God would reward us. The executioner coming into the cart, we stepped out and walked away, weeping and praying for him. He afterwards took leave of several persons, and returned thanks to the gentlemen of Bedford who had endeavoured to get him a reprieve. He particularly thanked the gaoler and his housekeeper for their kindness to him. Seeing some young soldiers among the people, he begged of them never to desert. Deserting, he said, was one cause of his coming to an untimely end.

He continued to call upon God till he was turned off. And even afterwards, as long as there were any signs of life, his hands were lifted up in prayer.

What is very remarkable, after he was put into the coffin there did not appear to be any marks of a violent death upon him, but he seemed as if he had been in a natural sleep.

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<sup>3</sup>CW, Hymn 59, *Hymns for Children* (1763), 52–53.

He was buried the same evening at six o'clock, and a sermon was preached upon the occasion at the Methodist chapel at seven, to a very crowded audience, from 1 Corinthians 1:9. 'But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead.'<sup>4</sup>

Joseph Pescod

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 11 (1788): 69–71, 124–27.

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<sup>4</sup>2 Cor. 1:9.

From Rev. Freeborn Garrettson

Halifax  
April 20, 1785

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Known to me, yet unknown, I have many things to write but am afraid of burdening you, or of taking up your precious time, which I believe you are redeeming moment by moment. I bless God that I ever heard of your name or read your numerous works. Close doctrine and discipline I dearly love. This spring is fourteen years since I was powerfully convinced without the use of human means. The doctrine of the first Methodist preacher I ever heard was as precious ointment to my poor wounded soul. I was sure he was a servant of the living God. I have been travelling in your connexion nine years, during which time (I desire to write it with humility) God has granted me health, so that I have seldom missed preaching the whole of that time. My lot has mostly been cast in new places, to form circuits, which much exposed me to persecution. Once I was imprisoned; twice beaten; left on the highway speechless and senseless (I must have gone into a world of spirits, had not God in mercy sent a good Samaritan that bled, and took me to a friend's house); once shot at; guns and pistols presented at my breast; once delivered from an armed mob in the dead time of night, on the highway, by a surprising flash of lightning; surrounded frequently by mobs; stoned frequently. I have had to escape for my life at dead time of night. O, shall I ever forget the divine hand which has supported me! O that I could love my God more, and serve him with a more perfect heart.

It was three years from my conviction before I was brought through the pangs of the new birth. Eight months elapsed after I was called to preach before I was willing to leave my all and go out. I wanted to live in retirement, and had almost got my own consent to sell what I had in the world and retire to a cell. God withdrew himself from me. I was very near desperation, for I was travelling, as it were, alone. I betook myself to my room, except when I was wandering through the woods and fields, till I was worn away to a skeleton. And all this time I was kept from unbosoming myself to the lovers of Jesus. Strong impressions I had to go forth in Jehovah's name to preach the gospel. When I thought of it, I was pained to the very heart. It seemed like death, so great was the sense I had of my weakness and ignorance. By day I was drawn out in the study of the Holy Scriptures, and in the night season, when fast asleep, preaching aloud, till I have been as wet with sweat, as if dipped in a river. O what a precious time I had when I gave up my own, to the will of God! I saw there was no other way for me to be saved. I was determined, if required, to go to the ends of the earth. Yea, I promised the Lord if he would stand by me, and required it, I would go to the very mouth of hell. Blessed be God, he has been very kind and good to me ever since.

The second year I travelled, I was powerfully convinced of the necessity of holiness. For a considerable time I waded through deep, but sweet distress. I had a discovery of the purity of the law, and the impurity of my own heart. Being conscious it was my privilege to become pure in heart, I determined not to stop short of it. Sensible I was it came by faith. I was under deep exercises to preach no more, till I received that blessing. There was a time when I had a greater nearness to God, but I did not receive the witness till a twelve-month afterwards.

F. Garrettson

*Source:* published transcription; Bangs, *Garrettson*, 161–62.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Bangs describes the manuscript as incomplete.

From the Rev. Charles Wesley<sup>1</sup>

[London]  
c. April 30 1785

[[Dr. Coke has writ[ten] you several th[ings]. Did he ac[knowledge] his treachery in none of them <...<sup>2</sup>>, of my journal]] *te video*.<sup>3</sup> [[If I should be at rest before you return, you will deliver it]] *bonâ fide*<sup>4</sup> [[for my widow.]]

[[I am s<...Male>factor.<sup>5</sup> It costs me £25. If the whole impression is sold, my family may gain so much by it as will bury me, if not help to clear a few <debts. ... > if you take my l[ack of] m[oney] into your m[ind?], you will af[ford] me more impressions. Therefore I stop its publication till you assure me you will [not?] publish it without mine or my widow's leave.<sup>6</sup>

[[Surely you can say]] *O si angulus ille proximus accedat!*<sup>7</sup> [[I had better say no more about it.]]

[[Only one word more concerning the Dr. [Coke]. I bear him much good will, and shall never hurt him. Yet I call his dealings with me treacherous. If you allow them to be, [I] shall say no more of him, but when I have my publication(?) ∞<sup>8</sup> him for your sake.]]

Source: CW's shorthand summary of reply; MARC, DDWes 3/59 (on JW's letter of April 23).

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<sup>1</sup>CW is replying to JW's letter of Apr. 23, 1785, *Works*, 30:336–37.

<sup>2</sup>A portion is missing, affecting about two words each in three lines.

<sup>3</sup>'I am watching you.'

<sup>4</sup>'In good faith'.

<sup>5</sup>Almost certainly referring to his last published collection: [CW,] *Prayers for Condemned Malefactors* (London: Paramore, 1785).

<sup>6</sup>Apparently referring to JW's intent to publish CW's portrait in *AM*.

<sup>7</sup>Horace, *Satires*, II.vi.8–9; 'O if there could be added that near corner' [which is missing from my holdings] (Loeb). CW is implying that JW is taking resources that belong to CW's family.

<sup>8</sup>It is unclear whether the infinity sign that CW drew here has a meaning, or it it was the result of trying to revise (or disguise) something he first wrote.

From Rev. Samuel Badcock<sup>1</sup>

South Molton  
May 10, 1785

Mr. Urban,

As Mr. John Wesley hath done me the honour of publicly noticing, p. 246, my paper respecting his family, I think it a piece of civility due to him, to notice his strictures in return.

I am pleased that any 'publications' of mine should be esteemed 'ingenious and useful', by a man so well qualified to judge of their merits. For his acquaintance with my name as the author of the publications which I suppose he had in his eye, I am indebted to certain writers who took the liberty of proclaiming it in pamphlets, letters, reviews, and advertisements, with the *very generous* intention (for they are all *benevolent* men) of injuring its credit. The attempt, however, hath operated contrary to their wishes—and if I needed a testimony, Mr. Wesley's would serve instead of a thousand.

My paper was drawn up in great haste. But it was drawn up under the impression of sentiments not hastily adopted. An opinion of Mr. Wesley's great abilities, and an esteem for qualities which he possesses of still greater account, have long been familiar to my mind. I have been conversant with his writings from my earliest youth, and though never his disciple, have been always his admirer.

I have already informed the public by what means I became acquainted with some papers which relate to the more secret history of his family. Had they been papers of a *merely* family or personal concern, I would never have communicated any account of them to the public. Had they tended to fix any reproach on the private characters of individuals, I would have suppressed them. And I was not conscious of doing an injury to the memory of Mr. Samuel Wesley [Jr.] when I called him a Jacobite. I called him, indeed, by a title which in politics I abhor. But I have learned to separate *political* from *moral* character; and have no doubt but a Jacobite may be as good a man, and as perfect a Christian, as even a Whig or a Presbyterian. I judge of no man merely by his opinions or prejudices. Nor at all times would I judge of him by any improper bias or influence that they may give to his conduct. If I know the cause, I can account for the effect; and if I can excuse the former, surely I cannot want an apology for the latter.

There are certain fundamental principles of conduct in which all good men, with all their prejudices and partialities, are united. They are the common bands of society—the universal laws, which are independent of custom or country, sects and parties, and may be said to know no distinction between 'Greek or Jew; Scythian, barbarian, bond, or free'.<sup>2</sup>

I have now given my *creed of charity*; which, for a Calvinist,<sup>3</sup> as I have been denominated, is somewhat free. And I would risk the credit of my orthodoxy rather than recall it.

I esteem Mr. Wesley for the zeal he hath discovered in vindicating his brother from the imputation of Jacobitism. But till I am convinced, I cannot retract. And my conviction of Mr. Samuel Wesley's antipathy to the house of Brunswick is founded on evidence too strong to be overcome by mere general assertions to the contrary.

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<sup>1</sup>JW wrote a letter dated Jan. 11, 1785 to the *Gentleman's Magazine* (published on pp. 246–47 of their 1785 volume; and in *Works*, 30:297–301) with some strictures on Badcock's letter-essay about the Wesley family (see above Dec. 5, 1782) that had appeared the 1784 in *Gentleman's Magazine*. This is Badcock's rejoinder.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Col. 3:11.

<sup>3</sup>Note in original: 'A denomination I should not blush to acknowledge, if I thought myself fairly entitled to it; though a very silly writer, following at an immense distance the great leader of a late controversy, hath brought it forwards in the shape of an accusation—as if to be a Calvinist were as disgraceful as to be a *mumper*, or as infamous as to be a *cheat*.'

However, if there be an error in my account, let *me* be wholly answerable for it. Mr. Wesley should not have coupled Mr. Maty's name with mine, especially in such uncivil language.<sup>4</sup> If I cannot prove what I have advanced, let the blame rest on my own head alone. He is guiltless.

And were I convinced that I had been guilty of a false accusation, no man would be more ready to acknowledge it. But as I cannot, in justice to my own persuasions, revoke what I have written, it is certainly due, both to the public and to myself, to give some reason for what I have asserted.

I would first, in general, observe that when I called Mr. Samuel Wesley 'a *noted* Jacobite', I only echoed back the voice of popular fame. His brother cannot be ignorant that he always bore this character. And his greatest friends, and most intimate associates in this part of the kingdom, made no scruple of applying to him a title to which, I really believe, he had no dislike.

His daughter often assured me,<sup>5</sup> that he was strongly attached to the exiled family. And she once showed me a small print of the Pretender,<sup>6</sup> which *she said* had been presented to her father, and which he esteemed as a sort of a precious memorial. A late excellent and ever-honoured friend of mine, who was the pupil of Mr. Samuel Wesley, and who in his earlier days had imbibed a tincture from politics of the same colour and quality (though his maturer wisdom dictated far different sentiments), frequently called his old master a Jacobite; and appeared to entertain no conception that anyone would question his right to an appellation, to which that good man affixed no moral turpitude or infamy, though a genuine '*Whig of the Revolution*'.

Other pupils of Mr. Wesley have confirmed to me this account of his political principles. But my conviction hath not arisen from general or vague report, even though backed by the authority I have mentioned, but from evidence more particular and more decisive.

Mr. Wesley says, in his remarks on my paper, that 'he' (viz., S. W.) 'never published anything political, whether satirical or not.' — 'He never wrote any thing of a treasonable tendency; he sacredly avoided it.' — 'He never *wrote*, much less published, *one line against the king*.'

Had Mr. Wesley read the poems which Mrs. Earle, his brother's only child, put into my hands, he never could have expressed himself in such unqualified language. Amid a number which I once possessed, I can at present only lay my hands on one, entitled the 'Regency'.<sup>7</sup> It was written by Mr. Samuel Wesley purposely with a view to raise a laugh at the expense of the king (George I) in the choice which he made of the persons who were entrusted with the prerogative while he visited Hanover.

I will transcribe a few verses of this witty and sarcastic poem, and let our readers judge how far the author '*sacredly avoided*' what had a 'treasonable *tendency*'.

As soon as the wind it came fairly about,  
That kept the king in, and his enemies out;  
He determin'd no longer his confinement to bear,  
And thus to the duchess his mind did declare.

Quoth he, 'My dear Kenny, I've been tir'd a long while,  
With living obscure in this poor little isle;  
And now Spain and Pretender have no more mines to spring,  
I'm resolv'd to go home and live like a king.'

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<sup>4</sup>Paul Henry Maty (1745–87) was the editor of *A New Review*, where JW first came across a reprint of Badcock's letter.

<sup>5</sup>Samuel Wesley Jr.'s daughter, Philadelphia (Wesley) Earle.

<sup>6</sup>James Francis Edward Stuart (1688–1766).

<sup>7</sup>Badcock is quoting a *manuscript* poem of Samuel Jr. Unfortunately, this one does not appear to be included in two manuscript volumes that now reside at the British Library.

Quoth Kenny, 'Great sir! I approve your design ...'

And so Kenny ludicrously runs over the list of the regents, estimates their several qualifications, and by exposing them obliquely, laughs at the king himself.

Of the duke of Argyle she is made to say:

'And had not the stars been equally strong,  
To keep him in the right, and you in the wrong,  
It might have induc'd him such schemes to pursue,  
As had made him belov'd—full as little as you.'

After lashing the lords of the regency all around, the duchess says, in the conclusion,

'On the whole, I'll be hang'd, if all over the realm,  
There are thirteen such fools to be put at the helm:  
So for this time be easy, nor have jealous thought,  
They ha'n't sense to sell you, nor are worth being bought.'

'Tis for that' (quoth the king in very bad French)  
'I chose them for my regents, and you for my wench:  
And neither, I'm sure, will my trust e'er betray;  
For the devil won't take you, if I turn you away.'

Let these lines be glossed over by any art or refinement whatever, yet they can never be accommodated to that reverence which Mr. Wesley would acknowledge to be due to *the Lord's anointed*, let him be who he may.

I cannot produce the poem Mr. Samuel Wesley [Jr.] addressed to Sir Robert Walpole in behalf of his father. I have only a general recollection of it, but a recollection sufficient to make me assert with confidence that such a poem did really exist. And I particularly remember that he entreated the great statesman not to permit any prejudices that he might have imbibed against himself, to stand in the way of his beneficence to his father.<sup>8</sup>

But I will not any farther urge a circumstance of which I am utterly incapable of producing the proof that may be required to establish it.

I was not acquainted with the later periods of Mrs. [Susanna] Wesley's life. I only spoke of what I knew. Her letters breathe a spirit of rational and enlightened piety; and she frequently deplored, in very pathetic language, the departure of her two sons from the simplicity of Christian faith, and their innovations on the order and decorum of the established worship. She adopted, it seems, very different sentiments of their principles and conduct several years before her death. To whatever society of Christians she united herself, I doubt not but she was an honour to them; and wonder not that a life that had been so singularly pious and exemplary should close, as Mr. Wesley says his mother's did, with a hope full of immortality.

Her letters to her daughter on the first principles of religion, together with some other curious papers, I communicated some years ago to Dr. [Joseph] Priestley: and when he expressed a desire to transcribe them, I saved him the trouble, by freely making him a present of the originals.<sup>9</sup> One of the most valuable (and which, in a letter to me, he calls '*uncommonly curious*') he hath unfortunately lost. I took no copy of it myself, so that I am afraid it is irrecoverable.

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<sup>8</sup>This poem is not known to survive.

<sup>9</sup>This notebook, labelled by JW 'My Mother's Conference with her Daughter', now resides in MARC, WCB, D2/4. A transcription is published in Wallace, *Susanna Wesley*, 427–54.

It is a kind of presumption to publish speculations about the state of another person's mind, and the different steps by which it acquires certain principles and habits; especially at a time when that person may speak for himself, and call all that you have advanced the fiction of your own imagination. And it would be the height of insolence and obstinacy to persevere in maintaining what he, who hath the best right to contradict it, positively disavows. 'For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man which is in him?',<sup>10</sup>

'Therefore' (says Mr. Wesley) 'all that Mr. Badcock adds of the incidents that *gave an additional force* to an impression that never existed is very ingenious; yet is in truth a castle in the air.'

Let my conjectures then be the mere dream of fancy. I will not dispute for what I cannot prove, nor have even a wish to maintain. I might have been deceived when I talked of Mr. Wesley's enthusiastic impressions and prophetic notices. But when I spoke of his admirable talents, his extraordinary exertions, his honest zeal, and his generous superiority to the world and its possessions, I am sure I was not deceived. I *built no castle in the air*, but raised a humble pillar to his fame on that ground where posterity will erect a nobler and more lasting monument.

Sam. Badcock

*Source:* published transcription; *Gentleman's Magazine* 55 (1785): 363–66.

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<sup>10</sup>Cf. 1 Cor. 2:11.



From Joseph Pescod<sup>1</sup>

Bedford  
May 24, 1785

Alderman Parker of Bedford was for upwards of forty years a steady, upright, humble Christian. He was also for many years a useful magistrate, and a diligent preacher of God's word. He was indeed a nursing father to the Methodist society in Bedford, and a great example of good works.

About nine months ago, being greatly afflicted, the Lord blessed him in a very remarkable manner: on which he said to me, 'I enjoy more happiness now than I formerly thought was to be enjoyed on earth.'

Three weeks before his death he preached from the twelfth chapter of Isaiah, with such strength and clearness as astonished his hearers. The Sunday before he died he preached from Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones. But nature being almost exhausted, he was not able to say much. The Tuesday following, he visited a young man in prison, under sentence of death, to whom he spoke very plainly and affectionately. That day, when I asked him if he felt his evidence for heaven clear, he said, 'Yes, blessed be God! I have not had the least doubt of my acceptance for more than half a year.' The Friday following (being Good Friday), finding him on his deathbed, I said, 'You are going to your Father's house.' 'Yes, blessed be his name', said he, 'I shall soon be there. Jesus is precious.' He was now so convulsed that he could not say much. But when he could speak so as to be understood, his words were very edifying. On my going to prayer with him, he repeated the Lord's prayer as distinctly as if he had been in perfect health; but was so exhausted that he could say very little to me afterwards. On Saturday morning he gave an affecting exhortation to some of the society who stood round his bed. 'Be in earnest', said he, 'to have Jesus implanted in your hearts. Beware of being mere nominal Christians. Pray that everything contrary to the love of Jesus may be rooted out of your hearts. Mind not the foolish fopperies of the world, but cleave to God, cleave to the preachers, and to the society. God bless you, and all the society!'

He then tried to conclude with the Lord's prayer, but was so convulsed that he was not able to finish it. His last words were, 'God bless you!' He continued labouring for breath till two o'clock next morning, when he sweetly breathed his last, and went to paradise on the glorious morning of our Lord's resurrection; and in the 80th year of his age.

Joseph Pescod

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 8 (1785): 624–26.

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<sup>1</sup>Titled: 'A short Account of the Death of Alderman Parker'. William Parker (1705–85), a former English Moravian in Bedford, who sided with the Methodists in the early 1750s, became not only a stalwart of the society there but served as alderman and as mayor of the town. See JW, *Journal*, Oct. 15, 1753, *Works*, 20:476–79; and *WHS* 2 (1900), 123–24.

From Thomas Wride

Epworth  
May 30, 1785

Reverend Sir,

Many reasons induce me to write. I hope you will look favourably on my design, as I assure you that my aim is honest, if my method is odd.

A little before and at the last Conference I took the liberty to write unto you my thoughts about the works of Nicholas Manners.<sup>1</sup> You was pleased to take my design in good part, and you took all that notice of my extracts that I could have desired. But sir, I must own that I was disgusted at the attempts to excuse Nicholas.<sup>2</sup>

The first was 'He is a *pious* man'. This, sir, you silenced by replying that it was likely to have a worse influence on that account.

The next was brother [Samuel] Bradburn (holding up one of the books), 'He can't do it for money, for he sold this for a shilling, binding and all.' I was ashamed of this, I own. It may be allowed that money was not his motive, but the argument (if it proves anything worth notice) will prove as easy that a papist, if zeal for papacy be his only motive, ought to be allowed to propagate his notions among us without control. I thought brother Bradburn had understood consequences better than to talk at that rate.

The report brought by Mr. [John] Fletcher unto you, sir, in Conference did not then, and doth not now give me a very favourable opinion of the piety of Nicholas Manners. If true, then [?] had a swift sale, and we may expect that Mr. [Robert] Spence will favour us with a second edition. But sir, the plain case is Nicholas made his copyright over [to] Mr. Spence, that *he* might publish it in his own name. This was done to evade the rule of Conference against printing. This, sir, is not conjecture. I know it to be fact. The report brought by Mr. Fletcher, which was that 'he has but very few left', could only be true with respect to what he had in his own keeping—the principal stock, which was with Mr. Spence, being kept under the hatches.

The late production of Nicholas Manners brings old things up. He has lately been vending in various parts of Epworth circuit a pamphlet which I think no sensible person can admire.<sup>4</sup> When I came to Thorne on the 25th of April, I heard that Nicholas had been on the evening before publishing a pamphlet, price 3 [pence] (to the poor, 2 [pence]), and 'they are to be sold at the door of the preaching house that evening', said they. In my way to the preaching house, Samuel Meggot<sup>5</sup> showed me the stock left with him for sale, and asked me to speak of them after preaching. I told him he might be sure I would not be cat's paw for Mr. Manners. I was certain such a book never met with the approbation of Mr. Wesley, and I would not publish it without [that approbation].

If, sir, the copy had been left with you for correction, I am persuaded you would have thought that the best way would have been to put it into the fire, as the friend of Steven Duck did by the first

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<sup>1</sup>See Wride to JW, July 3 and July 26, 1784.

<sup>2</sup>While the detailed discussion is not included, part of the 1784 Conference was devoted to discussion on writings by some Methodist preachers (i.e., Nicholas Manners) that were judged to deny the doctrine of original sin (see Q. 20, *Works*, 10:562).

<sup>3</sup>Wride's text is illegible but likely is referring to Nicholas Manners, *An Attempt to Illustrate the following Subjects: I. The 13th chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians. ... VIII. Despising the goodness of God, and treasuring up wrath* (York: R. Spence, 1783).

<sup>4</sup>Nicholas Manners, *Some Particulars of the Life and Experience of Nicholas Manners* (York: R. Spence, 1785).

<sup>5</sup>This is not Samuel Meggot, the local preacher who died in 1764. It may be his son.

productions of Steven.<sup>6</sup>

I cannot give you a quotation, but I can give you an account of one part, sufficient to show that he could catch and kill a louse. He tells us that, 'In Ireland he experienced the two national evils, itch and lice. For the former, he was advised to wash with a poisonous water, which gave a sensation on his skin as if pricked with pins. For the latter, he was ashamed to speak of them, so he had only (when they bit too hard) to pull off his clothes and catch them; and he believes that he has sometimes caught forty in a quarter of an hour.'<sup>7</sup>

I left word with some who I supposed would tell him that I wished someone would cure him of the itch of being an author, and that I suppose what cured *me* of the itch of being a *poet* would cure him—viz., when I got sense enough to see the beauty of the performances of other persons, I was heartily ashamed of my own. And if he could but see how far he was excelled by others, he would publish no more. But yet I would not have his works unused, but put unto the best use they were fit for—viz., send them unto the pastry cooks to cover tarts.

Your labours, sir, at Mr. Dean's chapel on the 28th of June met with great approbation.<sup>8</sup> And when I came to Gainsborough on Sunday, the 4th of July, there was left for me by Mr. Tubman<sup>9</sup> a verbal invitation to his pulpit. I had no hopes of convincing his hearers, or fear of being convinced by them. Neither should I have once attempted a dispute with them when invited among them. But being afraid of setting our society and the Calvinists at disputing, I sent Mr. Tubman a note thanking him for his favour, but that it would not be convenient to accept his offer because it would make a disappointment at our own preaching house. I supposed that their aim in having *you* there, and in offering to let *me* be there, was to get hearers. But since I have been in the Epworth circuit I was told that Mr. Tubman's servant-maid said that her master said 'If *he* had preached for us, I would have preached in their house the next night. And *I* would have given them *such preaching* as they never had before. And we would have had them *all* at our chapel the following night.' Oh, brave Mr. Tubman! But, it was not decreed.

Yet perhaps they may think it was decreed that another company of Calvinists should have our *house*, if not our *hearers*; for James Kershaw has let the preaching house unto Lady Huntingdon's people, by a lease, for 14 years.

It is with no small concern that I hear of matters relating to John Fenwick. I believe that some of his enemies are such because he is true to you and old Methodism. I do not speak *all* by guess. I know what was said of him on the York circuit. I know also that he had enemies there. Yea, I know that a scheme was laid to prevent his ever getting into the York circuit. Yea, what is more, the very man who laboured hard (assisted by William Hunter) to get me out of the York circuit, strove to get me into it again, rather than John Fenwick should come; and made vigorous attempts to get the consent of the acting steward of Scarborough society to change me to York and John Fenwick to Scarborough. Was it a wonder that he met with such difficulty, when they were so strongly prejudiced against him? That a real Methodist should find foes in York is no wonder. How Mr. [Alexander] Mather is prized in York by the capital enemy of John Fenwick (viz., Roger Preston) I suppose I need not tell you as *news*. But I am creditably informed that as soon as he knew that Mr. Mather was to come, he would no longer be steward, because he could no longer be master—'master' and 'steward' being in York synonymous terms.

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<sup>6</sup>Wride is referring to the fact that Alured Clarke dissuaded Stephen Duck (1705–56), author of *Poems on Several Subjects ... To which is added The Campden Wonder* (Gloucester: Printing Office, 1740), from publishing his earliest poetic efforts.

<sup>7</sup>Manners, *Some Particulars*, 26.

<sup>8</sup>JW preached on June 28, 1784 at a chapel in Gainsborough owned by John Dean and opened by Cradock Glascott; it was used at the time by a congregation of Independents who had seceded from a Presbyterian congregation that was moving to unitarianism. See JW, *Journal, Works*, 23:320.

<sup>9</sup>Apparently the current pastor of the Independent congregation.

But I may take the liberty to say that, as I heard all that was said against John Fenwick at York, so I had great opportunity of knowing his conduct on the Scarborough circuit. And it is but a piece of justice to declare (and I am ready to do it when called upon) that I have frequently observed that at a whole dinner his drinking has seldom amounted to half a pint; frequently within the quantity of one third part of a pint. Now sir, as to the truth or falsehood of what he is this year charged with, I can say nothing. But his character on the Scarborough circuit and his enemies on the York circuit I know as much as most, and am willing to declare it when and where you please.

What I am now going to relate should have preceded the forgoing, but a weak memory has confounded my intended order. But I must beg liberty, sir, to entreat you to ask for no name. You will not ask me to break truce, I am well persuaded; and I would not wish to give anyone cause to think me treacherous.

I was (since last Conference) in company with several persons when one asked me, 'Mr. Wride, what are *you*?' Not knowing the meaning of the question, and my ignorance being owned, a question was put 'Are you a great man, or a little one?' Then, 'Are you in the Conference deed?'<sup>10</sup> I said 'No'. I was asked how I liked to be left out, when such and such were in. I told them it was little to me. After many altercations, I told them it was needful to fix the meaning of the word 'Conference'. That the trust must be committed to the whole or to a part. If to a part, these must be self-constituted, or else constituted by the appointment of Mr. Wesley. But it was objected that some of importance were left out, and some of little account taken in. I replied that I supposed there was not *one* among us but some persons thought highly of. 'Let my wife be judge, and I am of more importance than any five men in the connection', said I, 'but interested persons are not proper judges.' This ended our consultations for that time.

Some days after a conversation began when one said, 'Mr. Wride is a man of noble principles, for he never betrays his friends.' (If he had told me 'he never betrays his enemies', it would be true.) From this conversation I learned that an attack is preparing. If I understand right, the battle is to be at the Conference. Who is to be the general? How strong are the forces? Or, in what manner the question is to be opened? [On these points] I am entirely ignorant.

I said all I could to make quietness, but it was objected that Mr. Wesley had promised to make some alterations with respect to the thing complained of—but nothing was done. I said that perhaps as much was done as could be done until the time of Conference, for (I gave it as my opinion that) as Mr. Wesley had given the reversion of a power unto certain persons by name, these persons were now become a party without whose consent an alteration could not be made, and therefore nothing could be legally done until the London Conference.

Now sir, whether you are of my opinion or no, yet I spoke what I thought right, and with a desire to prevent another ferment which may end in an unhappy separation. What is best to be done, I do not pretend to say. May God direct you. Although I cannot use names to betray any man who confides in me, yet I did not think I could be innocently silent when I knew a scheme was forming against you. If you have had better intelligence before, I am glad. But whether or no, I hope you will keep this secret, and believe me to be, reverend sir,

Your dutiful son,

Thomas Wride

If, sir, you have no objection, I would be glad of your leave to be at the Conference. But if you object it, I submit.

The reason why you have not had from me an account of the troubles at Leverton<sup>11</sup> is brother [Thomas] Carlill told Ann Smith that you had wrote two letters unto me about it, and that it was to be published in the [*Arminian*] Magazine. Therefore she will not (although often desired) give me an account. I wrote to the purpose to brother [Henry] Moore some time ago. The scraps which I have got

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<sup>10</sup>I.e., the 'Deed of Declaration' designating the one hundred preachers in the 'legal' Conference

<sup>11</sup>See Wride to JW, c. June 1785.

together, with some affairs concerning the coffin-maker's visit, I hope to have in readiness against the Conference, so as to bring it or send it as you may see good to enjoin.

*Source:* Wride's manuscript draft; Duke, Rubenstein, Frank Baker Collection of Wesleyana, Box CO9, Thomas Wride papers.

From Thomas Tattershall<sup>1</sup>

[Waterford]  
c. June 1785

Thomas Ramsey was a native of Ireland, and an inhabitant of Tullow, in the county of Carlow. He was born of parents in affluent circumstances, and was an heir to a considerable property. But being indulged (by his mother) in his tender years, he soon contracted an ungovernable temper, which as he grew up broke out into various excesses, such as gaming, drinking, and swearing, etc., And he was such a proficient in the last that he frequently sat up in bed, striving to invent new oaths. He also enlisted in the Train of Artillery and served for a time, till his mother bought him off. In one of his riots he fought a duel with one J. H., whom he shot in his breast with a ball that could never be extracted—so that he is still lingering out a life of pain. For this he was obliged to flee, in order to escape those who sought to bring him to a public trial. He resided in England for the space of nine months, before he durst return to Ireland. Still continuing his loose way of living, till he both spent his own property and all he could get from his mother. Yet all was too little to support him in his abandoned course with his debauched companions.

He was acquainted with a young man, an attorney, who had likewise spent a considerable fortune. They first agreed to rob, rather than starve, work, or give up their loose way of living. And accordingly they went out several nights, in different parts of Dublin, but without success. At length they met a foreigner, a fit object for their purpose, whom the attorney knocked down and robbed of his purse, which he gave to Ramsey. They then bought a brace of pistols, and soon got acquainted with some others of the same cast. From this time Ramsey went through a variety of scenes, and had some very narrow escapes. I shall only mention one particular. As he and Thomas Haycock (who was condemned with him) and some others were going to rob some gentlemen in Dublin, one of them drew a sword from his cane, with which he made a push at Ramsey, and cut his neckcloth through, without doing him any harm. The guards coming to their assistance, he sprang into the midst of them, and so got off unnoticed. But being soon after taken for the robbery of one Mr. Harrington, as they were on their way to the prison they only laughed at it. And Haycock said, if they were hanged for this it would only save them a severe fit of sickness another time; so that it signified very little, as everybody must die sometime.

The first of my acquaintance with them was after they were condemned. In my first visit I saw very little appearance of consciousness of their offence before God. Yet they acknowledged their error respecting man. I saw them again the next day, and then God appeared to speak to their hearts, as they both wept bitterly. They had then eight days unexpired of the term allotted them, and they requested me to come every day. But as I was to go on my circuit, that was impracticable. Then they earnestly importuned me to come again, in order to attend their execution. But another reprieve coming down for a fortnight longer, I could not judge how it would fare with them; but afterwards heard an order came for the execution of Haycock, and a farther reprieve for Ramsey.

I was informed by those who attended Haycock that he behaved with decency, resignation, and great fortitude at his death, saying, 'I do not mind death, for that I find a persuasion in myself that I shall be happy; that it is better for me to leave this troublesome world than to stay in it. So that I look on my own case as good as Ramsey's.'

Ramsey now expected a full pardon, and so became more careless than before, for as he was related to some rich families who had a powerful interest at court. And as his life also was in many capital leases, he knew they would do all in their power for his releasement and preservation. He also discovered a very ingenious mind in the many exertions he made to procure friends for obtaining his liberty, and made several discoveries of others. But all proved ineffectual. At length orders came for his execution on the 20th of November. William Gerd and one of our society, who had attended the prison from their first

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<sup>1</sup>Titled: 'Some Account of the Life and Death of Thomas Ramsey, executed at Wexford, November 20, 1784'.

confinement, now began to visit him oftener. He always discovered a desire for his company and prayers. But the expectation of a pardon so ran in his mind that the thoughts of futurity made very little impression on him. And in case no pardon came, to effect his escape he had by some means procured a proper instrument to cut his bolts off. The papists also perplexed him, striving to bring him over to have a priest, make his confession, and so receive absolution. In this they gained considerably on his mind, so that he wavered greatly, not knowing which way to turn for the best. In this his great extremity, though he had no confidence in the priests, yet his wish was by them to get out of prison.

I came again to Wexford, and visited him the 12th of November, and twice more before I left town. He appeared overwhelmed in sorrow, and told me he found a great longing to be fitted for heaven, and to leave this wicked world. He again requested that I would attend him to the gallows, and desired me to pray for him wherever I went, which we did in all the societies. In some places, while we prayed for him, many were affected. At Burmount, about the time he found peace, I had such a remarkable answer of prayer that I told the people I fully believed God had pardoned him. I returned the 19th in order to sit up with him the last night. When I came into the prison, as soon as he saw me through the bars he rejoiced. I then heard he found peace on Wednesday the 17th about 9:00 at night. On Monday and Tuesday he was much depressed in spirit, his sins came fresh into his mind, death looked him in the face as an enemy ready to devour him. On Wednesday, his burden becoming intolerable, he fainted under it. But while Mr. B. went for some wine to revive him, one gave out and sung,

O thou that hear'st when sinners cry.

As they were singing the fifth and sixth verses,

My soul lies humbled in the dust,  
And owns thy dreadful sentence just,  
Look down, O Lord, with pitying eye,  
And save a soul condemn'd to die,<sup>2</sup>

the Lord spoke peace to his soul. He then broke out, and said, 'Now I am satisfied to die, and go to my Saviour.' They then kneeled down and returned God thanks for his pardoning mercy. He told Mr. B. the same on his return, and also gave up his instrument to him. From this time he rejoiced in the knowledge of salvation. I found it good to be here this night, though locked up in a prison, in which I took occasion to talk with him closely.

He asked if I believed he should know us in glory? When I told him I did believe so, he praised God for it, and said he believed that would heighten his felicity in heaven. He also desired that all might fear, love, and obey God; that if all knew the trouble of a robber's mind during the time, they would never begin; that he forgave, loved, and could willingly do anything for the welfare of his most inveterate enemies. With regard to his fear of death, and desire of life, he said he did not fear to die, nor desire to live, but as God pleased; that he longed to be dissolved and to be with Christ. I told him of some who had recovered after hanging, and (to try him) asked if he wished any experiments to be made? He said by no means, for that he was now prepared to die, perhaps better than ever he should be again hereafter. By these, and such like declarations, I had not a doubt left of the reality of his conversion. I read some of the remarkable passages in the Revelation respecting death, judgment, and eternity; but these all seemed fresh matter of rejoicing to him.

In the morning one of his relations came to see him, and wept much. He said, 'Do not weep for me. I am not afraid to die, for I am sure I shall be happy. But strive to meet me in heaven.' When his cap was brought him, he said this is my wedding dress; in this cap I shall be married to Christ. As the time passed away in the night, I pulled out my watch and told him as the hours went on. He often wished they

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<sup>2</sup>Isaac Watts, Psalm 51, included by JW in *CPH* (1737), 41–42.

were all gone, that he longed to go to Jesus. When the officers delayed till past the time he expected to go, he wondered why they did not come for him. I found need of all the fortitude I had, for I trembled at his approaching fate. But it never appeared to move him. Surely he proved this promise of God to be true: 'My grace is sufficient for thee.'<sup>3</sup> He also rejoiced much in the promise given to the penitent thief on the cross.<sup>4</sup> This he claimed as his own and said, 'This shall be fulfilled in me this day.' When the gaoler came to call for him, he went forth in as high spirits as if he was going to a feast. As he went, he read a little in the Bible, and then pulled out a hymn-book, and gave out,

Lamb of God for sinners slain, ...<sup>5</sup>

and sung with great fervour. He then said, 'I am the happiest man living, being so near my end. It is the most glorious day I have ever seen! I bless God that I was born to see such a day. I do not care what they do with my body, for I shall be happy.' He then gave out,

Vain delusive world adieu, ...<sup>6</sup>

At the gallows he said, 'I deserve to die, and am quite willing.' Then we sung,

Praise God from whom all blessings flow,  
Praise him all creatures here below,  
Praise him above ye heav'nly host,  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.<sup>7</sup>

After this, he opened his shirt neck, put the rope about it, stepped upon the cart, and pinned down his cap very deliberately. Then prayed, 'God be merciful to me a sinner! God be merciful to me a sinner!' Then commending his soul into the hands of his faithful Creator, he sunk back into the rope, and so resigned his life in peace.

This awful scene drew tears from many eyes, and several appeared much amazed at so uncommon a sight: a man singing and rejoicing in God as he was going to be hanged.

T. Tattershall

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 9 (1786): 485–90.

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<sup>3</sup>2 Cor. 12:9.

<sup>4</sup>Luke 23:43, 'Today you shall be with me in paradise'.

<sup>5</sup>CW, 'Looking Unto Jesus', *HSP* (1742), 49–50.

<sup>6</sup>CW, Hymn on 1 Cor. 2:2', *HSP* (1742), 257–58.

<sup>7</sup>The Doxology, as standardized by Thomas Ken.



From Thomas Wride

[c. June 1785]

Reverend Sir,

I am under obligation of duty and promise to write unto you. I am sorry that after so long time I can write so little to the purpose. But I truly say it is not my fault.

Shortly after I wrote my last to Mr. [Henry] Moore, I wrote unto Mr. [John] Beanland<sup>1</sup> at Newcastle and to Mr. [Peter] Mill at Gainsborough, requesting each to help me by information of what had come within their observation, either by experience or by creditable information. I expected much assistance from each of them, but am quite disappointed. Mr. Beanland answered me by a letter dated [an open space is left] but declares himself unable to describe what he went through. I believe him, for although what I felt was small compared to what Mr. Beanland went through, yet it would be very difficult—yea, quite impractical—for me to convey a clear idea of what I felt the first night that I was at Leverton [Lincolnshire]. Mr. Mill has not answered me. My asking of the assistance of Mr. Mill has shut up my very fountains of intelligence, for Ann Smith and Lydia her sister (daughters of the restless deceased, whose spirit was supposed to give all the trouble) refuse to give me information. And the reason given is: 'Because I was at Newton last Saturday to hear Mr. [Thomas] Carlill,<sup>2</sup> and he tells me that Mr. Wesley has wrote two letters to you for an account, and it is to be published in the [*Arminian*] *Magazine*; and I don't know if they' (viz., Thomas and Mary, the deceased) 'would like it.' This was in the evening of [blank space] the [blank space] 1784. I pressed them all I could, but could get next to no answer. The next morning I tried again and was then told: 'We should have told you everything, if it had not been for what Mr. Carlill said.'

What little I could get I wrote down. But Nanny [i.e., Ann] desired that I would not write unto you, sir, about it—and after desired that I would not write unto you until I came there again. I engaged that I would not, upon condition that she would be free and tell me all then. She promised she would 'if she might'; meaning, if she did then apprehend that it would be agreeable unto her deceased father and mother.

Of Mr. Beanland

Coming in from the yard, he expressed something of a surprise from the thoughts of the deceased T[homas] S[mith]. Nanny said, 'You would have to reason for it, if you knew what we know.' The telling of what had passed, he seemed somewhat to question, and sometimes to believe it. They told him that it was most about 12 o'clock [midnight].

He did not go to bed until about 1:00. Ann lighted a candle to leave burning with Mr. Beanland, because they had always been free of any appearance while the candle was burning. She set the candle on the hood and she had a check in her mind for so doing, and heard her mother's voice saying, 'Is he a preacher of the gospel and afraid to see one who is in glory?' (or words to that import). She then asked Mr. Beanland if she should put the candle out. He said yes, for he did not fear anything. Glad of his leave, she extinguished the candle and went to bed.

Mr. Beanland (as he said in the morning) was quite composed and undaunted, and thought they were only the groundless thoughts of weak women. Soon after this he was in very great distress, as appeared by the piteous distressed manner in which he called, as was heard by Thomas [Smith] Jr., who laid in the room above him. They called unto him, and although he heard them he could not answer. In the morning, about 6:00, Thomas Smith Jr. went to him. He appeared in a strong sweat and Nanny said that he was amazingly altered by this short exercise. And it seems that it was a full week before he recovered

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<sup>1</sup>John Beanland was admitted on trial in 1775 (see *Works*, 10:440). He had been appointed to Epworth through July 1784 (10:533), when he was moved to Newcastle (10:556).

<sup>2</sup>Thomas Carlill was also currently assigned at Gainsborough (10:555).

his vivacity.

Mr. Padley says but little, save that he came unto his house the same day, that he (Mr. Beanland) looked as bad as if he had been under a fortnight's sickness.

[back of sheet, some notes crossed out]

Write to Mr. Beanland and Mills

Joseph Mbry? of Retford?, ask is sister Spencer's skins are done. Bring them if done (nine) pay him; not done. he was not at home. She could not tell him when they would be done.

The Hillton carpenter at Houghton Park: enquire about his coffin tokens

[then a hymn written upside down]

Thou shall have thy seat above us,  
Nearest him who rules the sky,  
Thou art welcome,  
Thou art welcome,  
Thou art welcome,  
Tis Jesu's will, it should be so.

[new page; material crossed out]

Mary Smith of Leverton died about [blank space]. About a month after her death her daughter Ann, as she was setting by the fire, she heard the voice of her mother speaking to her [blank space]. She rose and went into the parlour, for fear her brothers should hear. Her mother followed her into the parlour [several blank lines].

She has told her that she came on an errand of love. She has said to her 'O they will turn my preachers out!' She said that she was happy, but that it was not her desire to come on these errands, for it diminished her happiness while she was here. Her daughter was in fear on account of her father, — 'Thou needest not fear about thy father, for we are happy.'

About February, after P. by G Rustlig at Houghton Park, E. Spencer being asked to retire, they retired into the preaching house. Ann Smith seemed inexpressibly happy and spoke of seeing a great light, etc., directing the other to look up to see it. But she could not. She was holding Ann by the hand, and felt an hand exquisitely soft spread upon her right arm. She then looked toward her arm and saw an hand such as is not describable, but that it was transparent. She could see, as she thought, every vein, etc., etc.; as if she could see the blood flow, etc.

[new page; again xed out]

About [blank space] weeks before Sarah Brainbrou? dies, she ([Mary] Smith) appeared unto [her] and brought with her a crown and a white robe, which she said was for her, and said there was one for each of the children if they wanted one. She also said that she had seen Thomas Smith, but that he appeared like a man in common apparel; that he was happy, but not like his wife, for though he was got it, he had but just escaped.

[Mary] Smith said to the other woman 'How happy am I, for where I am the Lamb is the light. There is no need of the sun.'

She at another time appeared (about two days before her death) and held out a crown, saying 'This is for thee'. She had something on her head like a crown. Her countenance and crown was so awfully luminous that she could not steadfastly behold.

About noon the day before her death, she say [Mary] Smith come out of an adjoining room. Her husband [Thomas Smith] followed, but with an inferior appearance, being seemingly in common apparel. They both passed by, and as she went out of the room she said [blank space left].

She was taken in travail that evening, was delivered of two children about [blank] o'clock, and died in about an hour after.

[next page; crossed out]

The time of coming is about 12:00 o'clock. She told her the reason [for] her coming at that time was because it was about that time that she left the world.

[next page]

Mary Smith of L[everton] died a little before G—. Friday was twelve month, after eight days sickness of a fever, of a Sunday. Her husband died the Wednesday following. He had been ill, but seemed recovered. He died that day six weeks<sup>3</sup> [after] that he was first taken [ill]

She began her sickness on the Sunday, died the Sunday following. He sickened the Wednesday after her and died the Wednesday following. Her husband laid in the same bed until his own last sickness began.

It appeared that her life and death was of a piece. Mr. Beanland [preached] the funeral sermon 'they shall walk with me in white for they are worthy'.<sup>4</sup>

At the time of the death of Mary, her daughter Ann was just recovering from the same disease. She began to recover. The disease affected her hearing, so that she knew little of what her mother spoke in her sickness. Mary had a bad sore throat, so that it was not easy to understand her.

The text above was often applied to her by way of promise. She spoke of it, but they could not certainly understand her, whether as desiring it for a funeral sermon or only as a repetition of the former promise.

After the death of Mary, and before the death of Thomas, Ann had heavy temptation concerning the fate of her mother. He father reassured her, telling her the manner of behaviour during the three days that he continued with her. After the death of her father, she had the same painful concern about him.

*Source:* Wride's manuscript papers; Duke, Rubenstein, Frank Baker Collection of Wesleyana, Box CO9, Thomas Wride papers.

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<sup>3</sup>The word 'weeks' is clear; but does not agree with the next paragraph.

<sup>4</sup>Rev. 3:4.

Robert Oastler to James Oddie<sup>1</sup>

Thirsk  
June 3, 1785

Very Dear Sir,

I beg leave to hint to you that it is the opinion of some here that if Mr. [John] Wesley continues to persevere in refusing the 91 preachers that justice which their cause demands, that the reputable private Methodists who disapprove of the good old man's conduct should enter into a petition signifying (in mild terms) their sentiments—and freely declaring that if he continues inflexible they shall consider it their duty to support the 91.

It this is agreeable to your ideas, I beg you will favour me with a reply.

I shall be glad to be favoured with your further orders for linens.

I am, respectfully, dear sir,

Your obliged friend, etc.

Rob. Oastler

*Address:* 'Mr James Oddie / Kighley'.

*Source:* secondary transcription; MARC, MA 1977/487, p. 30.

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Oastler (1748–1820) was raised by an uncle after converting to Methodism at the age of 16. He became a grocer in Thirsk, where he served as a local preacher, and was added as a trustee of the Methodist chapel in 1771. He was a close friend of James Oddie and took an active role in circulating the petition apparently drafted by Oddie (see c. June 15, 1785, next; and Oastler to Oddie, June 24, 1785). In 1797 he became part of the Methodist New Connexion split.

From James Oddie and Others<sup>1</sup>

[Keighley]  
[June 14, 1785<sup>2</sup>]

**To the Reverend Mr. John Wesley and the 100 Brethren<sup>3</sup>**  
**The Humble Petition of the Subscribers**

Wishing well to the prosperity of the church and people of God, and knowing how much unity, peace, and love among the preachers contributes to this, we feel ourselves somewhat affected with fear lest for the present the minds of the 91 brethren not mentioned in the Deed should be in any measure grieved or alienated from the rest, and that in [the] future they should be more so. And lest anything should appear to the governors of our nation by an addition to or alteration of that Deed that might render us less respectable to them, we earnestly request it may be settled privately between the 100 and 91 brethren.

And in order to this we, first, humbly entreat our reverend fathers in God that they would suffer, or advise the 100 brethren to do this.

Secondly, we with the same earnestness entreat the 100 brethren and our beloved teachers that they would by a writing signed with their own hand respectively assure their 91 brethren that at the decease of the Reverend Mr. [John] Wesley they will not take any advantage, or act in any line of preference to them; but will upon Mr. Wesley's decease invite them (or as many of them as shall be continued in the connection of itinerant preachers at that period) to their first meeting, and receive them, to all ends and purposes, into and equality and on a like footing as themselves.

Thus doing, we hope out of the eater will come forth meat, and out of the strong, sweetness. That the 91, having this proof of their brethren's affection, they will not only be cured of all suspicion of their desiring power over them, but will hold them in higher estimation and love than ever. We say no more to induce our beloved brethren to do this thing, but just this single word: Let each of the 100 put himself in the place of one of the 91, and then act according to the feelings of his own heart upon that supposition.

*Source:* secondary transcription; MARC, MA 1977/487, p. 30.

