

John Wesley's In-Correspondence (1786–91)

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From the Rev. John Pawson

[Edinburgh]
January 20, 1786

Reverend Sir,

When I was in Yorkshire last, I found my brother had been dangerously ill for a long time.¹ But though he was attended by Mr. [John] F[loyde] and a physician from Leeds, and was got a good deal better, he was still very feeble. While I was there, on catching fresh cold, his disorder returned and was attended with so violent a pain in his left side that it was with the utmost difficulty he drew his breath—and was thought to be in great danger of a consumption. On this, I advised him to apply the brimstone plaster to his side.² He did so on going to bed, and was much better the next morning. This encouraged him to keep it on; and in four or five days (changing it once a day) his pain was entirely gone. Since then his health in general is amazingly restored.

As I never saw anything have so extraordinary an effect in so short a time, I thought it my duty to give you this information; as you may have frequent occasion to recommend this most excellent medicine to others.

That the Lord may be ever present with and bless you, is, reverend and dear sir, the unfeigned desire, and fervent prayer of

Your son and servant,

J. Pawson

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 9 (1786): 679.

¹Marmaduke Pawson (1740–98).

²See *Primitive Physic*, Ailment #176, receipt 5, *Works*, 32:215.

From Mary Cooke¹

Devizes
January 24, 1786

Reverend and Dear Sir,

On the evening of that day on which I received your highly-esteemed letter, I had such a delightful view of divine things as brought an inexpressible calm into my mind. I saw myself as deserving the vengeance of divine justice; yet as a saved soul, for Christ's sake. The former brought no terror, because the latter appeared an all sufficient sacrifice. It was a sweet conviction which I was loath to let go for sleep; and could methought (had not a sense of duty with regard to health prevented) have found it in my will rather to have sat up all night, that I might meditate thereon, and drink deeper into the spirit of it. O how good, how gracious is Immanuel, God with us! How bountifully does he provide even for his unbelieving disciples, and work miracles to feed them in the desert, when they are ready to cry, 'Who shall give us food in this wilderness?' Were he to open the windows of heaven, might this thing be, that our hungry, fainting, spirits should be fully fed with a satisfying portion?

I have sometimes experienced in a measure the truth of your observation, that the love of God is the *one* remedy against unprofitable reasonings, etc. When the heart is full of God, there is then no place for these vain or evil things. Each thought looks out after him, and every wish aspires towards him. The tempter prevails not, and the world is at a distance: Terrestrial things are too little to find a name for, and happiness proportions itself to the capacious soul. O that *my* soul ever felt a continual abiding in this state, and proved in very deed a constant heaven begun below! I believe it is attainable. I believe it is my privilege to enjoy it. Still I desire earnestly to press onwards for it, and hope it shall be my portion.

O glorious hope of perfect love!
It lifts me up to things above,
It bears on eagle's wings:
It gives my ravished soul a taste,
And makes me for some moments feast
With Jesu's priests and kings.²

I want to describe the various states of my mind. I would that I could tell you its exercises, its sorrows, its joys; yea all its feelings. But when I attempt it, I want words; or rather I feel that words want [i.e., lack] power to speak expressively as I wish. I write and talk weakly, foolishly. O that you could read my thoughts, my mind, as easily as the language of my pen; and see my heart plainly as my writing! Its ideas are so much stronger, its views so much larger than I can express, that on a review of what I write I wonder at the folly of what I say; am ashamed, and ready to determine that as God alone sees my soul so he alone shall know its feelings.

The time now draws near when I hope we shall be favoured with your company in Duke Street.³ My heart looks forward with glad expectation, and pleasingly anticipates the day of your arrival. Then surely your affection for us will prevent a disappointment, nor suffer our hope of seeing you to be vain. We can say, we love the dear preachers of the truth as it is in Jesus. We love to see them all. But above *all*, we love to see their father in the gospel, who sends them forth in the name of the dear Immanuel to gather souls for his kingdom. Shall I say, 'Come then, reverend sir, and visit the little flock at Trowbridge. Give them (in your presence) the children's due, and thus encourage the weak ones to hold on nor faint in the heavenly way.' We have one young woman who wishes much that you should baptize

¹Replying to JW's letter of Dec. 14, 1785, 30:410–11.

²CW, 'Desiring to Love', Pt. II, st. 4, *HSP* (1742), 245.

³Location of the Cooke residence in Trowbridge.

her, and for that purpose waits to see if you will be with us in the spring.⁴ Need there a stronger incentive than your love for us? If I knew a more prevailing argument, I would urge it. But surely this is sufficient. I hope, yea I believe, you will give us room to expect you; and before the month of March is expired, personally convince us that our hopes and expectations were well founded.

Miss Shrapnel has left Devizes,⁵ but gave me in commission to present thanks to you for your kind remembrance of her—desired respects to you, and an interest in your prayers. Herein I most earnestly join her and ask an interest in them for myself, for much I need it; my own are weak and powerless. Yet there ever liveth one to intercede, whose voice is, 'Hear, O Father, for I have died! Though so weak, yet cast not out the languid prayer; break not the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax!'

Mr. and Mrs. Locke desire their Christian respects.⁶

[I] must beg your next letter may be directed as the last. As I think, unless unlooked-for providences prevent, it will find me still at Devizes; where I propose staying three weeks, or a month longer. Here then I hope to receive the happy annunciation of your intended visit to Trowbridge, where I shall rejoice to testify how much I esteem myself, by more and stronger than obligation's common ties,

Yours,

M. C.

Address: 'The Revd J. Wesley / New Chapel / City Road / London'.

Endorsement: 'Answer to Mr. Wesley's 4th Letter'.

Source: manuscript copy for records; Bridwell Library (SMU), Mary Cooke Letter-book, p. 4.

⁴JW's visit to Trowbridge on Mar. 1, 1786, was quite short and he makes no mention of a baptism.

⁵Likely Mary Shrapnell (1767–1823), a cousin of Mary Cooke, who would marry Thomas Naish (1768–1828) in Nov. 1787.

⁶Thomas Locke married Margaret Coles Bennett on Nov. 9, 1785 in Trowbridge; Mary Cooke signed as a witness. The new couple resided in Devizes.

From Adam Clarke

Plymouth
January 30, 1786

Reverend and Very Dear Sir,

May love from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be multiplied unto you in time and in eternity, Amen.

I embrace the present opportunity of acknowledging (with much gratitude) the receipt of the kind epistle with which you favoured me while in St. Austell.¹ Several causes concurred to hinder this acknowledgement ere now—one of which was fearing to be troublesome, being conscious that your important time was devoted to more excellent purposes than reading or answering my epistles. In your very acceptable favour you kindly exhorted me to enforce the duty of fasting. Before I travelled, God deeply convinced me that fasting was a duty incumbent on me. I struggled against the conviction for a considerable time, till finding my soul much impoverished by resisting the Holy Ghost, I at last took up the cross, and found not only grace sufficient to enable me to bear it, but also found the promised blessing in the observance of it. When I was admitted at Conference, I promised before God and my brethren to observe the rules laid down in the Large *Minutes*, and to keep them for conscience' sake; one of which was to recommend fasting both by precept and example. To the latter, through the grace of God, I have constantly adverted ever since. But to the former, namely recommending it by precept, I must confess (though I have not wholly neglected it, yet) I have been too remiss, being foolishly afraid of the cry of 'legality'. This timidity I acknowledge was quite wrong, as I should have attended to the express command of God rather than the cry of those who esteemed the preaching of the cross in this respect foolishness.² However, since I received your letter I have, through grace, more boldly and earnestly inculcated it; endeavouring to represent it, as I believed and felt it to be—viz., not only a positive duty, but a privilege also.

My soul has for some time past waded through the deep waters. My adversary has been permitted severely to buffet my spirit. But the strength of God communicated has been sufficient to counteract the power of my enemy in the day of trial. Glory be to Jesus! He has hitherto preserved me, and has left me no room for complaint. I have lately found Luther's saying abundantly verified, '*Evangelium predicare est furorem mundi in te derivare*'.³ And this I believe every preacher will experience who shuns not to declare the *whole* counsel of God. Indeed, there are parts of the gospel which one may preach without much trouble. But if the whole is proclaimed, some will be offended. Several indeed spake evil of me because I assert that the blood of Jesus Christ can cleanse *now* from all unrighteousness. And because I bring several arguments deduced from Scripture and sound speech to prove it, they call me a 'carnal reasoner'. How strange that one should become their enemy for proclaiming one of the most comforting and God-honouring truths in the Bible! Would to God that the pearl of great price was as diligently hoarded, and as reluctantly parted with, as indwelling sin is. Then should we find at least as few backsliders from the faith as it is in Christ as there are witnesses of Christian perfection. But it is the truth of God and, whether it is received or not, will stand firm when heaven and earth are fled away. It is certainly the children's bread, the withholding of which is the grand reason why numbers are in a Laodicean state,⁴ and others fallen asleep who, had they had proper nourishment afforded them, might have now been prosperous and flourishing. May the good Lord keep all the preachers from observing too great a silence on this point!

¹JW to Clarke, Feb. 12, 1785, 30:310–11.

²See 1 Cor. 1:18.

³'To preach the gospel is to bring the wrath of the world upon you.' Clarke is likely referring to Luther's sermon for the Sunday after the Ascension of the Lord Jesus, on John 15:26–16:4, §10.

⁴See Rev. 3:14–24.

I know it rejoices your soul to hear of the prosperity of the work of God. Blessed be his name, I have some intelligence of this kind to impart. We have seen and do see glorious days in [Plymouth] Dock. All the waste places and ravaged borders of Zion are abundantly repaired and inhabited. God has already given us several more than we lost by the Moorais schism.⁵ And still there is an adding unto the church. The congregations have been wonderfully enlarged, and the work of God has been carried on powerfully among the people, so that multitudes have been convinced, several converted, and, though I do not yet know any who have attained, yet there are several who are panting after perfect love—whom I trust God will shortly call forth as witnesses that the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin.

When you visited us last, I remember to have observed you several times praying particularly for backsliders and children. The good Lord has not permitted his servant's prayers to return empty. For several backsliders are returned and restored, and we have a company of children whom we meet weekly, on whose tender minds the Lord is working wonders. 'Jesus, ride on till all are subdued,'⁶

At Plymouth our congregations were distressingly small for some time. I went out to the parade, and had more hundreds to hear there than I had dozens in the room. And though I have preached *out* in the cold weather, at the expense of part of my hearing and voice, yet have I been amply compensated for both in seeing an increased congregation at the room. And several of those have been awakened and joined to the society. So that we have a blessed prospect of this wilderness becoming as Eden, and the desert as the garden of the Lord.

What a blessed alternative is field-preaching! It has not only been recommended by the example of Immanuel, but is still countenanced by his presence and grace. I long for a fit season to make use of the same expedient again. I must however confess that it is frequently a cross to me. But I should esteem myself very culpable before God and man, were I to neglect on that account the exercise of that which I have found to be productive of so many excellent advantages.

Nor does the Lord permit us to labor in the country in vain. We have been in some new places, where God has added numbers of seals to our ministry. Multitudes flock to hear, and evidence by their uncommon attention that they hear for eternity. And indeed the event proves it, for many are saved from their sins and joined to the people of God. There are some other places where we hope to get in shortly; One of which I am invited to, and intend, by the grace of God, to visit it in a few days. May God make my going prosperous, for Christ's sake. Amen.

The Lord has opened a door at Plympton, a borough town five miles from Plymouth, on the road to Exeter. There we have a large congregation, a society formed, and an agreeable prospect. Even at poor Launceston there is some prospect of good being done. The congregations are much enlarged, and morning preaching (long a stranger there) is now set on foot, and is well attended. There is one thing that conduces much to the prosperity of the work at Plymouth and Dock—namely, the constant morning prayer-meetings, together with several evening ones.

Some time ago I met with a French book entitled 'A Discourse on the Eloquence of the Pulpit'.⁷ Having a little knowledge of that language, I have translated from the above the exordium of a sermon delivered by one of the missionaries. It is very excellent. If you have not seen it, and will give me permission, I will send it to you; and I dare say you will find it not unworthy of a place in the *Arminian Magazine*.⁸

Dear sir, be so kind as to favour me with a few lines. God I trust will make them a blessing to me, and amply reward you for the labour of love. My soul longs to go forward. I see many privileges I have

⁵The schism when William Moore, one of two preachers in the Plymouth circuit, renounced the Methodists and set up an independent church; see JW, *Journal*, Feb. 25, 1786, *Works*, 23:343.

⁶CW, 'After Preaching to the Newcastle Colliers', st. 12, *HSP* (1749), 1:312.

⁷Jean Siffrein Maury, *Principes d'éloquence pour la chaire et le barreau, où l'on trouve des discours* (Paris: Lamy, 1782).

⁸It appeared as 'Account of a French Preacher', *AM* 14 (1791): 565–68.

not attained. My spirit is humbled and ashamed because of my small progress. God help you to pray for me! Earnestly praying that you may be filled with all the fullness of God, I am, reverend and dear sir,

Your truly affectionate, and willing to be in all respects obedient, son in the gospel of Christ,

Adam Clarke

P.S. Our friends at Mevagissey think of building a room, as the present one is not half large enough for the congregation. The Marquis of Buckingham is the proprietor of a spot of ground they have fixed on, but they are afraid they shall not be able to obtain it from his steward, and therefore beg you, if you have any interest with the Marquis, to beg for a grant of the place. If he gives the grant, it is enough, as every particular will be known by his steward.

We labour together in much love and unity. Mr. [John] Mason is a pious, judicious man, well calculated for the department he fills, and is a father to us.⁹ Mr. [John] King is a man of solid piety, devoted to God, and zealous for his cause. Brother George Flamank is married; his wife I think bids fair to be an ornament to the gospel.⁹

Address: 'The Revd. Mr. John Wesley / at his New Chapel / City Road / London'.

Postmarks: 'Plymouth' and '2/FE'.

Endorsement: by JW 'Adam Clark / Plymouth / Jan. 30. 1786 / a[nswered] Feb. 3'.

Source: holograph; MARC, WCB, D6/1/70.¹⁰

⁹Mason was the Assistant for the Plymouth circuit.

⁹George Flamank (1751–1831) was an excise officer who financed building a preaching house in St. Austell, Cornwall; and later resided in Plymouth, Devon. He married Christian Thomas (1766–1806) in Plymouth on Sept. 30, 1785.

¹⁰Abridged transcriptions published in *Wesley Banner* (1850): 241–43; and Dunn, *Clarke*, 19–23.

From Matthias Joyce

c. February 1786

Martha Brewton was born in Edenderry, in Ireland, in the year 1767. Her natural temper was mild and gentle, and her conduct in general, was what is commonly called innocent. Her understanding was exceeding clear, considering her opportunities. Yet she understood nothing of the power of godliness until the Lord stirred her up to hear the Methodists.

She was a person of few words; but, like Mary, she pondered the things which she heard in her heart, and used to copy down certain striking sentences.

On Thursday the 19th of January, she dreamed that she was repeating the following lines,

Stoop down my thoughts that us'd to rise,
Converse a while with death;
See how a gasping mortal lies,
And pants away his breath!¹

On Sunday night, the 22nd, she awoke crying out to her mother that she had a severe stitch in her side, which was soon followed by an inflammation of the lungs.

Thursday, 26. She was visited by her grand uncle, Joseph Fry (a preacher),¹¹ who asked her what she thought of being called away? On which she turned her head aside without answering a word.

The second time he visited her, she was glad to see him, and prevented him by saying, 'Jesus has been with me ever since you were here, and I hope he will not leave me any more. Has he not promised that he will never leave nor forsake his own?'¹² The next visit he found her more given up to God, and filled with wonder, love, and praise.

Friday, 27. Her father, (who is a Roman Catholic) coming in said, 'Well, my dear, you never did anything for which you need be afraid to face God.' She replied, 'O yes I have! That is your plea; but it is not mine.'

Saturday, 28. She was remarkably happy, having a full assurance of her Redeemer's love and a hope full of immortality. From the abundance of her heart her tongue spake of his praise, who had chased away all the gloomy horrors from her mind. And so sweet was her voice, that it charmed and astonished all who heard her. It was, however, with some difficulty that she spake as she did. And judging she would not be able to speak long, she said to those around her, 'If I lose my speech, do not doubt me; for even then, my heart shall be with Jesus.' On one desiring her to spare herself and strive to sleep, she said, 'I will speak while I can. And if I should die in my sleep I doubt not but I shall awake in eternity, in the arms of Jesus!'

The doctor giving her some drops to make her sleep. She declared her unwillingness to take any more of them, lest they should keep her too long asleep, and thereby prevent her from praising him whom her soul loved. The doctor thinking it might afford her some satisfaction, told her there was hope of her recovery; but she replied, 'I do not want to live.'

Sunday, 29. Her aunt going very early into the room, she cried out, 'Come and rejoice! Behold Jesus standing by my bedside! See his bloody robes! O what love! What love! I know that his blood has washed away all my sins. Then from the fulness of her heart, she said,

¹Isaac Watts, 'Death and Eternity', st. 1, *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* (1709), 154.

¹¹See JW, *Journal*, July 3, 1749 (*Works*, 20:284) and July 7, 1769 (22:194).

¹²Cf. Heb. 13:5.

This is the day our Lord arose,
So early from the dead:
Why should I keep my eyelids clos'd,
And spend my hours in bed.¹³

This day, as well as the former, she rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory. And at night she desired the nurse to call the people of the house into the room to see Jesus. When they came, she told them they might see the convoy of angels that waited for her, adding, 'I see the room crowded with heavenly spirits. O that I was going with them; but my Jesus knows the time best.'

Monday, 30. Being the day she took her flight to the city of God, the great red dragon made his last effort to overthrow her. At the same time her bodily pain became almost insupportable. Her aunt going into her room just then, she said, 'I am in great misery, send for the doctor.' She also desired that her grand uncle might be sent for. This was the only conflict worth recording, which she had to endure from the time she found the love of Jesus till her death. And though it was severe, it was but of short duration, and rather helped to confirm her holy soul in the truth, by making way for a glorious manifestation of her Redeemer's love. For before her uncle arrived, her everlasting friend rebuked her pain, and the tempter too. So that in a kind of triumph she said to her aunt (who is one of our society) 'Kitty! Kitty! The scene is greatly altered. Jesus has appeared, and sweetened every pain!'

When her uncle entered the room, she desired him to pray. But he excused himself, saying, 'I have a pain in my breast.' 'No matter', then said she, 'Jesus is praying.'

Soon after she called her mother, and told her with joy that the time of her departure was at hand; requesting at the same time that she might not forget when she said to her respecting her eternal state. As her mother wept at the thought of losing her so soon, she said, 'It ought to be matter of joy to you, and not of grief. For while you are mourning over this sorrowful bed, I shall be singing praises above.'

When her uncle told her of the blessed company she should have by and by, she said, 'What would they all signify if Jesus was not present!'

And now being near her journey's end, and standing upon the verge of eternity, she was eager to bring those who remained along with her; or at least, to show them how they might obtain the same grace, and share in the glory she was entering upon. Therefore she sent for a little popish boy who used to come to the preaching, and who had some good impressions made on his mind by hearing the word, and was much persecuted at home for coming. Seeing his danger, and the difficulties he had to encounter, she wished she could take him with her, and charged him to attend the preaching, etc.

To her mother's brother she gave the same advice, desiring him likewise to mind what his uncle said.

To her grand aunt she said, 'You are not very wicked. But you must not trust to your prayers, for nothing short of an interest in Christ, such as I have, will avail you anything. Without this you will be found but a whited wall.'

To the nurse she said, 'Molly! Molly! You have been an old sinner.' On her signifying that she wished to be better, she replied, 'Come now! Come just as you are! Christ is as able to save you now, as at any other time. Do not put it off any longer, as the Lord may suddenly summon you away, as he has done me.'