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<sup>1</sup>When the *Appeal* of John Hampson Sr. and other preachers in the connexion (see c. July 1, 1784 above) to set aside the Deed of Declaration was turned down at both the Irish Conference and the British Conference of that year, a few left the connexion. But the debate continued to simmer—and broaden. In particular, some Methodist lay leaders added their voice by circulating this manuscript petition prior to the 1785 Conference (see the letters of Robert Oastler to James Oddie of June 3 and June 24 below). The only known surviving copy of the petition was among papers of James Oddie, a former preacher, and according to James Everett, who made a transcription, it was in Oddie's hand—suggesting that Oddie drafted the original.

<sup>2</sup>The date is mentioned in Oastler to Oddie, June 24, 1785.

<sup>3</sup>I.e., the hundred preachers listed in the Deed of Declaration of 1784 as comprising the 'legal' Conference.

From Dr. Joseph Fisher<sup>1</sup>

Rogerson's Quay, No. 83 [Dublin]  
June 20, 1785

Reverend Sir,

Permit me, though a stranger, to return you thanks for the benefit I reaped by your two discourses which you delivered the last evening and this.<sup>2</sup> I had before read with advantage several of your printed works, but had never an opportunity before of hearing you, which I have often earnestly desired. I am a clergyman and at the present I hold the vicarage of Drax near Thorne in Yorkshire, which I left the last summer upon the account of the bad state of health I enjoyed in that low marsh country. Since I arrived here I thank almighty God that I am quite recovered.

What you said this evening in regard to the adorable Trinity was well expressed, though short. This causes me to hope that the pamphlet which I formerly published, and herewith send you, will not be wholly unacceptable.<sup>3</sup> The second pamphlet upon necessity, etc., in opposition to Dr. [Joseph] Priestley, I hope may not be disagreeable.<sup>4</sup> The last part of it contains such an account of man's fall, etc., as I believe corresponds with what you teach, or with what the New Testament teaches. The doctrine of man's fall and redemption by Christ, the eternal Son of God who became man to save sinners, certainly constitutes the very essence of Christianity. The doctrine of atonement is the corner stone. I am sorry that I have no better copies of the two pamphlets than these I send. They are all I have, so please to accept the will for the deed.

I have sent you another treatise, which has not been yet made public, but which will be so I believe in a week or two. It is entitled 'The Practice of Medicine Made Easy'.<sup>5</sup> I wrote it with a good intention to serve mankind. I hope it will do good. I intend to make a present of 200 copies for the benefit of your society in Dublin, to be distributed amongst the members thereof as you think proper, if you please to accept them for that purpose. It would oblige me and I will send them to where you think proper to order them.

I have yet another favour to beg, which is that you and as many of your friends as you think proper would take a breakfast, dinner, or tea in the evening with me at my lodgings, No. 83 Rogerson's Quay, near the marine school, before you leave Dublin, I know your time is precious, and therefore is this

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<sup>1</sup>Joseph Fisher (c. 1716–1820), trained in medicine at Leiden, was ordained in 1763, served as an assistant curate of Carlton chapel in Snaith, Yorkshire for nine years. He was named curate at Drax in 1774, and elevated to vicar in 1778. Drax is about 8 miles north of Thorne.

<sup>2</sup>JW preached respectively on Luke 3:8 and 1 John 1:1–3 (see his diary, *Works*, 23:527).

<sup>3</sup>Joseph Fisher, *Remarks upon the Remarker on a late publication by a Layman* (London: W. Nicoll, 1775). [replying to Anthony Temple's criticism of a tract by William Burgh titled *A Scriptural Confutation of the arguments against the one godhead of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*].

<sup>4</sup>Joseph Fisher, *A Review of the Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity, Illustrated by Dr. Priestley* (London: W. Nicoll, 1779). JW records reading this tract on Aug. 9, 1785 in his diary (*Works*, 23:532). He then published the bulk as a series of excerpts in *AM* 11–13 (1788–90).

<sup>5</sup>Joseph Fisher, *The Practice of Medicine made Easy: Being a short, but comprehensive treatise, necessary for every family. In which are exhibited the symptoms of almost every disease to which men are subject, the method of distinguishing any disease from others which it resembles, where such distinction is necessary, together with the most approved methods of cure, as to the regimen of the patient and the proper medicines to be used, so far as the lectures of the learned professors in the two celebrated Universities of Edinburgh and Leyden, or the books hitherto published by the most eminent physicians in Europe, or the author's own judgment and experience have discovered to be most safe and beneficial, expressed in such a plain language, that it may be easily understood by persons of very moderate capacities. By J. Fisher, M.D. graduate of the University of Leyden* (London: for the author, 1785).

request be granted I desire you to fix the time which is the most convenient, and when determined upon to let me know. If the request cannot be complied with, I wish to wait upon you at any convenient time and place, in order to enjoy some of your private conversation, as I suppose it to be equally edifying as your public ministry.

That the pure gospel of Christ may tear down every opposition and overcome every obstacle, so that the true and saving knowledge of God, of his Son, and of redeeming love may be spread over the whole earth is the fervent prayer of, reverend sir,

Your very humble servant,

J. Fisher

*Address:* 'Revd. Mr. Wesley / at / Mr. Arthur Keen[e]'s / Miltown road'.

*Endorsement:* by JW, 'Revd Dr Fisher! / June 20. 1785 / a[nswere]d 22'.

*Source:* holograph; MARC, MA 1977/610/60.

From Thomas Wride

London  
July 23, 1785

Reverend Sir,

I herewith send you a curiosity; at least, it is so to me. The person unto whom it was sent, Mr. Post(?), disapproving of the proposal, showed it unto me and was easily persuaded to let me bring it unto you.<sup>1</sup> The only thing feared is the resentment of the writer of the letter, and those who are a party with him—to remove which fear, I promised that names, postmark, etc. should be rendered unintelligible. This I would have done myself, but [I] thought it would have rendered the affair not so easy for you. But sir, I must beg that you will be at the trouble to fulfil what I promised, lest any should see your papers and the affair should be known, to the procuring of difficulty unto him who is in some measure under obligation unto R[obert] O[astler].

Excuse sir my manner of writing. If it is understood by you, it is enough. I wish it to be wholly unintelligible unto everyone else, lest I bring trouble upon James W[ray].<sup>2</sup> I am, reverend sir,

Your dutiful son,

Thomas Wride

*Source:* Wride's manuscript copy for his records; MARC, PLP 115/9/35.

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<sup>1</sup>This would be a lay leader of a circuit, who received a copy of the Petition drafted by James Oddie (June 14, 1785 above) that was being circulated by Robert Oastler (see Oastler to Oddie, June 24, 1785, next).

<sup>2</sup>James Wray (d. 1793), was admitted 'on trial' as an itinerant in 1781 (see *Works*, 10:507) and served his first appointment in Thirsk, where Oastler was a leader. After serving six years in England, Wray volunteered for missionary service in Nova Scotia, and died during a subsequent appointment in St. Vincent; see *Minutes* (post-Wesley, 1793), 1:275. Wray was currently stationed on the Whitby circuit, adjacent to Thirsk.



Robert Oastler to James Oddie

Thirsk  
June 24, 1785

Dear Sir,

I was duly favoured with your kind Petition and letter of the 14th instant.<sup>1</sup> I have laid it before sensible friends and sent it to some circuits. I have had the satisfaction to find that it is *universally* approved of.

I sincerely wish you to send a copy *immediately* to every circuit in England. I have received the following reply from one circuit: 'I think the Address to Mr. Wesley is sensible, drawn up in modest language, with a good design, and proper to be signed by all who see the subject in that point of view.' My friend will (if health permit) put it forward in his circuit.

I have sent it to five circuits and intend this day to have copies addressed to five circuits more.

Let me remind you of your own advice, 'Lose no time and pursue it with vigour.'

I trust our gracious God will prosper your undertaking.

With real esteem, I am, dear sir,

Your affectionate friend,

Rob. Oastler

P.S. I hope you will let one of your young men write many copies of the petition, and wish you to send copies into the circuits in the *north* as well as other places.

*Address:* 'Mr James Oddie / Draper / Keighley'.

*Source:* secondary transcription; MARC, MA 1977/487, p. 30.

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<sup>1</sup>While the letter is not known to survive, see the petition above.

From Samuel Mitchell<sup>1</sup>

c. July 1785

In November 1783, while James Sheerman, leader of a class near Aghalun<sup>2</sup> was telling his experience, Thomas Berney was cut to the heart. From this time he groaned earnestly for redemption, till being strongly tempted by another man he swore by his faith. This much increased his convictions, till on Friday the 26th, he went to the quarterly meeting. Here at the love-feast he told his distress before them all, and earnestly begged their prayers. On Sunday the 28th, the preacher, Mr. Armstrong,<sup>3</sup> and several others, seeing his distress prayed for him one by one. God heard their prayers, and filled him with peace and joy unspeakable. But the very same day, he was convinced of the wickedness of his heart. He groaned more and more for deliverance from this, till January the 18th. Then God applied those words with mighty power, 'I will: be thou clean.'<sup>4</sup> And from that hour he has the clear witness in himself, that God has 'cleansed him from all unrighteousness'.<sup>5</sup>

At the same time a woman was vehemently crying to God for purity of heart. But ere long, she cried aloud, 'The Redeemer is come, and has cleansed me from all sin.' Then the flame rose to a great height, so that few, if any, in the room were unaffected. While some groaned in anguish of spirit, others rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory. The careless were seized with a real concern for their souls, and many backsliders resolved to set out afresh.

A few days after, as James Sheerman was praying with and speaking to his family, two of them were cut to the heart, and roared for the disquietude of their soul. But within a few hours, the Friend of sinners appeared, and burst their bonds in sunder. At the same time his wife received a testimony from God, that she was saved from inbred sin. When the two children had told what God had done for their souls, another daughter, about eleven years old, was so affected that she cried aloud for pardon. She was soon answered to the joy of her heart. And as great as their distress was before, so great was the joy of all these, after they were accepted in the beloved.

On Wednesday, January 14 [1784], two relations of mine, who were first cousins to each other, in consequence of a warm dispute, met to fight a duel. The challenger shot Andrew Irwin through one of his ribs, and the bullet lodged in his body. Andrew had been married about six weeks. Before he reached his father's house God began to work upon his soul. He declared he had far rather die himself than to have killed another, and cried incessantly to God for mercy. Many likewise called upon God in his behalf. In four or five days the answer came. All his sorrow was turned into joy. He wanted all that were about his bed, to assist him in praising God. But they understood nothing of this, though he did not fail, from time to time, to tell them, they would be lost forever, unless the same change were wrought in their souls, which God had now wrought in his. He begged earnestly that my brother, or some other serious person, would come to read and sing by him. But they would not suffer it. Only my brother came. But even him they would not suffer to say much to him. However the eighth or ninth day he died in perfect peace.

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<sup>1</sup>Titled: 'A Short Account of the Work of God in the County of Fermanagh, in Ireland: by Mr. S. M.'. Samuel Mitchell was admitted 'on trial' as an itinerant in 1779 (see *Works*, 10:484), served only in his native Ireland, and withdrew from the connexion in 1791 (10:765). He was the Assistant for the Lisleen circuit in 1783, which included Aghalun.

<sup>2</sup>Orig., 'Aughalam' here; and 'Aughalun' three later times. It is the hamlet spelled as above, also known as Brookeborough.

<sup>3</sup>Joseph Armstrong was appointed to the Lisleen circuit with Mitchell; see *Works*, 10:535. He served until going supernumerary in 1798, but only in Ireland.

<sup>4</sup>Matt. 8:3, Mark 1:41, Luke 5:13.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. 1 John 1:9.

On January 18, the day the first young man was sanctified, a young woman received the same blessing not many minutes after, and another a clear sense of pardon—as did also, in a glorious manner, a girl about ten years old. And that day many of the stout-hearted sinners awoke out of sleep. While these were crying out for want of Christ, others were rejoicing in his salvation. And indeed the voice of praise and thanksgiving did so prevail, that in a while nothing else could be heard.

The same night Thomas Berney slept with a boy of eight years old, and when they were in bed, spake to him of the things of God. He began to weep bitterly, and continued to do so all night. In the morning he found peace with God. I have often talked with him since, and he had not lost anything of the blessing which God had given him.

Wednesday 21. While a few of the people were met at James Sheerman's, and one was reading to them in the Bible, the power of the Lord descended. They went to prayer. And it was not long before two young women, who were before deeply sensible of their wants, were cleansed from all pollution of flesh and spirit.

On Friday, February 6, Mr. Armstrong came over to my father's. The next day he went to a place two miles off, where after preaching, he kept a love-feast. Here many rejoiced in God, many groaned for pardon, and one young man was set at liberty. When he told this, on Sunday [February] 8, at the meeting of the class, it seemed as if God opened the windows of heaven, and poured out blessings upon all that lifted up their hearts to him.

This morning Mr. Armstrong preached three miles off at the house of one John Dunbar, whose mother appeared to be near death, but earnestly seeking life eternal: as were he and his wife also. I preached here on February 22. There were many tears and groans in the congregation. The old woman confirmed all I had said, and was filled with joy and peace in believing. And a little after, it pleased God to remove her to Abraham's bosom.

Hence I went to my father's: where, as I was one night talking of the things of God, I perceived a young woman who lived there to be much affected. While we were at supper, I said, 'How it would rejoice me if Peggy was converted to God, or even convinced of sin!' As I spake, she quitted her supper and roared aloud, and her convictions grew deeper and deeper. On Sunday 29th, at family prayer, a girl was convinced of sin and wept bitterly. On Saturday, March 6, Mr. Jordan<sup>6</sup> came to my brother Robert's and preached; and while he met the society, Peggy found a clear sense of the favour of God.

After we concluded, John Dunbar and his wife came, but were greatly troubled to find all was over. Richard Dunbar however began to apply the Scripture to his brother John. The spirit of power applied the simple words to the heart both of John and his wife. They fell down on their knees and cried aloud for mercy. And Richard cried mightily to God for them, till John rose from his knees, and cried out, 'O see me! See me! I am all new! I am all new!' His words were as fire to all present. But his wife continued weeping till Robert Mitchell came in and went to prayer. Two girls meantime were sent for, who were before convinced of sin. As soon as they entered the door, the Spirit of God took fast hold of their hearts. So there was much weeping, praying, and agonizing for some hours. But Mrs. Dunbar was rejoicing with her husband. And who can describe the heaven of love which was there, while this happy pair saluted each other with tears of joy, saying, 'Though we were too late for the preaching, we were not too late for the blessing. O that we had all our children here! God would bless them all!' But the two maidens continued still in violent agonies! And one of them swooned away, and lay motionless for a considerable time. Meanwhile many continued in prayer, till the Lord delivered first one, and then the other, out of all her trouble. But who can describe the joy and love which filled the hearts of all present, particularly the newborn children.

Sunday, March 14. Though I was very ill, yet I spoke a little to the class. As I was speaking to a deep mourner, the Lord shined upon her heart. I made it known to all that were in the room, which was full. The hearts of all that knew Christ were filled full and running over, and those that knew him not

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<sup>6</sup>Apparently James Jordan (d. 1821), who served as an itinerant in Ireland from 1780 until near his death. See *Works*, 10:499; and *Minutes* (post-Wesley, 1821) 5:203.

wept aloud. The voice of joy and the voice of weeping were so loud that those who prayed could not be heard for some time. At this happy season, in whatever house a few met, they went to prayer; and none went away without a blessing. Some were either convinced of sin, or justified, or saved from all sin.

Saturday 20. While Mr. Jordan was preaching at Robert Mitchell's, it was a time of love to many. I travelled in birth for the mourners, and more particularly, for one little girl: but while I was praying for her, my prayer was suddenly turned into praise, and tears of joy. After the people were gone, I told Mr. Jordan I believed Elizabeth Hall was justified; and the next morning she declared, God had spoke to her soul at that very time.

A lad was then admitted into the class for the first time. As I was speaking to him, the tears dropped from his eyes. But while Mr. Jordan was speaking, it pleased God to seal a pardon upon his heart. He could not but tell what he felt to all that were in the room, and most of them rejoiced with joy unspeakable. A few days after, his elder brother found peace with God, and openly declared it to all in the room, to the unspeakable comfort of all; especially their old father, who had long lamented that his foes were those of his own household.

On the 21st, I ventured to exhort a little, and another soul was set at liberty. The same evening, about sunset, a few of the young converts met together in Robert Mitchell's outhouse.<sup>7</sup> First one prayed, then another. And while they prayed, God bowed the heavens and came down. The mountains of unbelief flowed down at his presence, so that several stood quite motionless. When it was dark, the elder Christians brought them into the dwelling-house and prayed with them. They had a night of great consolation, and one (if not more) was cleansed from all sin.

Monday 29. The young converts met in the same place, and the power of God laid hold on two boys (one about thirteen, the other scarce seven years of age) who were not only convinced, but converted to God before they parted. The elder Christians then took them into the house, as before, and continued in prayer, till a girl between ten and eleven was filled with pure love, who has been ever since a pattern of all holiness.

Upon the whole, I never saw so sound a work of grace wrought so rapidly before, as this was in all its branches, from the beginning to this very day. May the Lord carry it on in every heart, and make us all more than conquerors through him who hath loved us!

Sunday 28. John Dunbar brought his eldest daughter, twelve or thirteen years old, to stay a few days at her uncle Richard's. He was persuaded she would know the Lord before the end of the week, and he was not mistaken. The child set herself to seek him as if she believed she had but another week to live. Her cousins, who were already alive to God, were of great service to her. They prayed with her, wherever they were, six or seven times a day. On one day, which she set apart for fasting, she inadvertently put a grain of mustard in her mouth. This troubled her exceedingly, till she mentioned it to one, who exhorted her not to mind it, but to go steadily on her way, and she would soon find the salvation of God.

Saturday, April 3. While John Miller was preaching, the arm of the Lord was revealed.<sup>8</sup> There was a noise, and behold a shaking! And bone came together to his bone. After preaching, this girl and several others were exceedingly distressed. One prayed, and another, and another, till God spoke peace to her soul. I have seen many sinners converted to God, but very few in so apparent a manner as her. She was distressed more and more, till she fainted away and lay as one dead: so that a person said to me, do you think she will ever come to herself again? She soon answered for herself, suddenly crying out, 'Glory, glory be to God my Saviour!' All her trouble was gone, and she rejoiced in him with joy unspeakable.

Wednesday, April 7. I preached at Robert Mitchell's, and several were filled with joy unspeakable. On Easter Day, April 11, in the evening some were justified, and some believed they were

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<sup>7</sup>I.e., a detached shed.

<sup>8</sup>John Miller (d. 1796), of German ancestry, first appears as an itinerant preacher in the *Minutes* (1780), *Works*, 10:510. He served faithfully in various parts of Ireland till his death; see *Minutes* (post-Wesley, 1796), 1:347.

cleansed from all sin. On Wednesday they met again, when a backslider was healed and two others found peace with God. Saturday 17, Mr. Jordan preached at my brother Robert's, and three were converted to God. In the morning Robert Hall came to hear, as he had done for eleven years, though to little purpose. Before preaching he went into the house of his niece, who said, 'Uncle, will it not be a dreadful thing if this little boy, your son' (converted some time before) 'should say amen to your destruction at the last day?' This struck him to the heart, so that when he went in to the preaching he was all in tears. After Mr. Jordan had preached, he met the society. He would have exhorted them, but his voice could not be heard: such were the cries both of sorrow and joy, till six souls were set at liberty, of whom Robert Hall was one.

On Wednesday 23, coming to my father's, I found him seemingly at the point of death, but rejoicing in God. A report prevailed on Sunday that he was dead, which brought many together to the house. I prayed that God would give me strength to preach to them, which he did beyond my expectation. Two were convinced of sin, which were both the same night converted to God in family prayer.

Saturday, May 1. Joseph Armstrong preached at Robert Mitchell's, and the next evening I preached in the very house wherein I first heard a Methodist preach eleven years ago. A lad was there who came from a very barren place, who told his sister when he went home that he thought verily if she would go with him, as careless as she was, she would find a blessing. She went, and as he said, so it proved. For while many were wounded, God both wounded and healed her soul.

In my way to the Conference, I called at Aghalun, where there was a quarterly meeting on Monday the 28th. That day some were truly converted, and among them one who had wished us well from the beginning but never found peace till now. There was now a great outpouring of the Spirit, upon young men and maidens, old men and children. And the work was not only very rapid, but very deep. Many of those who had found the pure love of God, were so overpoured that they lay motionless for some hours.

At the Dublin Conference, July 6, 1784, I was appointed a supernumerary, because of my ill health.<sup>9</sup> At my return I was asked to preach at Bigwater, about three miles from Aghalun. The young man of the house had long known the good way, but it was too narrow for him. The people were remarkably serious and well behaved, so I promised to preach again that day fortnight. I then found a much larger number, and was so happy in preaching that I forgot all my pain. I came every fortnight for a considerable time after, and every time the congregation was larger than before, till a regular society was formed.

In the latter end of August Mr. Barber preached in my father's house.<sup>10</sup> During the love-feast which followed a fresh work of God broke out, which increased more and more, till the 27th of September. On that night Robert was nearly driven to despair. But when he was in bed, God spoke to his heart. He sprang out of bed, and began to praise God aloud for his pardoning mercy. His brother James hearing this, was so cut to the heart, that he could have no rest till he also rested in God his Saviour. And indeed all the family were in an uproar that night, crying and praying for a share of the same blessing.

October 26. While a few were met together James Cooke was set at liberty. They continued in prayer, till James Rea,<sup>11</sup> and his sister Jane also knew their sins were blotted out. And so did Patrick Johnson, and on the 27th, a young man that lived at John Cooke's. He thought he should see war no more. But in the evening, going to prayer in the barn, while he was on his knees Satan so violently assaulted him that, not understanding it, he started up from his knees and ran into the house crying,

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<sup>9</sup>Mitchell was made supernumerary for the Clones circuit; see *Works*, 10:557.

<sup>10</sup>Thomas Barber (c. 1746–1826), of Sidare, was converted and began work as a local preacher in the rural parts of the Londonderry circuit about 1778. He was admitted on trial as an itinerant at the 1779 Conference (see *Works*, 10:484), and remained active until retiring in 1808. See *Minutes* (post-Wesley, 1826), 6:112.

<sup>11</sup>This may be the James Rea who was admitted 'on trial' as an itinerant preacher at the 1765 Conference, and assigned to Newry (see *Works*, 10:303, 306). He was granted full status the next year and assigned to northeast Ireland (10:315, 318), but does not appear in the *Minutes* again until he desisted from travelling in 1770 (10:380).

‘Murder! Murder!’ Just as he got in, he cried out to the family, ‘Pray for me! O pray for me!’ They took him with them to the preaching. But his distress increased. They then removed him to another house, where they continued in prayer, till God bruised Satan under his feet.

On the 29th, Esther Johnston was brought to know that the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin. The next day her sister Catharine recovered the love of God, which she had long bemoaned the loss of. The same day Margaret Laird received a clean heart, and an old man, George Rea found peace with God. Afterwards he told me that at the time he thought his soul was wafted to heaven, and his very body lifted up from the earth. On Sunday 31, Francis Johnson found peace, and Robert Cooke the pure love of God.

November 12. While Gustavus Armstrong was preaching,<sup>12</sup> many were cut to the heart, particularly three young women. A few continued in prayer with them after the preaching, till the Lord answered the prayer, and filled them all with joy and peace in believing.

When they met as usual, on Sunday morning the 14th, Robert Burnside and Jane Graham found favour with God; as did Margaret King at the meeting of the class, on Sunday the 21st.

In the beginning of February 1785, I found a papist who had the love of God in her heart. But few Protestants would believe it, because she did not renounce all the errors of popery at a stroke.

Saturday, December 4. I came to John Cooke’s house. The same night James Beatie dreamed that he saw me come in, and heard me give out my text from the Lamentations. I did so, and as soon as I named my text the power of God fell upon the people. In a while there was scarce a dry eye to be seen. Afterwards some of the neighbours came in. While we were talking of the things of God, one roared out for mercy, and then another and another, till four or five were in a bitter agony. Three of us prayed by turns, till the Lord justified John Beatie, and his cousin Ann Beatie, and confirmed to the woman of the house that knowledge of God which she had tasted of the day before. I cannot describe the joyous scene! Parents and children saluted each other, and congratulated each other with tears, welcoming one another into the possession of that goodly inheritance.

Friday 10. My grandmother died, about ninety years old, in the full triumph of faith, crying out, ‘Help me, O help me to go to my Jesus!’ and then breathed her last. On the 11th, I preached, and the power of God convinced sinners in a wonderful manner. There was a cry as of people weeping for their first born, and some of those who were alive to God sunk down and for several hours lay quite speechless and motionless. The next afternoon I preached a funeral sermon. Soon after I began, the Lord filled the house with his presence, and many hearts with his love. I then set out with the funeral, but was constrained to turn back to preach, as had been appointed. At my beginning to speak, I was weary and in pain, having had no sleep the night before. But quickly the Lord so blessed both my own soul and those about me that pain and weariness vanished away.

On the 23rd, brother[s] Barber, Hetherington<sup>13</sup> and I held a watch-night. Brother Hetherington spoke first, and I followed, till the cries of the people rose to such a height that I left off preaching and we began to pray, one after another. We soon had a gracious shower, during which a young woman found peace with God.

Sunday 26. Mr. Barber and I held a love-feast at my father’s. And before we parted, Francis Little, Edward Thompson, Mary Armstrong, and Elizabeth Little knew all their sins were blotted out. A while after, Elizabeth Little’s uncle said, ‘When I came in here I was quite weighed down. But glory be to God, I am now full of his love, and as happy as I can wish.’ Yet William Noble went away in great heaviness, but the next day he was set at liberty.

January 1, 1785 was the quarterly meeting at Lisleen, and a lively one it was. The next evening I preached, and a man which had been a hearer many years found a sense of acceptance. On the 7th there

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<sup>12</sup>Gustavus Armstrong (c. 1758–1832) was admitted ‘on trial’ as an itinerant preacher in 1782 (see *Works*, 10:520). He served in various parts of Ireland until near his death. See *Minutes* (post-Wesley, 1832), 7:115.

<sup>13</sup>Thomas Hetherington was admitted on trial as an itinerant in Ireland in 1783 (see *Works*, 10:968). His last appearance in the *Minutes* is in 1791 (10:752)

were two young women in the house of Robert Graham who had a desire to cross a large river near Aghalun, to see some friends who lived on the other side. Some of the family going out, saw a bright flame reaching across the river, just where the passage was. Notwithstanding this they went over. But attempting to return in the morning, the river which had been much swollen by rain in the night, swept them both away.

On the 7th, Jane Buchanan knew her interest in Christ, and soon after, rejoiced in his perfect love. Sunday 9, Mary Smith, was accepted in the Beloved, and on Sunday 30, Jane Kelso, twelve years old. February 6, though the snow was deep, a large congregation got to Patrick Johnson's. One of them, Elizabeth Hern, had waded the river and stood, wet as she was, all the time of the sermon. She wept bitterly, and was in a great agony, till the Lord conquered and filled her with his love. Sunday 13, at the meeting of the society well-nigh everyone felt that God was there, and Mary Tremble knew her sins were forgiven. On the 24th, she and her sister, with a few more, went to prayer at her father's and continued weeping and crying to God, till their father came in, being afraid they were going to kill one another. But seeing them on their knees, he fell down on his; and they went on, till the other sister was filled with peace. The elder of the two is about thirteen years old.

Thursday 24. Three souls were set at liberty. The case of one of these was peculiar. A few weeks before, she had so violently opposed her husband's joining with this people as even to strike him. He did not strike her again, but immediately advertised all he had to be sold by auction, on such a day. She was much frightened, asked his pardon, and solemnly promised never more to oppose his going where he would. He said, 'Nay, you must go with me and hear for yourself?' I told him, 'Make haste, or she will get before you.' And so she did; being soon after justified, and in a short time enabled to love God with her whole heart.

Monday 28. I rode to the other side of the circuit. When I began preaching, I had much pain in my breast and side. But all on a sudden my pain was gone, my tongue was loosed, and the spirit of the people bowed down before the word of God. Of three who were justified that day, two were a mother and her daughter; and there were hardly five minutes distance between the one and the other.

For some time after, very few days passed without one or more finding peace with God. Sunday, April 17, Mr. Hetherington and I, after preaching at Kilmore, held a love-feast: at which it pleased God to display his saving power, in a wonderful manner. The next morning I found my mare almost killed by another. But I could say, 'The will of the Lord be done!'

About this time Jane Kelso talked closely to William Cooke, about eight years of age. As she was speaking, he began to cry in such a manner as roused the whole family. 'O', said he, 'you would have let me go to hell, had not Jenny Kelso warned me of my danger.' They continued in prayer for him till he broke out into such praise as astonished them all. April 21, Isabella Beatie, about eight years old found peace; on the 22nd, Eleanor McLaughlin, aged eighty; and on the 23rd, so did Rebecca, ten years old, sister to Isabella. On the 24th, I preached at Joseph Forster's. In the time of preaching many groans and cries were heard, so that many when I began to sing could not join, but groaned and wept still. I then addressed the careless part of the congregation and asked, 'Why will *you* reject the counsel of God against yourselves?' The tears then fell from most eyes. And when we prayed, all was weeping and lamentation. I then went to get a little fresh air, leaving some of our brethren to pray till my return. When I did return, many were convinced of sin, two backsliders were healed, and seven persons could magnify the Lord for a sense of his pardoning mercy.

June 13. We had a love-feast at my father's. From the very beginning of which, many spoke freely of the dealings of God with their souls. Among these was a boy eight years old, and several other children, from eight to twelve years old, who spoke both with wisdom and power. At last we betook ourselves to prayer, and pardoning love suddenly took place in many hearts. Those who were not joined with us now came forward to the doors and began to weep, and some of them to cry aloud for mercy. Their cries were so vehement that the preachers were obliged to separate themselves, and go from one place to another, to exhort and comfort the mourners; and were soon constrained to have prayer in four or five different parts of the house at once. Through much labour and tears many were brought to the birth, and then God gave strength to bring forth. By the lowest computation, between twenty-five and thirty

children were born that day. Meantime very many were convinced of the impurity of their nature, who were in as great distress as those that sought for pardon. There were probably many more that escaped our notice, not being personally known to us. Such a display of divine power and love, we never saw before.

Saturday 18. Brother Barber and I went to assist our brother Joseph Armstrong, to hold a meeting near Bellock. While we were preaching in a field, the Spirit of the Lord fell upon the congregation in a glorious manner. So that even the children of God cried out and trembled—yea and some of them fell to the earth. Meantime there was a shaking among the dry bones. Many were convinced of their guilt, and many of the want of purity of heart, which two of them attained in the love-feast that followed.

This is a brief and imperfect account of that great work of God. May it increase till the day of the Lord!

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 9 (1786): 54–56, 97–100, 152–54, 209–11, 260–63.



From [Richard Rodda?]<sup>1</sup>

[Birmingham]  
c. August 1785

Elizabeth Frances was born near Bromyard, in Herefordshire, of poor but honest parents. At eleven years of age she was obliged to go to service. Her father and mother dying when she was about seventeen years of age, she had the care of a younger sister committed to her.

After she was married, she was a professed enemy to the people called Methodists. But her husband sometimes (through much persuasion) prevailed on her to hear them.

One time hearing Mr. [Joseph] Taylor preach in the new marketplace, she seemed much affected; but the convictions soon wore off.

Some time after, she had a fit of illness which lasted for the space of ten weeks. Being visited by some Christian friends when she recovered, she attended the means more closely, and showed much love to the preachers and people. After this, she continued to hear the word about four years.

In this time she was troubled with hysteric fits, in which she would sometimes beat and tear herself; sometimes sing; sometimes cry; and sometimes would throw herself into the fire and water. But her husband observed that when she was most concerned for her future welfare she was not troubled with those fits.

In the year 1783 the Lord visited her with another fever, which threw her into a deep consumption. In this illness he drew her mind to seek his favour. This she did by fervent prayer both by day, and by night.

Though in the beginning of this illness she felt great impatience, yet for the last ten months she was greatly resigned to the will of God. June 16, sitting up in her bed, with her eyes looking upward, she began to relate what she had seen. Her husband inquiring more particularly what it was, after a short pause she said, 'I was taken up by my Guide, to the top of a high mountain.' Her husband asking who her guide was, she answered, 'My Jesus'. Being asked how she came to part with him, she answered, 'He would not stay with me any longer. But before he went away he put a harp to my ear, on which I heard such music as I never heard before!'

When a Christian friend asked her how she did? she answered, 'I am ill in body, but well in my soul!' She then cried out,

Hallelujah they cry,  
To the King of the sky,  
To the great, everlasting I AM!  
To the Lamb that was slain,  
And liveth again,  
Hallelujah to God and the Lamb!<sup>2</sup>

She then added, 'My Jesus! O my Jesus!'

When I ascend to yonder cloud,  
With all that dazzling throng,

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<sup>1</sup>Titled: 'A short Account of the Life and Death of Elizabeth Frances of Birmingham, who died July 17, 1785'. The writer is not named, but Rodda was currently the Assistant for the Birmingham circuit.

<sup>2</sup>CW, 'Hymns for Christian Friends, No. 41', st. 6, *HSP* (1749), 2:314.

Then shall I sing more sweet and loud;

And Christ shall be my song!<sup>3</sup>

On Thursday morning she spoke but little, being much inclined to slumber. On Friday evening, when Mr. B.<sup>4</sup> came to see her, she kissed his hand, as a mark of her sincere love to him and the people of God. After she had related her trials and temptations, it pleased God so to bless what Mr. B. said to her as to chase all her doubts and fears away. On this she cried out with great earnestness of soul, 'O what glory hath Jesus prepared for me! Jesus! Oh my Jesus!' She then said, 'I have also seen the place of torments! O the thousands who are howling and yelling there! And I deserve to be there also!' Then expressing much gratitude to Christ for delivering her from that place, she added, 'When we are about yonder throne, we shall be freed from all the arrows of death!' Then she lifted up her dying voice and sung,

Who in Jesus confide,  
We are bold to outride  
The storms of affliction beneath:  
With the prophet we soar  
To the heavenly shore,  
And outfly all the arrows of death.<sup>5</sup>

She then said, 'I have been taken into a very green meadow, the most beautiful I ever saw. Thousands of thousands were there walking in white, with crowns on their heads! One of whom beckoned to me to come to him.'

Some time after, she called her children, spoke to them one by one, and prayed that the Lord would give them grace to love, and fear, and serve him. When Mr. P.<sup>6</sup> came to see her, she cried out, 'O the thorns and pincers that tore his hair!' (meaning Christ's). Then bursting into tears, she said, 'All this he bore for me! All this he bore for me!' Then, on a sudden, she was so filled with joy that she laughed and sighed! and sighed and laughed again! Being asked the reason, she said, 'To think of the throne I am to sit in! I scarce deserve to sit at the feet of the meanest saints, and yet I am to sit on That Throne!'

When any came to see her in costly dress, she spake of the evil of pride, warned them of the dreadful consequences, and entreated all that came to see her to come to Christ for life and salvation. When a carnal acquaintance came to see her, who asked how she did, she said, 'Very ill in body, but happy in my soul.' She then exhorted her to seek redemption in the blood of Christ. On the other answering, 'I hope I shall', she replied, 'The hope of the hypocrite shall perish, when God taketh away the soul.' Then turning from her she said, 'Farewell, forever and ever'.

Some time after, when five or six friends were present, she showed such gratitude to Christ as amazed them all.

A person who is a player, sending her a shilling, her husband said, 'My dear, God can open the mouth of the raven, as well as the dove, to feed thee.' On hearing this she said, 'Ask him to step in. Who knows but the Lord may give me a word to speak for his glory.' Her husband answered, 'He will not come to such a poor place as this.' 'O then', said she, 'go and ask his sister.' When she came, she exhorted her to seek the Lord Jesus; adding, 'It is not a small thing to die without an interest in him!' She spoke with such earnestness on this occasion that when she had done she fainted away.

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<sup>3</sup>Cf. John Cennick, 'Thou Dear Redeemer, Dying Lamb', st. 4, *Sacred Hymns for the Children of God*, 2nd edn. (London: Milles, 1743).

<sup>4</sup>Surely Charles Boone, assigned to the Birmingham circuit.

<sup>5</sup>CW, 'Hymns for Christian Friends, No. 41', st. 2, *HSP* (1749), 2:313.

<sup>6</sup>Possibly a misread 'R'; which would refer to Richard Rodda.

When she came to herself, she lifted up her eyes to heaven and threw her arms wide open, then clasped them together as if she had grasped somebody. Being asked what she meant by that, she said, 'My Jesus! Oh, my Jesus!'

For three weeks before she died, her youngest child (two years old) and her husband lay very near her heart. But at length she freely gave them up into the hands of God.

July 15th, she would have none to sit up with her, saying, 'Jesus Christ shall be my nurse.' On the sixteenth (at night) she said, 'Nurse, take that candle away.' Her husband asking, 'My dear, do you think we have a candle?' 'Yes', said she; 'for I see a shining light all around!' The next night, about twelve o'clock, she fell asleep in the arms of Jesus without a single groan.

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 10 (1787): 22–25.

From William Black Jr.

Halifax  
August 7, 1785<sup>1</sup>

Reverend and Very Dear Sir,

Since I came to Halifax, which is now between two and three months, I have enjoyed some very comfortable and refreshing times. When I came, I found the little society I had left here in the fall, almost all scattered. They had had but little preaching during the winter, for it was not in our power to supply all the places.

When I came down and found scarcely any society that met, it grieved me much. For some time very few attended preaching. However I trust God has again begun to work. One or two have experienced remission of sins. Yesterday, several were crying in the bitterness of their souls, groaning for redemption. I trust the Lord will soon deliver them. Our congregations also increase fast. Last night the room was nearly full. I do hope God is about to begin a good work among us. We have now thirty-two in society.

There has been a blessed work at Liverpool the last winter, under brother Mann.<sup>2</sup> This spring he went up the country as far as Windsor and Cornwallis, and there he believes he received the perfect love of God, or sanctification. I do myself sometimes feel longing desires after this blessing. But oh the self and pride, the corruption and unbelief I feel within!—There is a fountain, a great deep. O Lord, avenge me of mine adversary! O the stirrings of *self*. This it is, I fear, that pleases me so much when I have uncommon liberty in speaking, and causes shame when I have not that liberty. Although perhaps I have heard of more good having been done in this case than in the former. One time in particular, before speaking I trembled every limb—my knees smote one against the other. Everyone I thought must see the hymn-book shake in my hands, and I was sorely tempted not to speak at all. Till I was at last brought to this conclusion, ‘Well, and what if the Lord should shut up my mouth, and confound me before them, still I will attempt to speak. This also may prove a blessing to me, and I will praise him for it.’ But never did I trust him and was confounded. O for faith to trust him for full salvation! But I am too cold and easy without it. O pray for me, that God would make me faithful.

At Horton the prospect is good. A young man, one Grandin,<sup>3</sup> has lately begun to preach, who I trust will be useful. He formerly belonged to the society in the Jerseys. He is now at Cumberland. Brother Cromwell is at Windsor,<sup>4</sup> brother [Freeborn] Garrettson at Shelburne, and brother Mann at Liverpool. The other day I met two or three of our friends from Gibraltar; it was a great comfort to me. What a pity they have not a preacher there.

Since I began this letter I am informed that one dropped down in the street yesterday, as he was returning from meeting, and cried for mercy. He has slept none all night, but remains in awful apprehensions of the wrath of God. A few minutes ago another came to me inquiring the way to Zion. There are serious impressions on the minds of many. I hope these are but the prelude to a future work. My dear father, I remain inviolably,

Your son in the gospel,

William Black

*Source:* published transcription; Richey, *William Black*, 156–58.

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<sup>1</sup>Richey gives the year as ‘1786’; but the reply from JW was dated in Nov. 1785.

<sup>2</sup>John Mann (1743–1817) had been part of the John Street society in New York. His Loyalist stance led him to move to Nova Scotia in 1783. John’s brother James Mann (1750–1820) came the following year. The brothers served as itinerants and were later ordained (John in 1789; James, 1795). See Nellie Fox, ‘Loyalist Brothers: John and James Mann’, *Nova Scotia Historical Review*, 4.2 (1984), 83–89.

<sup>3</sup>Orig., ‘Grandine’. William Grandin (1762–1832), a native of New Jersey, had just arrived in Nova Scotia and would serve as an itinerant for 13 years.

<sup>4</sup>James Oliver Cromwell (c.1760–1826) was admitted to the Conference of American itinerants in 1780, and ordained in 1784. He sailed with Garrettson from New York to Nova Scotia in Feb. 1785.

From the Rev. Charles Wesley

Bristol  
August 14, 1785

Dear Brother,

I have been reading over again and again your *Reasons against a Separation* (printed in 1758, and in your *Works*<sup>1</sup>), and entreat you, in the name of God and for Christ's sake, to read them again yourself, with previous prayer. And stop, and proceed no farther, till you receive an answer to your inquiry, 'Lord, what wouldst *thou* have me to do?'

(Here follow his *Reasons against a Separation from the Church of England*, etc.<sup>2</sup>)

Every word of your eleven pages deserves the deepest consideration. Not to mention my testimony, and hymns.<sup>3</sup> Only the seventh I could wish you to read—a prophecy which I pray God may never come to pass.<sup>4</sup>

Near 30 years since then you have stood against the importunate solicitations of your preachers, who have scarcely at last prevailed. I was your natural ally and your faithful friend; and while you continued faithful to yourself, *we two* could chase a thousand. If they had not divided *us*, they could never have overcome *you*.

But when once you began ordaining in America, I knew (and you knew) that your preachers here would never rest till you ordained them. You told me, 'They would separate by and by.' The Dr.<sup>5</sup> tells us the same. His 'Methodist Episcopal Church' at Baltimore was *intended* to beget a 'Methodist Episcopal Church' here. You know he comes, armed with your authority, to make us all dissenters. One of your sons assured me that not a preacher in London would refuse [ministerial] orders from the Dr. It is evident that all seek their own, and prefer their own, interest to your honour—which not one of them scruples to sacrifice to his own ambition.

Alas! What trouble are you preparing for yourself, as well as for me, and for your oldest, truest, best friends! Before you have quite broken down the bridge, *stop and consider!* If your sons have no regard for you, have some regard for yourself. *Go to your grave in peace.* At least suffer me to go first, before this ruin is under your hand. So much I think you owe to my father, to my brother, and to me, as to stay till I am taken from the evil. I am on the brink of the grave. Do not push me in, or embitter my last moments. Let us not leave an indelible blot on our memory; but [let] us leave behind us the name and character of *honest men*.

This letter is a debt to our parents, and to our brother, as well as to you, and to,

Your faithful friend,

Charles Wesley

Source: CW's manuscript copy for records; MARC, MA 1977/157, JW V.III, pp. 21, 23–24.

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<sup>1</sup>See JW, *Reasons against a Separation from the Church of England*, *Works*, 9:334–49.

<sup>2</sup>This parenthetical comment is by CW.

<sup>3</sup>*Works*, 9:341–49.

<sup>4</sup>CW, 'The Preacher's Prayer for the Flock', *ibid.*, 348–49.

<sup>5</sup>I.e., Thomas Coke.

From Michael Moorhouse<sup>1</sup>

c. August 15, 1785

‘Near four years ago I wrote to Mr. Wesley as follows:

I should have been driven out of your connection long since, but for the following reasons: First, I looked upon it no good sign when people left religious connections. Secondly, other people would have thought the same by me, if I had the the connection of Methodist preachers. And thirdly, I should not have hung my head like one who had done something amiss, and had been turned out guilty. Therefore, fourthly, I should have printed and published my reasons for leaving the connection. And I am suspicious my reasons would but have done little honour either to the Rev. Mr. [John] Wesley or his advisers, many of whom I love in the truth.’

Source: published excerpt; Moorhouse, *Defence*, 3.

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<sup>1</sup>Michael Moorhouse was accepted ‘on trial’ as an itinerant in 1773 (see *Works*, 10:415). He increasingly became disgruntled about actions by JW and some of the other preachers that he believed were unfair to him. As early as the 1780 Conference he expressed his concern in a long letter to JW (not known to survive); see Moorhouse, *Defence*, 26. His dissatisfaction grew when he was excluded from the ‘legal hundred’ by the Deed of Declaration adopted in 1784. This sparked the letter described above, which surely went on to rehearse all of the wrongs that Moorhouse perceived he had suffered (cf. the rambling 128 pages of his *Defence*). Moorhouse would be expelled ‘for malice and obstinacy’ at the 1786 Conference (*Works*, 10:597n).

From Mary (Bosanquet) Fletcher<sup>1</sup>

[Madeley, Shropshire]  
August 18, 1785

Reverend and Very Dear Sir,

Though but yesterday I parted with my beloved husband's remains,<sup>2</sup> I must now endeavour to collect my wounded mind (as I would not have any of his words fall to the ground) and give if possible some account of the awful, but to him glorious scene.

Our union increased daily, as did his health and strength. His consumptive complaint appeared quite removed, and in my eyes the bitterness of death was past. The work was sweetly prospering, and in a variety of circumstances the sun of prosperity shone around us.

For some time before this last illness, his precious soul (always alive to God) was particularly penetrated with the nearness of eternity. There was scarce an hour in which he was not calling upon me to drop every thought and every care, that we might attend to nothing but drinking deeper into God. We spent much time in wrestling prayer for the fullness of the Spirit, and were led, in a very peculiar manner, to an act of *abandonment* (as we called it) of our whole selves into the hands of God, to do or suffer whatever was pleasing to him.

On Thursday, August 4, he was taken up in the work of God from 3:00 in the afternoon, till 9:00 at night. When he came home, he said, 'I have taken cold.' Friday and Saturday he was poorly though he went out part of the day, but seemed uncommonly drawn out in prayer. On Saturday night his fever first appeared very strong. I begged him not to go to the church in the morning, but let a pious brother who was here preach in the yard. But he told me he believed it was the will of the Lord, and that he was assured it was right he should go; in which case I never dared to persuade. As I was in the morning with a little company of our pious women, I begged they would pray that he might be strengthened, and that I might have a grain of that faith which supported the faithful when their friends were martyred. In reading prayers he almost fainted away. I got through the crowd, with a friend, and entreated him to come out of the desk, as did some others. But he let us know, in his sweet manner, we were not to interrupt the order of God. I then retired to my pew, where all around me were in tears. When he was a little refreshed by the windows being opened, and a nosegay thrown into the desk by a friend, he went on. And afterwards going up into the pulpit, preached with a strength and recollection which surprised us all.

In his first prayer he said, 'Lord thou wilt manifest thy strength in weakness. We confer not with flesh and blood, but put our trust under the shadow of thy wings.' His text was from Psalm 36[:6–7], 'Thou Lord shalt save both man and beast; how excellent is thy mercy, O God. And the children of men shall put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.'

After he had pointed out the Saviour of mankind, and observed how some by sin had made themselves beasts, he showed that the promise, even in that sense, might be applied to the sinner as well as to the beasts of the earth. And in speaking to these with his usual earnestness, he *pressed*, *invited*, and *entreated* them to return unto God; *enforcing* those words of our Lord when he came near to Jerusalem and wept over it: 'If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes.'<sup>3</sup> These words peculiarly pierced the hearts of many, as they have since told me. He continued to observe (in nearly the following words): 'That the wings of the Lord are compared to those of an eagle for strength and protection, Exodus 19[:4], "I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself." And to those of a hen for love and care, "Like as a hen gathereth

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<sup>1</sup>JW included several extracts from this letter in his sermon *On the Death of John Fletcher* (1785), *Works*, 3:609–29.

<sup>2</sup>Rev. John Fletcher died on Aug. 14, 1785, and was buried in Madeley on Aug. 17.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Luke 19:42.

her chickens under her wings.”<sup>4</sup> In the Jewish tabernacle, where was the Holy of Holies, two cherubim were placed whose extended wings joining together overshadowed the mercy seat. When Christ died upon the cross his arms were stretched out, and these were as wings of love which he opened, and still holds wide open to receive all that come unto him. Let us then, when we see his love and power thus united to save and bless us, enter boldly into the Holy of Holies through the door of divine mercy. A friend threw me some flowers to revive me when I was faint, but the mercy of the Lord is far more reviving. It is this I would hold out to you, and drop it into your very bosoms. May it sink deep there, that you may taste and see how good the Lord is, and confess that his saving mercy is above the richest perfume, for he saves both man and beast!’

After sermon he went up the aisle to the communion table, with these words, ‘I am going to throw myself under the wings of the cherubim before the mercy seat.’

The congregation was large, and the service held till near 2:00. Sometimes he could scarcely stand, and was often obliged to stop for want of power to speak. The people were deeply affected. Weeping was on every side. Gracious Lord, how was it my soul was kept so calm in the midst of the most tender feelings! Notwithstanding his extreme weakness, he gave out several verses of hymns, and various lively sentences of exhortation. As soon as the service was over, we hurried him away to his bed, where he immediately fainted away. He afterwards dropped into a sleep for some time, and upon waking, cried out with a pleasant smile ‘Now my dear, thou seest I am no worse for doing the Lord’s work. He never fails me when I trust in him.’ After he had got a little dinner, he dozed most of the evening—now and then waking (as was usual with him) full of the praises of God.

That night his fever returned, but not so bad as on Saturday. Nevertheless, from Sunday his strength decreased amazingly. On Monday and Tuesday we had a little paradise together. He lay on a couch in the study and was at times very restless, as to change of posture, but sweetly pleasant, and often slept for a good while. When awake, he delighted much in hearing me read hymns and tracts on faith and love. His words were all animating and his patience beyond what I can express. When he had any bitter or nauseous medicine to take, he seemed to enjoy the cross, reminding me of a word he used often to repeat: that our business was to seek a perfect conformity to the will of God, and then leave him to give us what comfort he saw good. I asked him, if he should be taken from me, whether he had any particular directions or orders to give me, since I desired to form my whole life thereby. He replied, ‘No, not by *mine*; the Holy Ghost shall direct thee. I have nothing particular to say, only that the Lord will open all before thee—and let not anyone bring thee into bondage. If I stay with thee, I will keep thee from oppression. But if I should be taken from thee, beware.’ I said, ‘Hast thou any conviction the Lord is about to take thee.’ He answered, ‘No, not in particular. Only I always see death so inexpressibly near that we both seem to stand as on the very verge of eternity.’ While he slept a little, I laid my trial before the Lord, entreating him, if it was his good pleasure, to spare my beloved husband a little longer. But my prayer seemed to have no wings. It was held down, and I could not help mingling continually therewith, ‘Lord give me perfect resignation.’

This uncertainty in my own mind made me rather tremble, lest the Lord was going to take the bitter cup out of my dear’s hand and give it unto me. The cup of separation he had for some weeks before very deeply drank of, when I myself was ill of the fever. At that time he often passed through the whole parting scene, and struggled for the fortitude of perfect resignation. Sometimes he would say at that season, ‘O Polly! Shall I ever see the day when thou must be carried out to bury. How will the little things thou wast accustomed to use, and all those which thy tender care has prepared for me in every part of the house, how will they wound and distress me! How is it I think I feel jealousy? I am jealous of the worm! I seem to shrink at giving my dear Polly to the worms!’

Now all these reflections returned with a millstone’s weight on my heart. I cried to the Lord, and those words were deeply impressed on my spirit. ‘Where I am, there shall my servants be, that they may

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<sup>4</sup>Cf. Matt. 23:37.



behold my glory.’<sup>5</sup> This promise was full of matter as well as unction to my soul. It explained itself thus—that in *Christ's immediate* presence was *our home*, and that we should find our reunion in being deeply centered in him. I received it as a fresh marriage for eternity. As such I still take and trust forever to hold it. All that day whenever I thought of this expression, ‘to behold my glory’,<sup>6</sup> it seemed to wipe every tear away, and was as the ring by which we were joined anew.

Awaking some time after, he said ‘Polly, I will tell you what I have been thinking of. It was Israel’s fault that they asked for *signs*. We will not do so. But abandoning our whole selves into the hands of God, we will there lie patiently before him, assured that he will do all things well.’

‘My dear love’, said I, ‘if ever I have done or said anything to grieve thee, how will the remembrance wound my heart, shouldst thou be taken from me.’ He entreated and charged me, with inexpressible tenderness, not to allow the thought; declaring his thankfulness for our union, in a variety of words written on my heart as with the adamant pen of friendship deeply dipped in blood.

On Wednesday, after groaning all day as it were under the weight of the power of God, he told me he had received such a manifestation of the full meaning of that word, ‘*God is love*’, as he could never be able to tell. ‘*It fills me*’, said he. ‘*It fills me* every moment. O Polly, my dear Polly! *God is love!* Shout, shout aloud! Oh it so fills me I want a gust of praise to go to the ends of the earth! But it seems as if I could not speak much longer. Let us fix on a sign between ourselves’ (tapping me twice with his dear finger). ‘Now I mean, *God is love, and we will draw each other into God. Observe! By this we will draw each other into God.*’

Sally coming in, he cried out, ‘O Sally! *God is love!*’<sup>7</sup> Shout both of you. I want to hear you shout his praise.’ Indeed it was a season of love. All this time the medical friend who attended him with unwearied diligence hoped he was in no danger. He knew it to be the fever. But as he had no bad headache, much sleep without the *least delirium*, and an almost regular pulse, seldom much quicker than my own, he thought the symptoms amazingly kind. For though the disease was commissioned to take his life, yet it seemed so restrained by the power of God that we truly discerned in it the verity of those words, ‘Death is yours!’<sup>8</sup>

On Thursday his speech began to fail. While he was able, he continued speaking to all who came in his way. Accidentally hearing that a stranger was in the house, he ordered her to be called up, though uttering two sentences almost made him faint. To his friendly doctor he would not be silent while he had any power of speech; often saying, ‘O sir, you take much thought for my body. Give me leave to take thought for your soul.’ And I believe his words will remain with that friend forever. When I could scarcely understand anything he said, I spake these words, ‘God is love!’ Instantly he caught them, as if all his powers were awakened afresh, and broke out in rapture, ‘*God is love! Love! Love!* O for that gust of praise I want to sound.’ Here his dear voice again failed. He was restless and often suffered many ways, but with such patience as none but those who were with him can conceive. If I named his sufferings, he would smile and make the sign.

On Friday, finding his dear body covered with spots, I so far understood them as to feel a sword pierce through my soul. As I was kneeling by his bed, with my hand in his, entreating the Lord to be with us in this tremendous hour, he strove to say many things, but could not. Pressing my hand and often repeating the sign, at last he breathed out, ‘Head of the church, be head to my wife.’<sup>9</sup> When for a few

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<sup>5</sup>Cf. John 17:24.

<sup>6</sup>Cf. John 17:24.

<sup>7</sup>Sarah Lawrance (c. 1756–1800), possibly a niece of Sarah Ryan, was taken in by Mary Bosanquet as a child, after the death of her mother. She remained the rest of her life with Bosanquet, as an associate and helper. See Moore, *Mary Fletcher*, 39, 185; and Mary (Bosanquet) Fletcher, ‘An Account of the Death of Sarah Lawrance’, *MM* 26 (1803): 160–67

<sup>8</sup>See 1 Cor. 3:22.

<sup>9</sup>Cf. Eph. 5:23.

moments I was forced to leave him, to gather up some sheets of one of his manuscripts which I feared would be lost, Sally said to him, 'My dear master, do you know *me*?' He replied, 'Sally, God will put his right hand under you.' She added, 'O my dear master, should you be taken away, what a disconsolate creature will my poor dear mistress be.' He replied, 'God will be her all in all.'

He had always delighted much in these words,

[...] Jesu's blood thro' earth and skies,  
Mercy, free, boundless mercy cries.<sup>10</sup>

And whenever I repeated them to him, would answer, '*Boundless! Boundless! Boundless!*' And in allusion to them, he now replied, though with great difficulty,

Mercy's *full* power I *soon* shall prove,  
Lov'd with an everlasting love.<sup>11</sup>

On Saturday afternoon his fever seemed quite off. And a few Christian friends standing near the bed, he reached his hand to each of them, and looking on a minister who was weeping by him, he said, 'Are you ready to assist tomorrow?' Which recollection of his amazed us much, as the day of the week had not been named in his room. Most about him could not but believe he was better, and would get over it. One said, 'Do you think that the Lord will raise you up?' He strove to answer, saying, 'raise in resur... raise in resur...', meaning in the resurrection. To another who asked the same question he said, '*I leave it all to God.*'

In the evening his fever returned with violence, and the mucus falling on the windpipe occasioned him to be almost strangled. He suffered greatly, and it was supposed the same painful emotion would continue and grow more violent to the last. This I felt most exquisitely, and cried to the Lord to remove it. And glory be to his name, he did remove it, and it returned no more in that way. As night drew on, I thought I perceived him dying very fast. His fingers could now hardly move to make the sign (which he seemed scarce ever to forget) and his speech, as it seemed, was quite gone. I said, 'My dear creature, I ask not for myself, *I know thy soul*, but for the sake of others: If Jesus is very present with thee, lift thy right hand.' He did so. I added, 'If the prospect of glory sweetly opens before thee, repeat the sign.' He then raised it again—and in half a minute a second time, then threw it up with all his remaining strength, as if he would reach the top of the bed. After this his dear hands moved no more. But on my saying, 'Art thou in much pain?' he answered, 'No.' From this time he entered into a state that might be called a kind of sleep, though with eyes open and fixed, and his hands utterly void of any motion. For the most part he sat upright against pillows, with his head a little inclined to one side. And so remarkably composed and triumphant was his countenance that the least trace of death was scarcely discernable in it.

Twenty-four hours my dearly beloved was in this situation, breathing like a person in common sleep. About thirty-five minutes past 10:00 on Sunday night, August 14th, his precious soul entered into the joy of the Lord,<sup>12</sup> without one struggle or groan—in the 56th year of his age.

Often he had said, when hearing of happy deaths, 'Well, let us get holy lives, and we will leave the rest to God.' But I, who was scarce a minute at a time from him night or day, can truly say that there was the strongest reason to believe,

No cloud did arise to darken the skies,

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<sup>10</sup>Johann Andreas Rothe (trans. JW), 'Redemption Found', st. 3, *HSP* (1740), 92.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, st. 6.

<sup>12</sup>Cf. Matt. 25:21, 23.

Or hide for one moment his Lord from his eyes.<sup>13</sup>

And here, I break off my mournful story. I could say abundance more, but on my bleeding heart his fair picture of heavenly excellence will be forever drawn. When I call to mind his ardent zeal, his labourious endeavours to seek and save the lost, his diligence in the employment of his time, his Christ-like condescension towards me, and his uninterrupted converse with heaven, I may well be allowed to add, my loss is beyond the power of words to paint. O sir, you know I have trodden deep waters, but *all my afflictions were nothing compared to this*. Well. I want no pleasant prospect but upwards, nor anything whereon to fix my hope but *immortality*.

On the 17th his dear remains were deposited in Madeley churchyard; amidst the tears and lamentations of thousands, who flocked about the bier of their dead pastor. Between the house and church they sung these verses:

With heavenly weapons, he hath fought  
The battles of the Lord;  
Finish'd his course, and kept the faith,  
And gain'd the great reward.

God hath laid up in heaven for him,  
A crown which cannot fade;  
The righteous Judge at that great day,  
Shall place it on his head.<sup>14</sup>

The service was performed by the Rev. Mr. [Thomas] Hatton, rector of Waters Upton, whom the Lord moved, in a pathetic manner, to speak to his weeping flock on the sad occasion. In the conclusion at my request he read the following paper.

As it was the desire of my beloved husband to be buried in this plain manner, so out of tenderness he begged that I might not be present; and in all things I would obey him.

Permit me then to take this opportunity, by the mouth of a friend, to bear my open testimony to the glory of God that I who have known him in the most perfect manner, am constrained to declare I never knew anyone walk so closely in the ways of God as he did. The Lord gave him a conscience tender as the apple of an eye. He literally preferred the interest of everyone to his own. He was rigidly just, but perfectly loose from all attachment to the world. He shared *his all* with the poor, who lay so close to his heart that on the approach of death, though his speech was so gone he could utter nothing without difficulty, he cried out, '*O my poor! What will become of my poor! I am dead to my poor!*' He was blest with so great a degree of humility as is scarcely to be found. I am witness how often he has taken a real pleasure in being treated with contempt; indeed it seemed the very food of his soul to be little and unknown. When he said to me, 'Thou wilt write a line or two to my brother in Switzerland if I die.' I replied, 'My dear love, I will write him all the Lord's dealings with thee.' 'No, no', said he, 'write nothing about me. I desire to be forgotten—*God is all.*'

His zeal for souls I need not tell to you. Let the labour of twenty-five years, and a martyr's death in the conclusion, imprint it on your hearts. His diligent visitation of the sick laid, to appearance, the foundation of the spotted fever which, by God's commission, tore him from you and me. And his vehement desire to take his last leave of you, with dying lips and hands,

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<sup>13</sup>Cf. CW, 'Hymns for Believers, #18', st. 5, *HSP* (1749), 1:221.

<sup>14</sup>Isaac Watts, 'The Assurance of Heaven, or a Saint prepared to die', sts. 2–3, *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* (1709), 23.

gave (it is supposed) the finishing stroke, by preparing his blood for putrefaction. Thus hath he lived and died your servant—*And will any of you refuse to meet him at God's right hand in that day?*

He walked with death always in sight. And about two months ago he came to me one day and said, 'My dear love, I know not how it is, but I have a strange impression death is very near us, as if it would be some sudden stroke upon one of us; and it draws out all my soul in prayer that we may be ready.' He then broke out, '*Lord prepare the soul thou wilt call; and oh stand by the poor disconsolate one who shall be left behind.*'

A few days before his departure he was filled with love in an uncommon manner, saying to me, 'I have had such a discovery of the depth of that word, "*God is love!*" as I cannot tell the half. But it *fills* me, it *fills* me. O Polly! My dear Polly, *God is love!* Shout his praise. I want a *gust of praise to reach to the ends of the earth.*' And the same he testified as long as he had voice. And continued to testify to the end, by a most *lamb-like patience*, in which he victoriously smiled at death and set his last seal to those glorious truths he had so long preached among you.

*Three years, nine months, and two days* I have possessed my *heavenly-minded husband*. But now the sun of my earthly joy *is set forever*, and my soul filled with an anguish, which only finds its consolation in a total *abandonment* and *resignation* to the will of God: an exercise to which my dear creature and I had of late been particularly drawn. When I was asking the Lord if he pleased to spare him to me a little longer, the following answer was impressed on my mind with great power, and in the accomplishment of this word of promise, *I look for our reunion*. 'Where I am, there shall my servants be, that they may behold my glory.'<sup>15</sup> Lord hasten the hour.

I am, reverend and dear sir, etc.

Mary Fletcher

Source: published transcription; Moore, *Mary Fletcher*, 165–75.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Cf. John 12:26.

<sup>16</sup>Mary gave a copy of this letter to John Fletcher's old friend Winifred Edmonds, so that her son could published it to distribute to parishioners and others: Mary Fletcher, *A Letter to the Rev. Mr. Wesley on the Death of the Rev. Mr. Fletcher, Vicar of Madeley in Shropshire* (Madeley: John Edmunds, 1785). In a letter to Mary, Sept. 16, 1785, JW characterized this published form as: 'with some little variations, I think for the worse!'

From Thomas Wride

Hull  
August 28, 1785

Reverend Sir,

I am under the necessity of troubling you with this, for fear misinformation should make you misjudge my conduct.<sup>1</sup>

I was in a fever the 12th of July, so that I was in bed until noon. The 13th and 14th I was wholly laid up, and on the 15[th] confined in bed until noon.

Sunday the 17th I was so ill that I could not venture to go in the preaching house of Epworth during the time of the love feast, so that it was concluded by most, and doubted by myself, that I could not sustain the journey to London. But weak and almost stomachless as I was, on Monday the 18th I embraced the favour of your invitation [to attend Conference<sup>2</sup>], set out, mended as I proceeded, and was better when I got to London than when I started.

In London I still grew better. And when on Thursday the 4th of August I set out for Lincolnshire, I had no doubt of getting there with ease. But on Friday the 5th I had a return of the fever, so that I could hardly support. I had also a very painful inflammation in [my] anus, together with what seemed to be an abscess, which made me apprehensive of an approaching fistula. I could hardly bear horse or chair, or indeed to lie in any other posture than on my face. These things made me glad on the 6th to turn off the road unto Shillington, where I stayed that and the following night. And it was with great difficulty that on Monday the 8th I got as far as Newark[-on-Trent], where I found brother Hardcastle sick in a fever and delirious at intervals.<sup>3</sup>

I left Newark on Tuesday the 9th, but could get no further than Newton[-on-Trent], which I left the next day, but was so bad on the road by the fever, as well as by uneasy sitting, that I was obliged twice to make use of the grass for a bed, and got no further than Gainsborough that night.

From Gainsborough to Epworth (10 compu[te]d miles) proved too far for on Thursday the 11th. So that with getting to Epworth on Friday noon, packing my box, etc., etc., I was no farther than Thorne on Sunday the 14th. And it took me till Wednesday the 17th to get unto my wife [Jane] at Welburn.

What haste I could make, I did make, to dispose of the few household goods which my wife had got. And to pay the few debts of her deceased mother and herself, and provide for her removal, took me until Friday the 26th, when I set off for Beverley. And yesterday I came to [Kingston upon] Hull. And as I had to procure a lodging for my wife here, while she may have to wait for a vessel for Yarmouth, I take the opportunity to write these lines.

My wife (God willing) will set off by a keel from Malton on Wednesday next, and may be expected at Hull on Friday. A Yarmouth vessel is to sail from hence on Wednesday (two days too soon for my wife) so that it is quite uncertain when another may be ready.

Tomorrow morning I intend to go over the Humber and make the best of my way for Norwich, leaving my wife to get the first opportunity to follow me, either by way of Lynn or Yarmouth, as it may happen.

The above, sir, is the true and only reasons why I am so long from my circuit, and I thought best to trouble you with this lest the people, not knowing the cause, should trouble you with complaints and

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<sup>1</sup>At the 1785 Conference in early Aug. Wride was appointed the Assistant for the Norwich circuit. He is writing to explain his delay in getting moved to the new setting from Epworth, where he had been serving.

<sup>2</sup>See JW to Wride, July 8, 1785, *Works*, 30:353.

<sup>3</sup>Philip Hardcastle (1756–1839) was admitted 'on trial' as an itinerant in 1781 (see *Works*, 10:507). He was currently Assistant for the Thirsk circuit. He would desist travelling before the 1786 Conference (see 10:597–98).

induce you to think of me worse than what is really true.

My wife is very well satisfied with her appointment, although to one so little used to travel it will be a long journey. She desired that when I wrote I would give her duty unto you and thank you for the provision you made for her. I am, reverend sir,

Your dutiful son,

[Tho. Wride]

*Source:* Wride's manuscript draft; Duke, Rubenstein, Frank Baker Collection of Wesleyana, Box CO9, Thomas Wride papers.

From Thomas Wride

Norwich  
September 7[–10], 1785

Reverend Sir,

Although I have so lately wrote unto you, yet I judge it needful to trouble you again, because there are great complaints for want of preaching. We hear nothing of brother [Thomas] Jones.<sup>1</sup> I suppose it is because his place at the school was not filled.

I am afraid that we shall suffer loss in the country if we do not get help soon. Last Monday Dr. [John] Hunt came to offer help in some of the country places.<sup>2</sup> I was not in the way. He came again and found me. I thanked him for his offer, but told him I hoped that we should do without; that I had wrote today for help, which I hoped would soon arrive. This was true, for I had occasion to write to Mr. [John] Atlay. So I spoke unto him whether or no he could get brother Lake Houlton<sup>3</sup> to come and help us until we could get brother Jones or someone else to fill the circuit.

Dr. Hunt has lately got a man to be his preacher, who has been ordained and is ducking of the folks by wholesale.<sup>4</sup> It appears they have dipped 70 of late. For all this ordaining and dipping is since the time that brother [Jonathan] Coussins went from hence to the Conference.

The wild man (Mr. H[unt]) vapours much about this 'great work', the like of which he says 'has not be known since the days of the apostles'. I suppose *they* had not learned his art of proselyting—for those who shall come to him, he will reward by practicing on them his healing art gratis (they 'paying for the medicines'). And for farther encouragement, he shall procure husbands and wives for the single proselytes.

And he not only insinuates, but also says, that Wesley and himself are all one. For these pretty arts I choose to hold him at a greater distance than if he was always a bitter railer—this not being likely to be attended with such bad consequences as his present proceedings.

It is not unlikely sir but what you know that Robert Turner is dead. His much distressed and almost inconsolable widow,<sup>5</sup> to perpetuate his memory and publish her own incomparable poetical talents, has erected a monument in the preaching house, without any leave obtained or asked of you. The following is an exact copy of what is cut on the monument:

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas Jones had been admitted on trial at the 1785 Conference, and assigned to Norwich (see *Works*, 10:568–69). He apparently could not take the assignment, as he was admitted on trial again in 1786 (10:596). Jones last appeared with an appointment in the 1792 *Minutes*.

<sup>2</sup>John Hunt (c. 1738–1824), of Norwich, was a surgeon by trade and ornithologist by avocation. He was also a spiritual 'seeker', aligning himself at various times with Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, and others; but most at home among the Methodists in later years. Hunt lived on Ber Street, and his garden included a summer house. In 1781 he licensed this house with the bishop for religious worship, and called it Ebenezer chapel. JW preached there in 1781 and 1783. Hunt and his wife Susanna eventually retired to Gissing in south Norfolk (see *Norfolk Chronicle*, July 3, 1824).

<sup>3</sup>Lake Houlton (c. 1739–1816) was a prominent member of City Road society in London (now buried there), who apparently served as a lay exhorter. Wride spells 'Leak'.

<sup>4</sup>Dr. Hunt was currently leaning toward the Baptists. He had just brought Richard Wright (1764–1836), of Blakeney, Norfolk) to pastor his chapel on Ber Street. Wright was ordained by Daniel Taylor, but stayed at Ber Street just over a year, before affiliating with a different Baptist church in Norwich. Wright eventually became a leader in the Unitarian movement. See Maurice F. Hewett, 'The Story of Pottergate and Ber Street Churches', *Baptist Quarterly* 12.3–4 (1946): 98–106.

<sup>5</sup>Robert Turner (1735–84) married Susanna Cooke in Norwich in 1774.

In memory of  
Robert Turner,  
who died November 29th 1784. Aged 49

My sudden stroke to you my friends was known  
Therefore prepare, to you it next may come.  
Trim up your lamps, let them bright burning be;  
For death may summons you as he did me.  
No double dealings touched this just man's heart;  
But honesty pervaded ev'ry part.  
Plain Jacob's manners flourish'd on his ground;  
And Esau's subtlety no favour found.

Mr. Proud, of Long Preston in Lincolnshire, came to Norwich to assist in 'laying of hands' on Mr. Hunt's man.<sup>6</sup> But he killed two birds with one stone, for he also laid hands on the widow Turner, and turned her into a wife—to *his* as well as her great consolation.<sup>7</sup> For the poor man was himself a widower, and had been such for a whole month.

Last Tuesday I was invited to drink tea. In the company was Mr. Proud and sundry of Mrs. Turner's relations (I should have said Mr. Proud's relations). Mrs. Proud was also of the company. By some things which passed in conversation, I found that Mr. Proud was a preacher, but I knew not of what denomination, or that any scheme was in hand. But in the evening came some to me to tell me that Mr. Proud was a good man, of a very good moral deportment, a friend unto the Methodists. That his father also was a preacher, and had introduced the Methodist preachers into several places, etc. That several relations of Mrs. Proud were in the society and they expected that I would let Mr. Proud preach. That there was no difference between him and us, only but 'baptism' (dipping). I told them I could not do it. They were not easily denied, but I would not yield.

Norwich abounds in tunes not our own, and it seems an invasion of their prerogative to set a tune for them.<sup>8</sup> I began on Sunday morning to set the tunes, but at the two o'clock preaching our capital singer<sup>9</sup> set out as soon as me; he in one tune, and I in another. The tune he set out in was unknown to me, but I continued until he ceased. As soon as I rose from prayer, they began singing of somewhat I know not what. But I stopped them, telling them that we had not time for such things. On Monday he let me know what they had been accustomed unto: viz., 'to sing three or four verses' before the text was given out. 'The preacher sometimes sits down the while, or as he pleases.' I told *him* and the rest, that I did not approve of such things. That it was contrary to commonsense for any to sing what they pleased, independent of the preacher, as what they choose to sing may be as wide of the subject to be delivered that they may no more agree than a harp and a harrow.

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<sup>6</sup>Joseph Proud (1745–1826) was the son of Rev. John Proud, General Baptist pastor in Wisbech, Cambridgeshire. Joseph trained for ministry under his father, and in 1772 took his own church in Knipton. By 1775 Proud was pastor of a General Baptist church in Fleet, Lincolnshire. His introduction of singing into the worship service there led to tension, and in 1786 Proud left Fleet, to take over the Ber Street church supported by Dr. Hunt in Norwich. Eventually Proud was drawn to the Swedenborgians. See Maurice F. Hewett, 'The Story of Pottergate and Ber Street Churches', *Baptist Quarterly* 12.3–4 (1946): 98–106; and Ernest A. Payne, 'Joseph Proud', *Baptist Quarterly* 23.6 (1970): 280–82.

<sup>7</sup>Joseph Proud married Susanna (Cooke) Turner (1749–1826) at St. Paul church, Norwich, on Aug. 28, 1785.

<sup>8</sup>See the somewhat fuller account of what follows, from a note sheet of Wride, given at the end of this letter.

<sup>9</sup>This was apparently James Hey; see below.



But this was not *all* that I objected unto, for hereby often people took the liberty to introduce hymns that were never adopted by the Methodists; and by displacing of fine words turned fine sense into gross nonsense. I instanced the introducing of that doxology in the communion service 'Therefore with angels and archangels, ...'.<sup>10</sup> I endeavoured to show the absurdity of beginning with an illative conjunction, and told them that notwithstanding it was declaring war with commonsense, it had taken place in some of our preaching houses, and that I had been the displeasure of some because I would not let it be done when I was going to preach. I gained this point tolerably easy.

But the right of choosing the tunes was claimed by right of long possession. I could not admit the claim, objecting that by this liberty of choosing what tunes they pleased we were rendered barbarians to each other. For if preachers and hearers removed a little from home, they could not join in singing. They must either not sing at all, or else singing as they have been accustomed to do, they must make such discords as would be very disagreeable to any musical care. I told them that it was much to be desired that our singing should be uniform, and for this end Mr. Wesley had caused the approved tunes of the Methodists to be published, desiring that all our congregations would sing them. But it was said that many of the tunes that were among Lady Huntingdon's people were finer than ours, etc. I told them that for argument's sake I would suppose it, yet it amounted to nothing. For the ear differed in music as much as the palate in meat. And therefore some must be allowed what tunes to choose, and it seemed to me to be a contradiction to call ourselves 'Mr. Wesley's people' and at the same time go contrary to his reported desire. It is true in word he seemed willing you should rule. But I told him 'You will allow Mr. Wesley to govern, only you will be viceroy over him!'

He told me that he had been at considerable trouble and some expense to learn to sign, etc., etc. I told him that if he had made any proficiency, it would be no great trouble to learn our tunes. That if he would do so, when he had learned any considerable part of them he might give me a list of the names, enlarging of the list as fast as he learned the tunes, then I would tell the name of the tunes and he might set it. That if he would do this, I would thank him and save myself. But upon the whole he was not satisfied, and the penalty inflicted upon me is that he will not sing. Be it so as long as he chooses. The congregation loses nothing by it. My voice is sufficient for Norwich house, and although it is not capital, yet is not deemed contemptible. The people can and do follow me to as good purpose as they did him. And I suppose I can sing near an hundred of our adopted tunes.

Last night, at meeting of the leaders, I told them we were all confusion. That I could see little hope of prosperity except we set up discipline. For on Sunday evening, when I undertook to meet the society, it appeared that we had more than double the number present. This is entirely owing to the not showing of tickets. If I could get some faithful helpers, this soon may be remedied. That it would be no great trouble to bring and show a ticket. That none of sense would be displeased, etc.

Secondly, I spoke about collecting of the children together. I told them of some of the good I had seen by this means, desiring they would use their influence with their parents, and get them to send their children, etc., etc. Some other things were mentioned. I told them that I could do nothing to any purpose unless they would help me, and that in earnest, showing no respect of person. And if any came without ticket (or a note), send them back to fetch it. That I was content to bear all the blame for them; and if they kept back my wife, I would thank them for it.

Now sir, if we agree in doing as well as we did in talking, I hope you will have a good account of Norwich. For the leaders promised they would help me all they could, and expressed themselves pleased at the prospect of having discipline restored and the children cared for.

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<sup>10</sup>The Trisagion, a doxology used in the BCP Communion service.

I could not finish according to date. Therefore I have opportunity to add that while I was copying of the monument, I received the favour of your approbation and advice per letter from Bristol.<sup>11</sup> I thank you sir for the same, and hope you will find your desire fulfilled to your satisfaction and the disappointment of those who wish otherwise.

Last night (viz., Friday, September the 9th) I met with the few who meet as a select band. There were seven present.<sup>12</sup> Six of them gave a plain, rational account of the work of God, such as may well be received by such as are not prejudiced against the hated doctrine of *perfection*. One who used to meet (viz., Ann Fisher) was not present, being sick of a fever, and whom I intend, God willing, to visit today.

This brings to memory a point which I forgot in proper place. At the meeting of the leaders I desired they would make a point of giving in writing an account of every sick member in their respective classes—their name and place of abode—that the preacher on the spot may visit them. For it was a shame that a preacher should be so long in Norwich and not visit the sick. I hope this point will be regarded, as none refused. But it did not seem as if they were so hearty in this as in the things before mentioned.

My paper fills. Therefore, sir, I must beg you to send us a preacher without delay. Our wheels are clogged, and we may needs be embarrassed until we have the third preacher.

Brother M'Kersey<sup>13</sup> has no horse. I hope, sir, that whom you send will have one, or we are like to stick in the mud. We cannot do without two horses, and I do not see how we can buy one.

I got to Norwich on Saturday the 3rd, late in the evening, and my wife, above my hopes, was here on the evening of Monday the 5th. She desires her duty unto you. I am, reverend sir,

Your dutiful son,

Thomas Wride

*Source:* Wride's manuscript draft; Duke, Rubenstein, Frank Baker Collection of Wesleyana, Box CO9, Thomas Wride papers.

**[On a separate page Wride recorded these notes about his conflict with the congregation in Norwich over singing]**

The first day I preached at Norwich, as soon as I rose from prayer, Hey burst out singing 'Hark how the gospel trumpet sounds, ...'.<sup>14</sup> I stopped him, telling them we have not time for such things.

The next day the Heys<sup>15</sup> told me that they had been 'used to sing three or four verses before the text, and the preacher sit down the while, or as he please.' In reasoning with them, I told them that it was a contradiction to call ourselves Mr. Wesley's people and at the same time go contrary to his repeated desire. I told if they would learn Mr. Wesley's tunes, and let me know of the tunes they could sing as fast

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<sup>11</sup>JW to Thomas Wride, Sept. 5, 1785, *Works*, 30:375–76.

<sup>12</sup>The membership of the select society in Norwich in 1786 included Esther Chamberlain, Mary Flight, Ann Fisher, Edward Flegg, Rebecca Sydney, Robert Campion, Philip Boardman, William Booty, and Jane Marker. See David Hart, 'The Emergence and Development of Wesleyanism in Norwich; 1754 - 1802' (University of Manchester Ph.d. thesis, 2010), 225.

<sup>13</sup>John M'Kersey (d. 1800) was admitted on trial as a travelling preacher in 1784 (see *Works*, 10:553) and assigned to Norwich the following year. He was not advanced to full status until 1790 (10:711), perhaps because of some of the issues Wride raised in these letters. See Atmore, *Memorial*, 236–37; and *Minutes* (post-Wesley, 1800), 2:43. Wride consistently spelled the name 'Muckarsay'.

<sup>14</sup>A hymn in Spence's *Pocket Hymn Book* (1783) that JW omitted in his *Pocket Hymn Book* (1785).

<sup>15</sup>Wride's conflict with the Norwich society over music focussed on two brothers, George Hey (b. 1754) and James Hey (c. 1755–1805).

as they learned them, I would tell them the tune [and] leave it for them to set it, save myself the trouble, and thank them. Much altercation passed about the tunes of the Countess [of Huntingdon], and how much better; this for argument's sake I allowed, but said that the ear differed as much as the tongue; that some must set the rule or all would be confusion, etc., etc., etc.

The same week, I think it was on the Tuesday, I was asked at to tea. Mr. and Mrs. Proud was in the company. James Hey, I think it was, on the road back introduced the talk about Mr. Proud; want me to let one Proud preach in our house—there was not difference between him and us, 'only baptism'; that many of the society were related to Mrs. Proud and they expected him to preach. But they did not tell me that Proud had wrote before that if he could get a place in Norwich he did not doubt but he could get the most of Mr. Wesley's people.

The nonsense of Mrs. T[urner] (called poetry)

In pursuance of Mr. Wesley's direction I desired brother Muckersay to sing but twice. But still I sang three times. Mr. Wesley's letter on that head was as little regarded. For although he did not give out three times for them, yet he let them sing what they pleased, and the second among their choice was that of Mr. R which is a tune and measure unknown by the Methodists. N.B. they used to sing anthems and fugues. Mr. Wesley's letter expressly direct to M J and brother, enjoined them to sing no more than twice at one service 'if you stay with me', etc.

S. H. caused two letters from L?? to prevent my going on the Yarmouth circuit. The consequences were very unfavourable.

From the Rev. Charles Wesley

Marylebone [London]  
September 8, 1785

Dear Brother,

I will tell you my thoughts with the same simplicity.<sup>1</sup> There is no danger of our quarrelling. For the second blow makes the quarrel, and you are the last man upon earth whom I should wish to quarrel with.

That juvenile line of mine, 'heathenish priests, and mitred infidels',<sup>2</sup> I disown, renounce, and with shame recant. I never knew of more than one mitred infidel, and for him I took Mr. [William] Law's word.

I don't understand what 'obedience to the bishops' you dread. They have let us alone and left us to act just as we pleased for these 50 years. At present some of them are quite friendly toward us, particularly toward you. The churches are all open to you, and never could there be less pretence for a separation.

That you are a scriptural ἐπίσκοπος, or overseer, I don't dispute. And so is every minister who has the cure of souls. Neither *need* we dispute whether the uninterrupted succession be fabulous, as you believe; or real, as I believe. Or whether Lord King be right or wrong.<sup>3</sup>

Your definition of the Church of England is the same in prose with mine in verse. (By the way, read over my *Epistle* to oblige me,<sup>4</sup> and tell me you have read it, and likewise your own *Reasons*.<sup>5</sup>)

You write, 'All those reasons against a separation from the Church, I subscribe to still. What then are you frightened at? I no more separate from it than I did in the year 1758. I submit still to its bishops. I do indeed vary from them in some points of discipline (by preaching abroad, for instance, by praying extempore, and by forming societies).' (Might you not add, *and by ordaining*?) 'I walk still by the same rule I have done for between 40 and 50 years. I do nothing rashly!'

If I *could* prove your actual separation, I *would* not; neither wish to see it proved by any other. But do you not allow that the Dr.<sup>6</sup> has separated? Do you not know and approve [of] his avowed design and resolution to get all the Methodists of the three kingdoms<sup>7</sup> into a distinct, *compact body*, a new *episcopal* church of his own? Have you seen his ordination sermon?<sup>8</sup> Is 'the high-day of *his* blood over'?

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<sup>1</sup>CW is replying to JW's letter of Aug. 19, 1785, which opened with the same line; *Works*, 30:366–68.

<sup>2</sup>CW, *Elegy on Robert Jones* (Bristol: Farley, 1742), l. 388, p. 19.

<sup>3</sup>Referring to JW's claim in his letter to 'Our American Brethren', Sept. 10, 1784 (*Works*, 30:268–70), that Peter King's *An Enquiry into the Constitution, Discipline, Unity, and Worship of the Primitive Church* (1691) convinced him many years before that bishops and presbyters were the same order, and consequently had the same right to ordain.

<sup>4</sup>CW, *An Epistle to the Reverend Mr. John Wesley* (London: [Strahan,] 1755).

<sup>5</sup>JW, *Reasons against a Separation from the Church of England*, *Works*, 9:334–49.

<sup>6</sup>I.e., Thomas Coke.

<sup>7</sup>England, Scotland, and Ireland.

<sup>8</sup>Thomas Coke, *The Substance of a Sermon, preached at Baltimore, in the state of Maryland, before the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, on the 27th of December, 1784, at the ordination of the Rev. Francis Asbury, to the Office of a Superintendent* (London: W. Paramore, 1785). See also the rebuttal (which some attribute to CW): A Methodist of the Church of England, *Strictures on 'The Substance of a Sermon preached at Baltimore in the state of Maryland, Before the general conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, On the 27th of December 1784: At the Ordination of the Rev. Francis Asbury, to the Office of Superintendent'.* By Thomas Coke, L.L.D. Superintendent of the said

Does *he* 'do nothing rashly'?<sup>9</sup> Have you not made yourself the author of all his actions? I need not remind you, *Qui facit per alium, facit per se*.<sup>10</sup>

I must not leave unanswered your surprising question, 'What then are you frightened at?' At the Doctor's rashness, and your supporting him in his ambitious pursuits. At an approaching schism, as causeless and unprovoked as the American rebellion. At your own eternal disgrace, and all those frightful evils which your *Reasons* describe.

'If you will go on hand in hand with me, do.'<sup>11</sup> I do go (or rather creep) on, in the old way in which we set out together, and trust to continue in it till I finish my course.

'Perhaps if you had kept close to me, I might have done better.'<sup>12</sup> When you took that fatal step at Bristol, I kept as close to you as close could be; for I was all the time at your elbow.<sup>13</sup> You might certainly have done better, if you had taken me into your council.

I thank you for your intention to remain my friend. Herein my heart is as your heart. Whom God hath joined, let not man put asunder. We have taken each other for better for worse, till death do us—part?<sup>14</sup> No: but unite eternally. Therefore in the love which never faileth, I am,

Your affectionate friend and brother,

C. Wesley

*Source:* CW's manuscript copy for his records; MARC, MA 1977/157, JW V.III, pp. 27–29.

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*Church*. (London: G. Herdsfield, [1785]).

<sup>9</sup>JW had insisted in his letter: 'I do nothing rashly [...] The high-day of my blood is over.'

<sup>10</sup>'The one who acts through another, does the act himself.'

<sup>11</sup>CW quotes JW's letter.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid*.

<sup>13</sup>CW was in Bristol Sept. 1–2, 1784, when JW performed the ordinations privately, without consulting him.

<sup>14</sup>See BCP, Solemnization of Matrimony.

From Mary Cooke<sup>1</sup>

Trowbridge  
September 15, 1785

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Was it in my power to oblige you, your request should meet a ready compliance. This, yea even *this* desire, of sending you a few copies of verses should be granted, had I any by me of the kind you wish to see. But the simple truth of the case runs thus. Before religion (save that of outward show) had any influence over me, I used sometimes to indulge myself by addressing a few poetic lines to one or two particular friends, whose partial eye would easily overlook the many errors of an incorrect pen. But when conviction laid hold on my heart, it was of too deep a nature to admit of aught besides itself. I once or twice attempted to write, but found it to be an impracticable task. Something within still whispered, 'Is this the one thing needful, which alone thy mind should now pursue?' Even the serious muse, I feared, was too trifling a guest to be entertained; because it might for some moments draw my thoughts from what I deemed the only important consideration of 'what must I do to be saved?'

Besides, distress of the most poignant kind had taken from me all power of recollection, and the relish for *every* thing which I had before found delightful. It allowed me liberty only in the use of groans and tears, and made me fly with abhorrence [from] everything that looked pleasing to former-self, although if rightly pursued it had no evil in it. Those verses on the death of my dear valuable aunt were<sup>2</sup> rather the effect of aroused tenderness than deliberate choice.<sup>3</sup> The stoical assertion of unfeeling apathy alarmed my affection, and drew the lines from my pen, which had otherwise lain useless by me.

Since that time inclination has not lent its aid. Nor have I composed one poetic piece, the length whereof extends to half a dozen lines. Vain is the wish, but often have I formed it, that that copy you already have was once more in my possession—then should the flames presently kindle around it. I know not how to blame Miss Perry for your having it. And yet there somewhere is a fault. Was I to desire you to correct where needful, it would go right to its destruction, for then I am well aware your amazing pen must run through nearly every line. But let me rather say, oblige me, my dear sir, by burning this unlucky paper, and thus consume the memory and the substance both together. I know not if it be pride in the fair semblance of humility which pleads so strongly for the destruction. If it is, methinks I could be content that it should be mortified. Sometimes I think my uneasiness at *your* being possessed of these verses springs from this principle, which cannot bear to appear so little on so great an occasion. However they are not worthy contention, and I must of mere necessity give them to your discretion.

Permit me a few moments longer to trespass on your time, just to tell you that my soul has been abundantly blessed by your visit to Trowbridge. Whilst here, and since you left us, I have felt a degree of happiness which before I never experienced. In riding from Bradford on Friday evening, I began to reflect

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<sup>1</sup>Mary Cooke (1760–1836) was the eldest daughter of John Cooke (d. 1792), a clothier in Trowbridge, Wiltshire, and his second wife Mary Pitney (1742–1809). Although her immediate family remained staunch members of the Church of England, they were supportive of Methodist preachers, including Adam Clarke who was stationed in nearby Bradford in 1782. JW had just met Mary Cooke and wrote expressing interest in her poetry (see JW to Cooke, Sept. 10, 1785, *Works*, 30:376). Thus began an exchange of letters that continued even after Cooke married Adam Clarke in 1788. See Mary Ann Cooke Smith, *Mrs. Adam Clarke* (London: Partridge and Oakey, 1851).

<sup>2</sup>Orig., 'was'.

<sup>3</sup>Joanna (Cooke) Turner (1732–84), Mary's aunt, was a prominent figure in the Methodist society at Trowbridge. Mary's poem on her death was dated Dec. 27, 1784. JW eventually persuaded Mary to allow its publication; see 'On the Death of Mrs. Turner' By Miss C., *AM* 13 (1790): 223–24.

on the particular occurrences of the two past days,<sup>4</sup> and became a wonder to myself while I remembered the great freedom I had felt in conversation, which used to be a sore burden to me. But this pleasing thought was more than over-balanced by consideration of the little profit I had gained from your last sermon, owing to the unsettled status of my mind, which remained fixed scarcely a minute together. I was much grieved thereby and greatly cast down. Yet I began to think: 'Religion is the only happiness. I know but little of it, and that chiefly the most painful part. And yet I would not give up that little for all the world; nay, nor for all ten thousand worlds could offer.' Scarcely had the thought passed my mind, when such a sweet peace flowed into my soul as is not to be described. It was truly a little heaven opened in my breast. Saturday it greatly increased. O how did my heart overflow with universal love! All was a new world. And had I then received an injury, I do not think I could have been angry even with the injurer. I could not give place to an evil thought of anyone. Scarcely I knew distinction, but with my whole heart I wished to give to friends and foes, to strangers and acquaintance[s], happiness similar to that I now enjoyed. I could experimentally witness the pleasures of religion, and wanted others to 'taste and see how good the Lord is'.<sup>5</sup> If for a few minutes I felt not that overflow of joy, yet my soul in a sweet recollected frame naturally aspired upward, as to her home, and found in God an all-sufficient good. Not all below the skies could excite the least desire, or claim a wish. If this be the wages our Master gives, let me beg an interest in your powerful prayers that I continue to seek and serve him, until I resign my soul into the hands of him who gave it. If a sip be such a blessing, oh for an abundant increase! Till my thirsty soul shall drink full draughts of love!

Independent of this last peculiar blessing, I feel much strengthened and encouraged since Thursday last. My drooping hopes are cheered, and my fainting spirit greatly revived through the instrumentality of your coming.

One favour conferred, emboldens me to ask a second: which is that if your useful life be spared (O may it be lengthened far beyond the usual date of man!) you will repeat your visit in the spring. Beggars are importunate, if troublesomely so, yet their wants are generally allowed to plead their excuse. Thus let it be with me. Consider what I have received, and what I farther want, and then say, can I ask too much?

With a father's tenderest love, forget whatever I have said amiss. And if in any part I have been too free, oh impute it not to a want of reverence: for then my heart would bleed! But rather think it proceeds from that amazing freedom with which you kindly treated me, whilst by encouraging me to unreserve, you condescendingly listened to, advised, and set me forward.

If my letter is already too long, excuses will serve only to heighten, instead of extenuating my fault. Therefore without adding a single one, my pen in obedience to the dictates of my heart, shall with venerating esteem subscribe, which in verity I am,

Your obliged and ever grateful,

M. C—

P.S. My sisters desire to be respectfully remembered to Mr. Wesley.<sup>6</sup>

*Endorsement:* 'Answer to Mr. Wesley's 1st Letter'.

*Source:* manuscript copy for records; Bridwell Library (SMU), Mary Cooke Letter-book, p. 1.

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<sup>4</sup>JW preached in Trowbridge on Sept. 8, 1785, and the following day in Bradford-on-Avon; see *Journal, Works*, 23:376. After hearing JW in Trowbridge, Mary travelled to Bradford to hear him again. JW's letter to Mary was written the following morning.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. Ps. 34:8.

<sup>6</sup>Two of Mary's sisters, Frances Cooke (1767–1823) and Anne Cooke (1771–1820), were also active in the Methodist society in Trowbridge. Both married London Methodists and are buried at City Road chapel. Frances married James Pond (d. 1854) in 1790; and Anne married Joseph Butterworth (1770–1826) in 1791.

From the Rev. Charles Wesley<sup>1</sup>

London  
September 19, 1785

Dear Brother,

I did not say 'you separate from the Church'. But I did say, if I *could* prove it I *would* not.

That 'sad truth' is not a new truth.<sup>2</sup> You saw it, when you expressed in your *Reasons* such tenderness of love for the unconverted clergy.

Of your second Thomas Walsh we had better talk than write.<sup>3</sup>

How 'confound their intellect'? How weaken your hands?<sup>4</sup> I know nothing which I do to prevent the *possible* separation, but pray. God forbid I should sin against him by ceasing to pray for the Church of England and for you, while any breath remains in me. I am,

Your affectionate brother.

*Source:* CW's manuscript copy for his records; MARC, DDWes 3/60 (on JW's letter of Sept. 13).

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<sup>1</sup>CW is replying to JW's letter of Sept. 13, 1785, *Works*, 30:379.

<sup>2</sup>The line about 'heathenish priests and mitred infidels' cited in JW to CW, Aug. 19, 1785, *Works*, 30:366–68.

<sup>3</sup>JW had defended Thomas Coke against CW's criticisms, asserting 'he is now such a right hand to me as Thomas Walsh was'.

<sup>4</sup>JW had pleaded with CW 'do not confound the intellects of the people in London', for it would weaken his hand.



From Mary Cooke

Trowbridge  
September 23, 1785

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Last Tuesday [Sept. 20], when I had the pleasure of seeing you in Bristol, you was so obliging as to desire if I did not receive your answer to my former letter, that I would acquaint you therewith, and you would repeat the substance of the same.<sup>1</sup> I have now waited two post-days, but in vain, for no answer is yet arrived. Therefore, though I presume not to claim another as my due, yet will I ask for it as the gift of your generosity and freely-offered bounty.

As in our expectation of seeing Dr. Ludlow,<sup>2</sup> so likewise with respect to Dr. Drummond,<sup>3</sup> we were disappointed. He was from home, consequently we could not take his advice; at which I was grieved because, from your recommendation, joined to that of several others, I had conceived an high opinion of his skill. Through unsuccessful attempts in Bristol, we were necessitated to apply to a Bath physician. Whereby we were long detained, so that we did not reach home till past twelve o'clock. I feel the journey was too much. Its effects on me are a troublesome little fever and disagreeable headache, which causes a painful confusion of mind. But I trust all these shall soon be removed as my fatigue wears away.

I have been thinking it would be well to be particular in your address, because there are several persons in the town who are of the same name with myself, and who sometimes through mistake have opened letters intended for our family. Often also have they been missent into another county, Trowbridge I suppose not being of sufficient note to be universally known. Therefore to prevent all possible post-errors, [I] will beg you to direct for me in Duke Street, Trowbridge, Wilts. All confused as I am, I feel it absolutely necessary to be brief at the present time. Forget not, my dear sir, in your prayers to bear in mind

Your unworthy,

M. C—

*Address:* 'The Revd J. Wesley / Bristol'.