About an hour before she died, she said, 'If I had the tongue of Michael the archangel, I could not tell what the Lord has done for me!'

Her last words were, 'All comfort! More comfort! Sweet Jesus!' Then, with her lovely eyes steadfastly looking up to heaven, and a countenance that expressed the heaven she felt within, she sweetly fell asleep in the Lord, about seven o'clock that night, aged eighteen years, and about one month.

As to her person, she was indeed a beautiful flower to look upon. For her form was elegant, and her countenance very comely. And she bid fair to flourish long in this vale below. But the friend of

¹³Isaac Watts, Hymn 27, st. 1, *Divine and Moral Songs* (1715), 32.

sinner in mercy called her away betimes, to share in the joys of beatified spirits above; where, being freed from all the storms of life, she shall flourish in perpetual bloom!

From what I can learn, the place where she lay was filled in a peculiar manner with the divine presence. Her uncle informed me that he could scarce go near her bed without feeling the power of God. And I believe others felt it in like manner. The relation of her happy death has been made a blessing to my own soul; so also has the writing of the account. Therefore, from the ground of my heart, I say, 'O my God! Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like hers!'¹⁴

M. J.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 10 (1787): 518–20, 576–79.

¹⁴Cf. Num. 23:10.

From Thomas Wride

Norwich
February 7, 1786

Reverend Sir,

I am truly sorry to give you any trouble, but I hope you will bear with me. Although I expect the matter this brings will be no way pleasing.

I received brother [Henry] Moore's letter dated January 24,¹ and the same hour wrote the contents of it to brother [Samuel] Hodgson.² The 27th I went out of Norwich in course, and returned the 5th instant, where I found brother Hodgson, who had been in Norwich from the preceding Thursday. Brother Hodgson (I found) had wrote to you that same day.³ What he wrote, I know not. But if I may guess, it was to contradict you, to distress me, and to kill my wife.

It does not seem good to him to let me labour on the Yarmouth side of the circuit, nor yet to let my wife have a lodging at Yarmouth or at Lowestoft, although by brother Moore's pen you directed both. He wants me to be in another circuit, and to leave my wife at Norwich until Conference. This sir, you will allow is talking like a *young man* indeed. I doubt this would kill her. In the middle of last July she buried her mother. I never speak of it in the hearing of my wife unless she begins it. But if I may credit her, seldom or never does a day pass over her head without tears on the account of her mother. This has made great impression on her constitution. And if, sir, you separate us, I really doubt it will destroy the small remains of her health. She steadily believes it will kill her.

When I came into Norwich last Saturday I was on foot (my horse being dead). Brother Hodgson wanted me to go out again. I did so, although unable to walk farther. It was 14 miles. I got carriage in a cart. We were more than seven hours on the road. So that it was between 9:00 and 10:00 at night before I got to North Walsham. It was indeed very cold. It was far too much for me. I was obliged to go to bed in the daytime on Sunday, and could not rise to preach in the mornings after.

Yesterday I came to Norwich from Horning Marsh (about 14 miles). I had nothing with me but what was in an handkerchief. Yet the utmost use of my strength did not bring me to Norwich until a quarter past 5:00. The weather was fine overhead and the roads pretty good. Had it been otherwise, I could not have made my way.

Brother Hodgson says that the people on the Yarmouth side (by means of their intelligence from Norwich) do object my being there. It may be so. But this will prove too much, if it proves anything at all. For they object him also, glorying brother [George] Button far before *him*. Perhaps he does not know it, but I really do, and have known it a considerable time. Even in Norwich I know that there are those who already think less of him than of me, and they have spoke it—not to me (for then it may be thought to be flattery) but behind my back.

By Doctor [Thomas] Coke's letter of December the 10th, and yours of December the 24th,⁴ I thought that I was favoured with your approbation, although you thought it might be better to remove me from hence, to make way for one who might with less trouble complete what had cost me broken bones to begin. But if I infer right from what I hear and see, I am under your displeasure for striving to fulfill your directions with regard to the singing and the monument. For it is a plain case that all the objections centre

¹This letter, on behalf of JW, it is not known to survive.

²Samuel Hodgson (1759–95), a native of Halifax, Yorkshire, underwent an evangelical conversion in 1777. In 1780 he was accepted on trial into the itinerant ministry (see *Works*, 10:496). He continued to serve until his death, by drowning, while crossing the river Were. See Atmore, *Memorial*, 191–99.

³This letter is not known to survive.

⁴Wride likely meant JW's letter of Dec. 14, 1785; no letter of Dec. 24, 1785 is known to survive. Cf. Wride to JW, Dec. 29, 1785.

in those two points, the rest being only so many flourishes by way of ornament.

Perhaps, sir, I may escape the charge of being too soft. But I have no right to the character of an honest man longer than I endeavour to support your rules and your reputation. When I am determined to do so no longer, you shall know it by my acknowledgement, but shall never be at the expense of coming at it by easy inference from undisputed premises. But while my obligations under you stand as they now do, and my regard for you is that I have for years professed, I shall hardly get 'to such a pitch of apathy' as unmoved to hear Mr. Wesley called 'an old woman'. Yet sir, this is the title bestowed on you by my capital subscribing opposer. If you question the truth of what I say, you may have more proof than I now can give. I have spoke of it before, but concealed it from you, for reasons which I am not ashamed the sun should see.

As things now stand I am likely to be miserable and useless. It is taken for granted that you dislike me and my ways. Brother Hodgson do[es] not need my help. And to see all that I have with so much pain (in performance of your directions, by word and pen) strove for, at once trampled on, will be to my opposers a glorious sight, but to me a tormenting one. Therefore sir, I entreat you, let me be where I shall be out of sight of Norfolk.

You was thinking, when here [in mid-October 1785], of taking us to London (at least a short space to exchange with brother [Benjamin] Rhodes). If it is agreeable to you, it will save the trouble of buying an horse, and I apprehend that you are short of your number at London.

I hope, sir, that the speaking my mind will not be called 'dictating'. I am at your disposal. But if you see good at present to have me where a horse is needed, it must not be here. For we are 1 - 2 - 0½ behind hand, and to get a horse on the Norwich circuit is impracticable. Brother Hodgson says that it is the same on the Yarmouth side, and that he 'will not speak a word about a horse'. And [he] moreover says that 'one must provide himself with an horse'. Those *Minutes* must be of brother Hodgson's making; for yours, sir, say the very reverse. And it may be added that my horse happened to die when it was not with me, but with brother [John] M'Kersey.

Mrs. Gerrard, whom you called to see when in Norwich, died on the 22nd of December, in twelve days after the beginning of her sickness.⁵ I can give no particulars of her end.

Rachel Reader died January 10th. I was with her about half an hour before she departed. She had her senses and speech to the last. She had no doubt, yet not much joy.

I am, reverend sir,

Your dutiful son,

Tho. Wride

Feb. 12

I could not finish in time to send according to date. I was obliged to keep from the preaching, in order to send by this post. I had the mortification this afternoon to hear your directions set at defiance. *Three* times singing—viz., before prayer, between the first prayer and the text, and after sermon—but neither of the tunes belonged to us. The last of them was like a minuet. Such a tune I was grieved to hear. I was told that it was just the same last Sunday. Brother Hodgson cannot plead ignorance, for on the 19th of last month I told him, 'Mr. Wesley desires and requires that there be no more than *twice* singing at one service.' But how you are regarded, let facts speak. Therefore, sir, if things must be in this sort, I beg you to let me be where I may not see it.

Source: Wride's manuscript draft; Duke, Rubenstein, Frank Baker Collection of Wesleyana, Box CO9, Thomas Wride Notebook 1, pp. 20–23.

⁵Sarah Garrard lived in North Cove, Suffolk. See David Hart, 'The Emergence and Development of Wesleyanism in Norwich; 1754–1802' (University of Manchester Ph.d. thesis, 2010), 225.

From Johanna Carolina Arnodina Loten

Utrecht
February 10, 1786

Much Honoured Friend, and Very Beloved Brother in the Lord Jesus Christ,

You had made me ashamed by your last precious and very kind letter,¹ for you said 'it had given you a great satisfaction that your friends in Holland have not forgotten you. You had found it a precious gift of God.' O, alas, what miserable and poor sinners are we in ourselves, that you should set any value on our love! My family is much in love to you, my dear friend, and it will be a extremely great pleasure for us to meet you in this world. I wish the Lord will it order all to our contend, to bring you this summer to Holland.

But before this he will make you a blessed instrument to convert poor sinners from darkness to light. Indeed you are a wonderful man. The Lord has done wonders by your hands. Mister [Josiah] Dornford had send me a very kind letter on your account. He said, from you. 'Mister Wesley is like another Moses, as at 82 his eyesight does not faith, nor his natural strength decay. He has been many years a great blessing to our nations, but it has been chiefly among the poor of the land. There is likely to be a great work of God in America by the means of the preachers which he had lend to them. Many thousands have been converted to God, and those pulpits which used to be filled with wicked clergy, having be deserted by them, are now occupied by men of God.'

I believe the son of Mister Dornford is now at a good school. I have no much occasion to see him, neither to do him good. I am sorrow for this. His father is my good friend.

By the grace of God we have now peace with the emperor. But we are yet to have peace between ourself. Oh that the Lord would give us as a sinful nation his Holy Ghost, only for the sake of Christ, lest we may be deeply convinced of our sins and may turn to the Lord of Neederland, who has done wonders for us land. Then he will come again with his old blessings. And oh that it may please him to prepare us for our fast-day, which shall be the first of March. We have need to be prepared by the Lord himself. May Christ Jesus pray for us, as our great high priest, who is at the right hand of God, who love his church with a unspeakable love. I have many time the taste of his love in my soul. O I will not give this for all the benefits of the world. I see more and more how I need the precious blood of Christ to clean me from all my sins, which I commit every moment. But I want the courage to cast my whole soul upon the dear Jesus. I wish I could come more boldly to the throne of grace, without any fear, except fear because my sins. May the Lord have mercy with me.

I thank you for your lovely expressions in your letter to me. The week I was with Mistress [Sophia] Tydeman. I said to her I had invitation to write to you and if she had a letter to enclose to you she could send it me. But she was a little ashamed. On that account perhaps as she could do it she should sent me some lines to you, which I am expecting now. Mistress Tydeman and her husband [Meinard] are my good friends. She are of the best pious people. My father [Arnout], mother [Lucretia], and brother, and aunt Scheffer and cousin Swanenburg present theirs respect and love to you, like to mine; also to Mister [William] and Mistress [Elizabeth] Ferguson.

I take the freedom to recommend myself in your precious friendship, and I remain with all respect and love,

Your unworthy but very affectionate friend and sister,

J. C. A. Loten

I have not received a letter from Mistress Tydeman for you.

Address: 'To / The Reverend Mister John Wesley / at his new preaching house / in / London'.

Endorsement: by JW, 'M. Loten / Feb 10. 1786 / a[nswere]d 25'.

Source: holograph; Wesley's Chapel (London), LDWMM 1994/1993.

¹This letter is not known to survive.

From Samuel Bradburn

[Bristol]
February 12, 1786

Reverend and Very Dear Sir,

I have at length shot through the dreadful gulf.¹ Whether I shall see land or not is very doubtful. I am alive and that surprises me; can look at my precious Betsy dead, without going distracted. She had neither fear, doubt, nor hesitation to the last. At 10:00 yesterday morning, as I was giving her some drink, she sweetly fell asleep in Jesus, without sigh or groan.

O dear sir, what shall I do? Ten thousand charms appear in her, which even the extravagance of love did not see before. Thousands of little circumstances occur to my faulty memory which I thought little of at the time this happened. My dear companion, my real self, my pattern, counsellor, and guardian angel has left me. What have I more? O could I raise my grovelling soul to heaven, I should find relief. But a thick gloom intercepts my prospect and hides my lovely Betsy from my sight. I would and I would not wish her back again. I think I hear her speaking to me, nor can I persuade myself she is gone till I feel her ice-cold cheek. Yet something in my heart seems glad she is happy and out of all her pain. And I would fain believe I do not murmur at the will of him that took her.

I found a little ease last night in prayer, but it was followed by darkness which I most acutely felt. The awful venue of eternity seemed to open full to my view and displayed an inconceivable sublimity to my mind. Something urged me to feed my grief. I got alone with the corpse, without candle. I kneeled by the bedside in solemn stillness a long time. The wind was high and the windows open, which caused a sound that truly made my blood run chill. But I stood it out, reasoned with myself and my darling about our separation till I was enabled to give her up to God. I walked about the room till 2:00 in the morning, in some degree composed, but I could keep my ground as I wish. Hundreds of time I gave her up, and as often took her back again. I feel truly stripped of everything now. But God be merciful to me a sinner! My body is quite wasted, to a skeleton, through want of rest. I have not been in bed these seven-and-twenty nights. Nor could I leave the room. My leg has been so bad by the fall I got leaving from Bath. I wish to die, but feel a sort of willingness to live if I can do any good. My dear sir, my kind father and friend, should I live I trust it will be to give you every possible proof that I am, reverend and dear sir,

Your truly affectionate son and servant,

S. Bradburn

Endorsement: by JW, 'Sam. Bradburn of his wife / Feb. 12 1786 / a[nswere]d 14'.²

Source: secondary transcription; MARC, MA 1977/486.

¹I.e., the valley of the shadow of death; his wife Elizabeth (Nangle) Bradshaw.

²I correct the secondary reading (by Eliza Weaver Bradburn) of the endorsement at a couple places.

From Robert Sydserrff¹

c. February 15, 1786

Martha Cook had been under deep convictions for sin for some years before she was married.² One Sunday a young woman, a particular acquaintance of hers, called on her, desiring her to walk and see some coal works. The thoughts of having broke the Sabbath deepened her conviction, and caused her to weep bitterly, which her mother imputed to some other cause. On the next Sunday she hid herself, lest she should be enticed away again. At this time she had a great desire to be among the people called Methodists. But as her father would not allow any of his family to go, she could only get to hear them occasionally in his absence. At those times the word was very sweet to her. But through the vanities of the world, her convictions did not make a lasting impression, though they returned frequently from time to time.

She thought that after being married nothing should hinder her from serving God. And it pleased him to awaken her husband about a year and a half before her death, which gave her more liberty for that purpose. Being one night in very great distress, she went to a prayer meeting, when it pleased the Lord to set her soul at liberty, so that she was constrained to praise him aloud in the midst of the people. She enjoyed peace for many weeks. But being destitute of a servant, and having much business, and a child to nurse, she was deprived of the outward means of grace, and through unwatchfulness suffered loss in her soul. About two months before her death she was stirred up again, and it pleased God to manifest himself to her one Sunday whilst I was at prayer with her, and he continued always with her afterwards.

January 24, 1786. She was visited by a preacher, and afterwards continued to cry unto God for a clearer manifestation of his love. I called on her that evening, and found her in very great distress of soul: I pointed her to the promises, and then mentioned the woman of Canaan, to whom the Lord granted the desire of her heart. I then left her in full expectation that I should find her completely happy in the morning. When I called again, I found her very serene, enjoying much peace, and declaring she was willing to die; but prayed that the Lord's will, not hers might be done.

On the morning of the 26th when I called, she told me she had a very happy night, that the fear of death was now entirely taken away, and desired me to join her in singing these words,

What hath the world to equal this!
The solid joy, the heavenly bliss!
The joy immortal, love divine;
The love of Jesus ever mine!
Greater joys I'm born to know,
From terrestrial to celestial,
When I up to Jesus go!³

¹Robert Sydserrff (c. 1744–1815), a native of Scotland, was a tailor who settled and married in Leigh upon Mendip, Somerset, running a shop in Coleford. He was an active Methodist and local preacher. He published *Sydserrff's Treatise on Bees* in 1792. About 1800 he moved to Mells, Dorset, where he is buried. See *Journal of Horticulture and Practical Gardening* 3 (1862), 75; and *WMM* 36 (1817), 606.

²Martha Gane (1757–86) married Abraham Cook of Leigh upon Mendip (b. 1757) in 1780, at Holcombe, Somerset. She was buried on Feb. 18, 1786, in Leigh upon Mendip.

³The earliest published form of this anonymous hymn located is in *A Collection of Hymns, for the use of Christians Of all Denominations* (Leeds: E. Baines, 1799), Hymn 413, p. 336.

She sang with hands lifted up, as if she wanted to take her flight; and continued for most part of the day in an ecstasy, praising God, and calling those about her to join in praise with her. A minister coming in desired her to compose herself, for the Lord did not require it. 'Besides', said he, 'you will hasten your end by exhausting your strength.' She replied, 'How can I do it better than in praising my God? I *will* praise him.' And then she began to praise him louder than before, so that he left her, being much displeased. She still continued happy, exhorting all about her to seek the Lord, and to give their whole hearts to him, adding, 'What should I have done in such an hour, if the Lord had not been my friend?'

January 28. I was hastily sent for to come to her, as it was supposed she was dying. When I entered the room, she cried out, 'Pray with me, pray for me!' She was in such an agony that her husband was obliged to hold her in the bed; and in such a sweat as I had never seen before. I found this all arose from the suggestions of Satan, who said he would have her after all. I pointed her to the promises, and mentioned the sufferings of Christ, who surely had suffered for *her*, and I said the devil had no expectation of having her, only he strove to harass, because he envied her happiness. I observed also that Satan had even the boldness to tempt our Lord himself; but no sooner was he gone, than angels came and ministered unto him. I added, 'The angels are now waiting around your bed for the same purpose.' She then looked earnestly and fixed her eyes upon one particular place, as if she saw something invisible to us, and then spoke out with the greatest earnestness, 'Satan, I defy thee! Thou ugly monster, thou deceiver of poor souls. Who would be thy servant?' Her fears were immediately gone, her countenance changed, and she began to praise God, and continued to do so the remainder of the day.

Her mother now came to see her, and begged she would not fatigue herself so much. She replied, 'What! Mother, must I not praise my Lord? I *will* praise him. Come to him now, for he is willing to save you all; yea, to save the vilest man or woman in the world, if they will but come to him.' When her sister, who was about to go away, said, 'Perhaps I shall never see you again;' she replied, 'If you see me no more here, take care and come to me in heaven. Consider the privileges you enjoy. You live near the preaching house; do not lose one opportunity, and God will bless you.' She spoke to the same effect to everyone who came to see her. She was not willing that I should leave her, and on my saying I should soon see her again, she said, 'Blessed be God, I shall soon have company to join me in praising him.' And then she sang

And if our fellowship below
With Jesus be so sweet: ...⁴

On the 29th, as many persons came to see her, she said to me, 'I find it very difficult to keep my mind wholly staid upon God, amidst so much conversation. I desire none to see me, but those that fear God; but do you pray with me, and for them; who knows what the Lord may do?' The next evening, whilst her husband was reading that passage 'The wicked shall call on rocks and mountains to fall on them',⁵ Satan suggested that this would be her case after all. She had then another severe conflict, such as she had two days before, but it did not last so long. She sent for me several times, but I was not at home. When I heard of it, I hastened, and found her praising God. She told me how Satan had tempted, but the Lord had made her more than conqueror. And she never lost a sense of his favour from that moment to her death.

She took great delight every day after this in singing, and did not seem satisfied unless I sang with her both before and after prayer. When I said I feared singing would hurt her head, being so weak, she said it would not, as she liked it well; and then broke out in praising God, and added, 'The time is almost come, when I shall praise God without hurting my head. Then all pain and sickness will have an end, and sorrow and sighing will flee away. O how I long to be there!' When I asked, could she willingly leave her children behind? She replied, 'Yes. I love my Jesus above all. I know he will take care of them.'

⁴Cf. CW, 'At Meeting of Friends', st. 3, *Redemption Hymns* (1747), 43.

⁵Cf. Rev. 6:16.