*Source:* manuscript copy for records; Bridwell Library (SMU), Mary Cooke Letter-book, p. 2.

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<sup>1</sup>JW's reply to Cooke's letter of Sept. 15, 1785 (likely sent c. Sept. 19) is not known to have arrived or survived.

<sup>2</sup>Abraham Ludlow (1737–1807) was a Quaker surgeon, in charge of treatment at the original Bristol Dispensary on Stokes Croft.

<sup>3</sup>Archibald Drummond M.D. (1717–1801) was a physician in Rudgeway, Gloucestershire, just north of Bristol.

From John King<sup>1</sup>

[Plymouth Dock]  
September 30, 1785

... I believe God will do one of these two things: Either he will remove the affliction, or he will give me grace to bear it so that I shall be unhurt by it—yea, that it shall work for my good and I shall

Like Moses' bush, mount up the higher,  
And flourish unconsum'd in fire.<sup>2</sup>

I had often doubted my call to the ministry, which caused me to preach with heaviness. I sincerely prayed to the Lord that if I had done wrong in coming out to travel, he would forgive me and send me home again. With much anxiety of mind I went to York, to speak with Mr. [Alexander] Mather on the subject of my appointment to Plymouth Dock; and he was so kind as to say that he would go to the extent of his authority, if I could not go freely. I determined, however, to take up my cross and go. And now, dear sir, I rejoice that I came, for I am fully satisfied that my call is of God. I never had the liberty, since I began to preach, that I have had since I came here. And blessed be God, I find my heart more engaged in the work of God than ever it was. I hope it will continue so to my life's end.

*Source:* published transcription; *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* 47 (1824): 2–3.

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<sup>1</sup>John King (1752–1822), a native of Guisborough, Yorkshire, was converted in his late teens and began to serve as a local preacher. He was admitted 'on trial' as an itinerant in 1783 (see *Works*, 10:531), and was writing JW shortly after receiving his third appointment—to Plymouth Dock. Worn out after 28 years of service, King retired in 1811 and spent his last years in Sevenoaks. See *Minutes* (post-Wesley, 1823), 5:382–83; and a 'Memoir' in *WMM* 47 (1824): 1–8.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. CW, 'Hymn on Isa. 43:1–3', st. 7, *HSP* (1739), 154.

From Thomas Wride

Norwich  
October 3, 1785

Reverend Sir,

Your favour of the 16th of September came to hand on the 20th.<sup>1</sup> And as my motion respecting Lake Houlton was agreeable unto you, I wrote the same day a pressing letter desiring him to come without delay. But I hear nothing from either him or Mr. [Thomas] Jones.

I cannot think it advisable to accept of the help of Dr. [John] Hunt. At best he is a very unsteady man. But still he's constant in this—the spinning of webs to catch the weak flies of Cherry Lane.<sup>2</sup> But he may not prove successful according to his expectations, for yesterday I received some of his society on trial; (my haste will not permit me to examine my memorandums but) I think the number was five.

The 'doggerel verses' on Mr. [Robert] Turner you observed 'must not remain in the chapel'. Indeed sir, I think they are no less than an insult on the people, who by strangers may be supposed to approve of the verses as much as the poet herself does. But I rather hesitate as to what method I had best take. I wrote to Mrs. [Susanna] Turner (that was), in order to signify my disapprobation, and desire her to send a workman to remove them and put the wall into the same order that it was before; and to inform her that if she did not, it must be done without her, and the stone 'put unto a use much fitter for it than what it now answers'. I have not sent the letter, but await your directions to proceed, either in that or any other method you are pleased to appoint.

I hope Norwich will soon be in better order than it has been. Yesterday I began meeting of the classes. I find less trouble in this part of the work than I expected at first coming. If the expression would not be too sportive, I would say that 'The terror of my countenance has awed them', several having owned to me that they were afraid of me. The reasons were: When I first met the society (on September 4), I told them what they might expect with regard to showing their tickets, meeting of classes, etc. That I was not afraid of disobliging thereby any that were reasonable and desired the prosperity of the work of God, but perhaps it might seem a little disagreeable to some to be put into a rule who in time past walked at random. That I should not be surprised at meeting with a few sour obstinate spirits who would rather leave us than submit to the rules; but if so I should run the risk, and think their absence the best company—not doubting but for everyone lost to that account we should gain six of a better spirit.

The next day (September 5) they found a reason to believe that I was not in jest. For meeting of the class (what is called the 'preacher's class'), I found Mary Gooch had met but twice in the former part of the paper, from the 10th of March to the 8th of August, both inclusive. I spoke by way of reproof for her negligence and told her that to have the names and the people was of no use, etc. She told me that if I did not like her name to be there, I might put it out. I did so. Her violent temper and unbridled tongue spread the matter and made others fear what they were to meet with.

I cannot, sir, give you an account of the societies in general. I shall meet the last of the classes in Norwich this evening. I send no tickets to absent persons. To the sick, I engage to carry them; and intend to wait a reasonable time for information concerning doubtful persons.

Some parts of the country I have never seen. Where I could, I have given tickets. But at some places, coming upon them at unawares, the people did not come.

No one has been at Loddon until last Saturday, when brother [John] M'Kersey went there. I have never been either at North Walsham way or Loddon way, and I see no way out of our labyrinth until a preacher arrives. Tomorrow morning I intend to set out on foot toward North Walsham and stay two nights with them and give tickets there.

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<sup>1</sup>See JW to Thomas Wride, Sept. 16, 1785.

<sup>2</sup>The first preaching house (built for that purpose) in Norwich stood on Cherry Lane, and was opened in 1769.

If, sir, you cannot get brother Houlton to come, and if brother Jones will not be here soon, I beg you will think of and send some other, for we have very great complaints.

If you are at a loss, permit me to ask, 'Are you satisfied with regard to the penitence of John Fenwick?' If so, I have no objection to him. And if a favourable report of him can be given at the ensuing Conference, old things may perhaps be buried.

In your usual course I expect we shall have the satisfaction of seeing you in Norwich soon. I would be glad with instructions with regard to where you would please to lodge, and what shall be provided for you, if you have any preference. I know not that you will be asked to Dr. Hunt's, unless for compliment's sake, when your time is near expired. But sir, I would wish you to have as little to do with him as may be. I should be glad to know as soon as it is determined when you will be with us, that I may contrive to be with you and to get notice into the country, as well as to provide what conveniences we can while in the city.

I received a quantity of sermons last Saturday, but I have not exposed them. Nor do I choose to do it until I have your approbation. The sermon was preached at Baltimore, December 27, 1784, by Dr. [Thomas] Coke.<sup>3</sup> If my hasty perusal will enable me to judge, it amounts to a formal separation from the Church of England. And if others see it in the same light that I do, it will in the end tear up Methodism by the roots. Whatever may be said of America, I cannot think it right to declare ourselves in England independent of the Church of England while we enjoy the same privileges as we did from the first. I dread the consequence. For if we are Independents, hardly any will come to us but such as choose to 'change their religion'. Whereas most of those to whom the Methodists have been useful had no religion to change.

As I believe, sir, you will understand my meaning without many words, so I hope you will excuse my bluntness. Give such directions as you judge best, and believe me to be, as I subscribe myself, reverend sir,

Your devoted son,

Thomas Wride

*Source:* Wride's manuscript draft; Duke, Rubenstein, Frank Baker Collection of Wesleyana, Box CO9, Thomas Wride Notebook 1, pp. 1–3.

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<sup>3</sup>Thomas Coke, *The Substance of a Sermon, preached at Baltimore, in the state of Maryland, before the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, on the 27th of December, 1784, at the ordination of the Rev. Francis Asbury, to the Office of a Superintendent* (London: W. Paramore, 1785).

From Matthias Joyce (autobiography)<sup>1</sup>

Athlone  
October 14, 1785

I was born in Dublin, February 17, 1754, of honest, industrious parents. My mother, who was a serious woman, was born in London and professed being a member of the Church of England. But my father, being a member of the Church of Rome, got me baptized in that church and instructed me himself, as far as he was capable, in the principles thereof.<sup>2</sup>

When I was a little more than two years old, my sister going one night on an errand with me in her arms, let me fall into a deep window, where there was a great quantity of broken glass and other rubbish. Close to the bottom of the window ran a rapid stream which descended from the mountains of Wicklow, and emptied itself into the Liffey. The night being dark, and I not making the least noise, she thought I was carried down the stream and lost. However she brought a candle, and found me lying across a stick that was in the window; which prevented my falling into the stream.

When I was about eight years old a horse kicked me so violently on my thigh that I fell to the ground, and yet I received no material harm. And about the same time, I fell from a high wall, but was not much hurt!

When ten or eleven years old, I was thrown from a horse on full gallop, but received no harm. When I was about thirteen, coming one day from a review in the Phoenix Park, the road was thronged with horses and carriages. A man in a chaise called me from the other side of the road to speak to him. While I stood talking with him, a horse on full gallop darted against me with his shoulder, knocked me down in an instant, went over me, and left me sprawling on the ground; but through the interposition of providence, I was only stunned a little.

About the same time I was thrown down by two horses in a carriage, and was very much hurt. While I was down, one of the horses trod upon me. But the driver stopping in a moment, I had time to creep out of the way.

When I was about seven years old my mother struck me gently on my hand for some fault I had committed; on which I called upon God to d[am]n her. I was soon seized with conviction for this. Nor did it entirely wear away for several years. While it lasted I was frequently so terrified that I could not see how I could be saved. And sometimes I concluded I was born on purpose to be damned. But as I had heard among the papists that a child must be seven years old before sin can be charged upon him, I often calculated how old I was when I cursed my mother; and if I could bring my age under seven, then I felt some ease.

When I was about ten years old one of my companions and I made an agreement to swear no more; and blessed be God, since that time swearing was not my besetting sin.

When I was about thirteen I was taken from school, and my father and mother being mostly abroad, I was suffered to range wherever I pleased. Accordingly I spent most of my time with those who neither feared God nor regarded man.

In June 1768, my father sent me to Mr. —,<sup>3</sup> upon trial, to learn the art of printing. Though by this means I was removed from my old companions, I still retained my love of sin and, if possible, ran into greater excess of riot.

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<sup>1</sup>Matthias Joyce (1754–1814) began itinerating in Jan. 1783, and was admitted ‘on trial’ in that role at the Irish Conference in Apr. (see *Works*, 10:968). He served for thirty years. See *Minutes* (post-Wesley, 1814), 4:7.

<sup>2</sup>His father was Francis Joyce, a hatter.

<sup>3</sup>Joyce was apprenticed to John Exshaw (1751–1827), a Dublin printer, and twice mayor of Dublin.

As I increased in years, my pride and passion increased also: an instance of which is as follows. One evening my master's son wanted me to do something for him, which I refused. Upon which he went and told his father, who coming into the shop ordered me to do it directly. I told him plainly I would not. On this he seized an oak stick and laid it on me until he broke it. But so great was my pride that I verily believe I would not have submitted had I been sure of falling dead at his feet!

As I was very strong for my size, I was made to do the drudgery about the shop, such as carrying bundles of books to the inns, etc. My master's son, one time thinking to have some sport by raising my spirit, called me, 'Porter! Porter!' I could not bear this. My pride beginning to swell, I desired him to let me alone. But he would not. I then snatched a large pair of shears and threw them at him. But though he was not more than two yards from me, providence so guided them that instead of darting into his belly, they only went into his coat, and hung there.

In September 1771 I resolved to run away from my master and enter on board a man-of-war. About the beginning of December one of the men complained of me to my master for idleness, for which he gave me a gentle slap on the cheek. My pride then got the better of my judgment, and I determined he should strike me no more. Accordingly, that evening I fled from the house, with a full resolution never to return. I wandered about the city for some days, waiting for a fellow servant who was to go with me.

Having spent the last Sabbath in taking leave of my friends, I got drunk. Then I returned to the place of rendezvous, where my companion and I quarrelled. And because I could not get my revenge gratified, I drew out a knife to kill myself. But several persons being in the room, got about me, threw me on a bed, and wrested the knife out of my hand.

The next day, as we intended to set sail for Liverpool, my father and sister came to see me set off. My poor father wept bitterly and said, 'Now I am left alone. I have no one to be of any comfort to me now. I shall never see thee again.' He was at this time above seventy years of age. But neither his age, infirmities, nor tears could prevail on me to stay. So I kissed him and bade him farewell.

When I was on the great deep it was so exceeding pleasant that I thought, if I had a fortune, I would even then go to sea. After a passage of two days we arrived safe at Liverpool. We had not been long there before my comrade wanted me to return; but I said I would not. That night we stayed at Liverpool, and the next day crossed the ferry and went forward to Chester. But it being exceeding dirty, travelling was very fatiguing. So that I had not gone many miles before I began to be very weary. Then, with tears in my eyes, I reflected on my folly and wished to be at my master's again.

After a disagreeable journey of four days we arrived at Birmingham. By this time our money was spent; which was doubtless a singular providence, for if I had had money sufficient, I should have gone straight to London and entered on board a man-of-war. At Birmingham I had a brother-in-law of the same business with myself, who soon got me into work. But my comrade could not get any, so he was obliged to sell his coat, to bear his charges to London. When we parted we both wept much; but I never saw or heard of him from that time to this.

About the latter end of February 1772 there came a countryman of mine from London, to work where I was. I told him what I had done. He reproved me very sharply for it, saying I could never show my face in Ireland; for if I did, I must serve that time over again. What he said rested upon my mind, and made me resolve to return the first opportunity and serve my lawful master.

Accordingly, one Monday morning, this man and I set off together for Ireland. He had fivepence and I had threepence. We made the best of our way to Wolverhampton, where we got a shilling from Mr. Smart, the master printer. From thence we pursued our journey to Alberton.<sup>4</sup> It was quite dark before we got there. We had a crooked, dirty road, and could not tell where we were, nor see each other at a small distance. Yet we urged our way till we entered the town. Here we got a lodging among a parcel of gypsies, and after some conversation we went to bed, and in the morning pursued our journey.

The hardships I endured in this journey far exceeded all I met with before. We were brought so low that my companion went to a farm-house to beg—and, as he told me afterwards, sung a song for his

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<sup>4</sup>Likely referring to 'Albrighton', about 10 miles from Wolverhampton on the way to Chester.

dinner. But to beg I was ashamed. So I pursued my way, hungry and weary as I was, to Chester, and by this means lost my companion for two days.

When I came within half a mile of Chester, I sat down to rest myself. While I sat, my joints stiffened and I became more sensible of pain. My feet also swelled, and my thighs were raw with walking. Here I sat, a poor, forlorn wretch; without money, food, or any visible help. Nor did I know where to turn myself when I entered the city. But I had a hope it would be well with me when I got there. After some time, I strove to rise. But it was with the greatest difficulty I got first on one knee, then on the other. However, by degrees, with excessive pain, I got on my feet and crept on. Just as I came to the river Dee, I saw a man with two pitchers of water, resting himself. I went to him, and asked him to let me drink. He said, if it was sack I should have it, and held the pitcher to my mouth. Having drank freely, he asked me how far I came? I told him. He asked me if I had got any lodgings? I said, 'No; neither have I any money to give for one.' Then said he, 'The Lord succour you! For you are come into a bad place. But come along with me.' Accordingly I went with him to his house, where he set before me hanged beef, bread, and potatoes; and made me eat until I could eat no more.

After dinner he went with me to look for work. On showing me a master printer in the street, I went up to him and asked if he wanted a hand? He looked at me, and seeing me very young (being then about eighteen), he said, 'You are runaway from your master; and therefore if I had room for ten men I would not give you work.' 'O sir', said I, 'will you give me something? For I am in very great distress.' He answered, with a degree of sternness, 'I will not give you one farthing.' As soon as he said this, I turned from him, and was afraid to try anywhere else. On saying to my friend, 'I will sell my waistcoat', he said, 'Then come with me and I will show you where you will get as much for it as in any part of the city.' Accordingly he brought me to a woman whose name was Reeley, wife to Sergeant Reeley, belonging to the Yorkshire Militia, who sold clothes for people, and got threepence in the shilling for selling them. When she saw me, she pitied my case. And when I stripped off my coat and waistcoat, she began to weep and asked if I had nothing else to sell? I said no. Then she said, she would sell it for as much as she could, and not charge me anything. She did so, and brought me three shillings for it. She also made me stay to supper, and washed my feet and handkerchief. She likewise cleaned my shoes, and sent her daughter to get me a lodging; and insisted on my having a bed to myself, let it cost what it would, and said she would pay for it herself. She also sent her daughter in the morning with my handkerchief and stockings, which she had washed, and gave me a loaf when I was going away, and charged me not to change my money until I got to Liverpool.

When I arrived at Liverpool there was a vessel to sail the next day. Accordingly I went on board, with only tenpence of my three shillings left, which was only the third part of what would pay for my passage. With this I ventured on board, without any provisions, trusting to the generosity of a sailor on whom I had spent some of my money, and who promised in lieu of that to supply me with what food I wanted during the passage. Just as the vessel was about to sail my companion, whom I had lost for two days, came on board; who having earned something, had just as much left, when joined to mine, as made up the price of one of us!

We set sail with a fair wind, while the sun shone bright upon us. But we had not been long at sea when a dreadful storm arose. The vessel was tossed about like a cork, and the sea dashed over it with dreadful violence: while the waves, beating against her sides, made a noise like the report of a cannon.

Most in the hold were much terrified, and a few were endeavouring to pray; while I, hardened wretch! was highly diverted. At last a great wave dashed with such fury against the sides of the ship that I expected it would be beat in. The fear of death now laid hold upon me, and I thought it was time for me also to pray. I therefore crept on my knees into a dark corner, and uttered a few heartless petitions. At length, after twenty-five hours' sail, we arrived safe in Poolbeg. What money I had, I gave to my companion, to make up the price of his passage, and sent him to my father to come and release me. The captain kept me prisoner all night, and threatened to take me back. But my brother-in-law came down the next morning early, paid for my passage, and brought me safe on shore.

I was a month in Dublin before my master would take me back, during which time I lived with my father. One day I met one of my old companions in the street, whom I wanted to come and dine with

us. My father was not satisfied at this. Being highly offended, I refused to eat or drink with him, and so left him. He soon followed me and reprimanded me for my conduct. I resented it immediately, by giving him impertinent answers, upon which he grew very angry and came forward to strike me. I stood up to oppose him, being fully determined to give blow for blow. I was at that time so inflamed with infernal fire that I verily believe I should have done all in my power to have knocked him down, if he had been permitted to come near me.

At last my master consented to take me home, upon condition that two persons would be bound for me in twenty pounds each. The bail being given, he received me again without an angry word.

After this I went on tolerable well for about a fortnight, till one of my fellow apprentices gave me saucy language. As I could not bear it, I gave him a blow. He went immediately to my master and complained, who sent up his son to know why I struck him? I sent him word that he was impudent, and that I would not take an affront from anybody. My master then came up with a large whip, and beat me most severely.

Not long after this I took it into my head to run away a second time. Accordingly I went twice to look for a vessel. But the captain of a Bristol vessel that I thought to go with refusing what I offered him for my passage, I gave up the thoughts of going abroad.

But though I was so far settled, I still went on in sin, and grew worse and worse every day. About this time I fell into the cursed practice of gaming, by means of a certain person of some note (now in eternity) who came to my master's. I remember my fellow apprentice and I had a great run of luck one night, when playing with my master's son. The next night he was afraid to play, and so went to bed. But I went to his chamber, and would not let him rest until he (most unwillingly) got out of bed to encounter me again. That night he stripped me of every farthing. I asked him to lend me a little to enable me to try my fortune again, but he would not. On this I found as much of the spirit of the devil as ever I did in my life. If it had not been for preventing grace, I believe I should have murdered him!

To carry on this wretched employment, the aforementioned person contrived a ladder of ropes, to let himself and others out of a back window in the night, in order to go to the gaming table. And I was so deeply concerned in the scheme as to drive in the hook, and go out first to try it. But the Lord brought about a discovery of the matter, which put an entire stop to it. Yet not until my master's son lost about twenty-eight guineas, which were stolen out of his father's drawers by our instructor.

However I continued to be led captive by drunkenness, till I threw myself into a pleurisy. Then I thought I should have died, and was in some measure convinced I was not fit to die. On this I resolved to reform my conduct, if I recovered. But of turning to God, as yet I had no notion.

As soon as I was raised up, and was able to go abroad, I forgot my resolution and as eagerly gave myself up to the service of sin as before. For the second or third night after my recovery, I stayed out drinking till near twelve o'clock. My master hearing of it, said to one of the men next morning, 'Why will you take that fellow out? He is but just recovered from a fit of sickness, into which he threw himself by drinking. I do not know what to do with him. Beating does him no good, and I am quite tired of it. I therefore give up all hope of his ever doing any good.' And well he might if there was no God; for it was beyond the power of man to turn the stream of my affections to that which is good. But God's thoughts were not like my master's. There was hope in Israel still concerning even me! For notwithstanding my daring impiety, and repeated provocations, the Lord was waiting to be gracious.

In the month of September 1773, and in the nineteenth year of my age, Mr. [John] Wesley came to Dublin, when curiosity prevailed on me to go and hear him one Sabbath-day morning. As soon as I saw him, my heart clave to him. His hoary hairs, and grave deportment, commanded my respect and gained my affections. What endeared me still more to him was seeing him stoop to kiss a little child that stood on the stairs. However, though this prepared me for receiving the word of life, so great was my darkness that I could not understand what he said, and therefore went away as ignorant as I came.

The next preacher I took notice of was Mr. [John] Floyd[e]. But I thought the first sermon I heard him preach was mere nonsense. However I heard him again, and thought this sermon the best I had ever heard. After this, I went every other Sabbath to the preaching. Yet still I was led captive by the devil at his will. But though I repeatedly resisted the Holy Ghost, yet my long-suffering God did not cease



striving with me. For instead of giving me up, as he might justly have done, he deepened his work in my heart, and gave me to see that if I remained a companion of fools I must inevitably be destroyed. On this I resolved to quit them all; which resolution I was enabled to perform, and my fellow apprentice and I agreed to watch over each other and to reprove each other when we saw occasion.

About this time a providential circumstance helped to confirm my resolution of quitting the Church of Rome. I was one day in the shop, while my master's son was turning over some old pamphlets that had lain by for years as useless papers. At last he picked up one which contained an account of the conversion of Anthony Egan, a popish priest, in which he discovers a variety of tricks made use of by the priests to deceive the people.<sup>5</sup> Annexed to this were twelve queries taken from the word of God and proposed to the Church of Rome. When he looked at the title page, he judged it would do for me. So handing it to me he said, 'Matt, I will give thee this. It may be it will convert thee.' I thankfully received it, and gave it a careful reading, The effects of which were: 1) a clearer discovery of the Church of Rome; 2) an indignation against those abominable tricks made use of by the priests; 3) a great contempt for a set of men who, to support a bad cause, were constrained to make use of such shifts, instead of sound argument; 4) A resolution to have no farther connexion with them.

From this time I was very constant in hearing the Methodists, and walked more circumspect than formerly. I was likewise more constant in private devotions, and had some small conviction of the necessity of a farther work. I also fled from my old companions wherever I met them, and felt an abhorrence to the works of darkness, and had a regard for the people of God.

Thus I went on, till April 1774, when one Sabbath-day evening as I was going to bed, I felt an unusual love (such as I cannot express) to the people called Methodists, and a strong desire to be one of the number. But I thought they would not admit me as I was an apprentice. However I said to my fellow apprentice if I was out of my time I would join myself to that people. He being more acquainted with some of them said they admitted apprentices. On hearing this, I was glad and resolved, without delay, to cast in my lot among them.

Accordingly on Friday the 6th of May, 1774 (a day to be had in remembrance by me), I waited on Mr. [Peter] Jaco to receive a note of admittance. My fellow apprentice (namely Bennett Dugdale<sup>6</sup>) went with me, more out of curiosity than any real desire to become a member. Mr. Jaco brought us into a private apartment, and lovingly talked over the matter with us, then gave us our notes saying, 'The Lord write your names in the Lamb's book of life!'

A few months after we joined the society, all the men that were at my master's, together with their wives, joined the society. Two of whom are gone into eternity, and I hope under the smiles of heaven. Most of the rest I fear have not adorned their Christian vocation. May that divine Spirit who subdued my stubborn heart, convince them more deeply of the necessity of giving all diligence to make their calling and election sure!

I was two months in the society before I was thoroughly convinced of the depravity of my nature, and of the necessity of being born again. But one day as I was going upstairs to the printing office I fell on my knees to pray (as I used frequently to do), when the Lord God appeared in terrible majesty and Mount Sinai seemed to be in a flame. His voice thundered from the dreadful mount, and spoke in terror to my inmost soul, which made me tremble exceedingly! The Holy Ghost showed me the spirituality of the law in such a manner that I saw and felt my inward parts were very wickedness. For some time I was quite dumb, and wondered that I was so great a monster! O what heart can conceive the exquisite distress of my soul at this moment! I groaned, being burdened with a deep sense of the wrath of God! I saw myself just on the brink of hell! I thought I was undone forever, and despaired of ever being saved! But

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<sup>5</sup>*The Franciscan Convert: or, a recantation sermon of Anthony Egan, late confessor general of the Kingdom of Ireland, and Guardian of the Priory of Monasterioris, in the Province of Leinster; now a Minister of the Gospel, according to the Ordination of the Church of England* ([Dublin: s.n.], 1763).

<sup>6</sup>Bennett Dugdale (1756–1826), who apprenticed as a printer with Joyce under John Exshaw, established his own printing business in Dublin and was a member of the Methodist society there.

what distressed me most of all was my want of faith; for I thought I had not so much faith as the devil. In this condition I remained for some time before I was able to speak. At last I cried out in bitterness of soul, 'O Lord, I went among this people to serve thee better. But I fear I am worse than ever.' Now Satan laid close and horrible siege to my soul, in order to destroy the good work which the Lord had begun. He injected the most dreadful blasphemies, even filling me with the most horrible and uncommon ideas of God, and urging me every moment, like Job's wife, to curse him! Often have I concluded (and could scarce persuade myself to the contrary) that I had yielded to the temptation, and had really cursed God in my heart. O my God! Thou knowest the distress and anguish of my soul at this season, and what strong cries I put up to thee for deliverance. But for wise ends thou wouldst not grant my request until I had suffered a while. Yet thou didst support me in a wonderful manner, in giving me victory over outward sin, in making my conscience more tender, and in enabling me to form a determination that if I perished it should be in thy service.

These dreadful suggestions (many of which I dare not name) not only haunted me through the common employments of the day, but also in my most secret retirements, and wherever else I went. So that I have been constrained to entreat God to rid me of my life, and drive me out of the world. My flesh would creep upon my back, and a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation harassed me continually.

Surely I may as well forget my existence as forget the misery and iron with which I was bound, and the variety of spiritual plagues that tormented me during my abode in the land of my captivity. And as I have found that telling my experience has been of use to some exercised in the same manner, I am not without hope that a particular but brief relation of the same may be of use to many more.

And 1) I was almost continually tempted to doubt the being of a God. One argument the devil made use of to support his hellish doctrine was that if there was a God, he would destroy me for my blasphemous thoughts. With this temptation I had many a sore struggle. For I saw it was every way calculated to stifle my conviction, and kill my good desires. I therefore resisted it with all my might, and cried vehemently to God against it. But Satan was resolved to dispute the point with me; for when I would retire in secret, he would pour in upon me like a flood, saying, 'Who art thou praying to? Surely there is no God to hear thee; or if there is, he cannot hear thee through the thick clouds.' On this I would be thrown into confusion and immediately stop, thinking I was praying in vain.

2) Another of his temptations, which distressed me exceedingly, was concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, whether there was ever such a person in the world? And if there was, whether John the Baptist and he did not make a league together to deceive the people? This suggestion wounded me to the quick. For so long as I was under the power of it all hope of salvation was banished from me, because I saw there was no other way to be saved but by him. But that text often lifted up my hands: 'And lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon him. And lo, a voice from heaven said, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.'<sup>7</sup>

3) But then Satan attacked me most furiously from another quarter, saying, 'How canst thou tell whether the Bible is true or not? Thou knowest not but it is a cunningly devised fable to keep the world in awe.' This temptation brought exquisite distress to my soul. But on the other hand, I was the more stirred up to cleave to the Bible, and examine it closely, that I might be able to silence the enemy. And therefore when he tempted me to doubt it, I would take it up and kiss it, then put it into my bosom and hug it, and say in a quick and positive manner, 'I will believe it! I will believe it!'

I was helped a good deal by reading a passage in a certain book, the substance of which is as follows. 'They were either good men or bad men that wrote the Bible. If they were good men, they would not tell lies to deceive mankind by saying they spake and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; and by saying, "thus saith the Lord", if it was only their own invention. If they were bad men, they could not understand the deep things contained in the Bible, nor would they preach such self-denying doctrine, lest their own evil deeds should be made manifest.'

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<sup>7</sup>Cf. Matt. 3:16–17.

4) At other times it was suggested to me that I had no soul; and that when I died I should be like the beasts that perish. This temptation afflicted me much, and cost me many a hard struggle. For being extremely ignorant, I understood little or nothing about philosophical inquiries. Yet I still made my request known unto God. At length I was led to consider the nature of my inward faculties, particularly my power of thinking. My thoughts I found were free and unconfined; that they could mount up to heaven, or dive into hell in an instant. That they could with equal swiftness fly round the world, and as quick as lightning arrive at the spot I was in. I remember that one day as I was walking with a friend I was led to reason upon conscience when truly awakened; that it was neither visible nor substantial, like flesh and blood, and that therefore nothing material could wound or hurt it. That on this account it was different from the body, though dwelling in it. That the pain it felt was different from that of the body when wounded, it being nothing else than condemnation for sin before God. Whereas, the body being flesh and blood, felt no such pain, because the pain of conscience is spiritual.

5) I was also tempted to doubt whether there would be a day of judgment, a resurrection, or whether there were any angels or spirits?

6) I was tempted to doubt whether the Methodists were the people of God or not. For I thought they caused more disturbance in the world than any other people, and therefore I was nearly concluding they were all false prophets. Before the enemy was let loose upon me in the manner already mentioned, the preachers were dear to me. And as to Mr. Wesley, I thought I would be glad to be his servant, to clean his shoes, or do the meanest office for so precious a man. But now I seemed to feel no love at all to the preachers or him, and appeared to myself quite careless whether I was in their company or not. But the Lord did not suffer me to remain long under the power of this temptation, but banished it from me by the application of a text of scripture, Acts 5:38–39, 'And now I say unto you, refrain from these men and let them alone. For if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought. But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.' Then I considered the Methodists as a people greatly persecuted by almost all persuasions, striving to extinguish the glorious light of the gospel which they were spreading far and near; but to no purpose. For instead of putting it out, their light shined brighter and brighter continually, and numbers were flocking to that light that their deeds might be made manifest. Then it was clear to me that this counsel and work was not of men, but of God. I therefore thought I had much reason to praise the Lord for honouring me with a place among his people.

Now while I was racked<sup>8</sup> and torn by these horrid temptations, my convictions increased to such a degree that I saw hell moved from beneath to meet me at my coming. And as all hope of mercy seemed to be cut off, and as I thought the God of love had given me up to be a prey to the devil, I said in my heart, 'O if I were even a devil I should not be so much tormented in hell!' But though this horrid thought did not long abide with me, yet I so clearly saw that I was a hell-deserving sinner that I acknowledged with all my heart God would be just if he banished me from the glory of his presence. Yet I found I would rather die than live any longer to sin against him.

Time now was exceedingly precious to me. No moments were willfully spent in mirth or trifling. I was in general as serious as death and as solemn as the grave, and embraced each opportunity to call upon the name of the Lord. I also prayed out aloud when alone at my work for a considerable time, and thought the time lost if anything occurred to make me stop praying. Thus tossed about as I was on the billows of temptation, and exquisitely distressed by heart-piercing convictions, I wandered about in the fields, and sometimes got into vaults and other secret places to pour out my complaints before God. And when I have been going into dark places, fearful apprehensions would arise in my mind, lest the devil was in some hole or corner, waiting to carry me away. But notwithstanding this, I went forward, kneeled down and cried mightily to God, though my heart and my flesh trembled with fear.

At this time I sought after such books as explained the nature of faith. And when I met with one that treated on this subject, I searched it with as much eagerness, as a man perishing through hunger would grasp at a morsel of bread.

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<sup>8</sup>Orig., 'wrecked'.

Sometimes in the midst of my perplexity, not knowing where to find relief, I have been almost determined to go to the preacher and ask him if he could tell me where or how I might find Jesus. But then I thought, as they are but men, it is not in their power to save my perishing soul. At other times I was almost persuaded to go and desire them to scratch my name out of their book, for I thought I was the greatest hypocrite that ever existed.

But though I was thus led by the burning mountain which could not be touched, and through blackness and darkness and tempest, and often heard the sound of the trumpet and the noise of [s]words, in a spiritual sense; yet I still remained a determined enemy to all the works of the devil. I may say, through the grace of God, I kept from every appearance of evil, as far as I knew. And if, through ignorance, I committed anything that my conscience afterwards reprov'd me for, I did not rest until I confessed my fault, though I have been often laughed at for my scruples.

The following is an instance of my openness of heart, and tenderness of conscience at this time. I had now a great aversion to newspapers, though before that I was exceedingly fond of them. But one day as I entered the printing office, the men called me to them. When I went, I saw they were reading a newspaper. On this they said, 'You need not fear to read it.' So I looked at it, and saw a spiritual playbill (if I may so call it) concerning the day of judgment, that was stuck up at Richmond, on the king's birthday. When I read it, I liked it exceedingly. And as I had not much to do, I printed a few of them, in order to give away, without asking my master's leave, not thinking there was any harm in so doing. But one night at preaching, as I was giving one of them to a friend, he asked me if I had told my master? I said no. As soon as he asked me the question, my conscience smote me, and I was filled with shame and sorrow. I returned home, determined to tell my master, let me suffer what I would.

All this while I had no relish for the pleasures of this world. My whole desire was to be alone, that I might, without interruption, pour out my complaints. The sighs and groans of my troubled soul were sometimes heard by others, who, though joined in the same society, often asked me why I did so. And some of them could not help wondering at me. But alas, they little understood my conflicts! And perhaps it was not necessary they should, as the Father of mercies leads some in a more peaceable and quiet manner than others. Though it is certain the spirit must be wounded, before it can be healed.

After I had been about nine months in this condition, the Lord in great compassion to my poor, afflicted soul threw the *Life of Mr. John Janeway* into my hands.<sup>9</sup> This little book was made a most reviving cordial to me, and proved like the wine and oil poured into the wounds of the man that fell among thieves. The part which was blessed to my soul was a letter sent by Mr. Janeway to an acquaintance of his who was exercised nearly in the same manner I was. For the sake of those who may be tempted, and yet may not have Mr. Janeway's *Life*, I beg leave to subjoin an extract from it.

Dear Friend,

You say that you are troubled with blasphemous thoughts. So then they are your trouble, and neither sent for, nor welcome, and so are not assented to in your mind. (Tempted soul, is this the case with thee?<sup>10</sup>) What then shall we say of them? If they were your own production, your heart would be delighted with its own issue.

Sure then they are the injections of that wicked one, who is the accuser of the brethren and the disturber of the peace of the people of God. Doth Satan use to employ his weapons but against those that he is in fear of losing? He is not wont to assault his surest friends in this manner. Those that he has fast in his own possession, he leads on as softly as he can, fearing such disturbances would make them look about them. But those that have in some measure escaped his snare, he follows with all the discouragements he can.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Most likely he was reading JW's abridged version: *An Extract of the Life and Death of John Janeway* (1753, *Bibliography*, No. 163).

<sup>10</sup>The parenthetical comment is by Joyce or the editor of *AM*.

<sup>11</sup>See *ibid.*, 15.

As soon as I read this the cloud vanished away, and I saw that those terrible blasphemies and atheistical thoughts, under which I groaned so long, were the suggestions of the prince of darkness, and that I had no part or lot in the matter. When Satan found he was discovered he fled, and my soul enjoyed a comfortable hope of seeing the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

The fears I had of sinking into hell were now in a great measure removed, and I could draw nigh to God with some degree of confidence.

For about a year after this I rejoiced in hope of experiencing the forgiveness of my sins, and of having the witness of his Spirit that I was a child of God. For though I could frequently rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, and found the burden of guilt removed, yet I would not dare to say I was justified. Though at times I was ready to think I was.

I remember one day, while my mind was strongly persuaded to believe I was forgiven, I went to the preacher in order to be certain of the matter. I told him my experience. He liked what I told him very well, but gave me no satisfactory answer. I said, 'Well sir, I believe the best way of coming to the knowledge of it is to be much in prayer.' He said, 'It is.' So I left him as doubtful of my state as ever.

Some time after, when I went to renew my ticket, Mr. [Alexander] McNab asked me if I knew my sins were forgiven? I said, 'No, sir.' He asked me, 'Why cannot you believe?' I said, 'I feel so much corruption stirring within me, that I am afraid.' Then he said I was putting sanctification before justification; or in other words, I was seeking to be made holy before my sins were forgiven, but that this heart-purifying work began as soon as we were justified. I then thought I would begin to believe from that moment. Accordingly I could soon say, with some degree of confidence, 'Thou art my God.' But my mind was more confirmed in this from a sermon Mr. McNab preached not long after from these words: 'Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.'<sup>12</sup> I thought he preached this discourse on my account, for I was much tempted to cast my little confidence away. However, though I was encouraged for that time, yet because I did not feel that constant joy I expected, I let go my confidence, and walked in darkness as before.

About this time there came a man from the country, an old professor who was very fond of encouraging those who were of a doubtful mind. The first time he saw me at the preaching he took a liking to me, and in a little while we became very intimate. Our constant conversation was about religion, by which means he got some knowledge of my experience and would, upon every occasion, be encouraging me to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Often would he say, 'Dare you deny that Christ is yours?' When I was often at a stand what answer to give him, being afraid to say yes or no, lest I should tell a lie. At length, as he and I walked along one time, he said, 'I believe you do not doubt that God is able to save you. But you do not believe he is willing.' As soon as he uttered these words, the power of God rested upon me in a remarkable manner. All my doubts and fears vanished, and I was filled with faith and love. I could now no longer contain, but immediately cried out, 'O yes! I believe he is willing to save me. And I see so much love in his heart towards me that I should be the most ungrateful wretch in the world if I doubted of his love any longer.'

Now my heart rejoiced in the salvation of God, being inwardly persuaded that Jesus loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*; and that my sins were all forgiven for his name's sake. I could now say, 'O taste and see how gracious the Lord is!'<sup>13</sup> Harken all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul.<sup>14</sup> He hath brought me up out of the horrible pit, and out of the miry clay.<sup>15</sup> He hath turned my complaints into songs of thanksgiving. He hath not only forgiven all my sins, but healed all my diseases.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Heb. 10:35.

<sup>13</sup>Cf. Ps. 34:8.

<sup>14</sup>Cf. Ps. 66:16.

<sup>15</sup>Cf. Ps. 40:2.

<sup>16</sup>Cf. Ps. 103:3.

therefore doth my soul magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour.<sup>17</sup>

For some time I walked in the light of God's countenance, and my mountain seemed to be very strong. But Satan assaulted me again with redoubled fury, suggesting his old temptation, that there was no God. One morning in particular, while I was at the preaching, the enemy came in upon me with this temptation like a flood, so that I was well-nigh overwhelmed in the mighty waters. I was so deeply exercised during the time of preaching that I knew nothing about the sermon after it was over. My friend who was an instrument of good to me waited after sermon to speak to me. And when he saw me, he asked how it was with my soul. I being distressed in mind, answered him short, saying, 'I am tempted', and so left him. However, that day the Lord appeared to my help and delivered me. I think this was the last great conflict I had with the enemy on this head. It may not be amiss to remark here that after this conflict I experienced such a manifestation of the presence of God that I almost thought my nature wholly sanctified.

Soon after the enemy thrust sore at me from another quarter, telling me that I was deceiving myself, and that the enjoyments I experienced were the effects of a heated imagination. This temptation put me to a great stand for a while, and almost prevailed upon me to give up my shield. But I thought I would weigh the matter well before I let it go. So I reasoned in the following manner: The enjoyments I now experience make me cleave close to God: 1) by praising him for his goodness, 2) by delighting more and more in his ways, 3) by earnestly longing to drink deeper and deeper into the spirit of the meek and lowly Jesus, 4) by praying that everything in me contrary to his wil, may be utterly destroyed. These are some of the blessed effects of the enjoyments I feel. Now if the father of lies can prove that these flow from a heated imagination, I will give up the point; but not till then. But I am persuaded he cannot, as it does not appear that enthusiasm has these effects. Thus being delivered from these two temptations I went on my way with some degree of comfort, and had a well-grounded hope full of immortality.

When I was enabled to turn my face towards Zion, I endeavoured to give all diligence to escape the wrath to come. To this end I not only denied myself of all ungodliness and worldly lusts, but in some instances even of that which was lawful. It was common with me to fast twenty-four hours at a time; and once from Thursday night until Saturday morning. Add to this my eagerness to redeem my time, so that I could hardly bear the thoughts of going to bed. I have stood reading and writing, in the winter season, sometimes till two o'clock in the morning, till the calves of my legs were quite numbed with cold. And scarce ever did I go to bed until so conquered by sleep that the book dropped out of my hand. But though I was last in bed, I was generally the first up. So that I seldom got more than four hours' sleep. Five o'clock in the morning seldom caught me upon my pillow, for as I went to bed with reluctance, I stayed in it as short a time as I could. And whatever time I was up before preaching I employed either on my knees, or in the Bible, or in some other good book. Add to these, hard labour in my business, deep thinking, much reading, fierce temptations, and a wounded spirit! All these together bore heavy upon my constitution, and so impaired my health that I was filled with wind, and contracted a bad digestion to such a degree that the food I took, merely to support nature, lay like lead on my stomach. At last I became burdensome to myself and was distressed above measure.

But Satan, who always watches his opportunity to deceive the simple, took advantage of this and suggested that I was a glutton, or I would not be so oppressed with my food. As I believed him (though I took care to eat moderately, and sometimes would not eat at all), I frequently concluded that my belly would destroy my soul. On this account I have often stretched myself upon the floor, and twisted and twined in pain, crying to the Lord for deliverance. One thing I remarked, that the Sabbath-day was the day of sorest trial to me. So that I have denied myself of all food the most part of that day, endeavouring if possible, to worship God in spirit and in truth.

For near two years, I was oppressed in this manner. And though I had frequent manifestations of the goodness of God, and could at times rejoice exceedingly in his salvation, yet it was in many respects a dark and cloudy day.

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<sup>17</sup>Cf. Luke 1:46–47.

Meantime I was much stirred up to seek after that holiness without which no man can see the Lord. And I might say, with Jane Cooper, 'that I seemed to enjoy all I wanted, while I pressed after that which I had not attained'.<sup>18</sup> Such sweet consolation, and glorious liberty with God in prayer did I experience, while I sought this blessing, that it was the very delight of my soul to be found prostrate before him. But this holy fervour of spirit, and earnest longing for the full image of God, was in some measure cooled, partly by yielding to the risings of corrupt nature and partly by the reasonings of an old professor.

The first time he opposed me was either the first or second time after I met in the select society. This glorious meeting, which was always attended with the presence and power of God, and was made as marrow and fatness to my soul, he represented as a most dangerous and destructive meeting—that it would puff me up with pride. Having a high opinion of his judgment, I was almost determined never to go near it more. But in the evening I opened my mind to brother Gibson,<sup>19</sup> who urged me to meet again. Otherwise I believe I should have wholly declined it.

Some time after, the Lord stirred me up again to seek this unspeakable blessing; when it was my delight to be found in the company of those who I believed had attained, or at least were eagerly pressing after it. I generally left them with my soul on full stretch for God. Yet when returning from the company of these servants of God, with my heart panting after him, some temptation would surely be in the way. By this means I have been often stripped of my happiness; yea, and pulled back when I seemed near obtaining the prize. This has often distressed me exceedingly and cost me many a tear.

One who had entered into this rest lent me Mr. Fletcher's treatise on Christian perfection,<sup>20</sup> which was made a great blessing to me, both in convincing my judgment and quickening my soul more abundantly. The part which was chiefly blessed to me was his address to imperfect believers, who believed the doctrine of Christian perfection attainable.<sup>21</sup> One night when my little family was gone to bed, I took up this book to read, and as I read I met with the following words. 'If thou wilt absolutely come to Mount Zion in a triumphal chariot, or make thy entrance into the New Jerusalem upon a prancing horse, thou art likely never to come there. Leave then all thy lordly misconceptions behind; and humbly follow thy King who makes his entry into the typical Jerusalem meek and lowly, riding upon an ass, yea, upon a colt, the foal of an ass.'<sup>22</sup>

And as I was at this time sensible of my pride and self-will, I said in my heart, 'O this is the way! I want him to come in his meek and lowly mind.' I immediately laid down the book and went to prayer. I pleaded with God, and put him in remembrance, as he commanded me, in a manner I never did before. 'O Lord', said I, 'thy design in creating me was that I might glorify thy name and enjoy thee forever! Let me therefore, I beseech thee, answer the end of my being. O let me live to thy glory! Thou seest, Lord, that I cannot glorify thy name as I ought, unless thou makest an end of sin, and writest thy law of love on my heart. Lord, hast thou not promised to take away the heart of stone, and to give me a heart of flesh? Hast thou not promised to pour clean water upon me, and to cleanse me from all my filthiness, and from all my idols? Hast thou not promised to circumcise my heart, that I may love thee with all my heart and soul? O Lord, was it not for this very end thy only Son was manifested in the flesh, even to destroy the works of the devil? To deliver me from all my inward enemies, that I may serve thee without fear, in holiness and righteousness all my days? Therefore, O Lord, make this the day of salvation! Now, now, O Lord, let the work be done! Amen.'

While I thus poured out my heart before him, I seemed to enter into the holy of holies by faith in the blood of the Lamb. My heart expanded to receive my heavenly bridegroom when he came, as it were,

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<sup>18</sup>JW (ed.), *Letters wrote by Jane Cooper* (London: R. Hawes, 1764) 30.

<sup>19</sup>Edward Gibson; see Crookshank, *Ireland*, 309.

<sup>20</sup>I.e., John Fletcher, *Last Check: A Polemical Essay* (London: R. Hawes, 1775).

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 251–302.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, 292.

riding into my soul in his chariot of love, with all his sanctifying graces. I could do nothing now but bless and magnify the name of the Lord for this wonderful manifestation. My only language was, 'Glory! Glory! Glory be to God!'

What tongue can tell, or heart conceive the heaven that was opened in my heart at that moment! It might well be called 'joy unspeakable and full of glory'!<sup>23</sup> After offering up my tribute of praise to him who visited me in so extraordinary a manner, I went to bed full of love, of heaven, of God.

In the year 1780, my wife lay in.<sup>24</sup> And about that time my business was so slack that I was several weeks out of work, by which means we were brought very low. In this extremity a kind friend asked me how much would set me up. I mentioned a certain sum, which he offered to lend me without bond or interest, until I was able to pay him; urging at the same time the necessity of my entering into business, as I had a growing family. Such a generous offer surprised me, but I could not consent to accept of it until I had consulted my wife. Accordingly that night I spoke to her, but she did not seem forward to embrace it. However, thinking it might be a call of providence, I at length consented.

I then set about collecting the materials necessary for my business, and after a good deal of trouble completed my design. Having procured materials, the next thing was to look for work. To this end I entered into the company of booksellers, printed large posting bills, and handbills in the most elegant manner; and had them posted about the city, sent to the booksellers, and dispersed in the coffee-houses. But all to little purpose, for in the course of about eight months I did not earn as much as would support myself. And had it not been for what little my wife earned, I believe we must have starved. For not making a proper estimate when my friend spoke to me, I was obliged to enter deeper into the affair than I expected, which exposed me to temptation when I saw myself as it were deprived of the means of discharging the debts I had contracted. At times indeed I could cast my whole care upon the Lord, but then the thought 'How shall I get out of debt?' would again perplex me.