When I exhorted her to hold fast faith and patience, she said, 'I do not find the least impatience. I am willing to suffer everything my Lord shall lay upon me. And if my pains increase, I will praise him the more.' We then sang

For the joy he sets before thee,
Bear a momentary pain, ...⁶

February 5. She sent for me about six o'clock in the morning, and told me she found herself very low, and could not praise her Lord as she wished to do. When I asked if she had slept in the night, she replied, very little, and thought that time lost which was not spent in praising God, and therefore she would not sleep her time away. Soon after, when I visited her, I found her complaining of deadness and stupor, and said she was grieved because she could not praise God as before. I then prayed with, and left her somewhat dejected. But when I returned in the evening, I saw a visible change in her countenance. When I asked, 'Can you now praise God?' She replied in the affirmative, and told me her brother Dickey had been with her, who had died six years before. Her husband whispering that he believed her to be light-headed, she overheard him, and replied, 'I am not. I know what I said. My brother has visited me more than once. He is a happy spirit. He has comforted me, and told me that I shall soon be with him.' Have we not some ground to believe this from Hebrews 1:14?

Their souls are impassive above,
And nothing of mortals they know;
Unless on an errand of love
They visit a mourner below.⁷

February 13. I went and found her dying. But there was so much company in the room that I could scarce get near her. After some time she looked round, upon which I took her by the hand and said, 'Your pains are almost over.' She replied, 'I feel not the least pain.' I asked if she found any fear of death? She replied, 'None at all.' On my saying I thought it would be her last night here, she said, 'I hope so, because I want to praise my God better than I can do in this body.' She continued praising God till near four o'clock in the morning, and then asked her mother if she had heard Jesus call her? On her replying in the negative, she said, 'He does call for me.' She then desired them to call her husband, and seemed in haste. On his coming, she shook hands with him, and without speaking another word, and without a sigh or groan, went to him who had called her, and to join the triumphant host, who shall praise him forever and ever!

R. S.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 17–22.

⁶CW, 'For One Departing', st. 2, *HSP* (1749), 2:75.

⁷CW, 'At Lying Down', st. 2, *Redemption Hymns* (1747), 31.

From Mary Cooke

Duke Street, Trowbridge
February 20, 1786

Once more, my dear sir, I am returned to Trowbridge; and from thence have the pleasure of paying my thankful acknowledgements for your last kind letter.¹ The language of gratitude becomes one so highly favoured by your notice, esteem, and love. My heart would pay you what it owes, but cannot; accept in lieu thereof a willing mind, ready to repay the benefits conferred but utterly incapable. Your condescending command ('when we meet let there be no reserve between us') is too pleasing to be forgotten. Therein is included a precious privilege for which, as for every other, I only want an heart to make a suitable improvement.

I have announced to my friends your intended visit. They received the intimation thereof with joy, but with me join in wishing to know the exact time, that notice of your preaching may be given out publicly in the room. May I then expect a line, to name the day of your arrival? A time we look forward to with much satisfaction, and hope we shall have it even after many, many days, to say, it was good for us that we met together in the name of our God, who hath purchased us unto himself with his own blood.

I find Jesus exceedingly precious unto my soul. His 'name is as ointment poured forth'.² And when applied by the Spirit, it banishes every fear, disperses every cloud (however lowering with portentous evil) and brings into my mind that peace which in its operative feelings evidence its derivation to be from the God of all peace. For some little time past, those perplexing reasonings which heretofore harassed my soul, has not had the power over me which they used to have. The effect of their captivity is, to me, freedom, serenity, a filial love, and confidence in God—simply walking in the daily experience of that word, 'In *all* thy ways acknowledge him and he *shall* direct thy paths.'³ So far as the command is obeyed, so far is the promise made good unto me. Yet I have not been entirely without severe exercises of mind. But measured with former trials, they were as the early dew which quickly passeth away. If through manifold temptations I have been in heaviness for a season, yet comparatively speaking, sorrow endured but for a night, joy came in the morning. I oftentimes look around and ask myself, is there a creature in the world in *every* respect so highly favoured? If there is, this I feel, that I know not any with whom I would exchange situations.

At such a season, one might imagine I wanted nothing further. But there are two things of which I then more sensibly feel my want than at any other time: I mean a larger measure of grace, and stronger notes of praise. Who for such goodness can ever praise enough! Once there were two sorts of persons I could almost have envied: those who began younger than I did to walk in wisdom's ways; and such as were grown aged in their divine Master's service. The latter was the effect of cowardice and sloth, which feared the dangers of battle but wanted the glory of conquest, and would fain reap the joys of harvest without the toils and hazard of sowing, weeding, waiting in patient hope; first for the blade, the continual growth, the ear, and the full corn in the ear. But now I trust this lazy spirit is in a degree overcome, and I am made willing to endure awhile, seeing that if spared in life so long, yet a few days and I shall be old also; that a sufficiency of grace is promised; and if faithful to the end I am, he who hath said it will leave me no room to repine at the last, for in the streets of the new Jerusalem no complainings shall be heard. Here our joys are joys of conquest; there, of conquest and of peace. The thought that I began not earlier (even from the first dawn of reason) to seek God has made me to see the great necessity there is of my being the more in earnest to live much in a little time, knowing that so many days has already been spent in vain.

¹JW to Cooke, Feb. 12, 1786, 30:427–28.

²Song of Sol. 1:3.

³Prov. 3:6.

On compliance with one desire, many other requests are generally entailed. At present I have two to make, neither of which I think will be rejected. The first favour I ask is an explanation of the thirtieth verse of the third chapter of Romans: 'Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision *by* faith, and a circumcision *through* faith.' What means the difference between the words 'by' and 'through'? Or is there any real difference in their meaning? The verse has more than once struck me: I have often been puzzled by it, but never to any satisfactory effect.

My second request respects a friend. Miss Martin, one of the earliest in our society. From many circumstances of family change and alteration, she and her sister, aided by the counsel of their friends, have left Trowbridge and are settled at Shepton Mallet, where they propose opening a school. I think them well calculated for it, and believe I may say no attention will on their part be wanting to instruct their pupils in the most useful learning. They will esteem themselves highly obliged by your recommendation—which (I add) they deserve; and for which I will thank you, as for a favour conferred on myself.

You advise me to another careful perusal of the sermon on 'The Wilderness State'.⁴ Herein I could not *immediately* follow your advice, for I have not your *Works*, though long desirous to make them by purchase mine own. To be candid, I cannot yet afford to buy books; else my library had ere now been furnished, and your valuable writings had been some of the first in my collection. The volume of *Sermons* you refer to, I some time since borrowed of a friend who does not live in the town, but who I doubt not will willingly lend it a second time to me soon as opportunity offers, when I will again read it, and I trust with profit!

If I have asked too many things, pardon me; and kindly consider, you invite all this trouble by your encouraging condescension and goodness, for which I thank you. But if I abuse it, reprove me; and I will be corrected, and endeavour to amend.

My sisters [Anne and Frances] desire their respectful love, and are as anxious to see dear Mr. Wesley as is,

His hoping, expecting, obliged,

M. C.

Address: 'The Revd J. Wesley New-Chapel City-Road London'.

Endorsement: 'Answer to Mr. Wesley's 5th Letter'.

Source: manuscript copy for records; Bridwell Library (SMU), Mary Cooke Letter-book, pp. 4–5.

⁴See *Works*, 2:205–21.

From Hester Anne (Roe) Rogers

March 2, 1786

Mr. Peacock (humanly speaking; but *I* believe a higher power ordained the whole) laid the foundation of his illness by two journeys to Balbriggan, in very severe weather, where his word was made a blessing to many.¹ It was remarkable that the last Sabbath-day he ever preached in Dublin, it was with peculiar liberty and unction from those solemn words, 'He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning. His blood shall be upon him; but he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul' (Ezekiel 33:5).

The first Tuesday in February he found himself very poorly, and consulted Dr. F—, who ever after constantly attended him; and the week following two other physicians were called in. But medicine had no effect, for his disorder increased every day. On asking him how he was, he said, 'My soul is kept in peace, and staid upon God. I have no anxiety respecting life or death; no fear of any kind. But we have need to be ready for such an hour. For if eternal happiness depended on it, I can do nothing towards obtaining it *now*.'

On Thursday, February 9, I had three comfortable hours with him alone. My tongue was (as if for his sake) loosened in a manner I cannot now describe, and while I repeated many precious promises to him, he expressed himself greatly comforted.

Mr. [James] Rogers, at different times, asked him, 'Do you feel Christ precious?' He answered, 'Yes.' 'Have you any fear of death?' 'No.' 'Are you assured all will be well if you are taken away?' He replied, 'O yes'!

The Monday before he died, Mr. Rogers asked him, 'Are you not this day peculiarly comfortable in your soul?' (for his countenance declared it). He said, 'I am. But I am so ill, I cannot speak much.' 'Are you as happy as when you were in health?' 'I am happier.' 'Is Christ precious?' He answered, 'He is very precious.' And so he continued to answer, till he went to God.

I never knew a person more universally beloved and lamented than he is in Dublin. Almost the whole society attended his funeral, and many who never heard the Methodists before were so affected at that time that they now come to hear. The house was so crowded when Mr. Rogers preached his funeral sermon that about five hundred were obliged to go away for want of room.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 9 (1786): 355–56.

¹Christopher Peacock (c. 1752–86) was admitted 'on trial' as an itinerant preacher in 1781; see *Works*, 10:507. He had been moved in Aug. 1785 to assist James Rogers in Dublin, where he died 'young in years, but old in grace; a pattern of all holiness, full of faith and love and zeal for God' (10:598).

From John King¹

March 9, 1786

We still have a prospect of great success in our ministry here. The new chapel is now open for public worship, and we have let above four hundred sittings. It is a remarkable thing that, in a place where no sittings were ever let before, we should have let so many in so short a time. Our congregations are continually increasing, both at Plymouth and at Dock, and also in every other place where we preach. Blessed be God, the people in town and country appear to be alarmed on account of their sins. We have added above a hundred members since the Conference. I am thankful for my colleagues. We love as brethren.

Source: published transcription; *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* 47 (1824): 3.

¹King was stationed on the Plymouth circuit.

From Mary Cooke

Duke Street, Trowbridge
March 10, 1786

Ever Reverend and Dear Sir,

So lately in your company, can I have much to say by letter?¹ Thus might an indifferent person question me. But my own heart argues contrariwise, and urges this very reason for having much to say. Your being here (so short was the time) served only to increase my inclination for conversing freely with you, but gave me no opportunity for so doing. The desire thus increased, without being satisfied, is it any wonder if I should at present pass the bounds of moderation? Methinks my soul is full, and would pour out its feelings unto you. You kindly permit, you ask a free effusion. If I exceed herein, I know you will excuse, and only number it in the list of my other little foolishnesses.

Recollecting circumstances, my heart on reflection remembers with more deeply grateful sensations your visit than it did even at the present moment of your making it. Love constrains to love again. The stronger its manifestations, the more powerful are its effects. Your love for us is strikingly evidenced. What marvel then if our returns are large? And indeed I do think there is no place where you are more beloved than you are amongst your own people of Trowbridge. The general fault (it is the only one I hear of) is that your sermon, as well as visit, was too short. Our hearts consent to cry, 'Give more! More!'; not allowing the claim of thousands who have with us an equal right to share your labours, and your notice.

My heart grew heavy as you left us and only by *one* consideration could it be lightened—viz., of one day meeting to part no more: in prospect whereof it can, it does rejoice, believing it shall be so. And exults frequently in the thought,

That we are hastening to the day
Which shall our flesh restore;
When death shall all be done away,
And bodies part no more!²

Good is the Lord; and greatly to be praised is our God! Surely I may dare to say so, for he daily leadeth me with his benefits. My soul is glad; yea, triumphs in the God of her salvation. It is a good, it is a pleasant thing to serve the Lord. His love is sweet. I sensibly feel, yet cannot express, how sweet it is. Truly I have thought an age of misery might soon be compensated therewith. I would not yield the smallest measure up, for all that earth calls great. I have tasted the bitters, the sorrows of religion. *They* were more desirable than sin. Yea, they are rather to be chosen than the most refined pleasures an unawakened soul can possibly enjoy. If its darkest state be thus preferable, who would barter its delights for toys? Or change a peaceful conscience for a gnawing worm? I find that in living unto God we begin, and only then *begin* to live. Nor does he suffer his creatures to serve, or wait in vain. My heart this moment testifies his goodness; feels, and declares, the loving-kindness of him whose love is better than life itself. His promises are sure as gracious; and here I set my seal, that he is true, that he is truth.

I want a more capacious mind. I want the Saviour all revealed, my soul the temple of indwelling God. O for an increase of faith! To loosen from every hold but him, and there to find my all!

Another text I solicit the explanation of. A little time since I heard it spoken from, but not entirely to my satisfaction. If it be not engrossing too much of your time, I would desire from you the real meaning of it. The words are in the 126th Psalm, the last verse. 'He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.'

If your design of going to Scotland is fixed, may I ask how long will be your stay? During this

¹JW was in Trowbridge briefly on Mar. 1, 1786.

²Cf. CW, 'At Parting', st. 8, *HSP* (1742), 160.

distant visit, a cessation of your correspondence must be patiently, but will not be agreeably borne. The longer your stay, the more displeasing (on this account) will it be to me. But I trust our good Lord will abundantly bless your labours there—to which consideration every selfish motive *shall* yield. May you go forth in the plenitude of grace, and return in the fulness of the gospel of peace! May the dear Redeemer give you many souls, and make your latter days even more abundantly prosperous than your beginning! Thus prays your unworthy correspondent. O may her prayers be fully answered!

My sisters [Anne and Frances] unite in best wishes, and kind respects.

Will you, dear sir, hear and fulfil a concluding request: of remembering ever at a throne of grace,

Your weak and foolish, but gratefully affectionate and sincere

M. C

Address: 'The Revd J. Wesley Bristol'.

Source: manuscript copy for records; Bridwell Library (SMU), Mary Cooke Letter-book, pp. 5–6.

From James Rogers (autobiography)

Dublin
March 10, 1786

Since I first began to recommend the great love of God in Christ Jesus to others, I have had many solicitations to give some account of his dealings with my own soul. Yet I never could prevail on myself to attempt it till now. But having kept no journal, it cannot be expected that the following pages should contain anything more than a recital of a few particular circumstances which made the deepest impression upon my memory at the time they occurred. If these, or any of them, are made a blessing to my friends, let them give God the glory.

I was born in the North Riding of Yorkshire, in a large village called Marske, in February 1749. I was put to school early, and taught to read the Scriptures from a child; in some parts of which I found singular delight.

The Spirit of God began to strive with me when I was about three or four years old. On hearing a passing-bell, or seeing a corpse, I was very thoughtful, and would often ask my parents pertinent questions about a future state. On seeing lightning, or hearing a loud clap of thunder, my fears were usually alarmed to a high degree; and the more so as an impression always followed me that it was God speaking from the clouds. And as I generally expected, at these times, that he was just descending to judge the world, I would run to the door to see him come! Such ideas as these were much increased and confirmed by several dreams, which I had from my infancy, about death, judgment, heaven, and hell.

When I was about ten years of age, I dreamed one night I saw fire bursting out of the earth in several parts; that it raged so furiously, and spread with such rapidity, that in a few seconds, the whole globe was but one blaze! I thought I saw all the inhabitants of the place where I lived struck with inexpressible consternation and horror—and especially the bad people (as I called them) whom I had known to curse and swear, and get drunk; with many of my playfellows, who were accustomed to lie, and cheat, and play on the Sabbath—these I thought set up such dreadful shrieks and yells as were enough to pierce a heart of stone. As I looked up, the face of the sky seemed totally overspread with blackness. Instantly the forked lightnings began to play, till the heavens were all in one glare, and such loud claps of thunder followed as I had never heard. The sun I could see no more. But I thought I got a transient sight of the moon, which appeared larger than ever I had seen it before, and as red as a huge mass of blood. The heavens seemed all in motion, and were exceedingly agitated. They appeared to work, and heave, and rock from side to side, till not one star was left remaining. Thus was that scripture fulfilled, ‘And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs when she is shaken of a mighty wind.’¹ The sky seemed next to pass away, or (as I remember to have read) ‘to be wrapped together as a scroll’.² My favourite passage, Daniel 7:9–10, I now saw fulfilled: viz., ‘And the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool, his throne was like the fiery flame and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him. Thousand, thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The judgment was set and the books were opened.’

The thoughts I had about the deplorable state of my guilty neighbours now seemed swallowed up in a most painful anxiety for my own safety. I was waiting in expectation of a summons to the bar; but deeply conscious that I was unprepared, was alarmed to such a degree that I awoke.

After recollecting myself a little, and finding I was still an inhabitant of this world, my joy was inexpressible! Nevertheless it had a most solemn effect upon my mind, and the impression remained for many weeks. How true are those words in the 33rd [chapter] of Job, ‘God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not: in a *dream*, in a vision of the night, when *deep sleep* falleth upon men, in

¹Rev. 6:13.

²Cf. Isa. 34:4; Rev. 6:14.

slumbering upon the bed; then he openeth the ears of men and sealeth their instruction.³ From this time I began to feel great desires to be taught how I might obtain a preparation to meet my Judge with comfort.

On the winter evenings, several neighbours frequently came to sit and spend an hour in friendly conversation with my father, and oftentimes upon religious subjects, according to their light. To these I was very attentive, and when my hour for bed came, I would beg hard to sit a little longer, though I had not courage to urge the chief reason which induced me—viz., a desire to hear what might be said upon those subjects.

I remember one night in particular many queries were proposed about salvation. None of them thought it possible that any certainty could be attained in this life, whether they should be saved at last or not. But the general opinion was that our actions would all be weighed in the day of judgment, and if our good deeds overbalanced our bad ones, we should go to heaven. But if the contrary, we should go to hell. But some dissented a little from this, and thought, nay but God was merciful, and had sent his Son to die for sinners, and that their best way would be to amend their lives, and do all they could, and Christ would make up the rest. One of these they all agreed must be the way. And to confirm them in this conclusion, one observed that the parson of the parish was exactly of the same mind.

I endeavoured to satisfy myself with these determinations, but I could not. It was all, alas, left at uncertainty! And this would not do, for one that was daily expecting a call to appear before the Judge of quick and dead.

However, I thought no way so likely to succeed as to say my prayers regularly morning and evening, and be as careful as possible in refraining from bad words, especially from telling lies, playing on the Sabbath-day, neglecting my book, quarrelling with my schoolfellows, doing anything I was taught to believe was wrong, or keeping company with such wicked boys as led me into the way of such temptations.

At eleven years of age I was called to bear a severe trial, by the death of one of the tenderest, and dearest, and best of fathers. He had been subject for many years to what we call the heart colic and was often apparently near death. At such times, when every other hope seemed to fail, I would get into a corner, fall down upon my knees and there pray and weep and wrestle with God to spare his life. And though I knew not the Lord, yet I often felt a confidence that he heard me, and would grant my request. And when I found it so, such gratitude and uncommon sweetness would rest upon my mind for many days, as is better felt than expressed. However he died at last of that disorder, after a few days' illness.

For some time I was quite inconsolable. And had I been possessed of the whole world, I would gladly have given it all to have died with him, so I had been prepared. But as I knew I was not, I earnestly begged of my eldest brother (then upwards of twenty) to tell me what I must do to be saved; believing as soon as I was ready for heaven, God would certainly take me, which was all I wished for. But alas! I gained no ground, for want (I believe) of proper instruction. For as yet the light of the glorious gospel had not shined in that neighbourhood.

My father leaving no will, and his little property consisting chiefly of land, fell of course to my eldest brother, so that the family soon after became dispersed. I was removed to some distance among strangers. But I found favour in their sight, and was suffered to want for nothing. Here I got a new set of acquaintance, but equally destitute of the knowledge of God.

It pleased him however, whose ways are in the mighty waters, and his judgments in the great deep, to find means to teach me the knowledge of his salvation.

A wild young man, a few doors from where I lived, contrary to the will of his parents, and against the advice of all his friends, would go to sea. But he had not been there long before he was heartily weary, and ran away from his master. He was ashamed however to return home, and equally afraid of being known, as it was in the height of the French war when the press was very hot. He therefore set out for some inland town and took up his residence for some months in Northampton. Here the poor prodigal had time for reflection, and began to think on the mercies he had slighted in his father's house. By this strange

³Cf. Job 33:14–16.

chain of providences it was that he became acquainted with the Methodists, a small body of whom were in this place. He was invited by them, and afterwards went constantly to preaching. His conscience being very soon thoroughly awakened, he readily joined their little society, and became a steady member.

After several months, he took courage and wrote home to his friends. His father (always tender over him) was filled with joy to hear of his long-lost son, and went to the captain he had sailed with, got the indenture at a considerable expense, and the matter was made up, which happy circumstance no sooner reached the young man, than he set off and returned to his father's house with a glad heart.

His old acquaintance flocked to see him upon his arrival, and expected feasting, merriment, and as they call it, great doings. But the tables were now turned. He began to exhort us all to 'flee from the wrath to come!'⁴ Enforcing the necessity of old things being done away and all things becoming new.⁵ And observed that instead of gluttony, drinking, singing, and dancing, we ought the rather to fall upon our knees and give God thanks for all his benefits.

His former companions gaped and stared at him as a monster, and some of them came near him no more, swearing he was turned Methodist, that his brain was hurt, and that if they did not keep from him, he would convert them all and make them as mad as himself. But these things had a very different effect upon me. I looked upon him as some angelic being dropped from the clouds, and was affected in an extraordinary manner while he was speaking to the rest! But as he took no notice of me, I concluded I was too vile for such a favourite of heaven to stoop to. I went away trembling and speechless, seeking a place to vent my grief in. But it enhanced my misery when I found I could not weep, for my heart seemed black as hell, and as hard as a stone. I prayed again and again, but (as I thought) to little purpose. However I was clearly convinced that this was the way, and there was no other. But then I thought it was impossible I should ever feel the happiness that young man experienced, unless I could go to those people, and to that place where he found so blessed a change. I inquired what distance Northampton was, thinking to set out unknown to anyone, having a degree of confidence that God would take care of me. But finding it was near two hundred miles, and not knowing one foot of the road, and being not yet fourteen years of age, I was quite discouraged. And being no longer able to contain my sorrow, I begged one of the family with whom I resided to intercede for me with the young man, that he would only speak to me; thinking that if he would take notice of such an unworthy creature I should be one of the happiest of mortals! To my great surprise, he not only embraced the first opportunity of speaking to me, but seemed to rejoice over me as one that had found great spoil. This brought to my mind that scripture, 'There shall be joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.'⁶ And as with them, so I proved it to be with his people here.

From that time I date my acquaintance with the dear people of God, and to this day I have preferred them to all others. With what gratitude and delight have I often reflected upon, and repeated those lines,

What a mercy is this,
What a heaven of bliss,
How unspeakably happy am I?
Gather'd into the fold,
With thy people enroll'd,
With thy people to live and to die!⁷

The first society I had intimacy with was in Guisborough, a small market town in the north of

⁴Matt. 3:7; Luke 3:7.

⁵Cf. 2 Cor. 5:17.

⁶Cf. Luke 15:10.

⁷Cf. CW, 'On His Birthday', st. 7, *HSP* (1749), 2:258.

Yorkshire, and about eight miles distant from where I then lived. This was the nearest place where there was preaching, and the road to it not very good, having to pass over some mountains, and through several lonely woods, and on very dark winter evenings. But my need was such, I never thought a moment on these discouragements. Sometimes I had company, other times I had none; but I do not remember that (when business would permit) I ever neglected to go regularly once a fortnight on (I think) the Tuesday evenings, which was all the preaching we then had.

Some time after this, two or three of us began to think, if possible, to get preaching at the village where I lived. We spoke to the preachers, who appeared very willing to make a trial, and accordingly visited us occasionally a few times. The word was attended with power, and they soon joined about fifteen of us in a class, and afterwards took us into the quarterly plan. We now thought ourselves highly honoured indeed! Our little number increased to about twenty, and then the enemy who had hitherto been pretty quiet, began to show himself. His chief attack was upon the few united together to 'work out their own salvation with fear and trembling'.⁸ Against these he roared horribly. At our preachings and public meetings the sons of Belial would assemble in a most shameless and tumultuous manner, but were never permitted to hurt anyone, although they spoke many great and swelling words.

Once while one of our friends was at prayer, and I and a few more were kneeling by him, a big old woman with vengeance in her countenance advanced, having a sharp, broad axe (such as carpenters hew wood with), with many dreadful imprecations against the Methodists. She cursed horribly, and swore she would be the death of someone, if she was hanged for it the next hour! She stood a few seconds with her arms extended. No one offered to oppose her, but we prayed the more fervently. Till just as she appeared to be making a blow at the young man's head then at prayer, the axe fell to the floor as if the use of her hands was perfectly taken away, and she retired as fast as she could into another room, still cursing the youth for being the ruin of her son and daughter, as she was sure those false prophets would never have come there but for him, and she did not know where it would stop, but was sure the devil would get them all, with many such like expressions. Not long after this she was called to give up her accounts to God!

But these persecutions because of the word proved a sifting time, and many who countenanced preaching at first, appeared by and by to have been mere 'stony ground hearers'.⁹ Nay even our own society was soon diminished to about twelve. These held out for a few months, till the leader and his wife, with the man also who took in the preachers, were taken to Abraham's bosom. These three going in so short a time as a few months was an awful visitation! Those of us that remained proving unfaithful, the candlestick was very soon after removed to another place. Two or three of us followed it and continued for a little time; but by and by our love waxed cold also.

Though I was now about fifteen years of age, I had never been able to say my sins were forgiven. Nevertheless my desires were strong, and often did the Lord give me a foretaste. But having no one near to speak to, the adversary gained an advantage over me. I gave way by little and little, and my old companions, soon observing me less grave and circumspect, began to solicit me to join with them as formerly. This I refused for a time, but not with the resolution and steadfastness I had done before. So it only encouraged them to use other means of gaining me over. With what shame and sorrow of heart do I still reflect that in a little time I joined them in parties of pleasure, and went from bad to worse till I became tenfold more a child of hell than ever. For having once given way, my conscience became my constant tormentor day and night. I compared myself to that unhappy spirit, who being cast out of his habitation, went about seeking rest but found none. Thus I continued for upwards of two years, posting as if in haste for damnation, with a lighted candle in my hand; striving to stifle conscience with repeated acts of disobedience. The Spirit of God seemed for a time as if he had given me up, till I left the place I had now lived at upwards of five years, and removed to another village called Newton-under-Ousbury, where was a small society of sincere Christians, with monthly preaching, a public meeting, and a class on the

⁸Cf. Phil. 2:12.

⁹Cf. Mark 4:5, 16.

Lord's day. Here the Lord began to strive with me again, but I fought against him, and still grieved his Holy Spirit.

I removed from thence to Stockton-upon-Tees. Upon my arrival here I began to reflect upon my folly. Conscience was awakened once more, and I obeyed its dictates so far as to join the society. But seeing my class-leader intoxicated with liquor, I was offended and went near him no more.

After spending near one year in this place, I removed to Whitby in the year 1768, where was a large and flourishing society. I felt very unsettled and unhappy, till at last I resolved, God being my helper, to join that loving people. But then I thought I was too vile. And greatly discouraged by reflecting on my repeated backslidings for upwards of four years, I doubted I should never stand long. However my convictions increased, so that I could take no rest day or night, till I sent for that pious man, William Ripley.¹⁰ I expected him to have accused me with my past ingratitude to God and his people. But not a word of this! No, he saw me labouring under the weight of a wounded spirit, and the comfort he administered to me at that time was a cordial to my soul. Without asking me any questions, he fell upon his knees to write a note to admit me into the society, which I received with a trembling hand, as fearing my poor unfaithful heart would again start aside as a broken bow. But glory be to God, he was better to me than all my fears! In five days he blessed me with what I never knew before—viz., a clear sense of pardon. I believe I might have received this years before, when under those first awakenings of the Spirit of God, had I fallen into the same hands. But the people I was first connected with, though very serious and devout, were less evangelical in their sentiments, still retained a notion that my repentance was not sufficient—that I must be much more in earnest, feel more terror, more sorrow, deeper convictions, etc., before I could possibly attain a sense of pardon. This my friends in Whitby soon discerned, and told me that if God saw it necessary, he would deepen my convictions. But for me to pray for this, and to wait a little and a little longer, before I would dare to look for his favour, was the ready way to lose even the distress I then felt. They therefore told me I must pray for nothing but a sense of the favour of God. Two of them one night vehemently urged me to embrace the promises by faith, and insisted that I must, that very night, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and I should certainly be saved. At first I thought them so wild in their notions, and withal so unreasonable in their demands, that I could scarce refrain from being angry. My carnal nature spurned at it, because I thought it as impossible for me to believe as to pull the sun from the firmament. However when they had talked to me thus for near two hours, I began to tremble between hope and fear, and begged in a degree of agony that they would pray for me. Accordingly we all fell on our knees. That precious man of God, John Rogers, prayed first; and every word he uttered my heart felt, and I firmly believed that God would grant him his heart's desire. In that solemn moment all the sufferings of Christ came to my mind. By the eye of faith I had as real a view of his sufferings on Calvary as ever I had of any object by the eye of sense. I saw his hands and his feet nailed to the cross, his head crowned with thorns, and his side pierced with the soldier's spear—with innumerable drops of blood falling from the different parts of his body. But oh, what a look was that! Such an inexpressible degree of approbation was expressed, and communicated to my soul thereby, as I shall never forget. While I now recollect it, my overflowing heart and eyes almost forbid my proceeding. In that moment my burden was gone. My heart was changed from a state of bondage into glorious liberty. And I was constrained to tell those who feared the Lord, what he had done for my soul. I can truly say,

I rode on the sky,
(Freely justifi'd I)
Nor envi'd Elijah his seat;
My soul mounted higher,

¹⁰William Ripley (1739–84), a stonemason, settled in Whitby in 1760. He was active in the Methodist society, a local preacher, and accompanied JW at times on preaching trips. See *WHS* 4 (1904), 127–32; *WHS* 6 (1907), 37–42; and Dorothy Ripley, *Memoirs of William Ripley, Minister of the Gospel* (Philadelphia: J. H. Cunningham, 1827).

In a chariot of fire,
And the moon it was under my feet.¹¹

I now went about among my old acquaintance with a confidence that they would all repent and be converted if they knew how ready Christ was to save them. Some I found willing to hear what I had to say. Others stared at me as one quite out of my senses. However as nothing discouraged me, if I found them unwilling to let me pray with them, I would drop on my knees on the midst of the floor and praise God for what he had done for me, and pray that he would let them see their wants and give them all to experience the same blessing which I enjoyed. I had also great delight in accompanying those who came from country places about five miles distant, on their way home. Nor can I reflect on those seasons without singular pleasure, when we sang the praises of God as we walked along, and when we kneeled down on the sea-shore and commended each other to the grace of God. This was within a little of the twentieth year of my age.

Some time after, I was convinced that though the guilt of sin was all done away, yet there were in me the remains of an evil nature; that though I was happy in a sense of acceptance, and had power also over inward and outward sin, yet the fountain of corruption was not dried up; that I had yet a degree of the carnal mind which is enmity against God. At the same time I saw that, while it continued, I could not love the Lord my God with all my heart, and with all my mind, and with all my soul, and with all my strength, and my neighbour as myself; that I could not eat and drink and do all to the glory of God; in short, that I could not be holy in all manner of conversation, as he who hath called me is holy. Under a deep sense of this I groaned, being burdened, and my distress became inexpressible. My cry was, 'I cannot be satisfied, O Lord, till I awake up after thy likeness.' And then I pleaded his great and precious promises of making me a partaker of the divine nature.

At last I resolved neither to eat nor sleep till I had my desire accomplished. I had no sooner made that resolution than I was tempted to reason upon the rashness of it. But such was the condescension of God that he indulged my importunity, and granted my request. I then went with a trembling heart to the very house where it had pleased him to shed abroad his pardoning love in my soul. That dear family no sooner learned my errand than they encouraged me to expect the blessing that hour, and exhorted me to believe on the Lord Jesus for full salvation. We then fell on our knees, and a precious widow, one Mary Best, full of faith and love, wrestled and pleaded with the Lord till I felt an entire change, accompanied with a peculiar, humbling sweetness—but not that rapturous joy I always thought attended that perfect liberty. On this account I was tempted much to reason. And it is probable the enemy would have wrested away my shield, but for the comforting interposition of my friends, who were not, like me, ignorant of Satan's devices. They told me it was a common case that a soul might be emptied of sin, and yet not filled with love till afterwards. This I found true by experience, and therefore I was enabled henceforth to rejoice in a full assurance of this great salvation. In this glorious liberty I walked for at least three months, during which time, notwithstanding I had many fiery darts shot at me, yet I could sing,

Not a doubt can arise,
To darken the skies,
Or hide for a moment my Lord from my eyes.¹²

When I looked for those heart-risings of anger, pride, and self-will which, like dry tinder, were formerly ready to catch fire at any provocation, I found them not. But on the contrary, I found meekness, humility, and resignation. I was so truly humbled with a sense of my own nothingness, that I rejoiced to suffer reproach for the name of Christ. That natural enmity to the pure law of God being now totally removed, his commandments became more joyous than ever. And I could say, in a sense I never could

¹¹CW, 'Hymns for One Fallen from Grace, #15', st. 6, *HSP* (1749), 1:124.

¹²CW, 'Hymns for Believers, #18', st. 5, *HSP* (1749), 1:221.

before, 'The law of God is in my heart, even the law of love.' And I felt it the constraining principle which led me to do and suffer the whole will of God. But at the same time I felt my ignorance and helplessness, together with the weakness and unworthiness which attended my best services. Hence my daily cry was,

Every moment Lord I want
The merit of thy death.¹³

And blessed be God! I felt it applied. Through faith in his blood, I had constant access to the Father, through the Spirit; yea, and had fellowship with the Father and the Son, by the Holy Ghost.

The fervent love I had for God caused me to love my neighbour with a pure heart fervently. And hence I had a strong desire to preach the gospel unto them—not doubting but if I could explain what I then felt, they would all repent and be converted. And therefore, as I was at a distance from home, I made haste to return thither; being fully persuaded that I had a message from God to my friends. When I arrived, I got a considerable number together, and standing up, for the first time in my father's house, faithfully warned them to flee from the wrath to come. All seemed astonished, and some were much affected. But alas, it was not as I expected! I did not find it such an easy matter to convert them from the error of their ways as I imagined. I plainly saw, this power belongeth unto God alone! However it pleased him to give me some encouragement. For the second time I preached to them, the house was filled with groans and cries, till at length one exclaimed (*viz.*, my sister-in-law), 'Glory be to God! Glory be to God! He hath blessed me! He hath blessed me! He has set my soul at liberty! I can praise him, and I will praise him! O praise God for me! Praise him! Praise him! Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord!' And so she went on for a considerable time.

This greatly encouraged me. But Satan seemed very unwilling I should proceed, and therefore endeavoured to throw hindrances in my way. I then removed from the family I had been so much blessed with, to another, who though much longer professing religion, yet were less alive to God. Here I fell into a snare, which brought my soul into great heaviness; for parleying with the temptation, I lost my confidence, and became almost distracted for a season.

About this time I had the following dream. I thought I was bit by a large serpent, which wound I knew to be very dangerous, and that unavoidable death would ensue, if a speedy cure could not be effected. But where to go for it I knew not. My hand was presently swelled to a prodigious size, and the poison seemed to spread very swiftly through my whole body. Observing this, I was in an agony of distress, when one told me of a physician at some distance who alone could cure me. On this I determined to go to him immediately. But when I got to the door, I saw an innumerable multitude of serpents through the midst of which I must pass. My torture and perplexity being inexpressible, I turned into the house again. But reflecting that if I stayed here, death was the certain consequence; and that I could but die, if I went; and considering farther that if the physician could cure the first wound, he could also cure the rest; I resolved to push through them at all hazards, and so ran with all my might. On this I thought I got many bites more. Yet none so bad as the first. Coming to the physician, he received me with kindness, and applied a balmy medicine which immediately relieved my pain and removed the inflammation. Yet still my distress was great, and I told him I dare not return back again, for the serpents I have just passed through will again assault and wound me. But he bade me be of good courage, and anoint[ed] my whole body with the same balmy medicine (a quantity of which he gave me), and said it would hinder them from wounding me, though they might assault me. But if they should wound me, he bade me return to him again. On this I thanked him, and with a grateful heart took my leave. When I came towards the serpents, I saw them sunk back into holes in the earth, and only their heads peeping out, except a few who assaulted me, but had no power to hurt me.

By this dream I was convinced that I ought to leave that family, and therefore resolved to do it

¹³CW, Hymn on Isa. 32:2, st. 5, *HSP* (1742), 146.

without delay. I had no sooner fixed this determination than a glimpse of hope was darted into my soul, and I saw that Jesus was the physician, and that he alone was both able and willing to heal my wound. I went up therefore to my bedchamber to read and pray, when the Lord, instead of upbraiding me, applied the precious balm of his blood, and restored the joy of his salvation to my distressed soul. Taking my Bible, and lifting up my heart to heaven, I opened on the seventh chapter of St. John, and coming to that passage, 'Jesus stood up in the great day of the feast and cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."' ¹⁴ I shall never forget the manner in which those words were applied to my soul. It was as if the Lord Jesus Christ was standing before me in person, and actually speaking these words to me. On this I was fully satisfied that he had healed my backslidings, and again loved me freely.

I now left Whitby, and went to reside about five miles distant. Here providence cast my lot with a most agreeable and happy family, and the Lord confirmed what he had wrought. The holy flame was such in my heart that I went to the neighbouring villages, and especially every Lord's day stood in the open streets to warn sinners to flee from the wrath to come. I met with some discouragements. But in less than six months it pleased God to raise a society in Lythe, a village about a mile distant. We procured a comfortable place to preach in, and the Lord added daily to our number. We then solicited the travelling preachers to visit us, and soon after they gave us one night in a month.

The enemy had often strove to prevent the gospel from taking root in that wicked place. But now, seeing the word mightily prevail, notwithstanding all his stratagems, he raged with redoubled fury. Some ruffians combined to prevent my preaching, and were determined some way or other to carry their point. As I was not afraid of man, and the few whom God had raised up were resolved to stand by me, we regarded not their threats.

After they had often disturbed us in our preaching house, one night these sons of Belial collected all their forces and assembled at the door, to attack us as we came out. Their number was great, and I had no sooner dismissed the people than they began the assault. Hearing this, I pushed forward from the pulpit and got into the midst of them. They saluted me with volleys of oaths, and showers of stones and dirt; and in less than two minutes fell to blows. One of the stoutest of them advanced, with eyes full of fury, and made several strokes at my head. But I received them upon my left arm, which, by this means, was much bruised. When he could not bring me to the ground, he was enraged, and watching his opportunity, whilst I endeavoured to rescue one of my friends whom they were beating, he came behind and gave me such a blow on my right temple that I staggered like a drunken man. My hat fell off, and my senses were greatly confused; so that I must have fallen, had he followed his blow. This doubtless he would have done, but in that moment a young girl, who had lately been awakened and had joined our society, thinking I was much hurt, instantly took up a stone, about two pounds weight, and threw it at his back. He then left me, to revenge himself upon her. And indeed she suffered dreadfully. For he took up a stone, equally large, and threw it with such violence in her face that she fell to the ground and lay motionless. She was supposed to be dead, and was carried home to her mother's house. However it pleased God that she recovered. Yet she was cut in the most dreadful manner, having her cheek laid open to the bone; and she will bear this mark of suffering for her Lord's sake, to her dying hour. Others of our friends were hurt. One in particular had his face almost covered with blood, and his coat, waistcoat, and shirt torn halfway down his back. It is probable we might have come off worse still, had not God taken our part. For 'as the stars in their courses fought against Sisera', ¹⁵ so the Lord struck our enemies with terror, by sending in that very moment dreadful flashes of lightning from a cloud, which seemed to burst over their guilty heads. Finding an opportunity, while they were terrified, we endeavoured to escape; but retreated gradually, as some of our people were old and infirm, and we were not willing to leave them in the rear, lest they should become a prey. The next day we found means to bring some of the ringleaders to justice, and they disturbed us no more.