At last, seeing it was in vain to continue in that line, I came to a resolution to sell all and pay everybody as far as it went. Accordingly I did sell all; but most of what I had, greatly under the price I gave for them. I then discharged some debts I had contracted with those who either could not or would not bear with me. And with the remainder I made my friend an unworthy return for his kindness, as it fell short upwards of twenty pounds of what he had lent me. However he accepted of it, without troubling me for the rest. But notwithstanding he patiently bore with me, I was not satisfied. And therefore, that I might be the better able to pay the whole I determined to go to London.

Accordingly with a heavy heart, I sailed for Holyhead in company with brother James Martin, and brother [Joseph] Pilmore. We travelled together to Chester, from whence they went to Leeds and I to London. In this journey I endured much hardship, being obliged to ride almost from Holyhead to London, on the coach-box.

In about three days after my arrival I got into work, where I continued for about a fortnight. But work being slack, my employer wanted to lower my wages. I believe I should have taken what he offered, only some men in the house had a guinea per week, and I thought it might hurt them if I did. On this, I made known my situation to Mr. [Richard] Boardman, who advised me to return home as soon as possible. However, that I might be clear, I inquired at several printing offices in London for work, but could not get any. Then I determined to go to Ireland with Mr. Boardman. Only there seemed to be an objection, namely my want of money. But that he removed by bearing my expenses. While I was in London, Mr. Wesley arrived from the Leeds Conference. But I had not courage to speak to him all the time he stayed in town.

In my return to Dublin I was near finishing my course. For going through Wales I was suddenly pitched off the coach-box. But providentially having hold of the iron, I wheeled and my foot rested upon the spring. I went off head foremost; and though the whole weight of my body was on my left arm, I was so supported by an invisible power that it seemed no weight at all. I have since almost shuddered at my

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<sup>23</sup>1 Pet. 1:8.

<sup>24</sup>Joyce had married Alice Burrowes in Dublin, on Dec. 26, 1776.



dangerous situation, when sleeping on the top of the coach. Surely it was nothing less than the divine hand that prevented me from falling and waking in eternity.

When we came to Poolbeg, Mr. Boardman went on shore and left the care of the luggage to me. But before he went, he employed an open boat instead of the wherry, which was near costing me my life, and him the loss of his goods. From thence we sailed peaceably enough till we got between the walls of the river Liffey, when a wherry in full sail darted through the river the contrary way, and when she got pretty near us, the man at the helm tacked about and ran her head against the side of our little boat; where her bowsprit came across my back, and pressed me down with great violence, while our boat was near overset, But the Lord brought me through this also, without receiving any hurt.

The sixth of February, 1782, one of the members of the [Irish] House of Commons for the city being dead,<sup>25</sup> and two or three candidates offering themselves, my two fellow apprentices and I, being free of the city, were requested by our master to attend the corporation at the music hall. We all accordingly met there with the three candidates, in the grove room (so called, from its being painted like a grove). This was over the ballroom, and supposed to be twenty feet high or more. Alderman [Nathaniel] W[arren] arose and spoke first. Then Mr. T[ravers] H[artley] made a speech. Then the third candidate, Counsellor [Joseph] P[emberton], beginning with a feeble voice, the place was all silence.<sup>26</sup> When lo! in a moment, the beam broke close by the wall, and the floor sunk, and about three hundred persons went down in an instant.<sup>27</sup> I had just time to perceive them sinking through the cloud of dust which ascended, before I fell myself. But as God would have it, no one fell upon me. My fall was upon the pit of my stomach, which nearly knocked out my breath. For some time we were so encompassed with darkness that we could not rightly tell where we were. But the most horrid cries were uttered by those whose limbs were broken that could well be conceived. As we lay, not knowing which way to flee, some cried out, 'Lie still and we shall be all safe.' I thought they perceived the roof giving way; and as I was on the top of the rest, I gave myself up for lost, expecting every moment to be dashed in pieces. I lay as close as I could, patiently waiting my doom. But finding the roof did not fall as I expected, I raised my head, looked about, and discovered an open window just at hand. I then arose. But Sir E[dward] N[ewenham], who was under me, cried out to me to take the boards off his legs, which he said were broke. This I did as well as I could, and lent him a hand to help him up. I then looked down and saw my suffering fellow mortals like drowning men, stretching forth their arms, and grasping at the first thing that presented itself. One of them caught me by the hand, and nearly pulled me down. But I disengaged myself and made to the window, where I had to help a man through who had his foot broke and a desperate hole made in his forehead, so that the interior part of his skull might be seen. After him I went out myself, and by the mercy of God escaped without a broken bone, or the loss of a drop of blood.

When I got out I seemed like one returning from the dead, or coming from the field of battle. My face was covered with paleness, and it seemed as if I had bathed part of my garments in the blood of the slain. I went over to Mr. [Bennett] Dugdale's; but he not being come home, I thought he was buried in the ruins. So I went back to look for him, and turned over some of the rubbish, but could not find him. In the meantime he was carried home in a chair, with some of his ribs broke, and otherwise greatly hurt, so that his life hung in doubt for some time. While ranging about, I espied my other fellow apprentice not able to move, being greatly hurt in the thigh, and having one of his skirts tore off by something that caught him in the fall. Several others sat in the utmost agony with their legs and thighs broken, and otherwise shockingly mangled. Very few escaped unhurt more or less. Nine or ten, at least, died of the wounds and bruises they received. And others live disabled, to perpetuate the memory of this dreadful event. When I got home I was bled, and fainted away. My wife thought I was going to expire. But I soon came to myself, and in a few days was enabled to go to my work as usual.

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<sup>25</sup>William Clement (1707–82).

<sup>26</sup>The names are given in *Saunders's News-Letter* (Feb. 7, 1782).

<sup>27</sup>See Máire Kennedy, 'Disaster at the Music Hall, Fishamble Street, 6 February 1782', *Dublin Historical Record* 50 (1997): 130–36.

This same year it was impressed on my mind that I ought to give myself up to the blessed work of calling sinners to repentance. But then a damp came upon me, when I considered my unfaithfulness to his grace. Hence I was ready to conclude it could never be that such a vile creature should be chosen to labour in the vineyard of the Lord. But blessed be his adorable name, I can say, 'Unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles, the unsearchable riches of Christ.'<sup>28</sup> At first some objection was made to me on account of my family. But about Christmas 1782,<sup>29</sup> I received a letter from Mr. Wesley, the substance of which is as follows:

Dear Brother,

Not only Mr. [Edward] Smyth, but several others gave a satisfactory account of you at the Conference. Mr. [Richard] Watkinson writes me word, that as Robert Blake has left him, he is in great want of help. I have no objections, if your wife is willing, for you to go upon trial to Limerick.

John Wesley

Accordingly I began immediately to prepare for my departure. My Dublin friends assisted me very much; and on Saturday, January 11, 1783, I took leave of my wife and child, my dear acquaintance, and native place, and with an aching heart set out.

I stopped at Naas to refresh myself and my horse. And having a room to myself, with an aching heart I opened the Bible on these words, 'Go ye forth of Babylon; flee from the Chaldeans, with the voice of singing. Declare ye, tell this, utter it even to the ends of the earth, saying, The Lord hath redeemed his servant Jacob.' (Isaiah 48:20) I reached Monasterevin that night. But being much fatigued, I lay down with a heart burdened with inexpressible grief. But the next morning I arose quite composed. And as it was the Sabbath-day I rode to Portarlinton, and preached twice.

On Monday I left Portarlinton and set off for my circuit. On the way I was much tried with the severity of the weather, and deeply exercised about my call to preach. But I found a willingness to endure hardships, if the Lord would be pleased to make me an instrument of good.

My great Preserver conducted me in safety through hail, rain, and wind until I got to Cashel, the first place in my circuit. I entered the city in peace, and rode safely along, until I came to the street where I was to lodge. Then my horse suddenly fell. I was thrown over his neck upon my head, and dashed violently against the stones. Here I lay for a little time, stretched upon my back. When I arose, I found no great hurt, though some who saw me fall wondered I was not killed. One of the drunkards of the town very civilly conducted me to my lodging. But the people of the house looked astonished at me, and did not seem well inclined to receive me because, seeing me so dirty and in such company, they thought I had been drinking. But my guide strongly assured them I had fallen from my horse, which helped to gain me a more friendly reception. I thought Satan was angry with me, but the God of my life overruled his malice.

During the short time I travelled this circuit I had severe trials within and without. But the Lord comforted me in all my tribulations. My wife was sick about five weeks, and was so forsaken by her acquaintances that she might have nearly adopted the words of the Psalmist, 'I am counted with them that go down to the pit, free among the dead.'<sup>30</sup> The letters I received from her in this dark and cloudy day were like the tidings brought to Job, one weightier than another. Yet I was enabled to lay the matter before the Lord, and found unspeakable liberty. No outward trials whatever were sufficient to shake my confidence. I was strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. O thou God of love! Thou alone canst tell the happiness I enjoyed in thee, while wading through the deep waters.

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<sup>28</sup>Eph. 3:8.

<sup>29</sup>Orig. in *AM*, '1783'; a mistake.

<sup>30</sup>Cf. Ps. 88:4–5.

One morning in particular while I was speaking from, 'Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life,'<sup>31</sup> I was so filled with joy that it was as if I had got upon the wings of an eagle, and was soaring to endless day.

But that which distressed me most was my not having so many seals of my ministry as I expected. One day, while my mind was thus exercised, having the Bible in my hands, I opened upon these words, 'Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain.' (Joel 2:1<sup>32</sup>) I replied immediately, 'Lord, put the trumpet to my mouth, and I will blow it.' That night I found a peculiar degree of liberty and courage in delivering my message to the people. However, nothing would satisfy me but hearing the people roar under the sermon from a sense of their misery; and on the other hand, shouting for joy, through a sense of pardoning love. And as I laboured with all my might, and endeavoured to walk close with God through the day, I expected that it would be the case. And because it was not (except in one or two instances), I was almost ready to conclude I was not sent of God.

But though I did not often perceive those marks, which I laid down as proofs of my call to the ministry, yet I am now well assured I was doing the will of God, from the comfortable testimonies of the people at class meetings and love-feasts. And I think it would be well for every young preacher especially to meet the classes whenever he can. Nothing has a greater tendency to lift up the hands that hang down than to hear those who have sat under us relating the good they have received thereby. Another remark I would make is that we are not to look upon all our labours as lost because the seed we sow does not spring up immediately, or at least, is not made known to us at the time. God makes this known only so far as it is necessary, to enable us to go on in our work with humble boldness.

In April [1783] I attended the Conference, and from thence was sent to labour with Mr. Robert Armstrong<sup>33</sup> and Mr. John Kerr,<sup>34</sup> on the Ballyconnell circuit. I may say we loved as brethren, and kept the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. The party spirit which reigned throughout that circuit the year before was almost entirely removed. And some good was done to saints and sinners. We had therefore reason to bless God who did not suffer us to labour in vain!

The second day I travelled in this circuit I was most dreadfully wet. It rained upon me for four hours, to such a degree that the covers of the books in my pockets were stripping off with the wet. When I got to my quarters, I thought I should have met with sympathizing friends; but they seemed not to think much about me. (I suppose it was permitted for a trial of my patience, as I found this family exceeding friendly ever after.) I dried myself as well as I could, and got some cold milk to refresh me after my toil. But I went to bed, slept most comfortably, and rose next morning without the least cold. After breakfast I rode to my destined place. When I went in, I could not see the face of a Methodist, which discouraged me much. After dinner the day was very gloomy, which helped to depress my spirits more. I entered into a train of reasoning, till I came to a resolution to quit the work and return home. Accordingly I sent immediately to the field for my horse, clapped on my saddlebags, mounted him and rode off determined never to travel more.

But I had a conviction I was doing wrong, and feared as I was flying from the work, I should fall and break my neck. But so odious was the cross that I had neither inclination nor power to resist. When I had got about five miles, I met a member of the society I was flying from. The woman, though she never saw me before, without asking whether I was a preacher or not, stopped me and said, 'What is the reason you are turning your back on E[nniskillen]?' I looked earnestly at her, and said, 'How do you know me?'

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<sup>31</sup>James 1:12.

<sup>32</sup>Orig., '10'; a misprint.

<sup>33</sup>Robert Armstrong appears in an appointment first in 1776 (*Works*, 10:455). He was admitted to full status as an itinerant in 1778 (10:473), and served until desisting from travelling in 1788 (10:646).

<sup>34</sup>John Kerr (c. 1750–1830) was admitted 'on trial' as an itinerant in 1782 (*Works*, 10:520). He served in this role for 20 years, then was named Book Steward in 1802 (a role from which he retired in 1814). See *Minutes* (post-Wesley, 1830), 6:557.

On which she pointed to a young man, who told her I was the person he directed to C[osbytow]n the night before. She then said, as if she knew my heart, 'I suppose you do not mean to travel this circuit any more?' I said, 'I do not mean to travel at all any more. I cannot stand it, and therefore I am going home.' Then I rode away from her; but my heart was ready to break with grief.

As I pursued my journey, I rode into Enniskillen to get a bait for my horse. But it being fair day, and the town greatly crowded, I being a stranger did not know where to apply for it. While I was looking about a stranger (one of the society of Tonyloman<sup>35</sup>) came up to me and said, 'Sir, do you want anything?' I said, 'I want a feed of oats for my horse.' By and by another came up to me and smiled, but I knew him not. However I soon found he was a Methodist. This simple circumstance, I believe was the appointment of providence, as it helped to prevent my going home as I intended. After getting the oats, I rode on to Mr. H[ugh] D[rennan]'s, the general steward,<sup>36</sup> thinking to spend that night and the Sabbath-day there, and on Monday to set off for Dublin. Mr. D[rennan] reasoned the case very much with me, to keep me on the circuit. But I could not then be brought fully to consent. However the young men of Tonyloman persuaded me to go thither, where I preached twice that evening. At last I was prevailed on to stay until Dr. [Thomas] Coke came into the circuit.

During this interval I had many deep exercises of mind. I could hardly look upon myself to be a preacher, and I thought it absolutely impossible that I should submit to travel. I was altogether unwilling to continue, and would have been glad of any pretence to return home. I almost wished for a rupture, or a broken leg, or anything that might appear a lawful excuse for it; for I was afraid to go home without one. While I was thus exercised, I received a letter from my wife, encouraging me to persevere in the work of God; part of which is as follows:

Dublin  
May 14, 1783

My Dear,

The receiving of your letter gave me joy. But on reading it my heart did truly feel for you. Yet on consideration, I think it is a good sign that the devil does so much strive to hinder you. He fears you will lay your shoulders to the Lord's work, and his power will be shaken. And on this account you may expect all the opposition that the prince of darkness can make.

Are you afraid of the devil, who is himself held in chains by your Master? Is not God on your side? Then fear not. This temptation is for the trial of your faith. The Lord will make your cup to overflow after it, and bless you in his own way.

I remain your affectionate wife,

Alice Joyce

I now wrote a letter for Dr. Coke acquainting him with my objections against travelling. When I came to Killashandra, I gave him the letter. He took much pains to remove my objections. At last I submitted for that time. But soon after the temptation returned with greater violence. Accordingly I wrote to the doctor a second time, requesting permission to quit travelling. When getting another letter which encouraged me to go on, I found a willingness to sacrifice my all for the sake of the gospel. My mind being once more set at liberty, I preached the next morning with remarkable power—and I believe not many of the congregation went away unblessed. From that hour, through mercy, I was enabled to devote myself fully to the work of God, and to endure hardness with cheerfulness. And though I had lived twenty-eight years and upwards in Dublin, I never, during my stay in the north, murmured at the hardest labour, or the coarsest food I met with.

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<sup>35</sup>Orig., 'Tonnelummin'; this township is about 3 miles south of Enniskillen.

<sup>36</sup>Hugh Drennan, the steward of the circuit, like in the hamlet Skea (part of Cleenish parish). See Crookshank, *Ireland*, 192.

My wife also endured some hardship upon this circuit, yet she could not wish the cross removed. But what she wanted in temporals the Lord made up in spirituals. It was on this circuit he graciously restored her to the light of his countenance, filling her with peace and joy in believing. Here also the Lord favoured her with the affection of the people, several of whom were grieved at her departure.

Upon the whole, I have reason to be thankful for my appointment to the north, and trust I shall never lose my affection for my dear friends in those parts, or a grateful remembrance which I retain for the many little tokens of love they showed me for Christ's sake.

In July 1784 I was appointed Assistant in the Athlone circuit: an office I saw myself very unfit for. But I cast my care upon the Lord, and obtained help of him, so as to get through with satisfaction to some and profit to myself. This year the Lord was pleased to give me favour in the sight of the people, and to bless me with success in my labours. He enlarged the borders of Zion, and made me willing to spend and be spent for him.

In January 1785 I went to Dublin, intending to stay about two nights. But I was seized with sickness which detained me longer than I intended. I believe this was the appointment of an all-gracious providence, as I experienced such a measure of divine love as was beyond what I could ask or think.

After being in my circuit a considerable time, the letters I received from Dublin respecting the work were so delightful that I was desirous of seeing my native place once more. On my arrival, I found many much alive to God—by means of those men of God, James Rogers and Andrew Blair, and that mother in Israel, sister [Hester] Rogers. I soon caught a measure of their spirit, and was stirred up to seek for purity of heart; and was not without hope of getting a draught of that water of life before I left Dublin.

The ninth of January I was deeply wounded in my spirit, on account of indwelling sin. I saw it was like a flood ready to overwhelm me. I groaned to be delivered, and abhorred myself on account of it. That night I went and sat with sister Rogers and s[ister] B[lair?] and we talked about Christian perfection till Mr. Rogers came into the room. It being late, he said to me, 'You must pray for us.' Being distressed, I said, 'I want some one to pray for me.' We kneeled down, and sister Rogers wrestled with God in my behalf. Yet I went home much oppressed, which was visible to all. One asked me if anything was the matter, I was unwilling to tell. But on their pressing me, I told them my carnal mind was the cause. After family prayer, I entered my chamber and stood a while leaning against the wall. The language of my heart was, 'Lord! I am nothing. Lord! I am nothing!' After which I went to prayer, and in a moment found power to obey that command, 'My son give me thy heart.'<sup>37</sup>

I then arose from my knees and went to bed in peace, praising the Lord for all his goodness. Notwithstanding this change, I was afraid to speak in a positive manner what the Lord had done for me. I walked in the light, with my heart full of love to God. After my departure from thence I wrote to sister Rogers as follows:

Athlone  
January 31, 1785

First. In my former state, though often deeply distressed on account of my depravity, yet I could not freely part with *all*; so that when I prayed against this or that evil which beset me most, it was with fear and a secret unwillingness to part with that I prayed against. In my present state I do not pray that I may give up this or that evil, for I have cheerfully given up all. Yet I feel a necessity of constantly looking unto Jesus, that I may not be ensnared again.

Secondly. In my former state unprofitable thoughts sometimes carried me away. But now I feel both inclination and power to reject them immediately.

Thirdly. Though I frequently was enabled to delight myself in the Lord, yet there were certain times that I seemed to be forgetful of him, so far as to lose the happiness arising from communion with him. But now I feel that promise made good, 'He will keep them in perfect

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<sup>37</sup>Cf. Prov. 23:26.

peace whose minds are stayed on him.<sup>38</sup>

Fourthly. In my former state I loved Christian conversation; yet I was often ensnared by trifling conversation. But now Christian conversation is my constant aim, unless so far as I am obliged to speak about other necessary things.

Fifthly. In my former state, though I was sensible of my unworthiness, yet I had not so clear a discovery of my shortcomings in every particular, and of course could not see the necessity of keeping close to the fountain of my Redeemer's blood.

Lastly. In my former state I was often harassed with doubts and fears whether I should be admitted to behold the face of God in glory. In my present, I feel no doubt at any time of my being forever with him.

This is the change my God has wrought in me, of which I am as sensible as that I exist. Yet I find I am in an enemy's country, and feel myself attacked by various temptations. But by looking to the Captain of my salvation I am 'more than conqueror'.<sup>39</sup>

I cannot but admire the great goodness of God in thus manifesting himself to me at this very time. As I had a variety of trials to encounter, which must have made my hands hang down, had he not prepared me for them by a double portion of his grace. By this I was enabled to add to my faith courage. No hardship could make me afraid. I counted not my life dear unto myself, so I might finish my course with joy. When riding in the midst of my pain, which was often beyond expression, I have been constrained to cry, 'O the honour of being an ambassador for Christ!'<sup>40</sup> So many precious smiles of his face have rested upon me, while travelling round my circuit, that every cross was light, every rough way smooth, and every crooked place straight.

O Lord, grant that I may not be found among the slumbering watchmen, or lazy, careless shepherds, when thou shalt appear to reward thy faithful labourers; and to require, at the slumbering watchman's hand, the blood of those who have perished through their unfaithfulness!

Matthias Joyce

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 9 (1786): 132–36, 194–98, 244–48, 298–302, 351–55, 418–22, 475–80, 532–35, 588–92, 642–45.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Cf. Isa. 26:3.

<sup>39</sup>Cf. Rom. 8:37.

<sup>40</sup>Cf. 2 Cor. 5:20.

<sup>41</sup>This account is reproduced in Jackson, *EMP*, 4:228–73; along with the short biography on the occasion of Joyce's death published in the Conference *Minutes*.

From Joseph Benson<sup>1</sup>

Sheffield

October 15, 1785<sup>2</sup>

Reverend and very Dear Sir,<sup>3</sup>

I was out of town when your letter arrived here, otherwise I should have wrote sooner.<sup>4</sup> I am very glad you purpose writing a funeral sermon on Mr. [John] Fletcher.<sup>5</sup> It is a tribute you owe to his memory, and I hope what you will have to say of the life and death of that excellent man will know a blessing not only to the present age but to ages yet unborn. As I most sincerely wish that justice may be done to his most valuable<sup>6</sup> character, and that the subject may be treated in as edifying a manner as may be, I shall be extremely glad if I can furnish you with any materials for your work. But I fear I have nothing to communicate which you either do not know already or will not think improper to be made use of in such a performance. However, as I shall not think much of my labour in writing, I shall send you as many particulars that seem of any consequence as I can recollect or gather from looking over his letters, many of which I have in my possession.

Though I have frequently asked he would give me a short history of the former part of his life, yet he had so great an aversion to speak of himself that I could never obtain my request. Sometimes he would have begun to give me some account but impatient to proceed he soon broke off either in prayer or in exhorting to me or others in company. The following particulars I received lately from Mrs. [Sarah] Crosby and Miss [Ann] Tripp, who had them from his own lips.

Good impressions were made upon his mind when he was a mere child, and that by very simple means. One evening he had behaved ill, and when the servant girl went to put him (who it seems was seven) to bed, she spoke with a degree of sharpness and solemnity to him upon it and added 'I'll leave you and go and pray to God to have mercy upon you and make you a good boy.' The words went to his heart, and young as he was, he was as affected as to spend most part of the night in tears, and was serious for some time after.

These good impressions however wore off. For when he was a young man a message which he received from (I think) an uncle who was an officer of considerable rank in the army (as many of his relations were) informing him of some appointment in the military, he was so overjoyed with the news that he hastily rose from his seat and made a spring upon the floor, being of strong passions, and with his foot overturned the tea kettle full of boiling water; by which accident (shall I call it or rather interposition of providence) he was so dreadfully scalded that his acceptance of the preferment intended him in the military line was prevented at that time. And before any other offered, a train of providences brought him over to England, where he soon commenced a soldier of Jesus Christ and was promoted to high dignity in

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<sup>1</sup>JW had written Benson requesting input for John Fletcher's funeral sermon. The amount of input that JW received let JW over the coming year to prepare and publish as well *A Short Account of the Life and Death of the Rev. John Fletcher* (London: Paramore, 1786). We have access to Benson's initial reply to JW in two forms: two portions of his manuscript draft (which includes material JW did not use); and JW's published extracts (some of which continue the incomplete manuscript draft). We begin here with the manuscript draft (noting which portions were included by JW) and conclude with published material not found in the draft.

<sup>2</sup>The date and location are given on the portion of the draft in MARC, PLP 7/8/13.

<sup>3</sup>This salutation and the next several paragraphs are from the portion of the draft in PLP 7/12/1.

<sup>4</sup>JW's letter to Benson is not known to survive. JW wrote his funeral sermon for Fletcher Oct. 23–24 (see diary, *Works*, 23:540). He wrote to several persons by early Oct., soliciting such input.

<sup>5</sup>See Sermon 114, *On the Death of John Fletcher* (1785), *Works*, 3:609–29.

<sup>6</sup>'Most valuable' has 'incomparable' written above it as an alternative.

the armies of Immanuel the Prince of Peace.

I believe it was while he was a tutor in Mr. [Thomas] Hill's family that the first deep and lasting impressions were made upon his mind, and that it was in consequence of a single sentence dropped one day by a servant. This he himself mentioned occasionally, once in company when he was enforcing the observation of Solomon, 'A word spoken in season how good is it!'<sup>7</sup> 'When I was a tutor in Mr. Hill's family', said he, 'sitting one Sunday afternoon in my study and employing my time that precious day in no better a way than in composing a little music, the footman came up with some coals to the fire, and observing what I was doing, and being a serious and conscientious man, made bold to reprove me says, "Oh sir, that is not a proper employment for the Lord's day." The words went to my heart, and when the emotions of resentment exerted by what I thought impudence in the servant were subsided, I began seriously to reflect upon what he had raised. And though I felt my pride mortified that a *footman* should reprove me, yet I saw the proof *just*, and from hence was led gradually into a thorough acceptance with my real state and character. From that time I never rested till I found peace with God and experienced a birth from above so that "a word spoken in season how good is it!"'

It seems however that he was not immediately that eminent saint which he was for many years before his death. Being a man of a lively imagination and of strong passion, he had much to do with his natural temper, before it was perfectly subdued by grace divine. He was very prone to be angry, and a consciousness thereof frequently caused him to mourn deeply. I am credibly informed that he has often thrown himself prostrate upon the floor in anguish of soul and lay all night, or a great part of it, in deep distress and bathed in tears, bemoaning his unhappy state and imploring mercy and victory. And victory he surely obtained in a very eminent degree. For I dare say, for twenty years or upward before his death no man or woman saw him out of temper or heard a rash expression drop from his lips. I have often thought this testimony which Burnet in his *History of His Own Times* bears of Archbishop [Robert] Leighton may with equal propriety be bourn of him. The substance of what he says is that after an intimate acquaintance with the Archbishop for many years, and after being with him by night and day at home and abroad, in public and private on sundry occasions and in various affairs, 'he never heard an idle word drop from his lips, or any conversation as was not *directly* to the use of edifying, or that he never saw him in any temper in which he himself would not have wished to have been found at death.'<sup>8</sup> I for my part must say the same of Mr. Fletcher. I have been acquainted with him for several years, have been with him at all hours and on various occasions; I never heard, as far as I recollect, a trifling expression drop from his lips or any discourse that was not edifying, nor did I ever observe any wrong temper to rise, much less to reign in his heart.<sup>9</sup>

Indeed as to *conversation* he was peculiarly imminent, for it was his constant practice in all companies to improve it as much as possible to the edification of all present. He was always either inculcating some important truth, or exhorting to some neglected duty, or administering some needful comfort, or relating some useful anecdote, or making some improving remark or observation. He was instant in season and out of season. And his devout soul, always burning with love and zeal, led him to intermix prayer with all he said. And his manner was so solemn and at the same time so mild and insinuating that it was hardly possible for anyone who had the happiness to be in his company, [to be] not both struck with awe and charmed with love, as if in the presence of an angel or departed spirit from the other world. Indeed I have frequently thought, when in his company and attending to his heavenly discourse and divine spirit, that he was so different from and superior to the generality of mankind, even of professors, that he looked more like some Moses or Elias, some prophet or abbot come again from the dead, than a mortal man dwelling in an house of clay or compassed about with infirmity. It is true his weak and long afflicted body proclaimed him human, but the graces and virtues which filled and adorned his soul in a degree and nature rarely found, manifested him to be divine. And even before his final

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<sup>7</sup>Prov. 15:23.

<sup>8</sup>See Gilbert Burnet, *Bishop Burnet's History of His Own Time* (London: Ward, 1724), 1:134–35.

<sup>9</sup>JW included this paragraph, much polished, in *Short Account*, 173–74.



dissolution, that which was mortal seemed in a great degree 'swallowed up' of life.<sup>10</sup>

My acquaintance with him commenced when I was at Kingswood, I think in the year 1768. Making an excursion, as he did now and then, from his parish to Bristol and Bath, we gave him an invitation to come preach at Kingswood. The congregation was large and he was peculiarly assisted in enforcing those encouraging words, 'Whosoever cometh unto me ....'<sup>11</sup> The people were exceedingly affected and indeed quite melted down with tears to the Lord Jesus. Weeping was on every side, the tears streamed so fast from the eyes of the poor colliers that their black faces were almost universally marked with streaks of white. As to himself, his zealous soul had been carried out so far beyond his strength that when he concluded he was bathed in sweat and put off a shirt as wet as if it had been dipped in water. Indeed that was nothing singular, he very rarely preached but it was the case. Before this I had conceived that idea of him from what I had heard from others. From this time I held him in peculiar esteem chiefly on account of his piety and zeal for the salvation of souls, and wished much for more regular instances and greater intimacy with him, which blessing (for a blessing I have always considered it) it was not long before I obtained.

For about this time the Countess of Huntingdon created a college at Trevecca in Wales for the education of pious young men for the ministry. Her plan, and the high opinion she had of his learning and piety and abilities every way for such an office, made her chose him for the president of it. It was not intended that he should reside there constantly, or even chiefly—his duty to his flock would not admit of that—but that he should attend now and then as often as he conveniently could, and like the principal of a college in our universities should oversee the conduct of both tutors and the scholars, advise the young men how to prosecute their studies to the best advantage, assist their piety and judge of qualifications for the work to which they promised to devote themselves. As her Ladyship seemed to have no other end in view in the institution but to serve the cause of Christ in the general, without being attached to any one party in particular, and as she promised that the students should be at full liberty after their education was finished to enter into the ministry either in the established Church or among any denomination of Christians they thought proper, Mr. Fletcher, whose time and talents were entirely devoted to the service of the Lord Jesus,<sup>12</sup> readily complied with her Ladyship's desire and undertook the oversight of this institution apparently well calculated to promote the cause of God.

This he did without fee or reward, but with the sole view of assisting a great, a pious Lady in a good work, and of being useful in training up persons for the important office of preaching the gospel of Christ. And as I am conscious the same motive induced me to accept of the office her Ladyship wished me to undertake in the same college. So I believe, you had no other end in view when you agreed that I should leave Kingswood (though you remember I could be ill-spared at that time) for that purpose. Things went on remarkably well for some time. The young men were in general serious, made considerable progress in learning, and seemed many of them to have a talent for preaching, which as they exercised it a good deal both at home and in the neighbourhood improved much.

Mr. Fletcher visited us frequently and was received as *an angel of God*. Like Elijah within the school of the prophets, he was revered, he was loved, he was obeyed; nay, almost adored, and that as well by her Ladyship as by every student. Nay, and by ever member of the family. And indeed he was worthy of it. Forgive me my dear sir if you think I exceed. My heart kindles while I write. Here it was that I saw, shall I say, an angel dwelling in human flesh? I should not far exceed the truth if I said so. But here I saw a descendant of fallen Adam so far raised above the ruins of his fall that, though by the body he was tied down to the earth, yet was his whole 'conversation in heaven'.<sup>13</sup> Yet was his 'life hid with Christ in God'

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<sup>10</sup>See 1 Cor. 15:54. JW incorporated this paragraph, repositioned, in *Short Account*, 52–53.

<sup>11</sup>John 6:37ff.

<sup>12</sup>MARC, PLP 7/12/1 ends at the bottom of a page at this point; the narrative continues at the top of MARC, PLP 7/8/13.

<sup>13</sup>Cf. Phil. 3:20.

from day to day.<sup>14</sup> Prayer, praise, love, and zeal, all ardent, elevated above what one would think attainable in this state of frailty, were the element in which he continually lived himself. And the one ? employed with respect to others was to call, entreat, and urge all hearts to ascend with his own to God and glory. He had leisure, comparatively speaking, for nothing else. Languages, arts, sciences, grammar, rhetoric, and even divinity itself (as it is called) was laid aside when he appeared in the study among the students. His full heart would not suffer him to be silent. He *must* speak and they were readier to give ear to him, a servant and minister of Jesus Christ, than attend to Sallust, Virgil, Cicero, or any Latin or Greek poet or philosopher they might be reading. And they did not hearken long before they were all in tears and every heart had caught afire from the flame that burnt in his soul.

And such seasons generally terminated in this: after speaking to them a while in this way they were convinced that to be ‘filled with the Holy Ghost’<sup>15</sup> would be a better qualification for the ministry of the gospel than any classical learning (which however he knew how to use). He would have said ‘As many of you as are in a thirst for the fullness of the Spirit, follow me into my room.’ In a moment many would have rose and followed him, and there we have continued till noon, wrestling like Jacob for the blessing, praying one after another, till we could bear to kneel no longer. This was done not once nor twice, but many times. And I have sometimes seen him on these occasions, once in particular, so filled with the love of God that he could contain no more; but cried out, ‘O my God, withhold thy hand, or the vessel will burst.’ And yet afterwards he told me he feared he had grieved the Spirit of God, and ought rather to have prayed that the Lord would have enlarged the vessel, or have suffered it to break, that the soul might fly away.<sup>16</sup>

Such was the employment of this man of God at Trevecca. Indeed, he did not neglect any part of his office as president of the religious seminary, but he especially preached the word to students and to as many others as came together to hear. He was ‘instant in season, out of season’.<sup>17</sup> He ‘reproved, rebuked, exhorted, with all long-suffering’.<sup>18</sup> And at the same time he let his light, the light of a heavenly example, shine before all, and was himself the only person who was not conscious that it shined, being in this respect exactly like Moses—who knew not that his face shone.<sup>19</sup> He was little, and mean, and base in his own eyes. He seemed to himself to have no knowledge, nor experience in the things of God, and to be of no use—comparatively—among men. To be less than the least of all saints, a little better than one who cursed the gourd. And he would sometimes wish to return to the wilderness and set down with Elijah under the juniper tree, weary of living—as he thought—to so little purpose. He preferred all others to himself, and rejoiced to do the meanest offices for anyone.

At the same time he advise and directed the resident masters as to the books which the students should read and examine [...] <sup>20</sup>O what a loss did Trevecca sustain! What an irreparable loss when he left it!

But why then did he leave it? Why did he give up an office for which he was so perfectly well qualified? Which he executed so entirely to the satisfaction of all the parties wherewith he was concerned, and in which it had pleased God to give so manifest a blessing to his labours? Perhaps it would be better, in tenderness to some persons eminent for piety and usefulness, to let that matter remain still under the

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<sup>14</sup>Col. 3:3.

<sup>15</sup>Acts 2:4.

<sup>16</sup>JW incorporated the five preceding paragraphs, with some editorial polishing, in *Short Account*, 45–51.

<sup>17</sup>2 Tim. 4:2.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>See Exodus 34:29.

<sup>20</sup>MARC, PLP 7/8/13 ends here, at the bottom of a page. The remainder of what follows comes from JW’s published excerpts in *Short Account*, 53–61.

veil which forgiving love has cast over it. But if it be thought that justice to his character, and to the cause which from that time he so warmly espoused and so ably defended, requires some light to be cast upon it, it may be the most inoffensive way to do it in his own words.

The following is an exact copy of all that is material in a letter he wrote to me, in consequence of my dismissal from the office I had been in:

January 7, 1771

Dear Sir,

The same post brought me yours, and two from my Lady, and one from Mr. Williams.<sup>21</sup> Those contained no charges but general ones, which with me go for nothing. If the procedure you mention is fact, and your letter is a fair account of the transaction and words relative to your discharge, a false step has been taken. I write this post to her Ladyship on the affair, with all possible plainness. If the plan of the college is overthrown, I have nothing more to say to it. I will keep to my text, for one. I trust I shall ever be a servant of all. The confined tool of any one party I never was, and never will be. If the blow that should have been struck at 'the dead spirit' is struck (contrary to the granted 'liberty of sentiment') at *dead Arminius*, or *absent Mr. Wesley*; if a master is turned away without any fault; it is time for me to stand up with firmness, or to withdraw.

The following paragraphs are transcribed from Mr. Fletcher's letter to my Lady [Huntingdon]:

Mr. Benson made a very just defence when he said he did hold with me the possibility of salvation for all men. If this is what you call Mr. Wesley's opinion and Arminianism, and if every Arminian must quit the College, I am actually discharged. For in my present view of things, I must hold that sentiment, if I believe that the Bible is true and that God is love.

For my part, I am no party-man. In the Lord I am your servant, and that of your every student. But I cannot give up the honour of being connected with my old friends who, notwithstanding their failings, are entitled to my respect, gratitude, and affection. Mr. Wesley shall always be welcome to my pulpit, and I shall gladly bear my testimony in his as well as Mr. [George] Whitefield's. If you forbid your students to preach for the one, and offer them to preach for the other; and if a master is discarded for believing that Christ died for all; then prejudice reigns, charity is cruelly wounded, and party-spirit shouts, prevails, triumphs.

Two days after, he [i.e., Fletcher] writes, 'I am determined to stand or fall with the liberty of the college. As I entered it a free place, I must quit it the moment it is an harbour for party-spirit.'

This he was soon constrained to do, as appears from the following letter wrote about two months after:

My Dear Friend,

On my arrival at the college, I found all very quiet, I fear through the enemy's keeping his goods in peace. While I preached the next day, I found myself as much shackled as ever I was in my life. And after private prayer, I concluded I was not in my place. The same day I resigned my office to my Lady, and on Wednesday to the students and the Lord. ...

Mr. [Walter] Shirley has sent my Lady a copy of part of the *Minutes* of the last Conference.<sup>22</sup> They were called 'horrible' and 'abominable'. My Lady told me she 'must *burn* against them; and that whoever did not fully disavow them must quit the college'. She accordingly ordered the master and all the students to write their sentiments upon them without

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<sup>21</sup>John Williams, whom LH made a tutor at Trevecca in May 1768, and who succeeded to Benson's role on his departure. See Harding, *Huntingdon's Connexion*, 180.

<sup>22</sup>Q. 28 in the 1770 *Minutes*, which cautioned how they had 'leaned too much toward Calvinism'; see *Works*, 10:391–94.

reserve. I did so, explained them according to Mr. Wesley's sentiments, and approved the doctrine, though not cautiously worded. I concluded by observing that as after such a step on my part, and such a declaration of my Lady's, I could no longer as an honest man stay in the college, I took my leave of it, wishing my Lady might find a minister to preside over it less insufficient than

John Fletcher

These were his reasons for resigning his charge at Trevecca. As the circular letter now went abroad, under the name of Mr. Shirley, inviting the clergy of all denominations to assemble in a body at Bristol to oppose you and the preachers met in Conference, and oblige you to revoke the "dreadful heresies" contained in those *Minutes*;<sup>23</sup> and as Mr. Fletcher thought the churches throughout Christendom to be verging very fast toward antinomianism; he thought the propositions contained in those *Minutes* ought rather to be confirmed than revoked. And as he was now retired to his parish, he had more leisure for such a work than before. So after much prayer and consideration, he determined to write in defence of them. In how able a manner he did this, I need not tell any that have read those incomparable writings.<sup>24</sup> I know not how to give the character of them better than in the words of Dr. [George] Dixon, to whom I sent Mr. Fletcher's *Checks*, with a recommendatory letter. He answered me:

Dear Sir,

When I first read yours, I must own I suspected your friendship for Mr. Fletcher had made you too lavish in your commendation of his writings; and that when I came to read them, I should find some abatements necessary to be made. But now I have read them, I am far from thinking you have spoken extravagantly; or indeed, that too much can be said in commendation of them. I had not read his first letter<sup>25</sup> before I was so charmed with the spirit as well as abilities of the writer that the gushing tear could not be hindered from giving full testimony of my heartfelt satisfaction. Perhaps some part of this pleasure might arise from finding my own sentiments so fully embraced by the author. But sure I am the greatest share of it arose from finding those benevolent doctrines so firmly established—and that with such judgment, clearness, and precision, as are seldom, very seldom, to be met with. What crowns the whole is the amiable and Christian temper, which those who will not be convinced must however approve, and wish that their own doctrines may be constantly attended with the same spirit.

*Sources:* Benson's manuscript notes on Fletcher's life (MARC, PLP 7/8/13 & PLP 7/12/1); and JW, *Life of Fletcher*, 45–61, 173–74.

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<sup>23</sup>See Walter Shirley, c. June 5, 1771 in in-letters file.

<sup>24</sup>I.e., John William Fletcher, *A Vindication of the Rev. Mr. Wesley's Last Minutes ... in Five Letters* (Bristol: W. Pine, 1771); which became the first of seven volumes described as *Checks* on antinomianism.

<sup>25</sup>I.e., the first letter in Fletcher's *Vindication* ....

From George Shadford (autobiography)

Canterbury  
October 15, 1785

I was born at Scotter, near Kirton in Lindsey, Lincolnshire, January 19, 1739. When I was very young, I was uncommonly afraid of death. At about eight or nine years of age, being very ill of a sore throat and like to die, I was awfully afraid of another world. For I felt my heart very wicked, and my conscience smote me for many things that I had done amiss.

As I grew up I was very prone to speak bad words, and often to perform wicked actions. We lived by a riverside, where a part of my cruel sport was to hurt or kill the poor innocent fowls. One day seeing a large flock of ducks sitting close together, I threw a stick with great violence, killed one of them upon the spot, and was highly diverted at seeing it die, till I saw the owner of it come out of his house and threaten me severely. I was then sorely troubled, and knew not where to run. I knew I had sinned, and was greatly afraid lest it should come to my father's knowledge. Therefore I dare not go home for a long time.

I was very prone to break the Sabbath, and being fond of play, took every opportunity on Sunday to steal away from my father. In the forenoon, indeed, he always made me go to church with him. And when dinner was over he made me and my sister read a chapter or two in the Bible, and charged me not to play in the afternoon. But notwithstanding all he said, if any person came in to talk with him, I took that opportunity to steal away, and he saw me not till evening, when he called me to an account.

I wished many times that the Rev. Mr. Smith, the minister of the parish, was dead, because he hindered our sports on the Lord's day. On Sunday, finding me and several others at football, he pursued me near a quarter of a mile. I ran until I was just ready to fall down; but coming to a bank, over which I tumbled, I escaped his hands for that time. My conscience always troubled me for these sins. But having a flow of animal spirits, and being tempted of the devil and drawn by my companions and evil desires, I was always carried captive by them.

My mother insisted on my saying my prayers every night and morning at least, and sent me to be catechized by the minister every Sunday. At fourteen years of age my parents sent me to the bishop to be confirmed. And at sixteen they desired me to prepare to receive the blessed sacrament—for about a month before it, I retired from all vain company, prayed and read alone, whilst the Spirit of God set home what I read to my heart. I wept much in secret, was ashamed of my past life, and thought I would never spend my time on Sundays as I had done. When I approached the table of the Lord, it appeared so awful to me that I was like to fall down, and as if I was going to the judgment seat of Christ. However very soon my heart was melted down like wax before the fire. These good impressions continued about three months. For I often thought, 'If I sin any more, I shall have eat and drunk my own damnation, not discerning the Lord's body.'<sup>1</sup>

I broke off from all my companions, and retired to read on the Lord's day—sometimes into my chamber, at other times into the field, but very frequently into the churchyard near which my father lived. I have spent amongst the graves two or three hours at a time, sometimes reading and sometimes praying, until my mind seemed transported in tasting the powers of the world to come. So that I verily believe, had I been acquainted with the Methodists at that time, I should have soon found remission of sins and peace with God. But I had not a single companion that feared God; all were light and trifling. Nay, I believe at that time the whole town was covered with darkness, and sat in the shadow of death.

Having none to guide or direct me, the devil soon persuaded me to take more liberty and suggested that I had repented and reformed enough, that there was no need to be always so precise, that there were no young people in the town did as I did, and that I might take a walk amongst them on Sundays in the afternoon without being wicked. I gave way to this fatal device of Satan, and by little and little lost all my good desires and resolutions, and soon became weak as in times past.

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<sup>1</sup>See 1 Cor. 11:29.

After this I became intimate with two young men that lived about a mile off, who were very often reading books that were entertaining to youth of a carnal mind, such as Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and his *Art of Love*, etc., which soon had a tendency to corrupt and debauch my mind. Now religious books became tasteless and insipid to me. My corruptions grew stronger and stronger. And the blessed Spirit being grieved, my propensity to sin increased more than ever.

I was fond of wrestling, running, leaping, football, dancing, and such like sports. And I gloried in them, because I could excel most in the town and parish. At the age of twenty I was so active that I seemed a compound of life and fire, and had such a flow of animal spirits that I was never in my element but when employed in such kind of sports.

About this time the Militia Act took place,<sup>2</sup> and I thought I would learn the manual exercise. And as we had no expectation of marching from home, it would be pretty employment for me at Easter or Whitsuntide. Four persons were allotted to serve in the militia at the place of my nativity. One of them, a young man, was much afraid to go. I asked him what he would give me to take his place? He thought at first I was only in jest. But when he saw I was in earnest, he gave all I asked, which was seven guineas. When my parents heard I was enlisted, they were almost distracted, especially my father. I was greatly afflicted in my mind when I saw my parents in such trouble on my account. At their desire, therefore, I went back to undo what I had done; but to no purpose. So at the time appointed I was sworn in.

At the end of the year the militia was called off to Manchester, where we lay most of the winter. While we lay here I was taken ill of a fever, and found myself horribly afraid of death. But when I recovered, my distress soon wore off again. One night about nine o'clock, just as I was going to bed, I heard the drums beat to arms! We soon understood that an express was come to town for our company to march immediately to Liverpool; and that Thurot had landed at Carrickfergus, in Ireland.<sup>3</sup> We were under arms immediately, marched all night, and arrived at Warrington about break of day, and at Liverpool the next evening.

My chief concern now was for fear (if we should have an engagement) that my life and soul should be lost together. For I knew very well I was not prepared for death. The next summer we were quartered at Chester and Knutsford. And the winter following we lay at Gainsborough in Lincolnshire. This year I was often very miserable and unhappy. I well remember one day, when being exceedingly provoked by one of my comrades, I swore at him two bitter oaths by the name of God (a practice I had not been guilty of). Immediately I was, as it were, stabbed to the heart by a sword. I was sensible I had grievously sinned against God, and stopped directly. I believe I never swore another oath afterward.

I was often tempted this year to put an end to my life (for it was a year of sinning, and a year of misery). I was afraid to stand by a deep river, lest I should throw myself in. If I was on the edge of a great rock, I trembled and thought I must cast myself down, and therefore was obliged to retreat suddenly. When I have been in the front gallery at church, I have many times been forced to withdraw backward, being horribly tempted to cast myself down headlong. It seemed as if Satan was permitted to wreak his malice upon me in an uncommon manner, to make me miserable. But glory be to God, I was wonderfully preserved by an invisible hand in the midst of such dreadful temptations. At other times, when at prayer or walking alone meditating, God hath graciously given me to taste of the powers of the world to come.

I always had a strong natural affection for my parents, and would do anything that was in my power for them. It happened, a little before I went from home in the militia, that my father was in some distress in temporal circumstances. This moved me much. I therefore gave him all the money I had received in order to go into the militia. Very frequently during my absence from them, when the minister read over the fifth commandment in the church, 'Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be

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<sup>2</sup>The Militia Act of 1757, creating a militia to defend Great Britain during the Seven Years' War.

<sup>3</sup>On Feb. 21, 1760, 600 troops under the leadership of François Thurot (1727–60) landed in Antrim and captured Carrickfergus Castle from a small garrison.

long in the land ...',<sup>4</sup> with tears in my eyes I have said, 'Lord incline my heart to keep this law',<sup>5</sup> always believing a curse would attend disobedient, undutiful children.

When our company lay in quarters at Gainsborough, I went with a sergeant to the place where the Methodists frequently preached, which was the old hall belonging to Sir Nevil Hickman. We did not go with a design of getting any good for our souls, but to meet two young women (who sometimes frequented that place at one o'clock) in order to walk with them in the afternoon. When we came there, we found the persons we wanted. But I soon forgot them after the preacher began public worship. I was much struck with his manner. He took out his hymn-book, and the people sang a hymn. After this he began to pray extempore in such a manner as I had never heard or been used to before. I thought it to be a most excellent prayer. After this he took his little Bible out of his pocket, read over his text, and put it into his pocket again. I marvelled at this, and thought within myself, 'Will he preach without a book too?'

He began immediately to open the Scriptures, and compared spiritual things with spiritual in such a light as I had never heard before. I did not suppose he had very learned abilities, or that he had studied either at Oxford or Cambridge. But something struck me: 'This is the gift of God; this is the gift of God.' I thought it was the Lord's doings, and marvellous in my eyes.

The preacher spoke much against drunkenness, swearing, etc. But I thought I was not much guilty of such sins. At last he spoke very close against pleasure-takers, and proved that such were dead while they live. I thought, if what he says be true, I am in a most dreadful condition. I thought again, this must be true, for he proves it from the word of God. Immediately I found a kind of judgment seat set up in my conscience, where I was tried, cast, and condemned. For I knew I had been seeking happiness in the pleasures of the world and in the creature all my days, not in the Creator and Redeemer of my soul, the only central point of bliss. I revolved over and over what I had heard as I went from the preaching, and resolved, 'If this be Methodist preaching, I will come again. For I received more light from that single sermon than from all that ever I heard in my life before.'

I thought no more about the girls whom I went to mee, and found I had work enough to take care of my own soul. I now went every Sunday, when there was preaching, at half past 1:00 to the same place. And continued so to do most of the time we lay at Gainsborough. It was not long before my comrades and acquaintance took notice of my religious turn of mind, and began to ridicule me. I was surprised at this, for I (ignorantly) thought, 'If I become serious, everyone will love and admire me.' I still continued to go to the preaching, till the soldiers and others having repeatedly reproached and laughed at me, I began to think I had not sufficient strength to travel to heaven as I was, connected with such a set of sinners.

I then made a vow to Almighty God, that if he would spare me until that time twelvemonth (at which time I should be at liberty from the militia, and intended to return home) I would then serve him. So I resolved to venture another year in the old way, damned or saved. O what a mercy that I am not in hell! That God did not take me at my word, and cut me off immediately! From this time the Spirit of God was grieved, and consequently I was left to fall into sin as bad or worse than ever.

After this we marched and were quartered near Dartford in Kent, where we continued eleven weeks. This place seemed to me the most profane for swearing, cursing, drunkenness, Sabbath-breaking, etc., that ever I saw in any part of England. I was so affected that I went to the minister of the parish and let him know what wretched work of drinking and fighting we had in the taverns in service-time on Sunday, and desired him to see to it. He did so, and strictly forbade any liquor to be sold during church service for the future. It was at this place the Lord arrested me again with strong convictions, so that I was obliged to leave my comrades at noonday and ran up into my chamber, where I threw myself upon my knees and wept bitterly. I thought, 'Sin, cursed sin will be my ruin.' I was ready to tear the very hair from my head, thinking I must perish at last, and that my sins would sink me lower than the grave.

While I was in this agony in my chamber about noon, the landlady came into it, as she was passing into her own, and found me upon my knees. I was not in the least ashamed. She said nothing to

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<sup>4</sup>Exod. 20:12.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. Josh. 24:23.

me then; but at night took me to task, and asked me if I was a Wesleyan, or Whitefieldite? I said, 'Madam, what do you mean? Do you reproach me because I pray! Because I pray!' She paused. I said again, 'Madam, do *you* never pray to God? I think I never saw you at church, or any place of worship, these ten weeks I have been at your house.' She answered, 'No, the parson and I have quarrelled, and therefore I do not choose to go to hear him.' I replied, 'A poor excuse, madam! And will you also quarrel with God?' Wherever I travelled, I found the Methodists were everywhere spoken against, by wicked and ungodly persons of every denomination. And the more I looked into the Bible, I was convinced that they were the people of God.

Our next route was to Dover, where we tarried a month. Here the soldiers laughed me out of the little form of prayer I had, for I used always to kneel down by the bedside before I got into it. This form I dropped, and only said my prayers in bed. Our next remove was to Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, where we abode the winter, and in spring went to Epworth, in which place I was discharged.

Soon after my arrival at home several young persons seemed extremely glad to see me, and proposed a dance to express their joy at our first meeting. Though I was not fond of this, yet to oblige them, I complied, much against my conscience. We danced until break of day, and as I was walking from the tavern to my father's house (about an hundred yards) a thought came to my mind, 'What have I been doing this night, serving the devil!' I considered what it had cost me. and upon the whole I thought, 'The ways of the devil are more expensive than the ways of the Lord. It will cost a man more to damn his soul than to save it.' I had not walked many steps farther before something spoke to my heart, 'Remember thy promise.' Immediately it came strongly into my mind it is now a year ago since that promise was made, 'If thou wilt spare me until I get home, I will serve thee.' Then that passage of Solomon came to my mind, 'When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it, for he hath no pleasure in fools; pay that thou vowest.'<sup>6</sup> I thought, 'I will. I will serve the devil no more.' But then it was suggested to my mind, 'Stay another year, until thou art married and settled in the world, and then thou mayest be religious.' That was directly followed with, 'If I do, God will surely cut me off, and send my soul to hell, after so solemn a vow made.' From that time I never danced more, but immediately began to seek happiness in God.

A circumstance happened which tended to fix me in this resolution. Before I went into the militia, I was somewhat engaged to a young woman that lived in Nottinghamshire; and when I was at Manchester I wrote to her, but received no answer, which much surprised me. After I returned home I went to see her, but found she was dead and buried. This shocked me very much. I desired a friend to show me the place where she was interred. When I came to it and was musing, I turned my eye to the left hand, and saw a new stone with this inscription,

In bloom of youth into this town I came,  
Reader, repent; thy lot may be the same.

I felt, as if something thrilled through me. I read and wept, and read and wept again. I looked at the stone, and understood it was a young woman, aged twenty-one. Upon inquiry, I found she had made great preparations, in gay clothing, in order to have a good dance, as she called it, at the fair held here. She talked much of the pleasure she expected, before the time came. At last it arrived, and as she was tripping over the room with her companions, until twelve o'clock at night, she was suddenly taken ill. And behold! How unexpected! O how unwelcome! Death struck her. She was put immediately to bed, and never left it until brought to this spot to be buried. No one can conceive how I felt while I was meditating on the death of these two young women. The one I had tenderly loved. The other, although a stranger to me, had lived about two miles from the place of my nativity. Well, thought I, a little while ago these were talking, walking, pieces of clay, like myself. But now they are gone to visit the house appointed for all living. I wept, and turned my back. But I never forgot that call to the day of my conversion to God.

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<sup>6</sup>Cf. Eccles. 5:4.



At this time both my parents were taken very ill, which was cause of great trouble to me. For I was much afraid they would die. One day while I was greatly distressed about them, and knew not what to do, at last it came into my mind, 'Go to prayer for them.' I went upstairs, shut myself in, and, if ever I prayed in my life from my heart, I did it at this time. I remember in particular, that I prayed to the Lord to raise them up again, and spare them four or five years longer. This prayer he graciously condescended both to hear and answer, for the one lived about four, the other near five years afterward; and was truly converted to God.

I have looked upon it a kind providence that brought a Methodist farmer to the place of my nativity while I was absent in the militia, who received the Methodist preachers and had formed a little society just ready for me when I got home. I was now determined to seek happiness in God, and therefore went constantly to Church and sacrament and to hear the Methodist preachers; to pray and read the Scriptures. I thought, I will be good. I am determined to be good. But alas, in about six or eight weeks, instead of being very good, I saw my heart was corrupt and nothing but sin. I read at night different prayers. Sometimes I prayed for humility or meekness; at other times for faith, patience, or chastity: whatever I thought I wanted most. I was thus employed when the family were in bed, for hours together. And many times whilst reading the tears ran from my eyes, so that I could read no further. And when I found my heart softened and could open it to Almighty God, there seemed a secret pleasure in repentance itself, with an hope springing up that God would save me and bestow his pardoning mercy. While I was thus employed in seeking the Lord, and drawn by the Spirit of God, I esteemed it more than my necessary food.

A little after this I went to see an uncle at East Ferry, and as we were reading the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, he asked me if the latter part of that chapter belonged to St. Paul in his converted state? I said I could not tell—but if it was St. Paul's converted state, I said it is exactly mine. 'For that which I do, I allow not; for what I would, that do I not, but what I hate, that do I. Now, if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.'<sup>7</sup> I then began to flatter myself saying, 'Surely I am converted. I trust I am in a safe state.' And it is well if hundreds do not rest here.

But the Lord did not suffer me to take convictions for conversion. After those pleasant drawings, I had sorrow and deep distress. My sins pressed me sore, and the hand of the Lord was very heavy upon me. Thus I continued until Sunday the 5th of May 1762, coming out of church the farmer that received the preachers told me a stranger was to preach at his house. I went to hear him, and was pleased and much affected. He gave notice that he would preach again in the evening. In the meantime I persuaded as many neighbours as I could to go. We had a full house, and several were greatly affected while he published his crucified Master. Toward the latter part of the sermon I trembled. I shook. I wept. I thought, 'I cannot stand it, I shall fall down amidst all this people.' Oh how gladly would I have been alone to weep! For I was tempted with shame.

I well remember he called out at last and said, 'Is there any young man here about my age willing to give up all and come to Christ? Let him come and welcome, for all things are now ready.' I thought before this he was preaching to me, but now I was sure he spoke to me in particular. I stood guilty and condemned like the publican in the temple. I cried out (so that others might hear, being pierced to the heart with the sword of the Spirit), 'God be merciful to me a sinner.'<sup>8</sup> No sooner had I expressed these words but by the eye of faith (not with my bodily eyes) I saw Christ my Advocate at the right hand of God, making intercession for me. I believed he loved me and gave himself for me. In an instant the Lord filled my soul with divine love. As quick as lightning, so suddenly did the Lord whom I sought come to his temple. Immediately my eyes flowed with tears, and my heart with love. Tears of joy and sorrow ran mingled down my cheeks. O what sweet distress was this! I seemed as if I could weep my life away in tears of love. I sat down in a chair, for I could stand no longer. And these words ran through my mind

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<sup>7</sup>Cf. Rom. 7:15–17.

<sup>8</sup>Luke 18:13.

twenty times over. 'Marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well.'<sup>9</sup> I knew not then that these words were in the Scripture, until I opened on them in the psalms when I got home.

As I walked home along the streets I seemed to be in paradise. When I read my Bible it seemed an entire new book. When I meditated on God and Christ, angels or spirits; when I considered good or bad men, any or all the creatures which surrounded me on every side; everything appeared new, and stood in a new relation to me. I was in Christ a new creature. Old things were done away, and all things become new.<sup>10</sup> I lay down at night in peace with a thankful heart, because the Lord had redeemed me and given me peace with God and all mankind. I thought I never should be troubled with the sin that did most easily beset me, and said within myself, 'The enemies I have seen this day, I shall see them no more forever.'<sup>11</sup> I felt the truth of those words:

How happy are they,  
Who the Saviour obey,  
And have laid up their treasure above!  
Tongue cannot express  
The sweet comfort and peace  
Of a soul in its earliest love. [...]

On the wings of his love  
I was carried above  
All sin and temptation and pain:  
I could not believe  
I ever should grieve,  
I ever should suffer again.<sup>12</sup>

But no sooner had I peace within than the devil and wicked men began to roar without, and pour forth floods of lies and scandal in order to drown the young child. And no marvel, for the devil had lost one of the main pillars of his kingdom in that parish. And therefore he did not leave a stone unturned, that he might cast an odium upon the work of God in that place. But none of these things moved me, for I was happy, happy, in my God; clothed with the sun, and the moon under my feet; raised up, and made to sit in heavenly, holy, happy places in Christ Jesus.

In a fortnight after, I was joined in society. When I joined, there were twelve in the society, chiefly old people. This was a little trial to me at first, but I thought it my duty to cast in my lot amongst them, for I was certain the Methodists (under God) were the happy instruments of my salvation. Therefore I knew I could not better recommend the good cause to others than by joining them, and letting my light shine before men, that others might take knowledge I had been with Jesus. It is really marvellous that all who are awakened have not resolution enough heartily to unite in fellowship with the people of God. It is very rare that such make any progress. The blessed Spirit is grieved, and they remain barren and unfruitful. Were they faithful in obeying the Spirit of God, in taking up their cross and setting an example to others, they might bring much glory to God, as well as obtain great peace and happiness to their own souls.

My greatest concern now was for my relations. I had a father and mother, sister and brother, all strangers to God. My father was sixty years old, and my mother near it.<sup>13</sup> I scarcely ever went to the

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<sup>9</sup>Ps. 139:14.

<sup>10</sup>Cf. 2 Cor. 5:17.

<sup>11</sup>Cf. Exod. 14:13.

<sup>12</sup>Cf. CW, 'Hymns for One Fallen from Grace, #15', sts. 1 & 5, *HSP* (1749), 1:123–24.

<sup>13</sup>His father was also George (d. 1767); his mother was Anne (Standing) Shadford (b. 1709).

throne of grace without bearing them before the Lord in earnest prayer, and found great encouragement so to do. One night I took courage to speak to them in as humble a manner as I could with respect to family prayer. I told them I believed they had brought us up in the fear of God as far as they knew, but we never had any family prayer. I added, 'If it is agreeable to you, I will endeavour to pray in the best manner I can.' On their consenting, we went into another room. I had not spoke many words in prayer before they were both in tears. When we arose from prayer we wept over one another, and what seemed to affect them most was to be taught by their child, when they ought to have taught me.

I continued to pray for them every night and morning for half a year. My father at length began to be in deep distress. I have listened, and heard him in private crying for mercy, like David out of the horrible pit, and mire and clay, 'O! Lord, deliver my soul.'<sup>14</sup> I began to reprove, exhort, and warn others wherever I came. My father was sometimes afraid if I reproved the customers who came to our shop it would give offence, and we should lose all our business. Upon which I said, 'Father, let us trust God for once with all our concerns, and let us do this in the way of our duty, from a right principle. And if he deceives us, we will never trust him more, for none ever trusted the Lord that were confounded.'<sup>15</sup> In less than a twelvemonth, instead of losing, we had more business than ever we had before.

I began now to pray in all our meetings, private and public. And the Lord mercifully heard, to the conviction and conversion of several, who were savingly brought to God before I regularly attempted to exhort or preach. I had then no notion of being a preacher. I only thought it my duty to do good, and all the good I could; to occupy, or use my one talent, until my Lord should come. I believed that was the religion of Jesus Christ, who went about doing good, and worked while it was day. Indeed the love of God constrained me to speak. I had such a view of the fallen, miserable state of lost, perishing sinners that I thought if I could be an instrument of saving but one soul it would be worth all my pains, even all my life long. Our society increased from twelve to forty members in a short time, for the Lord gave me several of my companions in sin to walk with me in the ways of holiness.

The first time I exhorted was in the society. The class-leader put a hymn-book into my hand and desired me to give a word of exhortation. The moment he did this I was seized with tremblings. But instantly my soul was filled with the love and power of God. I believe the few simple words that I spoke were made a blessing more or less to everyone there. An old man, one of the first converts in the town, advised me to give myself much to reading and prayer, for he believed God had some work for me to do. The preacher had appointed me to meet a class before this, which often proved both a cross and blessing to my soul. I now exhorted my friends, neighbours, enemies, and whosoever fell in my way, to flee from the wrath which is to come.

One Sunday morning as I was exhorting in the farmer's house, some word cut my father to the heart. He fell back into the chair by which he stood and wept, and was much distressed. On the evening of the same day he said to me, 'I know not what is the matter with me. I seem quite stupid and foolish. Nay, I seem lost.' I answered, 'Then you will not be long before you are found. Father, you are not far from the kingdom of God. Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost.'

The next day about twelve o'clock I came into the room where he was sitting with a Bible upon his knee. He was reading in the psalms of David. I saw the tears running down his cheeks. Yet there appeared a joy in his countenance. I said, 'Pray, father what now? What now? What is the matter?' He instantly answered, 'I have found Christ. I have found Christ at last. Upwards of sixty years I have lived without him in the world, in sin and ignorance. I have been all the day idle, and entered not into his vineyard till the eleventh hour. O how merciful was he to spare me, and hire me at last! He hath set my soul at liberty. O praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name!'<sup>16</sup> I left him rejoicing in God his Saviour, and retired to praise God for answering my prayers.

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<sup>14</sup>Ps. 6:4.

<sup>15</sup>See Eccles. 2:10.

<sup>16</sup>Cf. Ps. 103:1.

My mother was convinced by hearing me and an old man converse about our souls together in private. She used to listen to our conversation, and the Lord showed her the state she was in. She had been a moral woman, and had the fear of God, so as to act conscientiously in what she did as far as she knew. But when she was thoroughly awakened, her convictions were very deep. So that many times, when I have been praying for her, she hath been like a person convulsed. At other times like a woman in labour, travailing through the pangs of the new birth. At last the Lord gave her an assurance of his pardoning love under the preaching of Mr. Samuel Meggot.<sup>17</sup>

About this time I went to see my sister near Epworth,<sup>18</sup> to inform her what the Lord had done for my soul. At first when I conversed with her she thought I was out of my mind, but at length [she] hearkened to me. She told me a remarkable dream she had some time before, in which she had been warned to lay aside the vain practice of card-playing, which she had been fond of. After I had returned home, she began to revolve in her mind what I had said, and thought, 'How can my brother have any view to deceive me? What interest can he have in so doing? Certainly my state is worse than I imagine. He sees my danger and I do not! Besides, he seems to be another man. He does not look, or speak, or act as he used to do.' She therefore could not rest until she came to my father's house; and before she returned was thoroughly convinced she was a miserable sinner.

In a short time I visited her again, and asked her to go to hear Samuel Meggot preach. She heard him with great satisfaction. Afterward there was a love-feast, and she being desirous to stay, at my request was admitted. As the people were singing a hymn on Christ's coming to judgment, she looked up and saw all the people singing with a smile upon their countenance. She thought, 'If Christ was to come to judgment now, I shall go to hell, and they will all go to heaven.' Instantly she sunk down as if she was dying, and lay some time before she was able to walk home. She continued praying and waiting upon God for about a fortnight; when one day going to the well to fetch water (like the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well), she found the God of Jacob open to her thirsty soul his love, as a well of water springing up within her unto everlasting life. And as she returned from the well her soul magnified the Lord, and her spirit rejoiced in God her Saviour.

So merciful was the Lord to my family that four of them were brought to God in less than a year. My mother lived a happy witness of the love and favour of God three years and died in great peace. My father lived upwards of four years, happy in God his Saviour, and used to say, 'Now I am a little child turned of four years old.' Meaning (although near sixty-five) that he had never lived to any good purpose or to the glory of God before. About half a year before his death, the Lord circumcised his heart, so that I believe he loved God with all his heart, and received a constant abiding witness that the blood of Christ had cleansed him from all sin.

When he was taken ill I was preaching in Yorkshire, and as I returned home, it was impressed upon my mind that my father was sick or dying. When I came near home I met two friends, one of whom told me he believed my father lay a dying. As soon as he saw me he was much affected, for he longed to see me before he died. He said to me, 'Son, I am glad to see thee. But I am going to leave thee. I am going to God. I am going to heaven.' I said, 'Father, are you sure of it?' 'Yes', said he, 'I am sure of it. I know that my Redeemer liveth. Upward of four years ago the Lord pardoned all my sins; and half a year ago he gave me that perfect love that casts out all fear. At present I feel a heaven within me. Surely this heaven below must lead to heaven above.' When I perceived he was departing, I kneeled down by him, and with fervent prayer commended his soul to God. And I praise his holy name that he died in the full assurance of faith.

My sister lived a faithful witness of the love of Jesus sixteen years. She was remarkable for faith and prayer, and enjoyed the perfect love of God several years before her death. She had eight or nine children, had nothing of this world's goods to leave them, but left them a good example, and sent up prayers to heaven for them, and wished more to see grace in their hearts than if she had thousands of gold

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<sup>17</sup>Orig., here and below, 'Meggitt'.

<sup>18</sup>His sister Susannah Shadford (1734–1804) married Joseph Pindar in 1756.

and silver to leave them. She used to say to me, 'Brother I believe all my children will be saved.' When I seemed to doubt it, she answered, 'But I pray in faith. And whatsoever we ask in prayer believing we shall receive.' Her eldest daughter died before her a little, aged twenty-one, in the triumph of faith. And it is remarkable since her death her children, as they grow up, one after another, are convinced of sin, brought to God, and join the society.

I had a relation, Alice Shadford,<sup>19</sup> who continued in earnest prayer for my conversion for twenty years, as she told me. And I believe that God heard and answered her prayers in my behalf. She was indeed a mother in Israel, lived a single life, and enjoyed the fear and love of God above fifty years. She died full of days, and full of grace, aged ninety-six years. I often think there is scarcely a person converted upon earth, but it is in answer to some pious person's prayer, whom the Lord hath stirred up to plead for them.

I had many doubts of my call to preach at first. I knew it was my duty to do good in the little way I began with. But the important work of going forth publicly to call sinners to repentance made me tremble. After a great struggle in my mind, at last I resolved to make the trial. The first place I went to from home was a little place called Wildsworth. I believe there were not any there that knew God at that time. On Saturday night I continued three or four hours until past midnight, in fervent prayer that the Lord might point out my way. On Sunday morning I set out to the little village alone; only I believed the Friend of sinners was with me. As soon as I came there I gave notice of my errand, and quickly we had near a house full of people. In the first prayer I was much assisted, and some present began to drop tears. Under the preaching several appeared cut to the heart, and the Lord blessed his word to many. As soon as I had done, I gave notice that I would preach in the street at East Ferry. Several attended me thither. And when I had concluded, I went home perfectly satisfied that God had called me to the work.

But very soon I was sadly discouraged, seeing my own ignorance, and feeling my weakness. I reasoned with myself and Satan, until I thought the Lord required impossibilities; that he gathered where he had not strewed. I would go to preach his word, but he had not given me a talent sufficient for the important work. How happy thought I are they in a private capacity, who have nothing to do but to be faithful in their little sphere, and have not the charge of the souls of others! I gave way to this kind of reasoning for a month, till at times I made myself almost as miserable as a demon. Then the Lord laid his chastening rod upon me, and afflicted me for a season; and showed me the worth of poor souls perishing in the broad way to destruction. After this, I was made willing to go wherever he pleased to send me. So that when I began again to speak for him, his word was like the flaming sword which turned every way, to every heart. For sinners trembled and fell before it, and were both convinced and converted to God. I was often amazed at the condescension of God, and his favour to me in all my weakness. I was like Gideon. I required token after token. As soon as the Lord made way and opened a door in any place, I formed a society, and got the travelling preachers to take it under their care as soon as I could.

But by loud and long preaching, by walking more and farther than my strength could bear, by sitting up praying and reading many times until morning, I was soon worn down and appeared to be in a swift decline. At last I fell into a severe fever that continued seven weeks; and I expected to die, as did most that saw me. I never had any affliction in which I enjoyed so much of the presence of God as this. He was with me every moment night and day. I continually saw him who is invisible, and rejoiced in hope of the glory of God. O how did I desire to depart and to be with Christ! I had such views of my Father's house, the glory and happiness of that place, that I longed to be there. But one day as I was in bed, full of the love of God, I had a visionary sight of two prodigious fields in which I saw thousands of living creatures praying and wrestling in different places, in little companies. It appeared to me that I must be employed in that work too, and must go to help them. Whilst I was considering what this could mean, I took up my Bible, and opened on these words in the psalms, 'Thou shalt not die but live, and declare the

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<sup>19</sup>Apparently Alice Shadforth (c. 1683–1779), of Upperthorpe, see *JW Journal*, July 11, 1779, *Works*, 23:140.

work of the Lord.<sup>20</sup> I now believed I should recover, but was not so resigned to live as to die. I compared myself to a ship tossed upon the tempestuous ocean for weeks and months together in great danger. At last I got in sight of the wished-for haven, when suddenly a contrary wind drives me back to sea again. From this time I began gradually to recover.

After this I preached occasionally for part of two years in the Epworth circuit; and was encouraged by my friends and by seeing the work of God prosper. When Mr. Wesley came into that part of the country, he asked me if I was willing to give myself up wholly to the great work of saving souls from death. I replied that it was my desire so to do. Accordingly at the Bristol Conference following, I was appointed to labour in the west of Cornwall for the year 1768. This was a good year to me. I often wondered how the people could bear with my weakness. But the Lord owned his poor servant, and gave me to see the fruit of my labours. I was one day in great danger of losing my life the first time I crossed Hale. But two men at a little distance suddenly called aloud, bidding me stop and come back. Had I gone a few yards further, myself and horse must inevitably have been swallowed up in a quicksand. I felt thankful, and went on admiring and adoring the watchful providence of God, my gracious and almighty Deliverer.

I was much affected this year with a remarkable instance of the sudden death of a backslider who lived between Truro and Redruth. He had known the love of God, and walked circumspectly in the light of his countenance for seven years, and was diligent in every means of grace. But he began to give way to lightness and a trifling spirit. After this he refused to meet his brethren in band, and seldom met in class, until at length he entirely gave up both. He came to preaching sometimes, but began to be very free with his carnal neighbours, and shy with the people of God. Till at last he fell into his old besetting sin, drunkenness, which he had conquered for seven years. One Sabbath-day he went with some carnal men to an alehouse, or gin shop, and continued there until they all got drunk. At last they resolved to go home, though it was dark. Two of them lay down in the road. But the backslider was determined to go home alone. And as there were pits along the roadside about fifteen or twenty fathoms deep, he dropped into one of them and was crushed to death, leaving a wife and children in deep distress. Many were greatly affected at this alarming case, and some backsliders who were acquainted with him were stirred up to return to him from whom they had revolted.

The next year I laboured in Kent with Mr. [Peter] Jaco. God gave me spiritual children here also. It was indeed a very trying year, but very profitable to my own soul.

In 1770 I was sent to Norwich, and appointed to be the Assistant, which was a great exercise of my mind, and hath been so ever since. We had a revival in Norwich, where several were converted to God. I went to Lynn occasionally this year, and stayed a fortnight or three weeks at a time; where the Lord blessed my labours, so that I joined thirty in society, of whom sixteen or eighteen had experienced the goodness of God to their souls.

After staying two years at Norwich, I went to the Leeds Conference, where I first saw Captain [Thomas] Webb. When he warmly exhorted preachers to go to America, I felt my spirit stirred within me to go; more especially when I understood that many hundreds of precious souls were perishing through lack of knowledge, scattered up and down in various parts of the woods, and had none to warn them of their danger. When I considered that we had in England many men of grace and gifts far superior to mine, but few seemed to offer themselves willingly, I then saw my call the more clearly. Accordingly Mr. [Thomas] Rankin and I offered ourselves to go the spring following, when I received a letter from Mr. Wesley informing me that I was to embark with Captain Webb at Bristol.

When I arrived at Peel, where the ship lay, an awful dream I had six years before was brought to my mind. I thought in my sleep I received a letter from God, which I opened and read, the substance of which was as follows. 'You must go to preach the gospel in a foreign land, unto a fallen people, a mixture of nations.' I thought I was conveyed to the place where the ship lay, in which I was to embark in an instant. The wharf and ship appeared as plain to me as if I were awake. I replied, 'Lord I am willing to go

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<sup>20</sup>Cf. Ps. 118:17.

in thy name. But I am afraid a people of different nations and languages will not understand me.' An answer to this was given; 'Fear not, for I am with thee.' I awoke, awfully impressed with the presence of God upon my mind, and was really full of divine love; and a relish of it remained upon my spirit for many days. I could not tell what this meant, and revolved these things in my mind for a long time. But when I came to Peel, and saw the ship and wharf, then all came fresh to my mind. I said to brother Rankin, 'This is the ship, the place, and the wharf, which I saw in my dream six years ago.' All these things were a means of strengthening and confirming me that my way was of God.

We took leave of our native land, and set sail on Good Friday, often singing in our passage these words,

The watery deep I pass,  
With Jesus in my view.<sup>21</sup>

And after a comfortable passage of eight weeks we arrived safe at Philadelphia, where we were kindly received by a hospitable and loving people. In a few days I crossed the river Delaware and went to Trenton, and laboured in the Jerseys with success for a month, adding thirty-five to the society, many of whom were much comforted with the presence of the Lord.

In my tour through the Jerseys, coming to a place called Mount Holly, I met John Brainerd, brother to the devoted pious David Brainerd, missionary to the Indians. He appeared to be a very humble, serious man. He heard me preach twice in his preaching house in that place, and asked me to go to an Indian town which lay twenty miles from thence, and said he would collect together all the Indians and white people he could from different parts. I fully purposed in my mind to go the first opportunity, but being suddenly called to labour at New York, was prevented. We conversed about two hours very profitably, about his brother David and the Indians he had the care of; about Methodism and inward religion. He heartily wished us good luck, and said he believed the Lord had sent us upon the continent to revive inward religion amongst them.

One day a friend took me to see a hermit in the woods. After some difficulty we found his hermitage, which was a little place like a hogsty, built of several pieces of wood, covered with bark of trees. And his bed consisted of dry leaves. There was a narrow beaten path about twenty or thirty yards in length by the side of it, where he frequently walked to meditate. If one offered him food, he would take it. But if money was offered him, he would be very angry. If anything was spoken to him which he did not like, he broke out into a violent passion. He had lived in this cell seven cold winters; and after all his prayers, counting his beads, and separating from the rest of mankind, still corrupt nature was all alive within him. Alas! Alas! What will it avail us, whether we are in England or Ireland, Scotland or America; whether we live amongst mankind, or retire into a hermitage, if we still carry with us our own hell, our corrupt evil tempers? The devil will only laugh at us, while we are strangers to true repentance and living faith in the blood of the Redeemer. It is this alone that can remove our guilt, purify the soul, and give us victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; make us comfortable in our own souls, and useful to others. As no man lighteth a candle and putteth it under a bushel, so neither doth God bestow upon us any talent to hide it in the earth, in a cave, or cell.

My next remove was to New York, where I spent four months with great satisfaction. I went thither with fear and trembling, and was much cast down from a sense of my unworthiness, and inability to preach the gospel to a polite and sensible people. But the Lord, who hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the things which are wise; and weak things to confound the things which are mighty; condescended to make use of his poor weak servant for the revival of religion at that city. I added fifty members in those four months; about twenty of whom found the pardoning love of God, and several backsliders were restored to their first love. A vehement desire was excited in the hearts of believers after all the mind of Christ, or the whole image of God. I left in New York two hundred and four members in

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<sup>21</sup>Thomas Olivers, *An Hymn to the God of Abraham* (Nottingham: S. Crewell, 1771), st. 5.

society.

I had a very comfortable time for four or five months that I spent in Philadelphia with a loving, teachable people. The blessing of the Lord was with us of a truth, and many were really converted to God. There was a sweet loving spirit in this society, for nothing appeared amongst them but peace and brotherly love. They had kept prayer-meetings in different parts of the city for some time before I went to it, which had been a great means of begetting life amongst the people of God as well as others. I left in society, when I went from this place, two hundred and twenty-four members.

A remarkable circumstance happened just as I was leaving Philadelphia. When I went to the inn where my horse was, and had just entered into the yard, I observed a man fixing his eyes upon me and looking earnestly, until he seemed ashamed and blushed very much. At length he came up to me and abruptly said, 'Sir, I saw you in a dream last night. When I saw your back as you came into the yard, I thought it was you. But now that I see your face, I am sure you are the person. I have been wandering up and down this morning until now seeking you.' 'Saw *me* in a dream', said I, 'what do you mean?' 'Sir', said he, 'I did. I am sure I did. And yet I never saw you with my bodily eyes before. Yesterday in the afternoon I left this city and went as far as Schuylkill River, intending to cross it; but began to be very uneasy and could not go over it. I therefore returned to this place, and last night in my sleep saw you stand before me; when a person from another world bade me seek for you until I found you, and said you would tell me what I must do to be saved. He said also that one particular mark by which I might know you was that you preached in the streets and lanes of the city.' Having spoken this, he immediately asked, 'Pray sir, are not you a minister' (by which name they frequently call the preachers in America)? I said, 'Yes, I am a preacher of the gospel. And it is true that I preach in the streets and lanes of the city, which no other preacher in Philadelphia does. I preach also every Sunday morning at nine o'clock in New Market.' I then asked him to step across the way to a friend's house, where I asked him from whence he came? He answered, 'From the Jerseys.' I asked had he any family? He said, 'Yes; a wife and children.' I asked where he was going? He said, 'He did not know.' I likewise asked, 'Does your wife know where you are?' He said, 'No. The only reason why I left home was I had been very uneasy and unhappy for half a year past, and could not rest any longer but must come to Philadelphia.'

I replied, 'I first advise you to go back to your wife and children, and take care of them by obeying God in the order of his providence. It is unnatural to leave them in this manner, for even the birds of the air provide for their young. Secondly, you say you are unhappy. Therefore the thing you want is religion—the love of God and of all mankind; righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. When this takes possession of your heart, so as to destroy your evil tempers, and root out the love of the world, anger, pride, self-will, and unbelief, then you will be happy. The way to obtain this is you must forsake all your sins, and heartily believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. When you return to the Jerseys, go to hear the Methodist preachers constantly, and pray to the Lord to bless the word. And if you heartily embrace it, you will become a happy man.'

While I was exhorting him, the tears ran plentifully from his eyes. We then all kneeled down to pray, and I was enabled to plead and intercede with much earnestness for his soul, and to commend them all to God. When we arose from our knees, I shook him by the hand. He wept much and had a broken heart, but did not know how to part with me. He then set out to go to his wife in the Jerseys, and I for Baltimore, in Maryland. And I saw him no more, but I trust I shall meet him in heaven.

I cannot but remark here that God sometimes steps out of the common way of his providence to help some souls; especially a poor ignorant person, who wants to serve him, but knows not how (and hath a degree of his fear). When such persons pray sincerely to the Lord, he will direct, by his providence, to some person, or book, to some means or other by which they may be instructed and brought to the knowledge of the truth.

That night I preached at Chester, and in two days I arrived on the borders of Maryland. I then crossed Susquehanna River, and preached to a loving congregation of blacks and whites, who were remarkably affected; and the next day at Deer Creek to a large company of Negroes and others. I had hurt my leg by a fall, and was obliged to preach sitting. But the Lord made his word spirit and life to the people.



Soon after this I came to Baltimore, where I had not been many weeks before a young man came to me with two horses and entreated me to go to his father's house, about four miles from Baltimore, to visit his poor distressed brother, who was chained in bed and whose case they did not understand, supposing him to be mad or possessed with a devil. When I entered the room, I found the young man in the depth of despair. I told him Christ died for sinners. That he came to seek and to save lost sinners; yea, that he received the chief of sinners, and added, 'There is no other name given under heaven, whereby men can be saved, but in and through our Lord Jesus Christ.'<sup>22</sup> The young man laid hold of those words, 'the name of Jesus Christ', and said he would call upon Jesus Christ as long as he lived; and found some little hope within him, but knew no more how he must be saved than an Indian.

I sang a verse or two of a hymn, and then his father and mother and brethren joined me in prayer. The power of God was amongst us of a truth. We had melted hearts, and weeping eyes, and indeed there was a shower of tears amongst us. I know not when I have felt more of the divine presence, or power to wrestle with God in prayer, than at this time. After we rose from our knees I gave an exhortation, and continued to go to preach in their house every week or fortnight for some time. They loosed the young man that was bound, and the Lord shortly after loosed him from the chain of his sins and set him at perfect liberty. He soon began to warn his neighbours, and to exhort sinners to flee from the wrath which is to come. And before I left the country, he began to travel a circuit and was remarkably successful. I followed him in Kent in Delaware, and verily believe he was instrumental in awakening an hundred sinners that year.

I was appointed the next year for Virginia, and was much dejected in spirit. I often felt much of this before a remarkable manifestation of the power and presence of God. In preaching and prayer the Lord strips and empties before he fills. I saw myself so vile and worthless as I cannot express, and wondered that God should employ me in his work. I was amazed when I first began to preach in Virginia, for I seldom preached a sermon but some were convinced and converted, often three or four at a time. I could scarcely believe them when they told me.

Among these was a dancing-master, who came first to hear on a weekday dressed in scarlet, and came several miles again on Sunday dressed in green. After preaching he spoke to me and asked if I could come to that part where he lived some day in the week? I told him I could not, as I was engaged every day. I saw him at preaching again that week, and another man of his profession. When I was going to preach one morning, a friend said to me, 'Mr. Shadford, you spoiled a fine dancing-master last week. He was so cut under preaching, and feels such a load of sin upon his conscience, that he moves very heavily. Nay, he cannot shake his heels at all. He had a large profitable school, but hath given it up and is determined to dance no more. He intends now to teach reading, writing, and arithmetic.' I said, 'It is very well, what is his name?' He said, 'He is called Madcap.' I said, 'A very proper name for a dancing-master.' But I found that this was only a nickname, for his real name was Metcalf. He began to teach school, joined our society, found the guilt and load of sin removed from his conscience and the pardoning love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him. He lived six or seven years after, and died a great witness for God, having been one of the most devoted men in our connexion.

Going to preach one day, I was stopped by a large flood of water, and could not come at the bridge. I therefore turned back about half a mile to a large plantation. And having found the planter, I told him my case, and asked if I could sleep at his house? He said I was welcome. After I had taken a little refreshment, I asked if that part of the country was well inhabited. And on his answering in the affirmative, I said, 'If it is agreeable, and you will send out to acquaint your neighbours, I will preach to them in the evening.' He sent out, and we had many hearers. But they were as wild as bears. After I reproved them, they behaved very well under preaching. When I conversed with the planter and his wife, I found them entirely ignorant of themselves and of God. I laboured to convince them both, but it seemed to little purpose. Next morning I was stopped again, when he kindly offered to show me a way, some miles about, and go with me to preaching. I thanked him and accepted his offer. As I was preaching that

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<sup>22</sup>Cf. Acts 4:12.

day I saw him weeping much. The Spirit of God opened the poor creature's eyes, and he saw the wretched state he was in. He stayed with me that night, and made me promise to go again to preach at his house. In a short time he and his wife became deep penitents, and soundly converted by the power of God. A very remarkable work began from that little circumstance, and before I left Virginia there were sixty or seventy raised up in society in that settlement. There were four travelling preachers that year in the circuit. We added eighteen hundred members, and had good reason to believe that a thousand of them were converted to God.

The spirit of the people began now to be agitated with regard to politics. They threatened me with imprisonment when I prayed for the king; took me up, and examined me, and pressed me to take the test-oath to renounce him forever. I thought then I had done my work there, and set out (after I had been a year and a half amongst them) for Maryland. But it being in the depth of winter, I was one night lost in the woods, when it was very cold and the snow a foot deep on the ground. I could find no house, nor see any traveller, and I knew I must perish if I continued there all night. I alighted from my horse, kneeled down upon the snow, and prayed earnestly to God to direct me. When I arose I believed I should have something to direct me. I stood listening a short space, and at last heard a dog bark at some distance, so followed the sound, and after some time found a house and plantation.

The next summer and winter I spent in Maryland; the winter on the eastern shore, where I could labour and be at peace. But as the test-oath must take place there also, I was brought to a strait. I had sworn allegiance to the king twice, and could not swear to renounce him forever. I dare not play with fast-and-loose oaths, and swallow them in such a manner. We could not travel safe without a pass, nor have a pass without taking the oaths.

At our quarterly meeting I said to brother [Francis] Asbury, 'Let us have a day of fasting and prayer, that the Lord may direct us; for we never were in such circumstances as now, since we were Methodist preachers.' We did so, and in the evening I asked him how he found his mind? He said he did not see his way clear to go to England. I told him I could not stay, as I believed I had done my work here at present; and that it was as much impressed upon my mind to go home now as it had been to come over to America. He replied, 'Then one of us must be under a delusion.' I said, 'Not so. I may have a call to go, and you to stay.' And I believed we both obeyed the call of providence. We saw we must part, though we loved as David and Jonathan. And indeed these times made us love one another in a peculiar manner. O how glad were we to meet, and pour our grief into each other's bosom!

Myself and another set off, having procured a pass from a colonel to travel to the general. And arriving at the headquarters, we inquired for General Smallwood's apartments.<sup>23</sup> And being admitted to his presence and asked our business, we told his excellency that we were Englishmen, and both Methodist preachers; and as we considered ourselves subjects of Great Britain, we could not take the test-oaths, therefore should be very glad to return home to our native land. 'We cast ourselves' (we added) 'wholly upon your excellency's generosity, and hope, as you profess to be fighting for your liberties, you will grant us a pass to have liberty to return to our own land in peace.' He answered roughly, 'Now you have done us all the hurt you can, you want to go home.' I told him our motive had been to do good. For this end we left our own country, and had been travelling through the woods for several years, to seek and to save that which was lost. It was true we could not beat the political drum in the pulpit, preaching bloody sermons, because we considered ourselves messengers of peace and called to preach the gospel of peace. At last he told us he would give us a pass to the English, if we would swear we would go directly to Philadelphia, and from thence embark to Great Britain. He then swore us, and generously gave us our liberty without any further trouble.

That evening, however, I was in great danger of losing my life. A man leaped from behind a bush, with his gun loaded, cocked, and presented at my breast, and swore like a fiend, and said if I did not stop, I should be a dead man; and called out as if he had more men in ambush. I stopped and said very boldly 'Where are your men? If you will take us, let them come up.' He swore again if I did not dismount he

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<sup>23</sup>William Smallwood (1732–92), later governor of Maryland.

would shoot me dead upon the spot. I dismounted, and said boldly to him again, 'You have no right to stop me, I have a pass from the general.' All this while he had his piece at my breast, yet I had no fear or dread. But I have often thought since, what a mercy it was that the piece did not go off, while he kept me so long at the end of it. At last he was struck with fear, and as no one came to his help, and we were two, and he did not know but we might have pistols, he said, 'I will drop my gun, if you will not hurt me.' I said, 'I have not threatened to hurt you. I do not want to hurt a hair of your head. But why do you stop me on the road, and threaten my life, when I told you I had a pass from the general?' The fellow seemed ashamed and confounded. If he had any design to rob us, his heart failed him and the Lord delivered us out of his hands.

We left our horses at a poor little inn (for they had taken down the end of the large bridge that goes into Chester) and, with our saddlebags upon our backs, we crept on our hands and knees on a narrow plank to that part of the great bridge that remained standing, and got our horses over the next morning. Thus, through the mercy and goodness of God, we got safe into Chester that night, and the next night into Philadelphia. Here we met three or four of our preachers, who like ourselves were all refugees. I continued near six weeks before I got a passage, and then embarked for Cork in Ireland; from thence to Wales, and then crossed the passage to Bristol. I felt a very thankful heart when I set my foot on English ground, in a land of peace and liberty, where was no alarm of war and bloodshed. They who have never been sick, do not properly know the value of health. Neither are we in this land sufficiently thankful for the laws which protect our persons and property; and above all, for our religious liberty to worship God according to our conscience, in the beauty of holiness.

I have received abundant mercies from a kind and indulgent Father since I came home; but have made small returns for them all, and feel greatly ashamed of myself, and deeply humbled for my coming short, and living beneath my privilege for years that are past. I am now determined, through grace, to give my whole heart to God more than ever; to be more constant and regular in my walk; and to cast all my care upon him who careth for me.

Last year indeed was a year of afflictions and trials to me. I was poorly in body most of the year, often very unable to travel, and sometimes had thoughts of desisting on that account. But I bless God things are changed. It seems as if the Lord hath given me a new commission, and added strength to body and mind. Since I came into the Kent circuit, I set apart some hours in order to pray that God might deepen the work of grace in my own soul, and make me more useful to others. He soon heard and answered, and hath brought my soul into such a liberty and fellowship with himself that he is always present. There is no time when my beloved is absent by day or by night. Neither do I feel that propensity within me to sin as before. 'As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after God; yea, thirsteth for the living God.'<sup>24</sup>

I see more than ever the preciousness of time, and the wisdom of improving it to the best purposes—the living every moment for God, the buying up every opportunity; the necessity of being more spiritual in my conversation, in order to grow in grace; the talking in company not about worldly things but about our souls, God and Christ, heaven and eternal glory. O how sad a case is it when we go to visit, to eat and drink with our friends, and say nothing, or that which is next to nothing, about their souls! If we had more of God in our hearts, there would be more of him on our tongues, and shining in our lives. For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. We should be often speaking, reproving for sin, labouring to bring souls to God, when we are out of the pulpit as well as when we are in. Lord make me more faithful in this, and in every respect, than ever I have been, for Christ's sake! Amen!

George Shadford

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 10–13, 69–74, 125–31, 180–85, 235–40, 290–94, 349–54.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Cf. Ps. 42:1–2.

<sup>25</sup>This account is reproduced in Jackson, *EMP*, 6:137–81; with an account of Shadford's last days.

From John Burnet<sup>1</sup>

Dublin  
October 22, 1785

Beloved Father,

I received your favour, which indeed I do acknowledge as such.<sup>2</sup> And since you desire it, I will briefly answer your questions. First, you wish to know, 'Is Christ all in all to me?' I can answer in the affirmative. I daily prove that in him all fulness dwells. He has and is all I want. He is my advocate, my wisdom, my strength, my refuge, my life, my all. I sit under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit is sweet to my taste. Christ is the fountain of all my joy. He is the spring to which I ever fly. I drink and yet am ever dry. But though my soul is panting after more of the love of God, I find he has given me a satisfying portion, so that the word of the Lord is fulfilled in me where he says 'He that drinketh of the water which I shall give him, shall never thirst.'<sup>3</sup> I prove it so, for my affections are weaned from earth and set upon things above. None but God can satisfy.

Next, you desire to know what deliverances God has wrought out for me since you saw me? Truly they are many and great. I am often assaulted from the quarter I mentioned to you before you left town.<sup>4</sup> But the Lord has hitherto delivered me. And having begun to speak a word for God, I am frequently assaulted with a temptation from the applause of the people. But in this also God has preserved me.

I expect your counsel, and need it much, as my youth exposes me to temptations from which persons of riper years are delivered. But as I hinted above, the grace of God does not change the animal nature; though I believe it suppresses it in a great measure. I feel a rest from self and sin, but not from sore temptation. I am,

Yours, etc.

J. Burnet

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 132–33.

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<sup>1</sup>Titled: 'The Experience of Mr. John Burnet (who died the first year he travelled as an itinerant preacher) in a letter to his spiritual father'. John Burnet was an Irishman, admitted 'on trial' as an itinerant in July 1787 (see *Works*, 10:623, 984). His death is recorded in the 1788 *Minutes* (10:646, 1069). This exchange took place before he began itinerating.

<sup>2</sup>JW's letter to Burnet is not known to survive.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. John 4:14.

<sup>4</sup>JW left Dublin in mid-July 1785.

From Mary Cooke

Trowbridge  
October 24, 1785

You bid me, my dear sir, be free 'to converse without disguise, or reserve.'<sup>1</sup> Yea I will show my readiness to oblige you. I will indeed be free, and without a preface tell you, as I can, what it is my heart would say.

Here is a mistake of my case, thought I, as I read these words of yours. 'The former' (the favour of God) 'by his grace you have recovered.' I could not say the same. I never knew the time that the Spirit of God witnessed with my spirit that I was born of him, that my sins were blotted out and I was accepted of God in Christ. I feel that I have tasted of his love. But is it not rather as a visit of encouragement than an evidence of liberty? I am afraid of taking too much. Is there not a danger of deceiving myself?

I was surprised to find you looked on it in a stronger light. I never adverted to it as the *pardon*ing love of God, and did not once suppose that any other person would. Thus I doubted, thus I thought, and thus I spake, till the evening of the day after I received your letter. I then met with a friend whose sentiments entirely corresponded with yours. He kindly took pains to reason and persuade, till at length I could almost yield to believe that what you jointly said was true. In the comfort thereof I went on for two days—at the end of which I dared not to say I doubted of being in God's favour, no more than I dared to commit the grossest sin. If I offered to say I think I am not in a state of acceptance, a something within rose to forbid the assertion, condemning me as lying against the conviction of my conscience, which witnessed better things. Yet though I could not deny, neither could I affirm. It was an happiness, but a negative one. And I wanted the Spirit's seal of full adoption to say, I know, I *feel* my sins forgiven.