Having spent almost two years among these my first children in the gospel, though I loved them

¹⁴Cf. John 7:37.

¹⁵Sir Walter Scott, *Old Mortality*.

as my own soul, I was not easy in my mind to be shut up in one place and that a small one. I therefore set out on foot upon a journey of about one hundred miles in circumference, preaching wherever I found a door open. In this journey I met with some difficulties. Nevertheless my encouragements more than counterbalanced them. Among several others, one thing was as pleasing as remarkable. An old man came to hear preaching at Wingate, a small village near Sunderland, and was deeply convinced of sin. He went home with trembling and terror, and could not sleep till he had found a clear sense of pardon. Being filled with joy unspeakable, he communicated this to his wife, with whom he had lived upwards of sixty years. She was exceedingly affected with the relation of what God had wrought in him, and wished to go the next evening with him and hear for herself. When she came and heard, she was deeply convinced, and returning home she asked her husband if he thought God would give *her* the same blessing which *he* had obtained. The old man, full of faith, cried, 'O, yes! All things are ready. You may have it this night. He hath saved *me*, who am the greater sinner.' Being encouraged at this, they agreed to pray together alternately, confident that God would bless her also, even that very night. They continued wrestling Jacob-like, till after 4:00 in the morning, and had no answer. Though their strength was much exhausted with praying so long, being both upwards of fourscore years of age, and consequently very infirm; yet they would not give up, and the Lord soon after condescended to grant her request and to speak her sins forgiven.

My health was impaired by this journey. But in the year 1774, it was so restored that I thought myself able to take a circuit. And therefore at the Bristol Conference that year I was appointed to labour with Mr. Duncan Wright on the Thirsk circuit. I was truly thankful for such a fellow labourer, seeing he acted the part of a father to me. We had the hearts of the people, and the Lord added many seals to our ministry.

In the year 1775 I was received into full connexion, and appointed at the Leeds Conference for Edinburgh; where I had for my colleagues Thomas Rutherford and Robert Wilkinson, two faithful men, whose hearts were in the work. The people solicited our stay another year. And though we laboured in love and harmony both with each other and among the people, yet very little fruit appeared at the end of two years. We had found two hundred and sixty members in the Edinburgh circuit; we joined upwards of two hundred more, and yet in the end left only two hundred and forty-five—that is, fifteen less than we found. So fluctuating was that people! Nevertheless we have a few steady, faithful, hospitable friends in Scotland.

I should probably have stayed longer in that kingdom, had my health permitted. What injured my constitution a second time was a journey which I took to the Isle of Bute. It is eighteen miles long, and in most parts about three or four broad, situate about forty miles from Glasgow. Its inhabitants in general speak the Erse language; few understand English. Being invited by one of the natives, a well-wisher to religion, I resolved to give them a trial. We had about twenty miles to go by water. And in the second voyage I made, just after we put to sea, a dreadful storm arose. The boatmen were so foolhardy as not to put back again, and the wind being nearly right ahead of our vessel they were obliged to tack most of the way. The women passengers and the children began to shriek, and cry dreadfully, so that the sailors were obliged to put them all below and to fasten down the hatches. The place was small, and the people so numerous, that I expected they would be suffocated. But there was no alternative! The rest drank so much whisky that I feared there would not be men enough sober to work the vessel. They pressed me to partake with them. But I could not taste. — No! I had other work, looking every moment when the vessel would fill and overset, as part of it was an open boat. The rain and hail was very heavy from the clouds, and the sea also breaking over us. I had nothing left dry about me. Thus I sat, or stood, without any shelter, for twelve or fourteen hours exposed to the whole, whilst the water ran out of my shoes. But contrary to our fears, it pleased God at last to bring us safe to the haven where we would be.

Having no clothes to shift me, I went straight to the inn where I had slept before, intending to go immediately to bed, as my only resource to prevent a fit of sickness. But to my great disappointment, a gentleman's family who had been detained by the same storm, had possession of my lodgings. In about two hours an old man, hearing of my situation, came and gave me a kind invitation to his little cottage. I gladly accepted his friendly offer and, hastening home with him, put off my wet clothes. But my bed

being raised only about twelve inches from a damp earthen floor, and there being no fire, it was not quite so comfortable as my condition then required. Especially as the coverings were not warm, being nearly worn out. The consequence was, in a few hours I found my throat exceedingly inflamed and a burning feverish heat through my whole frame. So that I had little hope of ever seeing the mainland again. It was also impracticable to send for any of my friends, because of the weather. Yet, blessed be God, I was not friendless; for that friend that sticketh closer than a brother did not leave me, neither forsake me. I returned and remained some months after this in Glasgow and Edinburgh, but did not recover my health for some time.

In the year 1777, being appointed to labour in the east circuit of Cornwall, I stopped in my way thither a few days at Bristol. On one of those days I waited upon and conversed with that great and good man, Mr. John Fletcher, who was then in the neighbourhood in a very weak state of body, and whom I had longed to see. In the beginning of his conversation he quoted part of the sixteenth chapter of St. John's gospel; and whilst he pointed out the descent of the Holy Ghost, as the great promise of the Father and the privilege of all New Testament believers, in a manner I never had heard before, my soul was uncommonly affected.

As an invidious report had been spread that he had recanted what he had lately written against Calvinism in those excellent writings of his entitled his *Checks*, etc., I took the liberty to mention the report, and asked him what he thought had given rise to it? He replied he could not tell, except that he had refrained from speaking on controverted points since he came to Mr. [James] Ireland's (where he then was)—partly by reason of the poor state of his health, and partly because he did not wish to grieve his kind and hospitable friend, by making his house a field of controversy.

Having been appointed in the year 1778 to the Kent circuit, I met with and was married to Miss Martha Knowlden, a young woman of a worthy family then residing near Coxheath, with whom I had been somewhat acquainted three years before at Edinburgh. It was in that city she had first joined the Methodists, and had received a clear sense of pardon. And about a year after our marriage she attained also the blessing of pure love—to which all her words and tempers bore witness whilst she lived; and in her death she gave testimony of God's power to save to the uttermost them that come to him through Christ Jesus.

In the year 1779 I was appointed to labour at Leeds, where I found a people ripe for the doctrine of holiness, and many that year believed unto full salvation. This was the richest soil for Methodism I had yet known. We found two thousand two hundred members in society, and about twenty local preachers, who greatly assisted us in the work. And the word of the Lord ran and was glorified; to which the sweet spirit and harmony which subsisted between the preachers, stewards, leaders, and people, greatly contributed.

In the year 1780 I went to Sheffield, where I found a large society. But less united than those I had left, and therefore I was not so comfortable for a time as I could wish. It grieved me also that one of my fellow labourers did not lovingly draw in the same yoke, and soon after left the connexion.¹⁶

I travelled a short time with Mr. Wesley, but being taken ill with a bilious complaint, I was obliged soon to desist. When I recovered, I was appointed to labour another year at Sheffield, and was highly favoured with the assistance of two zealous young men.¹⁷ So that we had peace in our borders, and the work prospered.

In the year 1782 I was appointed for Macclesfield. Here I met with some difficulties; yet I received also many blessings. I saw many converted to God in several parts of the circuit. And I had the satisfaction to leave the society increased considerably in number; and, I trust, upon the whole more alive to God.

But all my trials here were little in comparison of the parting with one of the most faithful,

¹⁶Alexander M'Nab.

¹⁷William Percival and Joseph Taylor.

agreeable, and best of wives.¹⁸ To add to my affliction, my youngest son died a little before his mother, and they were both lain in one grave.¹⁹

In the year 1784 I entered into the marriage state a second time,²⁰ and shortly after hastened to my appointment in Dublin—where, after an agreeable passage, I arrived in the end of August. Here I have received many favours, and have been blessed in my labours. Such love and sincere friendship I have rarely seen among any people. Vital religion hath made a swift progress here for about two years past. The revival is deep and wide, and very few of those who have put their hand to the gospel plough have as yet looked back, and I trust they never will. I never found a people so willing to hear, and so ready to embrace the whole gospel, as in Dublin.

Indeed they have been prepared for the reception of this ever since that burning and shining light, Mr. [John] Fletcher, visited them in the autumn of 1783. And though his stay among them was only six weeks, yet it was made an amazing blessing to some who, I believe, will never forget the discoveries made to them by his preaching, conversation, and prayers—whilst he set forth, in the warmest and most animated manner, the great love of God in Christ Jesus.

He was peculiarly useful to old professors, in stirring them up to seek purity of heart with more earnestness, which some attained while he was in town, and many more have since. He was a blessed instrument to some, in removing their prejudice against Christian perfection. So that I do not hear of any in this place who now oppose it.

On my arrival in Dublin I had the pleasure of being received by a fellow labourer, who was exactly of the same sentiment, in doctrines, with myself; and we agreed also in every point of the Methodist discipline.²¹ We laboured and lived in harmony. And the work of God so prospered in our hands that at the end of the year two hundred had been added to the society; and of these, one hundred and thirty, as we had reason to believe, were truly converted to God.

In the next year, it pleased God to send me another helper after my own heart; who was, indeed, a true yokefellow.²² So that we sweetly drew together, till he was called hence, in the midst of his usefulness, to his eternal reward, greatly lamented by all who knew him.²³ By his death my labours were increased, my spirits depressed, and, added to this, I caught a severe cold—so that I could hardly have stood up under it, had I not been comforted by the love of many sympathizing friends, and especially that of a kind and tender partner, who is indeed a helpmeet for me, and has also been singularly useful in the society.

The work of God has prospered here amazingly this year; for at the time I write this we have an increase of two hundred and fifty, and there are, we hear, upwards of one hundred and twenty converted. Of these about forty are enabled to love God with all their heart and now meet regularly in a select society.

But to return to my own experience. I observed in the former part of this account that my justification was particularly clear. So was also the work of sanctification. And as I received the former of these blessings by simple faith, and in one moment; so also did I the latter. I have not, indeed, always had the witness of full salvation equally clear. I observed before that by a certain circumstance I entirely lost it for a season. And even since it pleased God to restore it to me, I have more than once been robbed of my confidence. I believe I have some of the fruits which attend such a state; yet, I am clear that I have not so much of these as many of the adult children of God do possess. One thing which often brings sorrow to

¹⁸Martha (Knowlden) Rogers died Feb. 15, 1784; see her husband's letter to JW, c. Feb. 25, 1786.

¹⁹James Rogers Jr. (bap. June 20, 1783) was buried on Jan. 20, 1784.

²⁰To Hester Ann Roe.

²¹Andrew Blair.

²²Christopher Peacock.

²³See Hester (Roe) Rogers to JW, Mar. 2, 1786.

my mind is, I am apt to resent warmly what I believe wrong. And perhaps I reprove the person too much in my own spirit. My office in the church requires peculiar resolution and firmness. Yet, 'the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men; apt to teach, patient;—in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.'²⁴ For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.'²⁵

In order to avoid that by which I often suffered, I have wished that I had less to do with discipline and sundry other affairs in the church; and that I might spend my days in recommending the great love of God to perishing sinners. But so long as I act according to the light I have, in that station whereunto I am called, I hope my brethren will bear with me. I am deeply sensible of my great inability, and unworthiness. But my trust is in the Lord, who is my strength and righteousness. I feel a need of recurring daily to the blood of sprinkling, and am persuaded that the Lord will correct and pardon what he sees amiss, and will give me a still larger measure of his grace.

James Rogers

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 12 (1789): 346–50, 404–08, 460–63, 514–18, 572–76, 628–32.²⁶

²⁴2 Tim. 2:24–25.

²⁵James 1:20.

²⁶This account is reproduced in Jackson, *EMP*, 4:274–329; along with a short addendum on his death.

From Mary Cooke

Duke Street, Trowbridge
March 25, 1786

I gladly avail myself of the allowed liberty of an uninterrupted correspondence; and evidence the pleasure it gives me by addressing you, dear sir, at the first place I have any certain knowledge of your visiting.

Accept grateful thanks for the help already afforded. And if your kindness be not quite wearied, suffer it once again to exert itself in solving a difficulty which one has seen couched under those words which we find in the 29th chapter of Deuteronomy, and the 4th verse. 'Yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day.' Behold how presuming grows on encouragement. Yet when it gets too exuberant, lop it by rebuke, and prune its excesses into moderation.

The latter part of your letter brought to remembrance past, and begot new, both pleasing and painful sensations.¹ I recollect with what delight those words which you repeat came once to my mind, while walking from the [preaching-]room with my two sisters.² I felt such a confidence in the continual and final fulfilment of them as is inexpressible. That confidence brought an equal degree of joy—whilst with complacency, and sweet assurance, I dwelt on the given words, or rather on the power which accompanied them. 'A threefold cord, which *never* shall be broken.' Indeed I do believe it *never* shall, in time or to eternity. The painful feelings came in that injunction of yours, 'Remember you have some at home which you are not to leave behind you.' Alas, my dear sir, it is our grief they will not go with us! Often we wish, vainly wish, it was in our power to awaken them to a true sense of what is their best interest. All power is with him, we know, who delighteth in mercy and willeth their salvation. But they listen not to his voice. I plainly see they daily resist the strivings of his Spirit, and will not yield to become foolish and vile, that they may be made wise in the best things, and heirs of a kingdom. You say, 'Your advice and prayers for them will not finally be in vain.' The first they will not receive; the latter they cannot hinder. We are mopes and enthusiasts. A contradiction these, I think—yet we are deemed both. It is said our ideas of right and wrong are erroneous; our notions much perverted. Then from such *odd* creatures, think you advice will be kindly taken? Ah no, it is not. O who can tell how deeply it pierces, even as a sword into our souls, when we behold those we dearly love perversely blind, running to their own undoing! It causes us to weep in secret, and sometimes to go mourning all the day long. Viewing them as plunging unprepared into an awful eternity, an *unchangeable* state, my feelings are almost too much to bear! When so painfully exercised on their account, I have been ready to fear I am more careful for them than for myself, and am more anxious for their safety than earnest in striving to secure my own. And truly I do sometimes, comparatively, leave caring for myself to care for them.

When the dear Redeemer wept over Jerusalem, how poignant must the feelings of his soul be, which on his *own* people's account drew forth that piteous lamentation, 'Ye would not!'³ Herein we have fellowship with our Lord in his sufferings, and often deplore with exceedingly bitter cry the hardness and unbelief of such whose salvation (next to our own) above all things we wish. I never should have spoken of these things, but your mention thereof appeared an opening opportunity unexpectedly put in my way, which I could not but see right to embrace, of asking your advice how it would be most proper to act? We are frequently in a great strait, not knowing what to do. On the one hand, we are afraid of saying too much, lest by so doing we should disgust, and by thus over-much talking mar instead of forwarding any good work. But on the other side, when we consider the vast importance of eternity, and the awful danger

¹JW's 7th letter to Cooke, c. Mar. 20, 1786, is not known to survive; a little of its content is revealed by her select quotations from it.

²Anne and Frances Cooke.

³Matt. 23:37, and parallels.

of such as careless totter on its breaking brink, it seems necessary that every offered moment should be spent in warning, or invitation. And we are oft ready to conclude against ourselves, that every such opportunity neglected rises against us. We are weakness. But he who is *ours* is mighty. O may he guide us aright, and teach you how to assist us in this matter! To instruct us with knowledge, and to advise us with that wisdom which the enemy of peace and gospel-simplicity cannot gainsay. We find his devices are many—and never more subtle than when he transforms himself into an angel of light. In this plausible appearance he gains the greatest advantage, making our feeble minds to waver, raising a cloud of *imaginary* difficulties to obstruct the clearest views of our yet weak faith. Concealing himself in the mist he raises, he leads us into reasoning perplexities where, when our eyes are open and unclouded, all is easy and our path marked out with the most exact plainness. Yet our eye is open unto him, our expectation is from him who causeth light to arise in the darkness, and who hath in a measure shined by his illuminating Spirit on our hearts. His promises are yea and amen. Therefore we hope, and with confidence wait for the perfect day, which we believe shall break in upon our souls.

Was it not for this hope of victory, I should soon grow weary of combatting with the strong powers of self and sin. But Jesus will uphold our steps, and make us conquerors over *all*: *all* the powers of death and hell, and inbred sin's deep root. This hope, I trust, as an anchor cast sure, firmly rests in him. And did *ever* the weakest soul believe in vain? Truly I think that word is spoken in verity. 'All things are possible to him that believeth.'⁴ Acknowledging thus much (and thus much I must acknowledge), I am ashamed of my own weakness, doubts, and unbelief. And shall it be always thus? Nay, I believe it shall not. Mighty is faith. Effectual is prayer. Will you, dear sir, help us much with the latter, and pray that we may be made strong in the former grace? Ever growing therein; and exercising what is given, for the destruction of our spiritual foes, and for establishing the permanent, the perfect peace, our spirits hunger after.

As to my present state. I feel a deep solemnity of spirit which casts contempt on worldly greatness, and comparatively counts of little worth all things below. My one desire is to know *only* Jesus, and him crucified, esteeming his reproach greater riches than heaps of gold, wishing to live and walk in him by faith, believing with a pure heart, loving, and obeying with an ever-willing mind. Surely in me his whole will shall be accomplished. And this is his will, even my sanctification.⁵ He still bears with my provocations, and they are many. I wonder at my continued unfaithfulness. But more I wonder at his love, which forbids my deserved destruction, makes me ashamed of myself, confounds me before him, but says unto me, 'Live! Live yet a season longer, to praise redeeming grace.' O that I could worthily do it! That every hindrance was removed, 'and all my hallowed heart was love!'⁶

Bear one ever near your heart to a throne of mercy; and when you supplicate for choicest blessings, forget not

Your poor

M. C.

I have some fears for this letter. Hope it will reach you safely; as I cannot like that it should be opened by any hand save yours.

My sisters desire I would convey their best respects, with an assurance of their esteem and thanks for your kind remembrance of them.

Address: 'The Revd J. Wesley / To be left at the Preaching-House / Macclesfield / Cheshire'.

Endorsement: 'Answer to Mr. Wesley's 7th Letter'.

Source: manuscript copy for records; Bridwell Library (SMU), Mary Cooke Letter-book, pp. 6–7.

⁴Mark 9:23, and parallels.

⁵See 1 Thess. 4:3.

⁶Cf. CW, 'Hymn to God the Sanctifier', st. 7, *HSP* (1740), 46.

From [Thomas] Middleton¹

[Scarborough]
c. April 1786

You see the man; you see his hold of heav'n; [...]
Heav'n waits not the last moment, owns her friends
On this side death; and points them out to men,
A lecture, silent, but of sovereign power,
To vice confusion, and to virtue peace.

Young²

I make no pretensions to literary qualifications. Neither is it a desire of becoming an author that induces me to publish the following account. But believing that the exemplary life, and happy death of my dear brother will be of service to the people he was connected with, I think it my duty to declare what I know concerning him.

He was born at Asenby, near Thirsk, in Yorkshire, 1757, of poor, but honest parents, who gave their children as good an education as their circumstances would allow; for which we have much reason to be thankful.