The state of my soul at present is this. Was any person to ask me, do you believe you are reconciled to God? I would reply: I cannot advert to any particular moment when God spoke peace to my soul as his adopted child, enabling me to say 'Abba, Father!'<sup>2</sup> Yet have I in a measure partaken of the fruit of his Spirit, peace and joy—even such as the world can neither give nor take away, or have the least conception of. And now, though I feel not an excess of joy, still I have that settled peace which sorrow and temptation cannot destroy. It seems as beneath the foundation of every trial. And although it lessens not its weight, it strengthens to support it, in the hope that all shall terminate in good. I want a clear sense of sin forgiven; of Christ revealed in my heart, by his Spirit bearing constant witness in my soul that he hath died the just for the unjust, even for me; that he ever lives to intercede, and that through him I stand justified in the sight of God.

And now, my dear sir, will you candidly and simply tell me what you think of my case? Explain me to myself, and plainly speak your sentiments. My inexperience needs an interpreter. I want, and wish for one to tell me truly what my feelings mean. Kindly undertake this office and assist me also with your advice and prayer, and teach me how to live and how to die! Or rather, implore for me the teachings of him whose Spirit shall guide aright, and whose grace shall be sufficient to uphold the feeblest, and to lead the most ignorant into that plain way wherein 'a wayfaring man though a fool shall not err'.<sup>3</sup> And there shall that wisdom be found, the paths whereof are pleasantness and peace. Yea, and that same grace shall prepare for and bring to higher joys, shall extract the monster's sting, and open the gates of glory! Where

Far from a world of grief and sin,  
With God eternally shut in.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Replying to JW's letter of Sept. 24, 1785, *Works*, 30:384–86.

<sup>2</sup>Rom. 8:15.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Isa. 35:10.

<sup>4</sup>CW, 'Hymns for the Watchnight, #18', st. 6, *HSP* (1749), 2:143.

May you, ever reverend and dear sir, one day rejoice to see admitted  
Your unworthy,

M. Cooke

My sisters desire their affectionate respects.<sup>5</sup>

*Address:* 'The Revd J Wesley, New Chapel, City Road, London'.

*Annotation:* at top of copy for records: 'Answer to Mr. Wesley's 2nd letter'.

*Source:* manuscript copy for records; Bridwell Library (SMU), Mary Cooke Letter-book, p. 2.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Frances and Anne Cooke.

<sup>6</sup>An extract was published in *WHS* 1 (1898): 141.

From [Joseph Benson?]<sup>1</sup>

c. October 25, 1781

Reverend Sir,

I was yesterday in company with several clergymen who, among other things, mentioned Mr. [John] Fletcher, and seemed particularly anxious that in the account of his life a proper degree of caution should be observed in the panegyric that may be applied to his character. They say he was extremely passionate; and that there was in many instances an austere severity and rigour in his conduct to the young people under his care, particularly at Trevecca. As this information comes from a gentleman eminent for his knowledge of mankind, and universally esteemed as one of the greatest geniuses of the age, and one whose veracity has never been questioned, it will have no small weight in the learned world.

*Source:* published transcription; JW, *Life of Fletcher*, 170–71.

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<sup>1</sup>The author of this letter is clear from JW's response to Benson, Oct. 30, 1785, *Works*, 30:395.

From John King

October 27, 1785

A painful circumstance occurred here last year. One of the preachers became the pastor of an independent congregation; and some, whose minds were unsettled, have gone with him.<sup>1</sup> But even this is working for good. Many persons now come to hear us who never came before, so that our room is full on Sunday evenings—many are obliged to stand without, and others go away. This inconvenience will soon be remedied, as we are building a large chapel in another part of the town. We have already admitted about twenty new members into the society. On Sunday night, after the service, four persons followed me to my lodgings. One of these, especially, was deeply convinced of sin and determined to flee from the wrath to come. I have no doubt but it is the will of God that I should be here. I have as much honour as does me any good. I regard very little the praise or dispraise of men. I wish to be more ambitious of that honour which cometh from God.

*Source:* published transcription; *Wesley Methodist Magazine* 47 (1824): 3.

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<sup>1</sup>King had been assigned to the Plymouth circuit at the 1785 Conference. William Moore had been assigned as a preacher there the preceding year, but renounced the Methodists and set up his own congregation in Feb. 1785; see JW, *Journal*, Feb. 25, 1785, *Works*, 23:343.



From Dorthy (Furly) Downes

Leeds  
October 31, 1785

Reading in the *Arminian Magazine* an account of a gentleman who used to walk in his sleep,<sup>1</sup> it brought to my remembrance the following facts which I thought might be of service to such as are troubled with that disorder, by which some have run the risk of their lives.

The eldest son of one of my uncles, who used to walk in his sleep, was cured by a tub full of water being set in the nursery when he went to bed. My uncle was told that it was likely he might walk into it; and that if it waked him, he would never do it again. The tub of water was accordingly set in the room. And he getting up as usual, walked into it, and by so doing waked himself; but never attempted to rise in his sleep after.

When I was a child I walked in my sleep, and my mother was advised to awake me suddenly and endeavour to frighten me. But others told her this was dangerous, for some children had been thrown into fits by that means, and some irrecoverably lost their senses. She therefore tried the tub of water, which so effectually succeeded that from the first night it was set I never walked again in my sleep.

How long the water was continued in my room I do not know; being only about seven years old. From the account the servants gave, my mother did not believe I was asleep. She therefore ordered them to call her some night as soon as I began to move. But when she came, she said the sight was so affecting she never desired to see it more. For my eyes were open, but looked like those of a corpse! And my face was so deadly pale and covered with a cold sweat, with something so inexpressibly distressing in my countenance, that I appeared like a one rising from the tomb. She said she spoke to me and I answered as rationally as if I had been awake. And that I distinguished when she asked a question. But in the morning, she said, I knew nothing of what had happened.

Whether it would answer upon persons who have had a long habit of walking in their sleep, I know not. But I am sure (however it be accounted for) it cured us two.

D. D.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 9 (1786): 383–84.

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<sup>1</sup>See *AM* 8 (1785): 414–16.

William Boothby<sup>1</sup>

November 1, 1785

Thomas Wright was remarkably serious from a child. When he could begin to read, his chief delight was in good books. When he was about five years old his parents heard the Methodists, by which means they were awakened to a sense of their lost estate. Soon after they took their son Thomas to hear, which he did with very great attention. From that time he was very diligent in prayer. Sometimes his father and he would spend great part of the night in calling upon God. At such times the most earnest entreaties of his father could not prevail upon him to go to bed at the usual hour. He would also collect the neighbour's children together, and pray with them in the barns, the gardens, and the fields.

There did not appear to be the least degree of pride or shame in him. For if necessity called him to it, he would pray in the family with those who were present, and that with the greatest boldness, steadiness, and simplicity. He likewise visited his grandfather and grandmother frequently, and prayed with them in such an affecting manner as filled them with amazement, and often drew tears from their ancient eyes.

From his first hearing the preaching, he would not miss any opportunity, unless his father or mother desired him. He also attended the prayers of the church at six o'clock in the morning, and delighted in being in the churchyard late at night, as though he wished to enjoy the habitation of the dead.

While he was under the sound of the gospel, at the church or elsewhere, if he chanced to sit among rude boys or girls, however they might laugh or talk he could not be induced even to turn his eyes toward them.

When his parents appeared to be distressed about matters of this life, he would point out to them the most striking passages of Scripture, and say, 'These are for you.' Or if he heard a text, or any part of a sermon, which particularly respected the trials they were exposed to, he would carry that part home to them.

As he did not love or practise sin himself, so neither would he suffer it in others; but would reprove anyone, with the greatest solemnity, that sinned in his presence. When his parents conversed with any who came to their house, he would sit silent and seemed to devour every word, as though he was watching for something profitable, or else to give a seasonable reproof. But if anyone spoke to him on a religious subject, he would answer them with such striking expressions as struck an awe on all who heard him.

He also set such a watch before his mouth that no one, even of his most intimate acquaintance, would charge him with a rash, angry, or unprofitable word. He had also a very tender conscience. For if he did but look out at the window, and his father turned his eye towards him, he would take it as a reproof for indulging a wandering heart, and would burst into tears immediately.

He likewise suffered much persecution for religion, especially from a wicked neighbour whose tongue was like a sharp spear. So that he was afraid either to hear or see him, as his language savoured so much of hell. But whatever he suffered, he patiently bore it all, and in all things kept a conscience void of offence.

In the twelfth year of his age he was seized with the smallpox. The third day his fever was very violent; yet for the most part, he was sensible. And now it was that Satan appeared to be let loose upon him for a short season. The conflict lasted about twenty-four hours, during which time he cried out in the most lamentable manner, as one in the utmost distress. Sometimes he appeared as in an agony; at others, as though he was talking and arguing with the enemy. Sometimes he called upon God and man for help. Thus he was beset with the powers of darkness, till, partly by the conflict, and partly by his bodily affliction, his strength was exhausted.

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<sup>1</sup>Titled: 'An Account of Thomas Wright, of Sevenoaks: a Child of twelve Years of Age'.

One day he fixed his eyes very steadily on one side of the room, as though he saw something very extraordinary. At last he said, 'Take that wicked man, and bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness!'<sup>2</sup> Then he cried out, with unspeakable rapture, 'I am going to Jesus, to sing his praise forever! Forever! Forever!'

From that time he grew much worse in body, but his mind was quite calm and peaceable. He bore his affliction with great patience. Indeed, nothing seemed to trouble him after his triumphant conquest. He was prevented from speaking so as to be understood, except a few times that he was heard to say, 'O Jesus my rescue!' But he frequently lifted up his hands as if he was praying. And his eyes were lifted up to heaven, almost without intermission, from the time of his sore conflict, till he went to God; which he did without a sigh or groan.

W. Boothby

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 9 (1786): 80–82.

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<sup>2</sup>Cf. Matt. 22:13.

From Thomas Wride

Norwich  
November 5, 1785

Reverend Sir,

Writing is always a task to me. But if I could write to your satisfaction, it would be easy.

You do not love complaints, nor do I love to make them, but 'necessity has no law'. We hear no more of a preacher than we did when you was with us on the 17th of October. The people of Loddon are going among the dippers [i.e., Baptists]. At South Lopham the dippers will in all likelihood have the preaching house. So many disappointment have been that all we can say goes for nothing. The affair about Lake<sup>1</sup> Houlton being sent back has been received as a farce, and by many is looked upon no better than an invention—to blind them.

Pray sir, be so kind as [to] send us somebody. If one *will* not or *cannot* come, I hope you will think of and send someone that will *really* come. Gifts small or large, so he has grace, send him! For the faction is so great and so general that I have not time to write the shadow of them.

I am running as in a race to save the post, therefore shall only take time to say that I am, reverend sir,

Your dutiful son,

Tho. Wride

*Source:* Wride's manuscript draft; Duke, Rubenstein, Frank Baker Collection of Wesleyana, Box CO9, Thomas Wride Notebook 1, p. 5.

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<sup>1</sup>Orig., 'Leak'.

From Thomas Wride

Long Stratton  
November 14, 1785

Reverend Sir,

Your favour of the 2nd instant<sup>1</sup> came to hand too late to be acknowledged in my letter of the 5th instant, both being on the way at the same time.

Since then I received that [letter] containing your intelligence and directions concerning James Byron,<sup>2</sup> who arrived in Norwich between 6:00 and 7:00 on Thursday evening. I should have been glad that he could have preached, but he seemed much tired and desired to be excused.

On Friday I had free conversation with him, and if I may judge by such an opportunity, he is a man of fire and calculated for the outer-court worshippers chiefly. He professed himself ready to follow any direction that may be given him. But I find that in the little time he has been in England he has learned to let the people sing anthems—yea, to give out the anthem for them; not knowing that he therein acted against any rule. But as I have told him your mind, I hope that he will fulfill it.

Long ago I desired brother [John] M'Kersey to forbear the singing between prayer and the text, but he still goes his own way. His avowed reason is that it saves him labour and fills up the time. Last Saturday I told him of it in your name—viz., that 'Mr. Wesley desires you would sing no more than twice'. Whether this will be regarded or no, time will prove.

From the first I have desired brother M'Kersey to preach at Norwich at 5:00 in the morning. But he does not. He says that he cannot. He says that he can rise soon enough, but he cannot preach without his breakfast. If I laboured under this difficulty, I really would carry my intended breakfast to bed with me, that I might eat it when the clock struck 4:00. If it be a trouble to preach early, we have not much of it, for it is only at Norwich and North Walsam that we can get hearers.

Believe me sir, I am willing to follow your directions, especially those contained in yours of the 2nd instant. I wish I may be able hereafter to give you as good account of the success as now I am of my intention.

I almost think that you wonder why no regular account of Norwich circuit has been transmitted. Truly sir, for this plain reason: I cannot make one. I have no account of Loddon. I never was there until October the 21st, in company with you. On November 4th I was there, but was obliged to go from thence to Norwich on the 5th, so that they have not yet got their tickets. I expect to be with them on Saturday and Sunday next, and on Saturday fortnight at Norwich, where I hope to gain time to transcribe the accounts and send them unto you.

I am, reverend sir,

Your dutiful son,

Thomas Wride

*Source:* Wride's manuscript draft; Duke, Rubenstein, Frank Baker Collection of Wesleyana, Box CO9, Thomas Wride Notebook 1, pp. 5–6.

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<sup>1</sup>This letter is not known to survive.

<sup>2</sup>JW to Thomas Wride, Nov. 8, 1785. James M'Kee Byron (1760–1827), an Irishman, was just beginning to consider the itinerant ministry. JW sent him because Thomas Jones was delayed in coming. He would be admitted 'on trial' at the 1786 Conference (see *Works*, 10:596), and serve faithfully until retiring in 1823. See *WMM* 52 (1829): 577–91.

From John Gardner<sup>1</sup>

[London]  
c. December 1785

Reverend and Dear Sir,

A few of us are subscribing one penny a week each, and to be carried on the Sabbath by one of ourselves who read and pray with the afflicted who (according to the rules enclosed) must be a poor stranger having no parish, nor friend at hand to help him.

Our benevolent plan is opposed by Mr. P—, my class leader. Therefore we are constrained to trouble you, reluctantly, at this time for your approbation, before we proceed.

Reverend sir, if you think well of us, we are very poor, having neither box nor book; and our whole stock is not yet twenty shillings—therefore will thank you for any assistance you may be pleased to afford in our infant state. For we do hope God will bless this small beginning. Nevertheless, if you disapprove our proceedings, I will lay it all aside. And remain

Your very humble and obedient servant,

John Gardner

*Address:* 'To the Rev. John Wesley, A.M., City Road'.

*Source:* published transcriptions; *Grain of Mustard Seed* (c. 1815);<sup>2</sup> and *The Monthly Repository of Theology and General Literature* 14 (1819): 297.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Titled: 'A Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley, at founding the Benevolent, or Strangers' Friend Society [in London], 1785'. See Thomas Marriott, 'Strangers Friend Societies', *WMM* 1 (1845): 661–68; and Tim Macquiban, 'British Methodism and the Poor, 1785–1840', University of Birmingham Ph.D. thesis, 2000. John Gardner (d. 1807) served in the British army during the Revolutionary war and settled in London after his discharge. Here he recruited his wife and others to form this first society for the relief of the poor around his home in Long Acre, near Covent Garden. Gardner later became a doctor, with a career filled with scientific discoveries and charitable works. See Stephenson, *City Road*, 328–29; and *WMM* 139 (1916), 29.

<sup>2</sup>A copy of this single leaf printed flyer is held in MARC, MA 1977/609.

<sup>3</sup>A transcription with several small revisions appears in *WMM* 68 (1845): 662–63.

Alexander Knox to Methodist Lay-Preachers<sup>1</sup>

[Londonderry]  
c. December 1785

[p. 3]

To think for himself is the hereditary right of every man born into the world. Since then a separation of the people called Methodists from the Church of England is become at present a common topic of conversation, it seems lawful for every man to offer his free thoughts upon that subject. I shall therefore beg leave to throw out a few remarks as they occur to my mind, and shall leave it to the candid reader to judge for himself. But before I proceed, I shall just briefly enquire: first, What is the Church of England? [and] secondly, Who are the Methodists?

First: What is the Church of England? By the Church of England is generally understood, I believe, that body of professing Christians who worship God according to the form laid down in the Book of Common Prayer, and who profess to believe the creeds and hold the doctrines therein contained. This Church is governed by a primate, archbishops, bishops, and the inferior orders of the clergy, each in subordination to the other according to their respective offices, and all in subordination to his Britannic Majesty. So that no material alteration can be made either in the government, form, or doctrine of this Church without his consent, who is styled 'Defender of the Faith'.

Second: Who are the Methodists? They are a company of religious people raised up in the Church of England (for the Dissenters gathered in among them are comparatively few) whose first teachers were, and still are, [p. 4] ministers of that Church. These first instruments of God, finding their work to increase beyond what they could attend to, and having no other ordained clergymen to assist them, at length consented to be assisted by those laymen who were raised up and *separated by God* for this work. These laymen were call Methodist preachers, not *ministers*; their call being not to baptize but to preach the gospel—as they themselves professed and God abundantly witnessed by the conversion of thousands and tens of thousands. And this conversion was not from one system of opinions to another, but from sin and Satan to the living God. Yea, many were converted from the most abandoned wickedness, and became holy and devoted men. And that because these special messengers of God (for such they were called), according to the example set them, rushed *not only* into every opening door, but sought the vagrant souls in the fields, in the streets, and lanes of the city; not counting their lives dear to themselves, so they might finish their course with joy and save some of the precious souls for whom Christ died. All this time, after the example and by the advice of Mr. [John] Wesley, under whose care they laboured, they continued in the Church [of England]. Nor was this continuance at any time contrary to the judgment of the majority of them when in Conference assembled. To these extraordinary ambassadors of Christ have been added, of late years, two or three clergymen whose hearts God stirred up to assist in this glorious work.<sup>2</sup>

Why then should these separate from the Church *now*? Is it because the government of the Church is not apostolical? No; that is not yet made a matter of conscience, whatever it may be when a

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<sup>1</sup>With this tract Alexander Knox entered the fray in Ireland against those encouraging both the ordination of lay preachers and a separation from the Church of England/Ireland. While Knox presents the case as an attempt to protect JW's honour, he is criticizing implicitly some of JW's recent actions. The tract was published in later 1785, and anonymously, so the frequent letters between JW and Knox that year given no indication of alienation over this matter. But there are no known surviving letters from JW to Knox the next year (and Knox carefully preserved these), and the few letters in following years are rather perfunctory in nature. Meanwhile, a formal resolution was adopted at the July 1786 Conference of Methodist preachers in Ireland condemned Knox's tract, and the circular letter of Michael Moorhouse, as written by 'enemies to our Connection, and disturbers of the peace of Zion, and of that spiritual union which is so necessary for the preservation and increase of the work of God; see Irish Minutes, July 7, 1786, Q. 27, *Works*, 10:983.

<sup>2</sup>This would include Rev. James Creighton (a native of Ireland), and Rev. Peard Dickinson.

separation is determined upon.

Is it because the form of divine service is not apostolical? No; for though the preachers in general make no use of the form of prayer appointed by the Church service, yet they do not condemn it, looking on modes of worship or forms of prayer (as they justly may) to be non-essentials. [p. 5]

Is it because the doctrines of the Church are not pure? No, certainly. These they hold and strenuously contend for, as they are contained in the Book of Common Prayer and the Homilies.

Is it then that the [established] churches are shut against them *now*, or that they cannot have the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper? No, assuredly. They never were more welcome to the [established] churches of Great Britain and Ireland than now—many of the clergy finding a secret pleasure in having such a number of communicants.

But, one argument for the separation is: 'The clergy are not converted men, not experienced in the work of God upon the soul; therefore they are not fit to minister in holy things, nor can a blessing attend what they do.' — It is to be feared indeed that few are *converted*, in the general acceptation of the word. Yet several of them fear God. And unless it is first proved that the blessing depends on the intention or faith of the minister, and not on that of the worthy communicant, the argument above is inconclusive. Besides, the experience of thousands of the Methodists whose minds were not poisoned by those who rail against the Church and clergy proves that God will bless his own children by *any* means. And in this case we may apply the prophet Isaiah's words: 'Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your ploughmen and vine-dressers' (Isaiah 61:5). Would not the criminal deserve to die who should refuse the king's pardon because it was brought by the hand of a condemned person?

A second argument is: 'We lose many of those children whom we have begotten by the gospel, and who are therefore very dear to us, because we have not the ordinances regularly amongst us.' Now suppose it to be granted that some have left us and joined dissenting congregations; yet I must observe: 1) Many of these were originally Dissenters, or had imbedded republican principles; so that to them the transition was very easy. Besides, very few of these went [p. 6] away until their love to God and their brethren began to wax cold; then they were easily offended, and so separated. 2) Among ourselves have men arisen speaking perverse things against the Church, and taught, both by example and persuasion, that pernicious custom of strolling from one dissenting congregation to another—which caused several to separate from us. It had been well perhaps if these rotten members had been cut off before they infected those that were sound. 3) On the other hand, well-meaning men amongst us have opposed the favourite tenets or doctrines of Dissenters with a zeal far removed from the meekness recommended by the apostle to Timothy (2 Timothy 2:24–25), and this caused others to depart. 4) Some amongst us preach only a part of the gospel; nor are they content unless they contradict their brethren who hold out *holiness* as the prize of our high calling here. By this very thing thousands are prevented from running the race set before them; and having nothing more in view after justification, no other goal to run to or prize to contend for, they fall into Calvinian dotages; or, with Demas, love the present world again.<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Wesley, in his tour through the kingdom finding one society much decreased, upon inquiry found they had left off going to Church. Upon which he remarks in his *Journal*, 'It is no wonder they should leave us.'<sup>4</sup>

But will our having the ordinances, etc., prevent our people from going away? Does it effectually prevent it in London, where those very clergymen who are pillars in the work officiate? No—and if not, how much less when lay preachers are ordained to officiate;<sup>5</sup> against which ordination both Churchmen and Dissenters have their prejudices.

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<sup>3</sup>See 2 Tim. 4:10.

<sup>4</sup>This quote is not found in JW's *Journal*. Knox may have in mind JW's comment on the society in Athlone, when he visited there June 17, 1767 (*Works*, 22:85).

<sup>5</sup>By this juncture JW had ordained some of his lay preachers, so that they could officiate at sacraments, to serve in North America and the Caribbean, as well as Scotland; and some lay preachers were encouraging him to do the same in England, Ireland, and Wales.



Again, it may be argued: 'The Church of England is fallen, therefore we should separate from her.' — Yes, if we wish to pull her down. This reason may be plausible, but not solid. For *first*, she is not fallen so long as there are so many thousands still in connection with her who know the truth as it is in Jesus. [p. 7] Nor, *secondly*, is there any Scripture ground for separating any farther than we *have* done. We are separated from the immorality of fallen Church-men, and by our Christian fellowship among ourselves reprove the want of it in others. And so they understand it, and have often wished we would separate, for then we would be no longer a reproof to them. Besides, there is no danger of *our* members being corrupted by the Church; and there is some ground of hope that *they*, as many have been, will be sanctified by us—as a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

Again, others may roundly assert: 'The time is finally come that we should be an independent body of Christians.' If God has made this known, I wish to know how. Is it by his word, or by his providence? — If by his word, I confess myself ignorant of it. Indeed by Moses he commands the Israelites to separate themselves from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.<sup>6</sup> But I suppose none amongst the Methodists will conclude that the Church is in the state of those wicked men when they spread sedition through the camp. Nor did he who hath the seven spirits of God command those in Sardis who had not defiled their garments to separate from their dead pastor or the rest of the congregation.<sup>7</sup> — If it is by his providence, what are the circumstances? Is it because the offence and scandal of lay-preachers is in a great degree ceased? Because we are becoming honourable, therefore our ambition is fired to become still *more* honourable? O cursed ambition! What devastation hast thou made in heaven and earth, among both angels and men! There is no safer rule to judge of the will of God by his providence, than by the success he has been pleased to give to the labours of our laymen on the present plan. And this is corroborated by the very little use he has made of any person who got ordained and separated from us.<sup>8</sup> Therefore let every man abide in his calling, according to the will of God.

But here it may be still further argued: 'The good [p. 8] effects of a separation are already seen in the continent of America.' Whatever may be said about the American states, or supposing that providence may have there pointed out the way; yet the reasons upon which that separation took place have no existence either in Great Britain or Ireland. Therefore, till we are on the same footing, its good effect *there* has nothing to recommend it *here*.

'But as it is probable that a separation will take place after Mr. Wesley's decease, is it not better that whatever is done in that way should be done in his lifetime?' No. It is neither probable that it *will* take place; or even admitting that it *should*, it will not be done better now. It is not probable because, as a matter of such importance cannot take place till it is first investigated and fully considered in general Conference, it will be found that there are still two for one among the preachers who know their calling and prefer the saving souls in the *good old way* (a way approved by God and man) to the honour and snare of a gown, and the danger of becoming as 'salt that has lost its savour'.<sup>9</sup> But, admitting the necessity of the thing, it will not be better done now. The cause of God would be hurt through the indelible blot it would fix upon Mr. Wesley's character as long as his name shall be remembered. If he, after the astonishing labours of near half a century in the itinerant plan, in spite of honour and dishonour, in the greatest contempt of worldly glory; and after having begotten by the gospel a glorious company of sons, with whom he was not ashamed to speak with his enemies in the gate; if he, I say, even *he himself*, should hold out to these his sons the soul-destroying bait of worldly glory, the damning honour that cometh by men, by putting a gown on them which they did not seek or expect—what would the world say? What would it think? Besides, if he should proceed as he has begun, it would be highly injurious to the sense, to

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<sup>6</sup>See Num. 16:24.

<sup>7</sup>See Rev. 3:4.

<sup>8</sup>Among lay-preachers who received ordination and left the connexion were Lawrence Coughlan, Thomas Maxfield, Thomas Meyrick, Jonathan Reeves, and Thomas Richards.

<sup>9</sup>See Matt. 5:13.

the feelings, and to the character of the most respectable of the preachers.<sup>10</sup> To their sense, by not consulting [p. 9] them in open Conference; to their feelings, by raising some to such high dignity over them; and to their character, by holding them out to the world as less worthy. Though the above reason may seem plausible and sound policy to some, yet methinks it is not sound divinity to *use deceit*. Oh who will stand forth and show our aged father and friend these rocks against which the ship is like to be dashed to pieces? O that some good angel would take him by the hand and lead him through this thorny maze which is strewn with flowers of Satan's creating!

Arise ye *true* sons of the grey-headed Elijah, and let not his laurels be trodden in the dust. Let not his glory be tarnished. Ye have yet *ten* parts in this *son* and *servant* of God. Let no son of Bichri say, 'To thy tents, O Israel',<sup>11</sup> and leave him to himself. Or if anyone should say so, do ye say with Elijah, 'As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, we will not leave him.'<sup>12</sup> What an odium would these bring upon this servant of God, who would cause him to nullify what has been published to the world of his mature resolves concerning the Church, in conjunction with those with whom he conferred! See the answers to several questions in the *Minutes* of Conference, together with Mr. Wesley's twelve *Reasons Against a Separation from the Church* printed many years ago;<sup>13</sup> besides what he has said occasionally upon the subject in conversation, in private letters, from the pulpit, and from the press.

That a separation from the Church at this time can be of no real use to the interests of religion is, methinks, already apparent from what I have already hinted. But the evils consequent upon it may still more fully appear by showing what we are likely to suffer or lose by such a separation.

First, as many who are zealous for the Church have joined our societies, we may conclude that upon a separation many of these will be offended, some will withdraw, and in future few that are thus zealous will unite with us. For those in general that are saved [p. 10] from bigotry are established believers, not half-awakened sinners.

Again, as a separation implies ordination (and vice versa), this, in *my* apprehension, is attended with a train of evils. The thing itself, as to the manner, is new in this age and liable to many objections. But waiving these for the present, and even admitting the legality of the institution, who can deny that any three of those elders thus ordained may not as lawfully ordain those whom they please?<sup>14</sup> Besides, ordination will be a bone of contention, or apple of discord, among the preachers—for it will be impossible to choose such as may be thought most proper, or indeed *any*, without giving huge offence to others. How hardly do some bear to have one of their brethren appointed Assistant over them (as it is called), although his trust is but temporary and his office not the most eligible, on account of the care and labour it requires! How much harder will it be for *such* to bear that their inferior, both in sense and usefulness, and perhaps junior brother, should be preferred before them and privileged to approach the altar of God, while *they* are fenced off to mix with the populace, or go away without a crumb—and especially when this preference is not temporary, as the office of an Assistant, but for life.

Again, those who are rejected will rarely be preserved from speaking evil of the institution and of their brethren—who, however holy, will scarcely be preserved from giving offence, for they will be

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<sup>10</sup>It becomes clear at this point that Knox is criticizing the ordinations that JW has already performed, in part because he took these actions while consulting only a few favoured preachers.

<sup>11</sup>See 2 Sam. 20:1.

<sup>12</sup>Cf. 2 Kings 2:2.

<sup>13</sup>See *Works*, 9:334–42.

<sup>14</sup>In his letter to 'Our Brethren in America', Sept. 10, 1784 (*Works*, 30:268–70), justifying his decision to ordain lay-preachers to send to them, JW contended that in the early church 'presbyter' (or elder) and 'episcopos' (or bishop) were synonymous, so his status as an ordained elder gave him authority to ordain others as deacons and elders. But JW was aware that another long-standing practice was for three bishops to participate in ordaining a new bishop. Thus he had two other elders join in ordaining the lay preachers for America, and sent to America a cohort of three elders, who could jointly ordain others.

watched with a jealous eye and many will be ready to say to them, 'Ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi.'<sup>15</sup> Thus the bond of union which has so long subsisted upon the primitive plan will be weakened, and divisions most probably ensue. Besides, as these gownsmen increase in number, the government will more and more devolve upon them. So that if the obnoxious *Deed*<sup>16</sup> should remain in full force and virtue, one of the clergymen may be continued for life in whatever place he chooses to reside. A very desirable thing indeed! But hereby the itinerant plan [p. 11] will be gradually weakened, or continued only by the *raw lads* upon trial. Or if the above is denied to any of our canonical brethren, they are in such a capacity of separating and setting up for their own hand as they never were in before. And two or three of those elders or presbyters, thus separating, may form a presbytery of relief, and open an asylum for every disaffected H–p–n, M–r, and P–l–r in the kingdom.<sup>17</sup> And so divisions and subdivisions are likely to ensue, until they have rent the church and scattered her members like the limbs of Absyrtus's body.

It is truly astonishing indeed that men who are entrusted with the care of souls should so readily adopt the devil's maxim: 'Divide and then destroy'.<sup>18</sup> It is strange to tell that, after 1700 years experience, the present generation seems to be no wiser than those that are gone! Here I might refer my reader to the history of the church of Corinth in St. Paul's day. I might remind him of the division which broke out in the second century between Victor, Bishop of Rome, and the Asiatic churches concerning Easter. I might point him to the controversy which arose between the same churches and Stephen, Bishop of Rome concerning the baptism of heretics in the third century. To the still more violent one in the fourth century, upon the election of the bishop of Carthage by the African bishops, without waiting for the approbation of those of Numidia. To the shocking scenes which ensued in the fifth century upon the excommunication of Nestorius by Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria; and to the controversy in the same century between Pelagius and heated Augustine. I might lead my reader through the labyrinth of controversy and its effects down through every succeeding age to the sixteenth century, when the devil, as usual, divided those eminent men Martin Luther and others, whom God raised up in that day to reform his church. Nay, we might come still nearer home, and behold with sorrow the effects of that division which he caused between Messrs. John Wesley and George Whitefield in the present century, [p. 12] and which we sensibly feel to the present day. But I shall not dwell on these melancholy scenes; and after having pointed out one evil consequence more arising from a separation, I shall conclude.

While the present plan continues, if a preacher prefers ease to labour, or if his health will not bear the fatigue of an itinerant, he generally thinks of providing for himself and his family (if he has one) in some way of trade or business; and some that have thus retired are useful in their place and are an honour to us, without any expence. But when any have got a gown, we cannot expect that they will retire and sink into obscure farmers or common tradesmen. Be this far from them, so to degrade their office, or retire without a pension! Or if some of these *reverend gentlemen* should be excluded from the Methodist connection on account of their immorality, etc., etc., will they not turn 'buckle beggars' for a livelihood?<sup>19</sup> Yes, and to these will resort every villain or sensualist who desires to deceive a woman under the pretext of marriage, and after he has had his desire, will spurn her from his presence, telling her it was no legal marriage. Is not this then as the letting out of water, and who shall gather it up? Is it not about the deluge the whole land? Save, Lord, or thy servants perish!

*Source:* published tract; 'A Layman of the Methodist Society' [i.e., Alexander Knox], *Free Thoughts Concerning a Separation of the People called Methodists from the Church of England; addressed to the Preachers of the Methodist Connection* (London: s.n., 1785).

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<sup>15</sup>Num. 16:7.

<sup>16</sup>I.e., the Deed of Declaration, restricting 'legal Conference' to only 100 of the preachers.

<sup>17</sup>Referring to John Hampson, William Moor[e], and Joseph Pilmore (often spelled Pilmoor).

<sup>18</sup>See Matt. 12:26.

<sup>19</sup>I.e., ones who perform marriages in a clandestine and irregular manner.

From Jasper Robinson (autobiography)<sup>1</sup>

c. December 1785

I was born at Wooburn Green, near High Wycombe, in December 1727. My parents dying when I was about twelve years old, I was left to the care of a good grandmother, who kept me at school till I was fifteen years of age, at which time I went as an apprentice to London. A few years after my apprenticeship was out I went to Worcester, and wrought at the china factory about two years, and afterwards went to Liverpool. My whole life hitherto, had been spent in youthful vanities and amusements, sometimes mixed with sin and iniquity of the grosser sort, which I now hate, and am ashamed to mention.

In the year 1759, being at Liverpool, I began to consider that if I went on in sin, it would be my destruction; and I thought, if there was a judgment to come, it would be my wisdom to prepare for it. I therefore began to break off all my known sins at a stroke, and took to fasting and prayer, and soon found the happy difference between serving God and serving the devil. In the year 1760, I removed to Leeds in Yorkshire, where I got acquainted with the people called Methodists and joined them, attended diligently to my class, and missed no other means of grace. In the summer of that year I heard Mr. Wesley preach. Under one of whose sermons I was enabled to believe that my sins were forgiven. In the year 1763, I received a large effusion of the Holy Spirit, and seemed changed throughout the whole man. I then joined the select band, enjoyed much peace, and walked agreeable to the gospel. In 1765, after conversing with a friend, I again felt a blessed change in my heart, but through unbelief soon let go my hold. Some time after, at a morning preaching, it appeared as if every evil was taken out of my heart. But I soon gave way to unbelief and became as I was before. In the year 1770, it pleased God to bless several persons at Leeds, and I received a sweet, mild, and childlike spirit. But after a while, through unbelief, my corrupt nature prevailed again.

In 1776, I set out as a travelling preacher, and was appointed for Manchester, where I preached in great weakness and fear. However I was encouraged much from the Lord, and from many of the poorer people. But some of the rich showed great indifferency toward me. I believe I was of some use there, and in general that year was in pursuit of holiness. But though I received many marks of it, I put it off and did not believe. In 1777 I went to Epworth circuit. Here also holiness and usefulness were my chief aim. I received many tokens for good in my own heart, and trust I was somewhat profitable to the people. In 1778 I went to Lynn; and in 1779 to Aberdeen and Inverness. Here I was supported with an uncommon degree of cheerfulness, and found Scotland a happy place for me, notwithstanding some inconveniences. In the latter end of the year, at Aberdeen I was much tried, and much supported. In 1780 I came to Dundee, where I had a peaceful year, and was all for holiness. Yet I was tempted in an extraordinary manner, especially at Arbroath. I fasted and prayed night and day, but could get no rest. One day upon a mount, where I ran up to pray, a tremor seized me and I thought the devil would become visible. But on a sudden I was sensible that Jesus was my Advocate, the Holy Spirit my Comforter, and God the Father my reconciled God. Now again I received such comfort in my mind that nothing was wanting but faith, to make me a partaker of full sanctification.

In 1781 I was appointed for Barnard Castle, and in 1782 was sent to the Isle of Man, where I minuted down, at times, the occurrences of the day, an extract from which here follows:

April 5, 1783. My mind was somewhat strengthened by reading Matthew 21: 22, 'All things whatsoever ye ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.' Lord help me! I believe he does help me; for now I believe he has purified my heart by faith. I believe he has cast out all my

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<sup>1</sup>Jasper Robinson (1727–97), drawn to the Methodists in 1760 while living in Leeds, was admitted 'on trial' as an itinerant at the 1776 Conference (see *Works*, 10:452). He served for twenty-three years, right up to his death. In addition to this spiritual autobiography, see the account of his death in *MM* 21 (1798): 231–34; and *Minutes* (post-Wesley, 1798), 1:414.

enemies, and through believing they may be kept out. Glory be to God, I feel my spirit meek and pleasant. I am nothing, and wholly depend upon God and desire nothing but him.

All my wants are lost in one,  
Father, thy only will be done.<sup>2</sup>

April 9. I have been kept without sin in my heart this day. I grow more and more confident that God has cleansed my heart from all unrighteousness. As I was riding yesterday, a thought passed through my mind why I was not sanctified before. And it appeared it was because I would not believe; and if I *would* not, then it is plain I might if I would. Is not this the case with many? Instead of simply believing, they are looking out for some extraordinary thing formed in their own imagination. This, I believe, has been the case with me for twenty years past. Many times in the course of these years God gave me reason to believe it. But instead of believing he *had* done it, I thought now I was in such a way that I could not well miss it; and Naaman-like, I expected God would lay his hand very powerfully upon me, and manifest himself in such an extraordinary manner that my soul would be immediately swallowed up in a holy flame of love. But finding not what I expected, I soon flagged in my pursuit, and my vile corruption returned again to my heart. And though in general I had power over all sin, inward and outward, and peace with God, and still sought after a clean heart; yet I often thought that according to his word he was willing to give it to others, but had some particular exceptions against me.

I thought I strove more for it in every good word and work, than many others that received it. And yet the more I strove, the harder it seemed to be attained. Yea, I frequently thought, the more I sought God, the more he withdrew from me. Upon which I used to fall into such weakness of mind that I could scarce conceive anything at all of God, or of Christ. At other times, when I was earnest for purity there would appear such a huge bar, or such a huge something, that it was impossible for me to get any farther. Then I thought I might be contented with what I had got—and resting here, I used to enjoy a tolerable degree of peace; though envy, lust, and barrenness, frequently harassed me within. But oh how contrary to my expectation hath God dealt with me!

Two days before I received it I was telling a brother I could not see that I have grown in grace for twenty years past, because when I would sail forward in the divine life, there rose up always such a sand-bank that my poor vessel could not make any way. But as I was reading the fore-mentioned passage, 'All things whatsoever ye ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive',<sup>3</sup> I thought I would once more pray for sanctification; because it is God's will, according to his word. And I thought I would depend upon him as I would upon the faithfulness of a friend, and should be as much disappointed in my expectation, if he were not as good as his word, as if I were deceived by a man. I soon found my soul sink down into a kind of nothingness before God, and presently was persuaded that no sin remained in my heart, and that through believing I might ever keep it out. I thought, if this is the way to be sanctified, anyone that has grace may believe to be sanctified, if he will. For none can be more weak in faith than myself, and yet I have no doubt but my heart is purified.

Thus, contrary to my former expectation of being something extraordinary when sanctified, I am emptied of self, and sink into an unfeigned nothingness, that Christ may be my all in all. I can only admire the goodness of God respecting the manner in which he has been pleased to bestow this blessing upon me. For had he given it in my own way (that is, in rapturous joy), perhaps, upon those transports subsiding, I should have immediately thought that all was gone, and then have fallen into unbelief. But now, if I am ever so low, or ever so elevated, I continue

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<sup>2</sup>Cf. CW, 'The Last Wish', st. 1, *HSP* (1749), 24.

<sup>3</sup>Matt. 21:22.

believing in the Lord, who is my aim and end. I desire nothing, I seek nothing but God. He is my refuge, my rest, my portion, and my all.

O how wonderful his ways!  
All in love begin and end,  
Whom his mercy means to raise,  
First his justice bids descend.<sup>4</sup>

April 12. This day I find the Lord very gracious. Upon a trial that used to make me very hasty in spirit, I found not the least shadow of it in my heart. The state of my soul at present cannot be better expressed than by this verse,

Let the waves around thee rise,  
Let the tempest threat the skies;  
Calm thou ever art within,  
All unruffled, all serene;  
Thy sure anchor cannot fail,  
Enter'd now within the veil.<sup>5</sup>

April 14. I find the refreshing springs of grace purifying my heart more and more. Blessed be God the Father of mercies; he is my God, my portion, and my all. This night I found him very gracious to me in preaching.

April 16. I am more and more clear that my heart is entirely changed. The word of God, the Spirit of God, and my soul's experience agree together. This morning I was elevated in my mind. But I see it is dangerous, and that I have need to watch against it. My soul chooses Christ above ecstatic joy or transport, before everything that tends to alienate my mind from him; yea above all gifts without him—for was it possible to be in heaven without him, I had rather be on earth with him.

April 17. The Lord is still gracious. Satan tempts, but I get the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Friday, [April] 25. I have been in such a heavy state this day that it renders me very unprofitable. But blessed be God, I find that whether heavy or alert, weak or strong, he that believeth shall be saved. So that I still hope my heart is clean, though sometimes I am hardly sure.

April 26–29. My state is pretty even with some particular spiritual satisfaction. Blessed be God, I have reason to judge the root of sin is out of my heart, because when I am tempted, nothing within takes hold of it. I find it easier to keep sin out than conquer it when in.

May 12. I hope the Lord is establishing my heart in grace more and more. This morning I have had glorious conceptions of the blessed Trinity. So that my soul can say, 'O God thou art my God: glory be to thee, O thou Most High.'

May 17. Blessed be God, I am kept in peace through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Happy is the man that has the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God.

October 17. For three days past I have been much encouraged to hope for all the fullness of God. The promise as well as command is, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.'<sup>6</sup> And I hope I shall not rest short of it. O my God, give me power now, and continue it to my life's end for Jesus Christ's sake!

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<sup>4</sup>Cf. CW, 'The Life of Faith', Pt. 1, st. 6, *MSP* (1744), 3:274.

<sup>5</sup>CW, 'Matthew 5:3–12', ll. 77–82, *HSP* (1749), 1:37.

<sup>6</sup>Deut, 6:5; Matt. 22:37.

The promise is sure  
To the helpless and poor,  
Their souls as their bodies thou surely canst cure.<sup>7</sup>

October 30. Thou blessest me much, O my God. But I shall never be satisfied until I awake up after thy likeness.

November 1. I fasted and prayed for purity of heart. O when shall I be perfectly free, and all my soul unreservedly devoted to God! I am day by day pursuing holiness, and hate every appearance to the contrary.

November 7. I appear to myself little better than an atheist—so dark, and ignorant is my heart. I can hardly think well of any religion, short of all light, all love, and holiness; and the more I seek for it, the more dark and distracted my mind appears. What can I do? I am tempted to dispute the truth of God's word. O that he would answer for himself, in love and faithfulness to my heart! Who can deliver me! O, I read that one can, but I fear his willingness. Yet thou knowest, Lord, I should gladly be delivered now. Why tarriest thou, O my God?

December 10. The blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin. Blessed be the Lord for this!

'Tis all my hope, and all my plea,  
That Jesu's blood was shed for me.<sup>8</sup>

January 7, 1784. Glory be to God in the highest! The latter part of the old year ended, as the new year begins, well. I overcome all sin by the blood of the Lamb. For these three or four weeks past I have walked in blessed liberty through believing. Lord increase my faith, for there is nothing like living by faith.

April 2. I was waked this morning with a loud voice sounding in my ears, 'Say unto Zion, thy God reigneth.'<sup>9</sup> It was repeated again very sharply, 'Tell Zion, thy God reigneth.' Lord, help me so to do. I have several times had such solemn views of Zion's prosperity that I am in hopes the gospel will bear all before it in this island.

April 19. Ah! What is this life to him that is born to die? I wonder that Methodists will have anything to do with the pleasures, fashions, or riches of this world. How few cry out in their counting-house,

In all time of our wealth,  
*Good Lord deliver us* !<sup>10</sup>

In July I left the Isle of Man, in a very prosperous way, and was appointed for Whitehaven.

In 1785, I went to Bolton circuit, where I spent an agreeable year. Here also I made a few remarks of my experience.

Monday morning, September 2. I waked about four o'clock with my soul breathing after God. All evil seemed removed from my mind, and I was like a morning without clouds. I had a clear view of living by faith, and of being freed from everything but God: to have him the only portion of my soul. These words ran in my mind, till my eyes gushed out with tears,

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<sup>7</sup>Cf. CW, 'Hymns for Believers, #21', st. 9, *HSP* (1749), 1:226.

<sup>8</sup>An adaptation of CW, 'Christ our Righteousness', st. 3, *HSP* (1740), 96.

<sup>9</sup>Cf. Isa. 52:7.

<sup>10</sup>BCP, The Litany.

Never shall my triumphs end.<sup>11</sup>

This state brings us into all calmness and serenity, and shields the mind against every temptation.

On Tuesday morning also I had a satisfying sense of faith. I see it is no matter what I am beside, in the esteem of men, whether wise or ignorant, honoured or abased; or how many my sins have been, or how encompassed about with present infirmities; if I can believe God is reconciled unto me in Jesus, all is well. I stand by faith and not by works. I have felt a few temptations since, but I find my privilege is to look unto Jesus and be saved.

September 10. I hear Mr. [John] Fletcher is dead. May I follow him as he followed Christ! He was a star of the first magnitude in God's church, but now he is gone to shine in glory, and to set no more forever. A fixed star to all eternity. The wise shall inherit glory, and I think, if there was a wise man in the world, he was one.

September 13. I was discouraged this day, but I prayed unto God, who comforted and delivered me from all my fears. Glory be to thee, O Lord, who never failest them that seek thee! When man discourages, how clear it makes our faith, that God does help. Discouragement from man weans us from man, and help from God draws nearer to God.

November 23. I waked this morning at four o'clock. I thought much about believing, and what many assert, that you must believe now and you have what you believe for, either pardon or holiness. I fear this has led many of a warm imagination to believe they are sanctified, when a little time has proved they have been mistaken. I was much perplexed about their manner of speaking, and considered our Lord's words, 'Whatsoever ye ask in prayer, believing ye receive it, ye shall have.'<sup>12</sup> This I could not well understand, how I was to believe I receive before it was really given unto me. And it came into my mind that God speaketh of things that are not, as though they were. Faith in like manner says, I have it, though it is not yet given; that is, believes in the certainty of it, as if already come to pass. Thus faith anticipates the blessing, and makes us as sure of it as if it were already accomplished. In this manner a believer may go on, from strength to strength, and from grace to grace, believing and rejoicing in the sure word of God's promise, until he believes himself to heaven. Thus faith lays hold on every blessing, yea glory itself; but leaves the time and manner unto God.

November 28. In meditating, I had a very satisfying view of the covenant of grace, in contradistinction to the covenant of works—viz., as all have sinned, the covenant of works shows no mercy. The covenant of grace is full of compassion. In this, God is reconciled to us by the blood of his dear Son, and waits to be gracious to every returning sinner, in blotting out his sins and remembering his iniquities no more. He has promised to write his law in our hearts, even his law of love. Whosoever lives in obedience to this law of love sinneth not, for having always a loving intention to please God, he never offends him. Neither is God offended with him. In this covenant of grace, confirmed by the blood of Jesus, all involuntary ignorances, mistakes, and infirmities, God does not charge upon him as sin: nothing but willful acts. Thus he that is born of God, and lives in this covenant under the law to Christ, does not commit sin, neither can he sin, because his loving intention is always to please God, his seed remaining in him. He loves his neighbour, and love worketh no evil, but contrariwise good. Therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. According to the tenor of the first covenant no man is free from sin. But he that fulfils the law of love, the love of God and his neighbour, is as free from it, according to the new covenant, as he would be according to the old, were he to fulfil the utmost demand of the moral law.

In the eye of the law, every man is a sinner. But in the covenant of grace, he that loveth is free. To reason upon the law is bringing a man into bondage. But to believe according to grace is living in the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Many who are continually harping upon the

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<sup>11</sup>CW, 'Hymn on the Titles of Christ', st. 12, *HSP* (1739), 167.

<sup>12</sup>Cf. Mark 11:24.



purity of the law, and viewing Christian liberty in this mirror, grow blinder and blinder, and cannot see how a man can live without sin. But how unwise is this? If the Father of all mercies, the God of love, in consideration of the impossibility (through the weakness of the flesh) of being made perfect by the law, has substituted a milder covenant, full of grace, mercy, and love, whereby we may thus live; why should we not immediately embrace it? One would think we should encourage one another by saying, 'Well, brother, though you cannot by the law obtain the perfection of the law, yet by the grace of God you may obtain the perfection of the gospel, even the depth of humble love.' But, instead of this the law is frequently made use of to discourage the expectation of obtaining holiness by the gospel. One says, 'The law is so pure, that I do not see how I can be free from sin.' Another, 'If I was clean from sin, what need should I have for the atonement?' A third reasons, 'Sin is in the flesh which covers my bones, and therefore this putrefied cask will make all that comes out of it impure.' By this way of reasoning they conclude they can never be made clean from sin on this side the grave, and they discourage those who desire it according to the gospel. O what a pity it is, that we are so slow in believing, or looking into the glorious law of liberty and love, and continuing therein, that we may be happy!

J. R.

*Source:* published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 575–79, 630–36.

From Mary Cooke

Devizes, Tho[ma]s Locke's Esqr.  
December 5, 1785

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Encouraged by the consideration that he who has given little can also bestow much, I look forward expecting that as he has, I trust, begun, so he will carry on his work with mighty power in my soul; enabling me to believe with my whole heart unto righteousness, experiencing the fulness of his great salvation. I daily (may I not add momentarily) feel the great necessity there is that my 'heart should be established with grace',<sup>1</sup> that I be not (as now) tossed about with every wind of temptation, and cast down by each threat which the subtle enemy of my peace darts at me. The most sore I have been very lately exercised with came in the fearful application of that text, 'and the last state of that man is worse than the first'.<sup>2</sup> All my feelings seemingly agreed hereunto, and for many days I could not but think the awful saying should be actually verified in me. At last the great Deliverer of his church and people appeared, and put his foe to flight.

Yet my mind, ever prone to reasoning, soon lets its quiet go, in searching for further security instead of holding it by simple faith. Can you, my dear sir, tell me how to conquer or check the vain reasonings of my heart and the workings of my own spirit, which rises to seek a cause for every dispensation of God towards me? Presumption I know dwells in the enquiry, and I would that it was rooted up. But often with the unbelieving master in Israel I cry, 'How can these things be?'<sup>3</sup> Do I not want a greater simplicity of soul? And if I have a little faith, do I not need an abundant increase, which shall lay hold on the promises and the Promiser, in right of purchase by blood divine? When I meet with a case in any respect similar to my own, it leads me to hope that, though such a weakling now, it shall not be always thus. Yet can I but seldom think that feelings like mine are experimentally known to others. Your last letter raises me as from the dust.<sup>4</sup> I reflect that if such an one as *you* was ever weak in faith, there still is hope for me, that I shall yet grow stronger and become 'steadfast in faith'.<sup>5</sup> I sometimes anticipate the happy time that, as God can, so he shall save me to the uttermost. When I shall be renewed in his image. When I shall be pure as he is pure, and holy as he is holy! My soul exults in the thought, and tastes therein the bliss of heaven! But then a sight of my own heart again brings me low, and makes me almost to say it cannot be.

Here I want a language stronger than my own, to speak the feelings of my soul. When I attempt to describe my state, it looks so different from the original picture, and falls so far short of what I would say, that I come near to a determination of never attempting it more. I have often wished to convey the thought without vocal expression, such an amazing failure do I find herein. Sometimes I hear others telling what I myself would say. You have often read my heart, and spoke its language and its state, both in your writings, preaching, and conversation. Each has been abundantly blessed unto me. And though it has at times been a keen conviction, even as a sword piercing through my soul, revealing the secret evils which lurk within, yet the pain was productive of peace, and the deepest feelings of woe have<sup>6</sup> always brought the sweetest comforts. Though tried, severely tried, in the furnace of spiritual affliction, I *know*, I *feel* it is only in the severity of love. And there is not a tear or sigh which through anguish of soul has flowed from

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<sup>1</sup>Heb. 13:9.

<sup>2</sup>Matt. 12:45.

<sup>3</sup>John 3:9.

<sup>4</sup>Cooke is replying to JW's letter of Oct. 30, 1785.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. 1 Pet. 5:9.

<sup>6</sup>Orig. 'has'.

my eyes, or heaved my breast, that I would be without. God's dealings are mysterious in wisdom, and past finding out! No other way would I choose than that in which I have been *hitherto* led. And yet I cannot always trust for the *future*; but want to mark out a way of mine own, often crying, 'Surely, Lord, this cannot be for my good! This cannot be right!' But when past, its effects prove my understanding blind, and my will perverse, not knowing what is best, and choosing what in its consequences might be my utter destruction. My earnest prayer is, 'Lord make me all thine own! My heart, my soul, with all I have, with all I am, be wholly given up to thee!' But herein I know not what I ask. I want the end, but murmur at the way when it crosses my will, or its tendency is hid from me. Weak and helpless as I am, still the compassionate Saviour pities, and in the midst of the storm appears. Bids the overwhelming waves subside, and in the gentleness of love reproves, 'O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?'<sup>7</sup> Hast thou not had proofs enough of my sufficiency and willingness to save! When wilt thou cast away thine own strength, and trust altogether in me, without visible signs and wonders?

O my dear sir, you know not what I am. I wish you could read every thought of my heart, and tell me what they mean, and whither they tend. Instead of being zealously bold, I am a coward in the cause of God. Advise me how I shall overcome every degree of the fear of man; how I shall detect its subtleties amidst their most specious appearance, and trace them through the mazy windings of my heart; and confess myself before all not only in life, but in conversation, a disciple of the despised Galilean. I feel it not right to be silent, and yet find a backwardness and know not how to speak at all times for him who has done such great things for me. I am covered with shame and confusion at my coldness. But still from a fear of not speaking as I ought, I speak not at all. O that I was fitted with an holy boldness to declare in the simplicity of the gospel, his wonderous love! And in the meekness of Christian wisdom, tell to all what the Spirit of grace and conviction dictates to be right! Still would I beg an interest in your prayers. Continue them for me, that I may be endued with wisdom from on high, which shall guide me into all truth, and teach me all things necessary to salvation. And as my reverend father, advise and instruct me. Strengthen me with your counsel, and show me how to walk, and act, and live to God. Where reproof is needful, withhold it not. Nor keep back the food you think I want, though it may be bitter to the taste. For afterwards it shall be the sweeter; yea, it shall yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness and true holiness.

If I have been too prolix in some things, and too brief in others, I need not sue for a pardon, as I know it is already granted by you. In this confidence I will rest satisfied with saying so little in writing so much, as I can never fully express how much I feel myself to be

Your gratefully obliged,

M. Cooke

Please to address your next letter to me, at Thos Locke's Esqr, Devizes

*Address:* 'The Revd J. Wesley, New-Chapel, City Road, London'.

*Annotation:* 'Answer to Mr Wesley's 3rd letter'.

*Source:* manuscript copy for records; Bridwell Library (SMU), Mary Cooke Letter-book, p. 3.

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<sup>7</sup>Matt. 14:31.

From Thomas Wride

Norwich  
December 9, 1785

Reverend Sir,

I was in good hope that my promise of November 14th would be accomplished, with ease to myself and satisfaction to you. For when I left Norwich on November the 12th, I left the two Heys<sup>1</sup> in a silent inactive stupidity, which I hoped would at length ripen into something better. And had my brethren acted as they ought, showing any due regard to your directions which I communicated unto both of them, I seriously believe things would have been soon settled.

As brother [James] Byron was young both in years and experience, I gave him as full instructions as my opportunity and ability would admit. And fearing that he might forget, I gave him written instructions respecting what I would have him do. I did not doubt but that he would, as well as he could, fulfill them. For he so promised, as freely as could be desired. But he broke his word without delay. For the day following he began singing after the first prayer, and so continued to sing before and after the first prayer and after preaching as usual; although added to the advice I gave him, he heard me tell Mr. [John] M'Kersey that 'Mr. Wesley desires that you will not sing more than twice'.

My wife [Jane] told Mr. Byron concerning his singing contrary to Mr. Wesley's rule. But he said that 'They sing very well, and I could hear them sing ever so long!' So they had the singing according to their own will until Saturday, the 19th of November, when your letter of the 17th came to hand.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Byron was very pressing with my wife to open the letter, which at last she did. And telling what you said, he dropped the three times singing. And I have not heard of *his* singing more than twice at one service since.

But I do not thank brother Byron for busying himself with what is not his concern (except it be to raise himself a few inches by standing on my ruins). He has been free in giving out his verdict about me with regard to the stone at the chapel. 'He has done very wrong.' 'He had no business with it.' etc., etc. It would have become him better to hold his tongue about what he is entirely ignorant. For if I had not his leave, I had your orders for what I did. But I am content to bear the blame rather than you should, well knowing that you can bring forty of us out of the mud, when forty of us cannot do the like for you.

I wish I may prove mistaken, but I fear brother Byron will be a gentleman too soon. He begins to complain of the circuit already. He says he believes it is the worst circuit in England. Surely he has made the tour very rapidly, or else he concluded very rashly, for he has not yet seen *many* of the circuits in England; and when he delivered his judgement so freely, he had seen but three of the country places in *this* circuit.

Brother M'Kersey was also informed of the contents of your letter. Yet how has *he* regarded it? Why, he did not give out for them as usual. But as soon as the first prayer was ended out burst our singers with what they pleased, and brother M'Kersey stood listening unto them until they pleased to stop. My wife spoke to Mr. M'Kersey about going contrary to Mr. Wesley. But he replied, 'It is not worth making of words about.' So they went on as before until I came into Norwich on Saturday last. When I spoke to John M'Kersey, at first he evaded and said it was not his doing. 'They began singing without me.' I told him that he ought to stop them. But said he, 'I did not think it right to call out in the chapel.' But I told him that he ought to have done it, for I had to do it at my first coming. At last it came out nakedly thus: 'They asked me to let them sing a few verses before the text, and I told them I could not.' But they [then] asked him, if they did begin, 'would you not call out to us'? And I told them that 'I did not think it proper to call out to them in the chapel'. Now sir, without any comment, let anyone judge how much he has acted like one that has any desire to be directed by you.

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<sup>1</sup>George Hey and James Hey.

<sup>2</sup>JW to Wride, Nov. 17, 1785, *Works*, 30:401–02.

When I first went out of Norwich, which was September 22, I left the class paper and select band list for John M'Kersey. But on my return I found that he had not met the select band. I asked him why he had not met the select band. He said that he did not know how. I told him with all mildness and tenderness the method I took, where the company was so small as in Norwich, was to speak to each individual the same as in a class—only regarding the particular state of grace in which they were supposed to be. November the 6th, observing the list not marked, I said, 'Brother M'Kersey, you have not marked the band list.' He said, 'I have not met it.' 'But you ought', said I. The only answer he vouchsafed me was he turned his back on me and went out. And I do declare that his emphasis in answering, and his manner of leaving me, was as if he had said, 'I have no leisure to hear impertinencies.' Hitherto I was content to bury it. But as he continued in his old track, I told him last Saturday that I would no longer bear the blame. 'But as you will not regard Mr. Wesley any more than you will me, I shall inform Mr. Wesley of the whole.' I told him that he could not pretend to forget. For the members of the select band had at the time of meeting asked him to meet them, even before I came on the circuit. And that I had repeatedly told him of it since I came. 'But you have never met them yet.' He then said that he found a backwardness to meet them, etc., etc.

I also told him of the children which he had neglected to meet, and he said that he had rather go twelve miles than meet children. But I told him that he must do it. At last he consented to meet the children and the select band. But with regard to the *singing*, I could gain nothing. And with regard to morning preaching, he is farther off than before. He [said before he] could not preach before breakfast; but *now* he cannot (during winter) attempt the morning preaching at the 'peril of his life'. He says that he did try last spring, and perhaps he may try again next spring. But if he cannot be a preacher without preaching in the morning, he can return to whence he came. So he said to my wife at one time and to me at another.

I really believe he is weakly, but cannot think that it would at all hazard his life to preach early. But an easier way of escape might have been found at Norwich. For it seems they have not been used to morning preaching, because the rich will not attend, and the poor cannot. For after preaching, until eight o'clock in winter, they [the poor] know not how to dispose of themselves. They do not go to work until 8:00, and they have no fire to go unto at home. So that the want of hearers would have been a far more decent excuse. For last Monday I had only my wife and two more until half past 5:00, and then Rehoboth Porter made the fourth.

It was a grievous error of Mr. [Joseph] Pilmore that he did not put both of the Heys out of society. I am told they were closely concerned in a most villainous affair: cheating Mr. Champion of near £20.<sup>3</sup> But Mr. Pilmore would not put them out of society for a very weighty reason—viz., 'They are the only singers we have got, and if I turn them out of society we shall have no singing'! So being then and thenceforth of such importance on account of singing, it is no wonder they are so enraged when the apple of the eye is touched. But as they got so far the ascendancy over those who ought to be my *helpers*, I do not marvel that they make another effort to gain their end. And it seems to them no matter how hellish, if they can but gain their point.

They have proposed to hold a prayer meeting, on purpose to keep people from the preaching. And I apprehend they met on Sunday for this purpose. How they pleased themselves, I have not learned. But I did not find the congregation lessened thereby. But I may thank Mr. Byron and Mr. M'Kersey for so far encouraging them by their submission. For else I believe the war would have been ended without another battle; yea, without another blow.

If, sir, you can but make my fellow-labourers know and do their proper work, I do not fear my opposers. You may recollect that you sent me from Haworth to Whitehaven on purpose,<sup>4</sup> to work with a people full as obstinate (although not quite so stupid) as Norwich. The end was to your wish. And sir, if you can either mend or change my companions, I do not despair of success in Norwich.

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<sup>3</sup>Robert Champion; see Hart, 'Wesleyanism in Norwich', 225.

<sup>4</sup>Wride was stationed in Haworth in 1769 (see *Works*, 10:369); Whitehaven, in 1770 (10:382).

I hope sir you believe me when I tell you that I am ready to follow your direction. I should be glad to find Norwich easy to lead. But whoever would lead the Heys must say in effect, if not in form, 'Do as you please.' Then it would be done. If any man living could lead them, who so likely to do it as Mr. Wesley, who has done for them more than *many* men are *able* or willing? But if they paid any regard to gratitude, what you have done for them would weigh heavy in the scale. Or if reason was of any weight among them, what you said about singing would have been regarded. But whether either they or Mr. M<sup>r</sup>Kersey regard you, *let fact speak*.

What you said about the monument on the chapel wall was enough for a grateful people. And one would have supposed that the stone would have been down as soon as your back was turned. But there it still stands, in defiance of commonsense.

In proper place I forgot to say, the argument for singing three times now is that 'most of the *great* preachers sing three times. Mr. [John] Atlay and Mr. [Benjamin] Rhodes do it at London; and Mr. Rhodes did it in Norwich, when he was here with Mr. Wesley.'

You may remember what passed at Norwich when at tea with James Hey. It was proposed to sing a few verses in the tune which Mr. Rhodes had taught them. Then they got close together, in order to give the tune the advantage of their united voices. But then it was said that none of our measures would do for the tune without a good deal of repetition. You replied, 'Then you are fast, before you begin.' But yet the tune was sung, to words composed by *somebody*. This has been sung since in the chapel. And how much I am obliged to Mr. Rhodes for his labour in teaching them, and to my fellow labourers for encouraging them, I need not say.

Be pleased sir to take care who you trust with your papers. No one knew of my letter to you dated November 14. My wife is still ignorant of it. And yet last Sunday I was told of it, and that I was to write again this week!

My wife desires her duty to you. I am, reverend sir,  
Your dutiful son,

Thomas Wride

Be pleased to cut off the margin for Mr. [John] Atlay. I trouble you with [it] to save postage.

*Source:* Wride's manuscript draft; Duke, Rubenstein, Frank Baker Collection of Wesleyana, Box CO9, Thomas Wride Notebook 1, pp. 6–10.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Extract published in *WHS* 1 (1898): 141–43.

<sup>6</sup>This account is reproduced in Jackson, *EMP*, 6:182–200; along with a long account of Robinson's last days and death.

From Joseph Benson<sup>1</sup>

c. December 20, 1785

As to drawing the character of that great and good man (says Mr. Benson), it is what I will not attempt. But if I can suggest anything that will assist you therein, I shall think my little labour well bestowed. With this view I have been looking over many of his letters, and observe in them all what I have a thousand times observed in his conversation and behaviour, the plainest marks of every Christian grace and virtue.

Perhaps if he followed his Master more closely in one thing than another, it was in humility. It is one branch of poverty of spirit (another word for humility) to think meanly of ourselves. As he certainly thought meanly of himself, both as a Christian, as a preacher, and as a writer, I need not say how he shone in all those characters. But he knew not that he shone in any of them. How low an opinion he had of himself as a Christian manifestly appears from his placing himself at the feet of all, and showing a continual desire to learn from every company he was in. He paid all due deference to the judgment of others, readily acknowledged whatever was good in them, and seemed to think himself the only person in whom there dwelt no excellency worth notice. Hence it was that he often wrote and spoke as if he had not received that grace which he undoubtedly had received. And indeed he overlooked what he had attained, through the eager desire he had of higher and greater things. Many of his letters show how very meanly he thought of his own attainments as a Christian, through the continually increasing views which he had of the divine purity, and of the high degree of conformity thereto which is attainable even in this world.

And however little he was in his own eyes as a Christian, he was equally so as a writer and a preacher. In consequence of the mean opinion he had of his own abilities, he gladly offered what he wrote to be corrected by any friend, however inferior to himself. Thus in a letter, dated November 23, 1771, he says, 'I have sent a letter of fifty pages upon antinomianism. I beg, upon my bended knees, you would revise and correct it. I have followed my light, small as it is. Put yours to mine.'<sup>2</sup> What a mean opinion he had of his own writings appears from a letter written March 20, 1774: 'I do not repent of my having engaged in this controversy; for though I doubt my little publications cannot reclaim those who are confirmed in believing the lie of the day, yet they may here and there stop one from swallowing it at all, or at least from swallowing it so deeply.'<sup>3</sup> Two years after, he says, 'I have almost run my race of scribbling; and I have preached as much as I could, though to little purpose. But I must not complain. If one person has received good by my ten years' labour, it is an honour for which I cannot be too thankful, if my mind were as low as it should be. Let us bless the Lord in all things.'<sup>4</sup>

As difficult as it is to think meanly of ourselves, it is still more difficult to be willing that others should think meanly of us. And how eminent he was in this appears from hence, that he was constantly upon his guard lest any expression should drop, either from his lips or pen, which tended to make anyone think well of him—either on account of his family, or learning, or parts, or usefulness. Yea, he took as

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<sup>1</sup>JW prefaced: 'I had concluded what I purposed to say concerning the character of Mr. Fletcher, when I received a long letter from Mr. Benson; an extract of which I cannot withhold from the reader. For although most of the particulars hereof are contained in the preceding pages, yet as they are here placed in quite another order, and have also several new circumstances intermixed, I could not doubt of their being both agreeable and profitable to every person of piety.'

<sup>2</sup>Fletcher to Benson, Nov. 24, 1771, Duke, Rubenstein, Frank Baker Collection of Wesleyana, Box CO4; Benson, *Life of Flechere*, 169–70.

<sup>3</sup>Fletcher to Benson, Mar. 20, 1774, Duke, Rubenstein, Frank Baker Collection of Wesleyana, Box CO4; Benson, *Life of Flechere*, 179–80.

<sup>4</sup>Fletcher to Benson, May 8, 1776, Duke, Rubenstein, Frank Baker Collection of Wesleyana, Box CO4; Benson, *Life of Flechere*, 195–96.

much pains to conceal his excellencies as others do to show them, having the same desire to be little and unknown which many have to be known and esteemed.

It would have remained a secret in this kingdom, even to his most intimate friends, that he was of so great a family, had not Mr. [James] Ireland gone over with him to Switzerland; where he was surprised to find Mr. Fletcher's relations some of the first people in the country.

'Blessed are they that mourn', said the Lord Jesus.<sup>5</sup> And this blessedness was as certainly his as the former. He was a man of a serious spirit; one that stood at the utmost distance from levity of every kind. Though he was constantly cheerful, as rejoicing in hope of his heavenly inheritance, yet had he too deep a sense of his own wants, and the wants of the Church of God, as also of the sins and miseries of mankind, to be at any time light or trifling. I have a letter before me, dated December, 1771, which at once gives us a picture of his seriousness, watchfulness, and earnestness; and contains advices well deserving the consideration of all that fear God. 'There is undoubtedly', said he, 'such a thing as the full assurance of faith. Be not discouraged on account of thousands who stop short of it. It is our own fault if we do not attain. God would give us ample satisfaction if we did but deeply feel our wants. Both you and I want a deeper awakening, which will produce a death to outward things and speculative knowledge. Let us shut our eyes to the gilded clouds without us. Let us draw inward and search after God, if haply we may find him. Let us hold our confidence, though we are often constrained against hope to believe in hope. But let us not rest in our confidence, as thousands do. Let it help us to struggle and wait till he come. Let us habituate ourselves to live inwardly. This will solemnize us, and prevent our trifling with the things of God. We may be thankful for what we have, without resting in it. We may strive, and yet not trust in our striving; but expect all from divine grace.'<sup>6</sup>

Four or five years after, he says, 'I send this to inquire after your welfare, and to let you know, that though I am pretty well in body, yet I break fast. But I want to break faster in my spirit than I do. Yet, blessed be God, I have been in such pinching, grinding circumstances for near a year, by a series of providential and domestic trials, as have given me some deadly blows. I am not without hope of setting my eyes on you once more. Mr. Wesley kindly invites me to travel with him, and visit some of the societies. I feel an inclination to break one of my chains, parochial retirement, which may be a nest for self-indulgence. I leave the matter entirely to the Lord.'<sup>7</sup>

Meantime, he mourned, not only for himself and his friends, but also for the Church of God. 'The few professors,' says he, 'which I see in these parts, are so far from what I wish them to be, that I cannot but cry out, Lord, how long wilt thou give thy heritage up to desolation? How long shall the heathen say, Where is now their indwelling God?'<sup>8</sup> In another letter he writes (dated May 8, 1776), 'I see so little fruit in these parts, that I am almost disheartened. I am closely followed with the thought that faith in the dispensation of the Spirit is at a very low ebb. But it may be better in other places. I shall be glad to travel a little, to see the goodness of the land. May God make and keep us humble, loving, disinterested, and zealous!'<sup>9</sup>

These quotations give us not only an example of holy mourning, but likewise of hungering and thirsting after righteousness. In this he was peculiarly worthy our imitation. He never rested in anything he had either experienced or done in spiritual matters. But this one thing he did: 'Forgetting those things that were behind, and reaching forth unto those things which were before', he 'pressed toward the mark

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<sup>5</sup>Matt. 5:4.

<sup>6</sup>Fletcher to Benson, Dec. 10. 1771, Duke, Rubenstein, Frank Baker Collection of Wesleyana, Box CO4; cf. Benson, *Life of Flechere*, 170.

<sup>7</sup>Fletcher to Benson, c. Feb. 1776, Duke, Rubenstein, Frank Baker Collection of Wesleyana, Box CO4; Benson, *Life of Flechere*, 189–90.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Fletcher to Benson, May 8, 1776, Duke, Rubenstein, Frank Baker Collection of Wesleyana, Box CO4; Benson, *Life of Flechere*, 195–96.



for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.<sup>10</sup> He was a true Christian racer, always on the stretch for higher and better things. Though his attainments, both in experience and usefulness, were above the common standard, yet the language of his conversation and behaviour always was, 'Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfected; but I follow after, if by any means I may apprehend that for which I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.'<sup>11</sup> He had his eye upon a full conformity to the Son of God; or what the apostle terms, 'the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ'.<sup>12</sup> Nor could he be satisfied with anything less.

And he was meek, like his Master, as well as lowly in heart. Not that he was so by nature, but of a fiery, passionate spirit. But so thoroughly had grace subdued nature, so fully was he renewed in the spirit of his mind, that for many years before his death I believe he was never observed by anyone, friend or foe, to be out of temper. And yet he did not want provocation, and that sometimes in a high degree; especially from those whose religious sentiments he thought it his duty to oppose. One of these, who once loved him so well as to be ready to pull out his eyes for him, was so exasperated on reading his *Second Check*, that he wrote to him in the most bitter terms.<sup>13</sup> But none of these things moved him; no, not in the least degree. The keenest word he used upon the occasion was, 'What a world, what a religious world we live in!'

Hence arose his readiness to bear with the weaknesses, and forgive the faults, of others; the more remarkable, considering his flaming zeal against sin, and deep concern for the glory of God. Such hatred to sin, and such love to the sinner, I never saw joined together before. This very circumstance convinced me of the height of his grace, bearing so much of his Master's image, whose hatred to sin and love to sinners are equally infinite. He took all possible pains to detect what was evil in any of those that were under his care, pursuing it through all its turnings and windings, and stripping it of all its disguises. Yet none so ready to excuse when it was confessed, and to conceal it even from his most intimate friends.

He never mentioned the faults of an absent person, unless absolute duty required it. And then he spoke with the utmost tenderness, extenuating, rather than aggravating. None could draw his picture more exactly than St. Paul has done in the thirteenth [chapter] of the first Epistle to the Corinthians. Every feature in that masterly piece of apostolic painting was found in him. Let all that knew him, especially his intimate friends, recollect the spirit and behaviour of this servant of the God of love; and then let them judge whether I exaggerate, when I say, he 'suffered long and was kind; he envied not; acted not rashly; was not puffed up; did not behave himself unseemly; sought not his own; was not easily provoked. He thought no evil, rejoiced not in iniquity, but rejoiced in the truth. He covered all things, believed all things, hoped all things, and endured all things.'<sup>14</sup> It would be easy to enlarge on all these particulars, and show how they were exemplified in him. But waving this, I would only observe that with regard to two of them—kindness to others, and not seeking his own—he had few equals. His kindness to others was such that he bestowed his all upon them; his time, his talents, his substance. His knowledge, his eloquence, his health, his money, were employed, day by day, for the good of mankind. He prayed, he wrote, he preached, he visited the sick and well, he conversed, he gave, he laboured, he suffered, winter and summer, night and day. He endangered, nay destroyed, his health and, in the end, gave his life also for the profit of his neighbours, that they might be saved from everlasting death. He denied himself even such food as was necessary for him, that he might have to give to them that had none. And when he was constrained to change his manner of living, still his diet was plain and simple. And so were his clothing and furniture, that he might save all that was possible for his poor neighbours.

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<sup>10</sup>Cf. Phil. 3:13–14.

<sup>11</sup>Phil. 3:12.

<sup>12</sup>Eph. 4:13.

<sup>13</sup>John Fletcher, *A Second Check to Antinomianism; occasioned by a Late Narrative. In Three Letters to the Hon. and Rev. Mr. Shirley* (London: New Chapel, 1771).

<sup>14</sup>Cf. 1 Cor. 13:4–7.

He sought not his own in any sense; not his own honour, but the honour of God in all he said or did. He sought not his own interest, but the interest of his Lord, spreading knowledge, holiness, and happiness as far as he possibly could. He sought not his own pleasure, but studied to 'please all men, for their good to edification',<sup>15</sup> and to please him that had called him to his kingdom and glory. And yet it is certain, he found the greatest pleasure in pleasing God and his neighbour. For nothing could give an higher delight than this to his pious and benevolent mind.

In the meantime he was a man of peace, and spared no pains to restore it where it was broken. He gave numberless proofs of this amiable disposition. When we were at Trevecca (to mention but one instance), two of the students were bitterly prejudiced against each other. He took them into a room by themselves, reasoned with them, wept over them, and at last prevailed. Their hearts were broken, They were melted down. They fell upon each other's necks and wept aloud.

The pains which he took to make peace at the Leeds Conference will not easily be forgotten.<sup>16</sup> And although he could not prevail so far as might have been desired, yet his labour was not in vain.

But I do not attempt his full character. I will only add, what the apostle recommends to the Philippians was exactly copied by him. He was 'blameless and harmless, a son of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation; shining among them as a light in the world'.<sup>17</sup>

*Source:* published transcription; JW, *Life of Fletcher*, 186–200.

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<sup>15</sup>Rom. 15:2.

<sup>16</sup>The Conference in 1784 torn by debate over the Deed of Declaration; see *Works*, 10:546–49.

<sup>17</sup>Phil. 2:15.

From Mr. Vaughan<sup>1</sup>

[London]  
c. December 25, 1785<sup>2</sup>

It was our ordinary custom, when the Church service was over, to retire into the most lonely fields or meadows, where we frequently either kneeled down, or prostrated ourselves upon the ground. At those happy seasons I was a witness of such pleadings and wrestlings with God, such exercises of faith and love, as I have not known in anyone ever since. The consolations which we then received from God induced us to appoint two or three nights in a week, when we duly met after his pupils were asleep.<sup>3</sup> We met also constantly on Sunday between 4:00 and 5:00 in the morning. Sometimes I stepped into his study on other days. I rarely saw any book before him besides the Bible and the *Christian's Pattern*.<sup>4</sup> And he was seldom in any other company, unless when necessary business required, besides that of the unworthy writer of this paper.

When he [JF] was in the country, he used to visit an officer of excise at Atcham, to be instructed in singing. On my desiring him to give me some account of what he recollected concerning Mr. Fletcher,<sup>5</sup> he answered thus:

As to that man of God, Mr. Fletcher, it is but little that I remember of him—it being above nine-and-twenty years since the last time I saw him. But this I well remember, his conversation with me was always sweet and savoury. He was too wise to suffer any of his precious moments to be trifled away. When there was company to dine at Mr. Hill's, he frequently retired into the garden, and contentedly dined on a piece of bread and a few bunches of currants. Indeed in his whole manner of living he was a pattern of abstemiousness. Meantime, how great was his sweetness of temper and heavenly-mindedness! I never saw it equalled in anyone. How often, when I parted with him at Tern Hall, have his eyes and hands been lifted up to heaven to implore a blessing upon me, with fervour and devoutness unequalled by any I ever saw! I firmly believe, he has not left in this land, or perhaps in any other, one luminary like himself. I conclude, wishing this light may be so held up, that many may see the glory thereof and be transformed into its likeness. May you and I, and all that love the Lord Jesus Christ, be partakers of that holiness which was so conspicuous in him!

Our interviews for singing and conversation were seldom concluded without prayer. In which we were frequently joined by her that is now my wife (then a servant in the family), as likewise by a poor widow in the village, who had also known the power of God unto salvation, and who died some years

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<sup>1</sup>Vaughan is described by JW as 'a pious domestic' of Thomas Hill (formerly Harwood; 1693–1782) of Tern Hall, near Atcham, Shropshire. Fletcher was tutor to Hill's two sons from 1752–60. They joined Hill (M.P. for Shrewsbury) in London during the sitting of the Parliament, and resided the rest of the year at Tern Hall. Vaughan sent JW several anecdotes from this period of Fletcher's life, beginning with Fletcher's practice of attending the parish church at Atcham every Sunday, but instead of going home in the coach after service, typically taking a solitary walk by the Severn side, and spending some time in meditation and prayer.

<sup>2</sup>JW mentions having received this account in his letter to Mary Fletcher, Dec. 30, 1785.

<sup>3</sup>The two sons of Thomas Hill and his second wife, Susanna Maria Noel (d. 1760): Samuel Hill (1743–66) and Noel Hill (1745–89)

<sup>4</sup>Thomas à Kempis, *The Christian's Pattern; or, A Treatise of the Imitation of Christ*, translated by George Stanhope (London: W. Onley, 1699); likely in one of JW's abridged versions.

<sup>5</sup>I.e., Vaughan was making this request of the officer of excise, to include in his letter to JW.

since, praising God with her latest breath. These were the only persons in the country whom he chose for his familiar friends. But he sometimes walked over to Shrewsbury to see Mrs. [Bridget] Glynne or Mr. [John] Appleton (who likewise now rests from his labours, after having many years adorned the gospel). He also visited any of the poor in the neighbourhood that were upon a sick-bed. And when no other person could be procured, performed even the meanest offices for them.

...

The first time he preached in the country was at Atcham church on June 19, 1757. His text was James 4:4 (a very bold beginning!), 'Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of this world is enmity with God?' The congregation stood amazed and gazed upon him as if he had been a monster. But to me he appeared as a messenger sent from heaven.

...

It was in the beginning of June 1759 that he returned the last time from London to Tern Hall. And being now less frequently called to public duty, he enjoyed his beloved retirement, giving himself up to study, meditation, and prayer, and walking closely with God. Indeed, his whole life was now a life of prayer; and so intensely was his mind fixed upon God that I have heard him say, 'I would not move from my seat without lifting up my heart to God.' Wherever we met, if we were alone, his first salute was, 'Do I meet you praying?' And if we were talking on any point of divinity, when we were in the depth of our discourse he would often break off abruptly and ask, 'Where are our hearts now?' If ever the misconduct of an absent person was mentioned, his usual reply was, 'Let us pray for him.'

...

It was, as I remember, about the close of this summer that he was frequently desired, sometimes to assist, at other times to perform the whole service, for Mr. Chambers, then vicar of Madeley.<sup>6</sup> On these occasions it was that he contracted such an affection for the people of Madeley as nothing could hinder from increasing more and more to the day of his death. While he officiated at Madeley, as he still lived at the Hall, ten miles distant from it, a groom was ordered to get a horse ready for him every Sunday morning. But so great was his aversion for giving trouble to anyone that, if the groom did not wake at the time, he seldom would suffer him to be called but prepared the horse for himself.

...

On the tenth of May 1774 (says Mr. Vaughan, to whom we are indebted for several of the preceding anecdotes) he wrote to me thus:

My brother<sup>7</sup> has sent me the rent of a little place I have abroad, eighty pounds, which I was to receive from Mr. Chauvet and Company in London. But instead of sending the draft for the money, I have sent it back to Switzerland with orders to distribute it among the poor. As money is rather higher there than here, that mite will go farther abroad than it would in my parish.

...

After he had published two or three small political pieces in reference to our contest with the Americans,<sup>8</sup> I carried one of them to the Earl of Dartmouth.<sup>9</sup> His Lordship carried them to the Lord

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<sup>6</sup>Rev. Rowland Chambre (1728–96) was vicar of Madeley 1753–60; then rector of Dunham-on-the-hill, Chester, 1760–93.

<sup>7</sup>Henri-Louis de la Fléchère (c. 1728–1808).

<sup>8</sup>Fletcher, *A Vindication of the Rev. Mr. Wesley's 'Calm Address to our American Colonies', in some Letters to Mr. Caleb Evans* (London: R. Hawes, 1776); *American Patriotism farther confronted with Reason, Scripture, and the Constitution* (Shrewsbury: J. Eddowes, 1776); and *The Bible and the Sword; or, the Appointment of the General Fast Vindicated* (London: R. Hawes, 1776).

<sup>9</sup>I.e., William Legge.

Chancellor,<sup>10</sup> and the Lord Chancellor handed it to the King. One was immediately commissioned to ask Mr. Fletcher whether any preferment in the Church [of England] would be acceptable. Or whether he (the Chancellor) could do him any service. He answered, 'I want nothing but more grace.'

...

In 1776 he deposited with me a bill of one hundred and five pounds, being (as I understood) the yearly produce of his estate in Switzerland. This was his fund for charitable uses. But it lasted only a few months before he drew upon me for the balance, which was twenty-four pounds, to complete the preaching-house in Madeley Wood.

*Source:* published transcription; JW, *Life of Fletcher*, 31–34, 37–38, 69–71.

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<sup>10</sup>Henry Bathurst, 2nd Earl Bathurst (1714–94), was Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain from 1771 to 1778.

From Thomas Wride

Norwich  
December 29, 1785

Reverend Sir,

Dr. [Thomas] Coke's letter of December the 10th<sup>1</sup> I was not in the way to receive until the 24th, at the same time I received yours of the 14th.<sup>2</sup> By the Doctor's I found that you was pleased to remove me from Norwich. But as yours was of later date, it seemed that you thought best to wait a little while to see what they would be.

The Doctor says that you have 'such complaints from the stewards and leaders', etc. I knew, sir, that you had been wrote unto, but who subscribed the letter I know not. We have but two stewards in Norwich—viz., Samuel Best and William Booty. I am informed past a shadow of a doubt that when the company was met in order to frame the letter, Samuel Best said that he had 'no occasion to write anything against Mr. Wride, for he had always been very obliging' to him. Brother Booty positively refused to be concerned in it, for he has said that 'opposing the preachers was opposing of God'. And I am very positive that brother Booty neither signed the letter nor consented unto it. If brother Best did, it was not by choice but compulsion. Therefore, if the letter is pretended to be signed by the stewards, I am confident there is the forging of a name, if not names.

Who the subscribing leaders are, I know not. Brothers Booty and Best are leaders. James Hey, George Hey, William Kilburn, John Senior, Edward Flegg,<sup>3</sup> and John Johnson are the rest. If any others pretending to be leaders have signed the letters, let them and company be credited according to their desserts.

You may remember, sir, that I told you soon after I came here that I had refused to let Mr. [Joseph] Proud preach in the chapel. I had then reasons sufficient for my conduct. But I did not know all. Lately I have heard that about that time Mr. Proud said that if he could get a place in Norwich, he did not doubt but he could get the most of Mr. Wesley's people. Whether James Hey knew Proud's proud claim, I know not. Probably he might. If he did, it is no wonder that I am so much the object of his resentment. For James Hey was the person who was the most pressing for Proud to preach, and by marriage he is related to Mrs. [Susanna] Proud (the late Mrs. Turner being sister to the wife of James Hey<sup>4</sup>).

Mr. [John] Hunt's man (young [Richard] Wright) had disobliged his master by intending to marry contrary to the mind of Mr. Hunt. The quarrel is so high that they are parted. Wright assists at the friary,<sup>5</sup> and Proud has been at Mr. Hunt's. It does not appear that they are agreed about settling of him. Hunt has offered Proud £20 per year, until they can get a society sufficient to maintain him. Proud is not content to be a servant at will. He wants the house to be settled to him. But I apprehend the Dr. [Hunt] chooses to be master. Therefore things hang in suspense, and Proud is going back to Lincolnshire, for farther consideration.

I am told that the Heys were at the Doctor's last Sunday and Monday. Last Sunday I began meeting the classes here. Neither of the Heys were present. George Hey sent his class papers, but James Hey did not even do so far.

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<sup>1</sup>This letter is not known to survive.

<sup>2</sup>JW to Thomas Wride, Dec. 14, 1785, *Works*, 30:412–13.

<sup>3</sup>Edward Harper Flegg (1757–1826), a native of Norwich, became a schoolmaster and joined the Methodist society about 1778. In 1788 he married Lydia Pettifor (c. 1760–1826). The couple continued as central leaders in the Norwich society through their lives. See the notices of their deaths in *MM* 49 (1826): 791, 860–61.

<sup>4</sup>James Hey married Amelia (Cooke) Grice in May 1777 in Norwich.

<sup>5</sup>St. Andrew's and Blackfriars' Hall, where a Reformed congregation met for worship.

We are indeed poorly off on account of leaders. Brother Booty I look upon to be a steady, good Methodist. John Senior, little inferior. Samuel Best, I do not object. John Johnson, a good man but vastly wanting in gifts. Of Edward Flegg I say little. The two Heys I seriously believe are such as I should not count it an unspeakable mercy if God would be pleased to send them out of our sight. William Kilburn I hope is a good man, but he is a very bad leader. I told you sir, in his presence, that I had never seen his class paper since I had been in Norwich. I thought this would be likely to mend him. But it is just the same, I have never seen his paper yet. He is seldom among the leaders. I never saw him at the preaching but once; viz., 24 of October. I am told that he frequently goes visiting of the people at preaching time, and so keeps the people from attending. Monday evening last his class was to meet, but he was not there. Neither was his paper.

I told you sir, when at Norwich, why I thought that William Kilburn was a Calvinist. My reasons were but collateral, and what he had said to you in private you judged sufficient to make you think otherwise. I will not undertake to prove that William Kilburn is a Topladian Calvinist,<sup>6</sup> but I have no doubt of proving that he has deliberately and repeatedly said that no one ever perished that had known the love of God. But that God would bring them back again, some time or other, before they died. This I had from a person to whom he spake it in many words and in terms very strong. Yea, and lent her a book in order to settle her in that opinion.

The ground of disturbance among the Heys and party now is my refusing to let them sing their own way—not only with respect to tunes not our own, but also of hymns. For last Tuesday it was said that ‘I (George Hey) began to sing “Hark how the gospel trumpet sounds”,<sup>7</sup> and you stopped me; and yet you have owned yourself that you knew it sung in Lincolnshire.’

He (George Hey) also said that it was an evil deed to black the monument, and that I knew it was an evil deed or else I had not done it in the night, etc. While I was writing the preceding line, I was called downstairs and told that some wanted me in the chapel. I there found Mr. and Mrs. Proud, who wanted to talk to me about the monument, etc., etc. I told her that it must not remain there. But she said it should, if it cost her a hundred pound. Mr. Proud told me that ‘You have no right to take it down’; that ‘the trustees have a right to put the house to what use they think it proper for’. And [he] said that if any depredation was done to that monument again, he would take the law of them, if it cost him fifty pound. So now, sir, you are fairly set at defiance. He said much more to the same purpose.

I have, sir, laid matters before you as well as I can. But [I] am obliged to cut short, although I have much more to say. But Mrs. Proud says that she will write to you today. She *may* ask your leave to let the monument stand. But she says that she *will* ask you if you bid me black the monument, in order to prove me a liar. You may remember, sir, that you did bid me. But I never said so much to them. I am forced to write and conclude in haste, for fear their expedition make them outrun me, and cause you to write before you get mine. I hope to write again by Saturday’s post.

I am, reverend sir,

Your dutiful son,

Th. Wride

*Source:* Wride’s manuscript draft; Duke, Rubenstein, Frank Baker Collection of Wesleyana, Box CO9, Thomas Wride Notebook 1, pp. 11–14.

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<sup>6</sup>I.e., a staunch Calvinist like Augustus Montague Toplady.

<sup>7</sup>A hymn by Samuel Medley.

From Thomas Wride

Norwich  
December 30, 1785

Reverend Sir,

My last of yesterday was obliged to be finished in great haste and with many known deficiencies, for I had not time to complete it, or even to correct it.

My distress is great, and indeed has been *very* great. If I could convey an idea of my trouble I am fully satisfied that I should have a large share of your pity. I say to you, sir, what I would say to very few. I have undergone more pain of mind within this ten days on account of the circuit in general, but of Norwich in particular, than ever I felt in ten years about the salvation of my own soul. Reason told me that I ought to have answered your letter of the 14th without delay, so that I might have had your directions before I left Norwich. But I was no more able to write to the purpose than to fly.

As to the thoughts of my removing, I could and can say that I am truly willing to be at your disposal. And if another is more useful, I shall be heartily glad to know it. But a man had need to be extraordinarily qualified to fit Norwich in all things. To wish to leave them for my own ease would betray such a spirit of cowardice as I abhor. Whoever succeeds at this time must be a man of war, or what has cost me as it were broken bones will all be lost. And their victory will be so far their loss as I think will put them among the incurable.

If the person who succeeds me be not particularly fitted, he will have an uneasy time of it. He should know the Methodist tunes and be resolved to sing them only. Otherwise, if he stands in need of the Heys,<sup>1</sup> they will soon have him under their feet; where, if they once get him, they will not fail to trample on him. It would be well that he should know a little of music, or else their little knowledge will give them great advantage over him. A good preacher would really be lost on them. They do not understand good preaching or sound reason. But at this time a man is wanted for Norwich who has in him the lion, the lamb, the dove, the serpent, and the ox.

We labour under great inconveniencies, for want of places. This makes us lie heavy on some places especially. One place we have lost since we came. But although providence has opened another, yet we are hard put to it to make out our time at any rate. We are obliged to make ourselves but a kind of unwelcome guest at Langley (near Loddon). And although we are in, it is lost time, for they will not have us preach. At Heckingham (near Loddon) we almost waste a day, but are glad they will let us do it. And I fear that we shall be forced to beg them to take us two days instead of one, for we are now three days at Loddon and Mr. Crisp is determined to have but two days.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Crisp is sorely displeased at the dividing of the circuit, not only because it takes away one Sunday (out of their two), but also that it was done without consulting him. He hugely complains against Mr. [Jonathan] Coussins on those accounts, and I believe is disgusted with me because I do not speak his way. As to my own thoughts, I believe both circuits are much hurt by the division, and that no place except Yarmouth is benefited. If I may judge by report, various places on Yarmouth circuit are distressed by having more preaching than they know what to do with. And we are obliged to load the city with a horse and man once a week, although to all present appearance they will not be able to go through their own expense, having lost the £20 per year which they until late had from the Dissenters.

It seems as if the devil had a special leave of Norwich at this time. Wilks's party is on the decline.<sup>3</sup> Lady Huntington's preacher (Mr. Green<sup>4</sup>) has more than his hands full. And Mr. [John] Hunt's

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<sup>1</sup>George and James Hey.

<sup>2</sup>William Crisp, a farmer, was the leader of the society in North Loddon. JW preached at his house on Dec. 2, 1786; see *Journal, Works*, 23:426.

<sup>3</sup>Mark Wilks (1749–1819), born in Gibraltar, was raised in Birmingham. He was drawn into evangelical circles and attended Lady Huntingdon's college in Trevecca. In 1776 he was stationed at her



party is confusion compounded.

Today I spoke largely with sister Flight about the affairs of Norwich.<sup>5</sup> She is fully satisfied that the cause is the want of discipline, which has been neglected ever since the days of brother [Joseph] Pilmore, who by his popularity drew and joined many together, but they were little better than a rope of sand—each one doing what was right in his own eyes. And that now it will be a heavy work to get anything of discipline into Norwich again. She says that she has felt a particular burden of late for the work here, and that it was strongly applied unto her: 'He will thoroughly purge his floor.'<sup>6</sup> This she expects to be accomplished. I wish we may lose nothing but chaff.

I think if my fellow-labourers had been faithful, our war would have been [at] an end in a few days after you was with us. But brother [John] M'Kersey keeping to his three times singing set them upon their high horse, and they thought to trample me down. Since your letter to brothers M'Kersey and [James] Byron, the three times singing is over. But it has made the Heys outrageous with me.

Brother Byron says he has not given out more than twice at one service since he knew that it was disagreeable unto you. But that once since, the Heys burst out with what they pleased without him. But to prevent them for the future, he prays *before* the singing. Brother M'Kersey has met the select society and the children once. I hope that he will continue.

I fear poor Norwich will be sadly off for money to pay the mortgagee. The principal is £350, at 4½ percent. But they lately *paid* 5 percent, to keep him quiet. Yet he still asks the whole, I suppose in order to extract a premium. Could not you, sir, so far interpose for them as to get some person to take the mortgage from him? Could not the fund of the preachers take it up? And would it not be a better security than some others are?

Being about to set out for the country, I must beg leave to conclude with wishing you a happy New Year, and good news from Norwich, and to subscribe myself, reverend sir,

Your dutiful son,

Thomas Wride

*Source:* Wride's manuscript draft; Duke, Rubenstein, Frank Baker Collection of Wesleyana, Box CO9, Thomas Wride Notebook 1, 14–17.<sup>7</sup>

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Tabernacle in Norwich. But his marriage in 1778 led to a split, and Wilks helped form St. Paul's church in Norwich as an independent Calvinist Methodist group. In 1788 he aligned with the Particular Baptists, and drew the majority of St. Paul's with him. See Sarah Wilks, *Memoirs of Rev. Mark Wilks* (London: Francis Westley, 1831).

<sup>4</sup>William Green, a graduate of Trevecca, was ordained in 1783 as one of the first priests in Lady Huntingdon's connexion. Norwich was his first assignment.

<sup>5</sup>Mary Flight; see Hart, 'Wesleyanism in Norwich', 225.

<sup>6</sup>Matt. 3:12.

<sup>7</sup>Extract published in *WHS* 1 (1898): 144.