When my brother was about seventeen years of age, I had a concern for my soul. And going to see my father, I entreated my brother to go with me to hear the Methodists. On his refusal, I talked with him about the value of our souls, and the necessity of using all possible means for securing our salvation. Though he slighted me and my counsel for a year and a half, when he saw religion did not render me unmindful of the common duties of life, he grew friendly. About a year after, he told me that, to his knowledge, he had not committed a sin for the last five or six years, without being reproved in his own conscience for it. Notwithstanding which he withstood the workings of the Spirit, intending thereby to stifle his convictions.

About this time he came to Scarborough; and not finding work here went to Whitby, where he stayed the following summer. There he often heard the gospel, and was frequently convinced of the evil of his doings; yet endeavoured to turn a deaf ear both to the threatenings and promises of God.

The following winter he returned to my father's again, where he continued to follow the desires of the flesh. And as he could not serve two masters, he cast off all restraint, and would not have Jesus to reign over him.

Towards the latter part of summer 1779, the Lord opened his eyes more fully, and showed him the exceeding sinfulness of sin, when the following scriptures were deeply impressed on his mind: 'If ye die in your sins, where I am ye cannot come.'³ 'Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.'⁴ etc. On this he began to pray more earnestly than he had ever done before; and often put that question to himself, 'Who can endure everlasting burning? Who can dwell with devouring fire?' He now saw that everything from which he had formerly sought happiness was nothing but vanity and vexation of spirit. When I visited him that winter, I know not that I ever saw a penitent so exactly like Hezekiah as he was—for he mourned like a dove; and sleeping and waking,

¹This account is of Christopher Middleton, baptized Nov. 14, 1756 in Topcliffe, Yorkshire (which includes Asenby), and buried on Mar. 16, 1786 in Scarborough. His parents were John and Fortune (Durham) Middleton, who married in 1753. The account is apparently written by Thomas Middleton (b. 1754), their oldest son and Christopher's older brother.

²Edward Young, *Night Thoughts*, Night 2, ll. 643–48.

³Cf. John 8:21.

⁴Cf. Matt. 18:3.

‘Mercy! Mercy! Mercy!’ was all his cry. Now he forsook all his old companions in sin at once, and his Bible became his chief counsellor; together with a little book his landlady put into his box when he left Whitby, called, *A Choice Drop of Honey from the Rock Christ*.⁵ I stopped with him at my father’s near a week, and spoke to him of the Lord Jesus, as well as I could.

About a fortnight after I left him, he wrote to me the following account:

Dear Brother,

One night going to bed in great distress I began to cry for mercy. When I fell asleep, I dreamed that I heard a voice say, ‘Believe in Christ.’ I also thought that I saw a face, exceedingly bright, look through the window. On this I awoke, and found the load of guilt entirely gone, and the sting of death taken away. In crying for mercy in my sleep, the agony of my soul was so great, that when I awoke I was in a bath of sweat.

A little after, I received the following account from him. ‘When I come to reflect on the love of God to my soul, I am lost in wonder and amazement! What a change hath he wrought in a little time! How was I gratifying my fleshly appetites, and wandering on the dark mountains of sin and folly? Pursuing them with all the heat and vigour of youth, till the Lord shone into my soul, and discovered the cheat!’

He now found his soul at liberty, and was zealous in reproving and exhorting others, both rich and poor, as occasion offered: exceedingly longing for the salvation of all, especially his parents and brethren.

June 7, 1781, he wrote as follows:

I have lately been led to feel my need of being delivered from inbred sin, and of possessing all the mind that was in Christ Jesus. I see nothing unclean can dwell in heaven. I feel it is only sin that causes unhappiness. I find tempers in me contrary to the will of God, which cause many a struggle. One night I went into a private place, intending not to come out of it till the Lord had cleansed my soul. As soon as I got there, those words were impressed on my mind, ‘Dost thou now believe?’—I replied, ‘Not now!’ O the wretchedness of my heart! Yet I can at times rejoice in the Lord and bless his name for trials. He is making me more and more acquainted with my own heart. This morning my peace is as a river. The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want as long as I continue in his fold. O that we may never stray from him! I desire to be passive in his hands, and always humble before him. I thank him for sending his servants among us. We have no need of perishing for lack of knowledge. O brother, what need have we to mind that exhortation, ‘Be not conformed to this world!’⁶ Go thou rather, and preach deliverance to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound: exhorting them to come out from among the wicked (as far as business permits) and not to touch the unclean thing.

From this time till his returning to Whitby (in the beginning of 1783) I have only by me two letters: the substance of which is as follows:

Dear Brother,

If I was to tell you the many trials I am exercised with, perhaps you would not believe me. I sometimes think the devil rejoices over my unfaithfulness. Sometimes I reason about several parts of Scripture which I cannot understand; sometimes about going from this place; at others, about changing my state in life. Sometimes I think I must either do this or go back into

⁵Thomas Wilcox, *A Choice Drop of Honey from the Rock Christ; or, A Short Word of Advice to Saints and Sinners* (London: John Marshall, 1732); JW republished as *A Word of Advice to Saints and Sinners* (1746, *Bibliography*, No. 127).

⁶Rom. 12:2.

Egypt. Last week I was led by the devil, and my carnal heart, into a temptation that might have ruined me. But the good Lord prevented me from entering into it. O what matter of thankfulness is this! I see I want the heart of a little child. My carnal heart is my greatest enemy. O that I could be careful for nothing!

In the other letter he says,

I find much favour from the men of the world, which often makes me examine myself; because there is a woe pronounced against the man whom all speak well of. Dear brother, I find great need of humility; that is, of being little in my own eyes. For what is worldly honour, pleasure, profit, or any other creature-good, to the love of God in Christ Jesus! I have lately fed on substantial food. There has been an intercourse opened between God and my soul; and I feel a desire to cleave to him with full purpose of heart. I find myself delivered from many wandering thoughts, which I was once addicted to. At present I find no more creature-love than in my infancy. I find that scripture fulfilled in me, the Lord satisfies the hungry with good things.

From this time I do not remember that he ever lost a sense of the love of God; but walked in the light of his countenance in a higher or lower degree.

Soon after he came to Whitby, I discovered an alteration in his spirit. I cannot give a regular account of his experience here, but I know his heart longed for *all* that is contained in that precious promise: 'From all your idols, and from all your filthiness will I cleanse you.'⁷

Being obliged this spring, to leave off working, on account of an ague, he writes as follows:

My Dear Brother and Sister,⁸

I take this opportunity of informing you that I am obliged to leave off working. But, blessed be God, it was never better with me than now! I have not the least doubt but the Lord will keep me to the day of Jesus Christ. Last Sunday sennight, when Mr. Collins had done preaching,⁹ and was concluding with prayer, this promise, 'I will, be thou clean',¹⁰ was powerfully applied to my soul. Since that time, in my sorest afflictions, I have not found the least murmuring. On Tuesday night I was attacked by an ague fit. But while my body was burning with the fever, my soul was so on fire for God, that I could not but preach to all who were near me. At present, I find a determination, whether in health or sickness, to be wholly the Lord's.

As he now more fully possessed the mind which was in Jesus, he began to be more in earnest in doing good to the souls and bodies of men. He began by visiting the sick, and then by calling sinners to repentance both in public and private. But his zeal carried him beyond his strength. For now, his unremitted labours broke his constitution very fast. It is thought by some that he laid the foundation of his disorder by preaching. But I cannot think that, for he had frequent bleedings before, and had been often poorly; but it is likely his speaking so often increased his complaint.

As this Scripture was continually impressed on his mind, 'Thou God seest me',¹¹ he enjoyed the blessedness of the man that feareth always. Hence no chit-chat, no jesting or foolish talking proceeded out of his mouth. Nor could he endure it in others. For if he could not put a stop to it where he was, rather than have any fellowship with the workers of darkness, he would leave the place.

⁷Cf. Ezek. 36:25.

⁸Thomas Middleton married Elizabeth Neeshame in 1776.

⁹William Collins was appointed Assistant for the Scarborough circuit at the 1785 Conference.

¹⁰Matt. 8:3, Mark 1:41, Luke 5:13.

¹¹Gen. 16:13.

As a leader, he tenderly loved the people under his care. He encouraged the weak and wavering. But careless professors, whether rich or poor, he reproved sharply, that they might be sound in the faith. His zeal and piety gained the hearts of the people amongst whom he laboured, and I believe many of them will remember the profit they received from him to their latest moments. And that he might be better able to serve God himself, and to instruct others, he was diligent in searching the scriptures. He was also constant at the table of the Lord, and at all meetings of the society.

As to his creed, he believed that God had no pleasure in the death of a sinner, that Jesus gave himself a ransom for all, that we are justified by faith, and that the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin.

The following extracts from his own letters will best illustrate his experience in the latter part of his life.

About August 1783, he writes thus: 'It was never better with me than now. I live more in heaven than ever I did, and the world is under my feet.' About a month after, he wrote thus:

Last Sunday I went to a little village near the bay, (the second time I spoke in public) the house was filled with people, and my soul was filled with God. My thirst for his glory does much increase. Do remember me in your near approaches to God. I feel my thirst for creature happiness entirely quenched. And the language of my heart is, 'Lord, leave me here, or carry me to any place, only let me be doing and suffering thy will!' I think my thirst for souls is not so eager as I could wish. Notwithstanding that, I rest in God. I never go into my closet but I pray for you, and the Lord wonderfully blesses me. I hope my sister and Betty (if not in possession of it) are seeking that love which casteth out all fear that hath torment. O what a jewel is this! It is worth selling all to purchase. I believe William Ripley is likely soon to change earth for heaven. The good Lord give him a bright setting sun!

In other letters he says, 'What a comfortable state, when we are made free from sin. I enjoy an uninterrupted peace from day to day, and feel myself an utter stranger to all below.'

'There is nothing like Mary's place. My soul at present is happy at the feet of Jesus.'

'I have had continual struggles with temptations before I began to preach. The other night I visited a sick woman who cried out for mercy. Her sorrow was turned into joy; this was the Lord's doings. I am encouraged to travel on, and hope I shall never grow weary in well doing.'

My soul exults in God! What bright views of endless felicity? Glory be to my dear Redeemer! My Master is going to reap the reward of his labour. O what a preacher of holiness! What hold of God! O how happy! how satisfied! Tell my sister, there is nothing like purity of heart. Venture on the Lord with the little strength you have; strive to believe in Christ! Lay hold, and he whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple! I hope Betty's motto is holiness to the Lord. O Betty deny yourself, take up the cross, and follow the bleeding Lamb whithersoever he goeth! The Lord will help you; my dear, cleave to him with full purpose of heart.

Presently after he wrote as follows:

My Dear Relations,

Last Sunday my brother and I travelled about twenty miles. I preached twice. When I came home I spoke again. In so doing I grew very warm, and after that got cold. I have been poorly since, but am better at present. My mind also has been in the fire of temptation; but now I feel the Spirit of the Lord giving me liberty. O how much hath the Lord had to do with me! And how little do I know of myself or him! I sometimes think to leave off speaking, and come to your house, hoping that a little rest may restore my weak body. But oh time is short! How many are there who are perishing for lack of knowledge? And how few lay it to heart? O let us, more than ever, pray for Zion's peace! I have not had a doubt of entering the promised land these twenty years.

Soon after he wrote as follows:

Dear Brother and Sister,

I am now convinced what my disorder is: the symptoms of a consumption increase; and I believe I shall soon altogether leave off working. I wish to be at my brother's house, that I may get a little help in my conflicts, if they come in my way. At present, my soul exults in redeeming love, and I hope, while I live, to rejoice with joy unspeakable. My dear brother, do, pray for me.

As he now fell off so suddenly that he could not be removed, they fetched me to Whitby. I found him gasping for life. At my desire, he consented to have a physician. When the physician came to him he said, 'You want to keep me from heaven. But you know my disorder mocks the power of medicine.' After many a severe struggle, about one o'clock in the morning he lay motionless for some time. We thought he was dead, but in a little time one perceived his pulse to move. When he came to himself he said, 'I have had a glorious sight of heaven.' After this he recovered very fast. When I left him, he agreed to follow me to Scarborough as soon as he was able. But before he came, he wrote us the following letter:

My Dear Relations,

The Lord strengthens my body in a remarkable manner. I am waiting an opportunity of getting to your house, to stay with you two or three weeks. I have been tempted to think the Lord dealt hardly with me, in not taking me to himself. But I hope I shall praise him more than ever, and be a gainer by what I have suffered.

Presently after he came here, and was with us and near us about a month. But I do not think he exulted in his Saviour so much as when he was acting for God. He seemed however quite resigned, and was only jealous lest he was not doing all he could. Several good men talked to him of what they thought was his call, when he received their advice very kindly; but resolved to wait till the Lord discovered his will to him. The state of his mind will be best known by a letter he now sent to a person at Whitby, whom he intended to make the partner of his life.

Dear Sister,

I am driven into a wilderness, but am still under my gracious Father's wings. I would have been at Whitby today, but am solicited by my friends to stay a little longer. I am determined to use all prudential means for my recovery, and then leave the event to the Judge of all the earth. I am almost as strong as ever, but not free from my consumption. I have preached a little in this circuit, but do not intend it any more as yet. I cast myself on the mercy of God. My life is in his hands. I shall never forget the goodness of God to us both, in not suffering us to go together before this. Then would you have been more immediately a partner of my sufferings, but the Lord is good in all his ways. I hope you and I shall yield ourselves up unto him, that we may find he worketh all his good pleasure in us. I think, if I am called to work any more for God in a public way, it is at Whitby. But in this I am not clear. I am advised by the preachers to give myself up wholly to the work of calling sinners to the Lamb of God. At present I find much resignation, and hope that the Lord will give me all the direction I want. Alas! What need of so much care? What is my life? I hope, my dear Polly, while you have strength you will be eyes to the blind and feet to the lame. I know you are careful in watching the motions of providence in your present state. Live to God. Then, however heaven may dispose of you, or suffer you to be exercised, your life shall be spent in praises. Look, my dear, unto the sinner's friend! Keep in memory his cross and passion; and, through faith, you shall every moment feel he died for you.

In this circuit the kingdom of Satan shakes. O that the mighty power of God would throw it down! I hope my dear friends at Whitby are striving who can sink deepest into all the depths of humble love, and rise highest into all the life of God.

I hope you have a little church in your own house; and that your mother and sisters have faith in the promises. Dear sisters, believe till you feel the thoughts of your hearts cleansed.

Believe and heaven is yours. O blessed port! May we all land safe there! I remain the same as ever,

C. M.

After he returned to Whitby he wrote as follows:

Lately I spoke to our people. My heart being warm, I forgot my body, and cut myself up. Yet my dear Lord wonderfully strengthens me for a little more public and private labour. The Sabbath before last, I went twelve miles; spoke thrice. My labours were sweet and I hope not in vain. Last Sunday I was in the country, and spoke to a large company. O what multitudes yet perish for lack of knowledge, and how few show them any pity! Thanks be to God, he proportions my strength to my work. I feel my heart big with desire that all may have an interest in the Redeemer. My body oft wants rest, yet I find peace of mind and the Lord is my portion.

To a letter I sent him, pressing him to leave all and give himself to the life he was advised to, he returned the following answer:

My Dear Brother,

I did not think to have heard from you in the manner I have. But I believe my interest lies near you, therefore I will not chide. I can receive it thankfully. God knows I can abandon all fleshly desires for the Redeemer's glory, and if called by God tomorrow to spend and be spent, I hope I shall leave all and follow my bleeding Lord. My soul of late has had a strong hold of God, and has felt his supporting arm. I am glad to hear the Lord is working with you. May he continue to ride on gloriously!

February 4, 1786, he said, 'I am very poorly. My complaints increase daily. Yet amidst all I live upon the bounty of heaven, and find salvation for walls and bulwarks. Salvation is of the Lord, and he is my sure defence. I trust in his will. His way with me is past finding out, but I shall know it hereafter. I have perfect rest. And glory be to God, my engagements, though very close, never touch my spirit, nor stop the intercourse between God and my soul!'

As he desired to lay down his head at our house, the Lord inclined one of his brothers to come with him to Scarborough. When he arrived he was much wearied with the journey. After he had rested a little he said, 'When I think of the sufferings of Christ, and his unerring wisdom, I am resigned to his will, and praise him for all his dispensations.'

For two days and nights he had a violent lax, which brought down his body very fast. Yet his soul had perfect rest in God. His disorder was so violent that, though he retained his senses, he seldom could either think or speak much. And I believe he did not speak one hundred words about any worldly matter for the last six weeks! His patience and gratitude made it a pleasure to wait on him. It was not a house of mourning, but rather of peace and joy.

February 5. He took hold of my hand and said, 'You drink pretty deep. But I shall have a fulness today.' He wrote a line to Whitby for the last time, in which he said, 'Yesterday I was much followed by my cough, and in the night I had a most violent fit of it. But what is all this to the consolation which God pours in! Come, come my dear, we shall, I am confident, taste together of the marriage supper of the Lamb.'

February 6. 'This morning', said he, 'I have been thinking about home, and examining my state. I find myself buried with Christ, and risen again with him! And I find my confidence grows stronger and stronger.'

February 7. He said, 'O what a precious pearl is religion! I have been at prayer. The throne of grace is accessible. O it is sweet! O precious Christ! Nothing but Christ! What a precious portion is religion! My soul is filled with God!' Being overwhelmed, he broke out into a flood of tears, and said, 'I am much afflicted. But I am content with the cup he hath allotted me. I know he is mine. I find no doubt!'

February 10. His song was this day, 'Precious Christ! O he is precious to me!' He was very happy in the night, and after a little rest he said to one that sat up with him, 'I have been thanking and praising the Lord for my affliction.'

February 11. He said, 'My soul is a garden, enclosed to all but God.'

February 14. Being asked if he was easy, he said, 'Tolerable, but very happy. I have felt the virtue of Christ's death afresh.'

February 15. Seeing us affected, he said, 'Be not concerned for me. All will be well. I shall be happy.' I said, 'We have no doubt of that. Yet we cannot help being affected when we see you so afflicted.' 'Well, well', said he, 'it is a loving God that lays it on! O sweet rest! Sweet resignation! Pain is ease indeed! Nothing but Christ all the way through! Glory be to God! Glory be to God! I always abhorred trifling. O it is good to be zealous in a good cause! I used to have a little untempered zeal, but lately religion has been pure and sweet; but most so now. I have had many a precious visit from the Lord, praised be his name! Well, probably I shall see my Master soon, and many other dear friends who are gone to heaven!'

February 16. This was a day of sharp affliction. Yet in comparing his sufferings to what his sins deserved, he sung eight or ten times, 'Glory be to God! Precious Christ!', etc.

February 17. He was much inwardly convulsed. But at different times he was very sensible, and cried out, 'Come, Lord Jesus; come quickly!' At night I said, 'You have had two hard struggles today.' He answered, 'Well, the Lord helped me!'

February 18. He was happy. Mr. [William] Collins coming to see him, when he was at prayer, he seemed wrapped up in the sweet embraces of his Beloved. He wept, and then sung, 'Glory be to God! I have had a sight of the third heaven! Heaven is sure! Heaven is sure!'

February 19. He appeared so lightsome that I conceived hopes of his recovery. Two friends from Whitby coming to see him, he said, 'I am happy! I rest in the will of God! I am free from desires, excepting this, to be dissolved and to be with Christ!'

February 20. He had a sore fever on him all night. When I spoke to him, he said, 'My hope is full! O glorious hope!' Towards night my wife heard him say, eight or ten times over, 'Glory be to God! Precious Christ! Sweet Jesus!' When she went near him, he said, 'O I am happy! I have felt the sweetness of his love.' And then sang praises to his Redeemer as before.

February 24. One asking how he did, he said, 'I am incapable of thinking much, such is my disorder. But I know that the Lord is with me, and will be with me to the end. When I have ease, then my soul truly exults in God.' This night, about eight o'clock, he had a sweet visit from God, and began talking with him: which I overheard as I was writing behind the curtain. First he took a view of what the Lord had done for him on this side the grave, and sang praises on that account. Then he spoke of what he hoped for in heaven—viz., how he should mingle his notes of praise with the blood washed throng, etc. Having now a sweet foretaste of heaven, he said, 'Lord Jesus, it is enough! It is enough! Come Lord Jesus! Come Lord Jesus! Thy will be done! It is sweet! It is sweet!'

He then began to pray for us, that we might be kept from the spirit of the world, and that a blessing might rest upon all we put our hands to. He also prayed that the Lord would bless those who attended him in his illness: but more especially his parents, their children, and their children's children. That God would terrify them by dreams or visions of the night, or use any other means so that not one of them might perish. He then prayed for the preachers of the gospel, that the Lord would fill them with his Spirit. Then for the whole world, that he would hasten his kingdom. And lastly, that till that glorious time, he would take care of all his churches in different places, by setting over them nursing fathers and nursing mothers, and faithful overseers. Thus he continued in prayer and intercession for a considerable time, and concluded by crying out, with all the strength he had, 'Come Lord Jesus! Come quickly! But thy will be done!'

When we were about taking leave of him for this night (not knowing we had overheard him) he said, 'O I have been happy tonight! What a precious visit! I do not say it is the best I ever had, for I have had many precious ones from him. But oh what joy! Get this great salvation! It is a precious pearl! Get his image! Get his image! and then you will be happy! Live near to God! Breathe in heaven! Watch and pray.'

They stand or fall together. Be earnest. I was as much convinced of my want of full salvation as of the pardon of my sins.' After speaking thus, till his strength was almost exhausted, he said, 'My body is weak; but the Lord is strong.'

February 25. In sore affliction his soul had rest in God. His language was, 'I feel no murmuring! Christ is my all.'

February 26. To one who came to see him he said, 'I feel no complaining, no wish, no will but God's.'

March 6. He had little ease of body, but sweet rest in his soul. To one who came to see him he said, 'O precious Christ! He is precious! I lie in his arms!' On my asking if he had ever thought of a text for his funeral sermon, he said, 'I might have thought of one, for his word has been very sweet to me ever since I knew him. But what am I? Dust, dust, dust! When I drop, let all drop with me.'

March 7. He said to me, 'Watch and pray continually, and wisdom and power will descend into your soul.' To another he said, 'Watch and pray. Get full salvation. Get full salvation, and it will sweeten all the bitters of life!'

March 8. 'O', said he, 'I am happy! Help me to praise the Lord! You know the apostle says he is able to do exceeding abundant above all we can ask or think. Indeed he does! He does! O what a glorious place is heaven! There is an eternal weight of glory! No pain, no suffering I decline. God is love! God is love! Glory be to God! Glory be to God! Not a cloud does arise to darken the skies.'

March 11. He said, 'I have had a sweet visit from him. I know he will never leave me. No, the righteous shall have hope in their death.' I heard him at prayer, praising the Lord and attempting to sing, 'O what a glorious company when saints and angels meet!'¹² When I went to him, he said, 'O I am happy, happy, happy! No doubts! No doubts!'

March 14. Today he said, 'I can trust in the Lord. He is the strength of my heart, and I will believe he will be my portion forever. Glory be to him!' About noon, one coming from Whitby to see him, he sung, 'Glory be to God! Glory be to God! I have a clear prospect. Satan is not permitted to buffet me! God is love! God is love! O keep union with Jesus. Crowd in all the good you can! I want you near the Saviour.' After he had inquired concerning some friends, he said, 'They lie near my heart. I can trust God for them all.' He then added, 'My departure is at hand! I know it is. Lift up your hearts to heaven. Help me to praise him! I have a full assurance of hope, a full assurance of a bright mansion. Glory be to God! If all the world my Jesus knew, all the world would love him too.' He also said to some others who came to see him, 'Well, I am labouring on. Get ready! Get full salvation! Full salvation! A heart thoroughly purified. Then there will be no doubts. O labour is rest, pain is ease; nothing is too hard for love! Love can support under the greatest sufferings. You see my sun is setting at noon, and even without a cloud!'

March 15. Whatever he spoke now was through stiffening lips and cold sweats. In the morning he said, 'I lie in his arms.' And in answer one who spoke of his sufferings, he said, 'Afflictions is nought! It is nought. He gives sufficient strength. I am waiting his summons.' Seeing one troubled, he said, 'It is the will of God I should die. I am going to heaven. We shall meet above!' Then, with a ravished heart and eyes lifted up, he said, 'Welcome messenger! Welcome messenger!' And sung, 'Glory be to God in the highest!'

March 16. He was not able to speak, but seemed sweetly at rest. A few hours before he died, the Lord strengthening him again, he said, 'I am happy! Happy! Happy! God is love! Boundless! Boundless love! O Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!' About ten o'clock I said, 'My dear, do you believe you are going to Jesus?' He falteringly said, 'Yes! Yes!' And about a quarter past eleven, he died without a struggle, a groan, or a sigh!

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 10 (1787): 14–18, 67–70, 122–25, 181–83, 236–39.

¹²CW, Hymn 52, st. 7, *Redemption Hymns* (1747), 69.

From John Murlin¹

c. April 1786

Mrs. Elizabeth Murlin (born in the month of May 1710) was the second daughter of Mr. John Walker, a reputable tradesman in London. When very young she had some concern about her salvation, but when she was about eleven years of age she saw more clearly the sinfulness of her nature, and her absolute need of a Saviour.

About this time she received much benefit by conversing with a pious young woman; and also by hearing one Mr. Lawrence, a dissenting minister. But he being a predestinarian, she so far received his doctrine as to think she was one of those reprobates who could not be saved. On this account, she has often told me, none but God could tell what sore conflicts she passed through.

As her mother enjoyed but a poor state of health, and as her eldest sister was rather thoughtless, the care of the family fell chiefly on her when she was very young—which doubtless was one means of initiating her into that habit of care and economy which she possessed through her whole life.

When she was a little turned of twenty, Mr. John Berrisford, one of the cashiers of the Bank of England, paid his addresses to her. But though she had no inclination to change her state at that time, through her father's persuasion she was prevailed on to marry him.² But though he proved a very kind husband, and behaved well in every respect, yet she could not be happy, seeing she wanted a clear sense of the favour of God.

When Mr. [John] Wesley and Mr. [George] Whitefield came first to London, she heard them frequently, and found their preaching much blessed to her. And under a sermon which Mr. Whitefield preached in a church, the Lord was pleased to take away the burden from her mind, which had long caused her to bow down her head like a bulrush. She now found peace of mind, joy in the Holy Ghost, and a hope which is full of immortality!

But it was not long before she met with a great trial. For, as this way was everywhere spoken against, her husband desired her to hear those strange men no more. And that she might not, he allowed her to go anywhere else—and went so far as to take her a seat in a dissenting meeting, accompanied her there himself, and did all in his power to oblige her in other respects. But all this could not satisfy her. For though she found it a great cross to disoblige him, she could not bear to be deprived of that preaching which was made so great a blessing to her.

After some time Mr. Berrisford died; when she was at full liberty to hear the word. This was made so great a blessing to her that she bought up every opportunity of hearing it. She also joined the society, and found much pleasure and profit in assembling with the people of God.

The first time I saw her was at a friend's house, when it was strongly impressed on my mind that she was to be my wife. A few days after our first interview, a friend asked me to go and see a person who was not very well. When I came, I found it was Mrs. Berrisford. Soon after this we began a more intimate acquaintance. And as we continually set the Lord before our eyes, and prayed for his direction in all things, we seldom met without a blessing.

After we had been acquainted for about two years, we were married in London, on February 11, 1762, and from that day we determined to assist each other in saving our souls, according to the utmost of our power.

About two months after we were married, we went to Bedford, and after spending a month there, we returned to London, where we stayed but a short time. Our next remove was to Norwich. This was a very proper place to initiate my wife into her new office, for the society was very poor and the house they had provided for us had little in it but bare walls! One of the first things she therefore did was to buy a

¹An account of his wife, Elizabeth (Walker / Berrisford) Murlin (1710–86). They married in 1762.

²John Berrisford and Elizabeth Walker were married on Apr. 5, 1735.

bed, which cost her ten pounds, together with several other necessary articles; all of which she left behind her, for the use of the society, when we went away. She also provided all necessary provisions for our own little family, and also for all the preachers who came to Norwich while we were there. This she did in consideration of the poverty of the people, whose place it was to have provided these things for us, had they been able; but as they were not, she determined that while we stayed there the gospel should not be chargeable to them.

While we were in Norwich we had much persecution, which must be very trying to a person brought up so tenderly as she was. But she bore it all with unwearied patience, and Christian fortitude.

Since that time, she has travelled with me through a great part of the kingdom. And I bless God, she has been so far from bringing a reproach on the gospel at any time, that she has rather been an ornament to her profession and a pattern of good works in every place.

As for diligence in the means of grace, I scarce ever saw her equal. She attended the public preaching, winter and summer, late and early, to the very last. And when I, in consideration of her age, and many bodily infirmities, have sometimes desired her not to rise in the depth of winter at five o'clock in the morning, her answer often was, 'Shall the poor people get up, and come through all weathers, to hear the word; and shall I, who am in the house, neglect to hear it! If I did, my conscience would condemn me.'

She was also diligent in private prayer, Her custom was, when she came from the morning preaching, to spend the time from six o'clock till eight chiefly on her knees. She also spent a great part of an hour (and sometimes a whole hour) between dinner and tea in the same exercise.

Moreover, she read some part of the word of God daily, meditated thereon, and was careful to regulate the whole of her conduct according to its precepts. And as she knew that in all ages they who feared the Lord spake often one to the other, she was careful to assemble with her Christian friends, when they came together to exhort one another and provoke one another to love and to good works. Add to this, that she embraced every opportunity of attending the Church and sacrament.

As to her experience, though she did not rejoice in God as many of his people do, yet she had many a comfortable moment. But her great care to please him, and her unaffected and deep concern when she thought him dishonoured, are a sufficient proof that she loved him. And as to his people, she loved them all without exception. Yet her chief delight was in those who excelled in virtue. Her conscience also was very tender, and she paid a strict regard to justice and truth.

When she was not engaged in acts of devotion, her hands were employed in the necessary affairs of this life. She was diligent and frugal; some thought, even to an extreme. Hence many who had not an opportunity of a thorough acquaintance with her apprehended she was quite too near. And I confess, if we compare her care and frugality to the extravagance of some professors, she might be thought so. But to my certain knowledge, from a close acquaintance with her for the term of twenty-four years, I can declare that she was not straitened in her own bowels when the cause of God or the necessities of the poor called upon her. I have known her often, not only to give three or four guineas at a time to single persons, but also to give ten, fifteen, yea, and twenty pounds at different times to charitable uses—in all to the amount of not less than several hundred pounds. Add to this that she almost continually maintained herself where we went, bore all our travelling charges, and in a great measure enabled me to preach the gospel freely for more than twenty years.

The last two years of her life she had a very poor state of health, being greatly afflicted with a rheumatic gout in several parts of her body. One Sabbath-day in December 1784, as she was going to a church in Manchester, she fell and hurt her arm very much. However, though it was with great difficulty she got up, she would not return home, but went forward as well as she could. While she was in the church (the cold affecting her greatly), her pain became so violent that she could hardly get home. After that she grew weaker and weaker continually, all the time we stayed in Manchester. Notwithstanding, in 1785 she came with me to the London Conference, but was so feeble that all the way I was obliged to lift her in and out of the chaise. While we were in London she settled some temporal affairs, and after the Conference was over, she took her last farewell of her friends and went with me to Bristol. All that autumn, and the beginning of winter, her health declined daily. But yet she went on in all acts of private

and public devotion as she had formerly done, thus waiting till her change should come.

In January 1786, after preaching one evening at seven o'clock, I went into a room with the leaders and stewards to settle the temporal concerns of the society. At the same time she went into her room as usual, to pour out her soul to God. While she was on her knees she was seized with a violent pain in her breast, which continued all that night and the next day. Three medical gentlemen gave her all the assistance in their power, but to no effect. Nothing she took could reach her case. Apprehending that we were soon to part, we conversed freely about heavenly things. On my desiring her to tell me freely how she found it between God and her soul, she said, 'My pain of body is exceeding great. But my confidence is in God, my Saviour.' And all that day she spoke of her dissolution with great freedom and cheerfulness. In the same manner she said, 'I will not put you to the trouble of taking me to London to be buried, as we formerly intended; but I desire to be buried at Temple Church.'

Notwithstanding she was so very ill, she sat up all day. About nine o'clock at night she was got into bed, and continued in exceeding great pain about two hours; which she bore with great patience and resignation. About half after eleven we perceived she was dying, which, till then, we did not expect would be so soon. On which we called in Mr. [Samuel] Bradburn, and while he was commending her soul to God, she breathed her last, and took her flight to the regions of immortality, on the 18th of January, 1786, and in the 75th year of her age.

John Murlin

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 9 (1786): 422–28.

From an Unidentified Correspondent¹

c. April 1786

About nine o'clock in the morning, Mr. C.,² Mr. J., and Mr. L. visited John Steptoe, Richard Hemmings, and William Cripps; who were to be executed that day.

Mr. L. had visited Steptoe twice before; who as soon as he saw him, came up and shook him by the hand, with a very cheerful countenance. He had very lately known the pardoning love of God, and was quite resigned and happy in the Lord. He had been in the prison some months before his condemnation, during which period he read the Bible three times over, and could repeat St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews. For some time before the assizes, he frequently got the prisoners together on an evening, and prayed with them extempore.

Hemmings said he had reason to be thankful that he was brought to that place, for till that time he had been living without God in the world. He said it was a great mercy the Lord had not cut him off in his sins, and was truly thankful he was now convinced of his want of a Saviour.

Cripps appeared to be ignorant of the way of salvation by Christ. Mr. C. asked him whether he was not afraid to die? He said no, but could give no sufficient reason for it. Mr. C. and Mr. J. then spoke to him in a close manner, and though he did not seem to be hardened, yet he was not truly concerned about his soul. Mr. C. gave a short exhortation, sung a hymn, and (at the request of Steptoe) the fifty-first psalm, and then went to prayer twice.

After dinner, Mr. C., Mr. J., and Mr. L. revisited the prisoners. Cripps seemed then to be much affected, and said he was convinced of his lost state. A hymn being sung, the gaoler, his wife and daughter, and several other persons joined. Singing being over, Steptoe was desired to go to prayer, which he did with great earnestness—while most who were present were deeply affected, and some who before had but little concern about religion wept much.

When prayer was ended, Mr. C. spoke to Hemmings, and found him happy in the Lord. He said (among other things), 'I shall soon be in the arms of Jesus forever!' Afterwards they all went into the chapel, and received the sacrament. When they returned, Steptoe said, 'I have been feeding on Christ by faith, who is the living bread.' Steptoe then desired Mr. L. to give out The Sinner's Lamentation, which they all continued singing, with great fervour, till the under-sheriff sent for them.

The executioner coming into the cell, Steptoe immediately went up to him, and with a cheerful countenance, shook him by the hand, as though he was his friend. While the coffins were carrying out, Steptoe was standing a little way from the cell door, and the sun shining, he looked up, and said, 'The sun of nature shines very bright!' And added, 'This is the last sun I shall see shining below. But I shall soon see the Sun of righteousness, and be with him forever!'

As soon as the prisoners got into the cart, they began to sing, and continued to do so at times till they came to the fatal tree.

After the clergyman had done talking and praying with them, Steptoe stood up, and in a firm, collected, and most affecting manner, gave an exhortation to the people for near five and twenty minutes. Among other things, he said,

It was sin which brought me to this (pointing to the tree), and I am going to suffer justly. But although I am condemned by the law of man, yet as I am interested in the Lord Jesus Christ, I shall not be condemned at the bar of God. O think not, my dear fellow sinners, because we are brought to this shameful end, that we are sinners above all men. I tell you, nay. But except

¹Titled: 'An Account of the Behaviour of Three Malefactors, who were executed at Reading, in Berkshire, on the 25th of March last'. On Mar. 6, 1786, Richard Hemmings, John Steptoe, and William Cripps were condemned for execution at Reading, Berkshire for various forms of theft.

²Possibly Jonathan Coussins, Assistant for the Oxfordshire circuit.

ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Do not think that because some of you may now be living in pleasure, pomp, or splendour that it will avail you anything when you come to die. For you will be condemned at the bar of God, unless you forsake your sins and flee to the Lord Jesus Christ. And as I have found an interest in him, I do assure you my fellow sinners, my present situation (though you may think otherwise) is preferable to yours, who are yet in your sins. Therefore flee from the wrath to come, and seek religion with all your might. For there is nothing but true religion which can make you happy either in life or death.

He likewise spoke of his belief of the resurrection, in very strong terms, and added,

Oh my drooping friends below,
Did you half this glory know;
Daily would you stretch the wing,
Thus to fly and thus to sing.³

He then prayed very fervently for seven or eight minutes, and was much at liberty.

After he had done, Hemmings spoke to the people and warned them to forsake drinking, loose women, and other bad company; and to attend the house of God, where they might hear those things which would do them good.

When the clergyman left the cart, they all called out for Mr. C. who immediately came to them. Hemmings said, 'I never was so happy in all my life, for the Lord comforts me.' Steptoe said, 'My mind is quite comfortable and composed, and I am still happy.' Cripps also declared, he was happy. Mr. C. then gave out two verses of that hymn, 'Jesu lover of my soul',⁴ and was just going to prayer when the under-sheriff sent an order for him to quit the cart immediately. On which, some of the spectators spoke aloud, and said the conduct of the under-sheriff was shameful; and a Mr. Davis, a minister of Reading, said to the prisoners, 'Remember, the sheriff cannot separate your souls from Christ.'

Mr. C. then took leave of the prisoners, by exhorting them to look to Jesus; and they all continued fervent in prayer to the last.

Cripps's last words were, 'O God, have mercy on me! Jesus thou son of David, have pity on me! Jesus thou friend of sinners, have mercy on me!'

Steptoe's last words were, 'Into thy hands I commend my soul, O God, for thou hast redeemed it.'

Hemmings also was launched into eternity, calling upon the Lord. Steptoe had a cheerful and heavenly countenance, even to the moment the cap was drawn over his face. Hemmings and Cripps were also firm and collected to the last.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 9 (1786): 428–31.

³Anon., 'Why the Unbelieving I', st. 8; first published in George Whitefield's *Christian History* 2 (1742), 12.

⁴CW, 'In Temptation', *HSP* (1740), 67–68.

From 'Veritas' to the Printer of the *Caledonian Mercury*

Mr. Printer, a friend to truth, wheresoever or with whomsoever it is found, wishes through the channel of your impartial paper, to do justice to a worthy character, most unjustly aspersed with being the author of a recent detestable publication—viz., a Bible, in which the whole book of the Revelations is left out, and several chapters of the Epistle to the Romans entirely expunged, under the plausible pretext of being unintelligible to the generality of readers. This very extraordinary production, is said to be the work of the Rev. Mr. John Wesley, which assertion, I can assure the public, from the very best authority, is without the smallest foundation in truth, having it under Mr. Wesley's own hand, that he is an entire stranger to the publication, never having so much as heard of it, or of its being ascribed to him, till a friend in the north had the humanity to inform him what freedom the public were using with his character. Mr. Wesley is both a great and a good man, and has long been the honoured and successful instrument in the hand of the great Head of the church, in turning sinners from the evil of their ways. But having the misfortune to differ in sentiment from a few of his Christian brethren in some points of theology, no ways material and concerning which Christians have thought differently in every period of the church. Upon this account many take the liberty of viewing his character through a very false medium, and hence too easily credit every report to his prejudice, and think they do well to spread them, hoping thereby to weaken his influence, and of consequence to lessen his usefulness; neglecting the golden rule, of doing as they would be done by: and forgetting that every teacher of righteousness holds a *sacred office*; and if his life corresponds with his profession, that his *character* ought to be held sacred also; and that whoever attempts to blast it, must do it at his peril. By giving a place to the above in your useful paper, Mr. Printer, you will oblige your occasional reader,

Veritas

Source: published transcription; *Caledonian Mercury* (Apr. 15, 1786), p. 3.

From Alexander Mather¹

c. April 15, 1786

Elizabeth Richardson had a measure of the fear of God even from her youth. The first wages she received was in part laid out in the purchase of a prayer book, as a kind of thank-offering to God, who had provided her a good place at service.

In the year 1771, she came to live in a family where the housekeeper was a hearer of the Methodists, for which she was opposed by the rest of the servants, who spoke against the way of salvation by faith alone. With these Elizabeth Richardson also joined; and no wonder, as this laid the axe to the root of all her pharisaic hopes! Her great ignorance too increased her opposition to the way of finding mercy freely by grace. The housekeeper pitied, bore with, and continued to advise her, till at length she was prevailed on to hear for herself. The first time she went, she laughed, not only during the preaching but even while the preacher was in prayer. The other woman still strove to do her good. She read books to her; and among the rest Mr. Nelson's journal, which made some impression on her mind, though at the first she was unwilling to own it.² Mr. Nelson soon after coming into the circuit, she had a desire to hear him, as she had heard of his sufferings. Her prejudice was soon removed, and shame covered her, on account of the part she had taken in opposing and speaking evil of what she did not understand.

She became now truly in earnest, and was very constant in every means of grace, making the word of God her daily delight. She was now opposed, as well as the housekeeper, by the other servants. And as they attended the morning preaching, the footman, to prevent them, used to lock the door and carry the keys into his own room. And that they might not go through the garden undiscovered (there being a way into the street by it, when the river was low), he covered those steps with sand. Yet they ventured one morning, and as he got up before they returned, he called up his master, and informed him of their having going out upon that business. The master was greatly displeased, and on their return, said a great deal to the housekeeper (though he had a regard for her as a servant). Elizabeth Richardson standing by, encouraged her, bidding her remember Caleb, and Joshua, whose spirit and behaviour the preacher had been describing that morning. They both stood firm. And the housekeeper, in a becoming manner, assured her master that she was resolved, through grace, to save her soul; and as she found these means of grace useful to her, she could not desist from using them, whenever her duty in his service would admit. And if he could not allow it, she must provide for herself otherwise. However, she continued in her place till she married.

Elizabeth Richardson, being more exposed and confined, resolved to leave her place and try to get her bread some other way—purposing to live on bread and water, rather than be hindered from the use of the means. Therefore she learned the mantua-making business, bought up every opportunity, and joined the society. She was now more and more earnest in seeking God, but did not know him as a sin-pardoning God for some years. She was often indeed attracted by the drawings of his love, which encouraged her. But she could not rest satisfied without a clear sense that all her past sins were freely pardoned. The Lord was pleased at length to reveal himself so fully to her as to remove all doubt of her acceptance. She then with confidence invited others to the blood of atonement, assuring them, they need not fear, seeing God had been gracious to *her*.

She was strictly conscientious, and never (as far as I could learn) lost a sense of her first love. She was wont to say (notwithstanding her natural reserve), 'None has more cause than I have to speak good of the Lord.' Yet, when she was desired either in class or band to declare it, she could only express it by

¹Titled: 'An Account of the Life and Death of E. Richardson'. Mather was currently the Assistant for the York circuit. This account is of Elizabeth Baxter (d. 1786), who married John Richardson in York on Feb. 27, 1785.

²John Nelson (1707–74), *An Extract of John Nelson's Journal, being an account of God's Dealing with his Soul* (Bristol: Farley, 1767).

tears. Nor was she for a long time delivered from this temptation, or snare of the devil (for such it surely is, lest poor souls should get assistance by disclosing their minds). She walked very closely with God, and made all her wants known to him, who comforts and relieves those who depend upon him. He showed her what still remained in her heart, and therefore she felt the need of an entire deliverance from it. She groaned, and struggled to get free; but, like many others, knew not how to attain that liberty. She endeavoured after much watchfulness, devotion, self-crucifixion, and diligence; which though all good in themselves, yet it is by looking through them to Jesus only, as the author and finisher of this great work, that the soul is delivered.

While she found her nature quiet, and her mind steady in the discharge of every duty, and had nothing great to accuse herself of, she was confident she should attain. But when the flesh lusted powerfully against the spirit, and rendered the path of duty more difficult, she thought the attainment of such a change was at a vast distance, and scarce likely ever to be attained by her. Thus she continued (like many others) full of hopes and fears for many years; showing manifestly that she expected the blessing, not as the free gift of God, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ alone. Of this she seemed to have little, or no idea till about February 1785. Being married, she was put into a married woman's band and her leader, after some time, took an opportunity of speaking to her about her particular exercises; to whom she opened her mind freely, though she had been reserved before. She now began to understand the way of expecting and receiving all she felt the need of from God, and an instantaneous deliverance from all the evil in her heart, by simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. She also saw that she was not to expect this deliverance first, and then to believe it, as she had formerly done; but to believe now on the Lord Jesus, and then be saved from what she felt, or from whatever burden she brought to the Lord, desiring to be delivered from it. She had not waited long in this way, before she was made a happy partaker of *that* salvation.

From the time her soul was saved from inward evil she was no longer reserved, but spoke in class, band, select society, and in conversation, as freely and cheerfully as any of her brethren, of the things pertaining to God and her own experience. She now became pregnant, and in the various exercises incident to that state, she was supported with much patience, and sweet submission to the will of God. She looked, without any horror or dread, to the time of her travail, and the natural pains attendant thereon, and the peculiar difficulty to those who arrive at an age above forty before they have a child. Yet it appeared by her conversation that she had the deepest apprehensions of the manner wherein it would issue. For to some of her friends, after she had mentioned her want of several necessities for herself, as well as household furniture, she said, 'But I will wait till I see whether I shall recover.' She also gave directions how she would have her apparel disposed of, in case of her death; and all this without any seeming discomposure, as one who was going to exchange a life of woe for one of never-ending bliss.

It was the views and foretaste she had of this which made her see the emptiness of all she was about to leave behind, and to exult in full confidence and assurance of the all-sufficiency and permanency of those she was going to. As her communion with God, through faith in Christ, was very close, so the nearer the time of her dissolution seemed to approach (though she was in as good health as any in her condition usually are) the more cheerful, satisfied, and joyful she was; and attended every means of grace with more than common delight.

Thus prepared, when her travail began, though it was attended with circumstances that made it difficult and tedious, yet she bore all with patience and perfect resignation to the divine will. For she had an unshaken confidence that all would be well, whether life or death. Accordingly, after many hours of hard labour, it pleased God that she was safely delivered of a living child. She continued for some time after her delivery seemingly in a way of recovery, though very weak. She was still exceeding happy, trusting in God, and triumphing in hope of being shortly with him forever. She could not refrain from speaking of the goodness of God to all who came near her, and exhorting them to make sure their salvation; particularly some of whom she stood in doubt. She also encouraged her husband much, who was himself greatly supported by the presence of God. Being desired to refrain from speaking so much, because it hurtled her, she said, 'I must speak for God. I must praise him, he is so good, and has been so to me, and you, my dear husband.'

She continued thus for several days. And on Sunday morning, when one of our sisters went into the room, she said, 'Oh! what a blessed morning is this! I am in the Spirit on the Lord's day! What hath the Lord done both for my soul and body! I have no sin! I feel no pain!' Thus she continued, inviting all who came near her to praise the Lord with her, and desiring they might exalt his name together, for what he had done for her soul. About two o'clock, a particular friend (with whom she had often taken sweet counsel, and to whom she had spoken freely) going into the room, as soon as she saw her, she broke out, 'O sister, is not this what I have always desired, that I might preach Christ to *all*, when I came to die! And now I can say, "My Father, God", with an unwavering tongue!'

She then said to her husband, looking with pleasure and heavenly delight upon him, 'My dear, praise God! He is a great God! A faithful God! A God true to his promise! Oh what has he done for me!' When he begged she would not spend herself, as it increased her disorder, she said, 'I cannot help it. I must praise thee, O Lord, who dealest so bountifully with me!' To another coming in, whom she loved, and with whom she met in band, she said, 'My dear, here is an heir of salvation going to glory today! I have begun a glorious Sabbath on earth, which I shall forever spend in heaven. Oh praise the Lord with me! Praise him for what he hath done for my soul! I shall soon be with him, whom my soul loveth.' Shortly after, her leader going in and encouraging her still to look to Jesus, who, as he had been with her, would now bring her off more than conqueror; she said, 'O my dear, you have been a great encourager, and have helped to bear me up ever since I knew you.' She then fell asleep in Jesus, a living and dying witness of his power to save to the uttermost all who come to God through him, on the ninth of April, 1786.³

A. M.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 295–300.

³Elizabeth (Baxter) Richardson was buried in York on Apr. 10, 1786.

From Thomas Wride

Norwich
April 24, 1786

Reverend Sir,

I hope you will excuse my writing. I do not willingly trouble you, but I judge it absolutely needful.

I preached at Norwich on Saturday evening. I met with the marks of warm affection from many who expressed themselves very glad of my return. Soon after preaching came into the house William Life,¹ and without any introduction begins, 'Do you intend to disturb the people tomorrow?' I told him I did not know what he meant. 'Do you intend to preach tomorrow?' I answered 'Yes'. 'But you shan't', said he. 'You are not our preacher.' 'You have no business to preach here.' etc., etc. I told him I would not ask him. But he said that I should not get into the pulpit unless I did it by violence.

When he had talked a while, in came James Hey and began talking, wanting me not to preach tomorrow, etc., etc. For he said that none would come to hear me. I told him that he was much mistaken. That I knew the contrary from themselves, that many were very glad of my being here. But he urged that they might not say what they would, but he knew that hardly any would hear me. I told him he was mistaken, they would come if others did not keep them away. He assured me that he would not endeavour to keep any from coming, etc., etc. I was amazed at his calmness, for he did not use one single rough word. I was in hopes that he would be quiet in the future. But I did not think him reconciled, because I could not get him to sit down, although I asked him *often*, perhaps ten times.

Yesterday morning I went with a design to go into the preaching house a few minutes before the time was to begin, but the door was fast. I went to Mrs. Porter,² to ask why she did not open the door of the preaching house. She said that she had. I went back to the door, attempting to open it, but William Life says 'You shan't come in here'. (He had got in and bolted the door in the inside). I told him that I would come in. He said that I should not, unless I broke the door to pieces. I attempted to force the door, but had not sufficient strength or implements to do it. And as the people began to come, I desisted and told them I would preach in the street. So placing a chair at the street door, I made use of it. I was something afraid to be in the streets of Norwich, but it was needless for there was not the least disturbance attempted.

In the afternoon I went into the preaching house an hour before the time, and had a large congregation for that time of day. Sister Booty³ said it was larger than usual and the people at coming out showed more marks of esteem than usual.

In the evening I went to the preaching house before the time, in hopes to be soon enough to prevent what I had some fear of. But the door was fast and we could get no answer from any within. The people as they gathered showed great concern, but we knew not how to mend the matter. But brother [William] Booty proposed that someone should get upon the roof of the stable, and enter at the window. One did so, but when he got in none was to be found. They had set a form against the door and made their escape some way. So although it may be supposed that [William] Life was concerned, it cannot be proved.

¹William Life appears as a weaver in a 1785 Norwich society list. See David Hart, 'The Emergence and Development of Wesleyanism in Norwich; 1754–1802' (University of Manchester Ph.d. thesis, 2010), 225.

²Mary Porter (c. 1742–1822) joined the Methodist society in Norwich (then meeting in the Foundry) in her teens, about 1756. By her death she was the longest continuous member of the society living. She never married (but like many older single women of the time, was called 'Mrs.'), which enabled her to serve much of that time as 'chapel keeper'. See her obituary in *MM* 45 (1822): 480.

³Mary Booty, a shopkeeper, appears in the Norwich society list.

While the person was attempting to get in at the window, James Hey came and began to show his real self, in spite of the disguise he wore the preceding evening. For without any the least provocation, or even a word or look of any sort from me, he began saying, 'Now you see what Mr. Wride is', talking about me in a ridiculous manner. When the door was open, Hey kept saying that 'Mr. Wride has no business in the pulpit.' 'We don't look upon him as our preacher.' This he continued, and notwithstanding the many persuasions used by Mr. Booty and others, he kept in the preaching house, with his hat on, and continued talking. The altercations used between Hey and those who would have persuaded him to be quiet made it quite inexpedient to begin. Therefore I requested them to say nothing to him, but go and settle in their places, that we might begin; and if he then made disturbance, I should know what to do with him. At last they left him and I began, upon which Hey walked out.

Now sir, the plain case is Hey and a few more say that you have no right to send to Norwich a preacher that they do not approve of. It seems they heard of my character before I came, and that one at Conference said that I should not do for Norwich. He [who] said that is gone to America. At last it was found to be Joseph Pilmore. I've long wondered. For if Joseph would do for them, Thomas would not, unless they helped him out by imputing unto Thomas that playing upon the string of 'imputed righteousness' which made most of Joseph's music.

Now sir, give me leave to tell you what in fact I told you in time past—viz., if I had with me fellow-labourers who would be ruled by you, the disturbance would never have rose to any considerable height. You did for a while support me, and required John M'Kersey and James Byron to follow the directions that you had given me, and in a letter directed unto them told them if they choose to continue with you they should sing but twice at one service. But sir, how are you regarded? If actions may speak, they regard you as one to whom they owe no regard, for they do sing *three* times. Now here is the case: The Heys and five or six more are their rulers. But as I would not bow to their sway, therefore I have met with such treatment. But I really think it hard that I must be slighted for obeying of you, and they caressed for setting you at defiance.

As for Samuel Hodgson, he may pretend to what he will, but let matter of fact speak his esteem of you, or connection with you. I spoke to him about singing three times, etc. He told me, 'I have been used to singing three times. I cannot preach without it. And if Mr. Wesley will turn me off, he may.' So, sir, you may give what directions you please; Samuel Hodgson will do as *he* please.

Sir, permit me to be your councillor. You are stabbed through my sides. It is high time to lay your claim to Norwich house. If it be not done, you will soon find that force, not law or reason, will decide. It is with all possible respect to your person and places that I tell you I think it quite right that Hey and Life be immediately expelled [from] the society, and that a writ from the King's Bench be served on Life, and that it be never dropped until Life publicly asks pardon, in one or two public newspapers, subject to cost.

Brother [George] Button spoke to me at Loddon the 7th instant and told me that if I could let old things drop, all would be quiet. I did so, and I cannot but esteem brother Button more on account that I learned not from him but others that he had been to the discontented ones and engaged them to assist in endeavouring for peace. Perhaps if you empower brother Button, he will act. But Samuel Hodgson will not. More reasons I can give, but there is enough above. If sir, you can believe

Your dutiful son,

Tho. Wride

Source: Wride's manuscript draft; Duke, Rubenstein, Frank Baker Collection of Wesleyana, Box CO9, Thomas Wride Notebook 1, pp. 29–32.

From the Rev. Freeborn Garrettson

Shelburne [Nova Scotia]
April 25, 1786

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Some weeks ago I left Halifax, and went to Liverpool, where the Lord is carrying on a blessed work: many precious souls of late have been set at liberty to praise a sin-pardoning God. There is a lively society. Alline's small party oppose us warmly.¹ The greater part of the town attend our ministry, and the first people have joined our society.

A few days ago I came to this town, where I met dear afflicted brother [James Oliver] Cromwell, and was glad to find him able to set out for Liverpool and Halifax. A Negro man by the name of Marrant,² lately from England, who says he was sent by Lady Huntingdon, has done much hurt in society among the blacks at Birchtown. I believe that Satan sent him. Before he came there was a glorious work going on among these poor creatures, now (brother Cromwell not being able to attend) there is much confusion. The devil's darts are sometimes turned upon his own miserable head.

Our chapel in Shelburne is not able to contain the congregation, and at present our friends are not able to build a larger. If I thought it right, I could wish, yea, beg for fifty or sixty pounds from England to promote the building one. Blessed be God, there are some precious souls here; but I expect many will be obliged to move to other places for want of business. The people in Halifax have had very little preaching of late, at which they are much tried. It is impossible for us to supply half the places where they want us. I have written to Mr. [Francis] Asbury for help, but with no certainty of obtaining it, as the work seems to be spreading among them.

I am an unprofitable servant, but blessed be God, the desire of my soul is to be instrumental in spreading the glorious gospel. I find a willingness to spend my all for God. I meet with many difficulties, but a moment's contemplation of the eternal world weighs down all. A man who labours for God in this country, needs a greater degree of grace, fortitude, and wisdom, than I possess. Dear sir, if you are disposed to send books to be given to the poor, or for sale, the sooner the better: let me know the conditions, and I will do the best in my power. *The Saint's Rest* and hymn books are wanted, the small select hymn book would sell.³ [Also] some pieces displaying the nature, manner, and doctrine of the Methodists; your *Journals* and *Sermons*; Mr. Walsh's *Life*.⁴ Dear Mr. [John] Fletcher's works have been a blessing in Cornwallis and Horton—I would to God they could be spread all through the country. I wrote in a former letter for some of the new prayer books adapted to the kingdom.⁵

¹Orig., 'Allen's'. Henry Alline (1748–84) was the 'antinomian' mentioned in JW to Black, Feb. 26, 1783, 30:124–25. A native of Rhode Island, he was converted in 1775 in Nova Scotia and became an independent itinerant preacher there, drawing away several of the members of the Methodist society in Amherst in particular. A small group of followers continued after his death. See J. M. Bumsted, *Henry Alline, 1748–1784* (University of Toronto Press, 1971).

²Orig., 'Morant'. John Marrant (1755–91) was born a freeman in New York City. His family moved south to Charleston, then Georgia and Florida (as loyalists during the Revolutionary War. After the war Marrant resettled in England and became involved with Lady Huntingdon's connexion. He was ordained, and with LH's blessing went to Nova Scotia as a missionary in 1785, starting a Methodist congregation in Birchtown. The tensions noted here led Marrant to resettle in Boston within a couple of years, then return to England in 1790.

³JW's extract of Richard Baxter's *The Saints' Everlasting Rest* (*Bibliography* No. 165.iii; published separately in 1776); and JW, *Select Hymns with Tunes Annexed* (1761; *Bibliography*, No. 244).

⁴[James Morgan,] *The Life and Death of Thomas Walsh* (1763; *Bibliography*, No. 252).

⁵I.e., *The Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America* (1784).

We have bought two horses, which will do for the present. In some places the people will be able to support the gospel. In general they are poor. But in my opinion this country wants nothing but pure religion and industry to make it desirable. I have seldom seen a better spring in Pennsylvania or Maryland. The winter has been very moderate, except a few weeks. Much of the land is very good, and I am informed they get from twenty to forty bushels of grain from an acre; and hay and vegetables in great abundance.

I want to die to the world, and live wholly to God. This is the constant prayer and desire of
Your unworthy servant,

F. Garrettson

Source: published transcription; Bangs, *Garrettson*, 167–69.

From H. D.

Birmingham
April 29, 1786

About thirty-six years ago God forgave me all my sins. I lived in the comfortable enjoyment of it many years, but the remains of sin frequently brought me again into bondage. Often I have lamented and said to myself this is not the happiness I expected. But hearing how others were sometimes exceeding happy, and as often cast down, through trials and temptations, this made me expect no other deliverance in this life. But when God send Mr. M. to my house, he taught me the way of the Lord more plainly. I now began to see the state my soul was in, which made me cry to God night and day for deliverance. And blessed be his holy name he never suffered me to rest until he spoke to my soul, 'I will, be thou clean.'¹

But alas! I did not continue above two years in this happy state. I could wish to draw a veil over my life for twenty years past, for to speak of all I have undergone would be impossible. Suffice it to say, after I shook off my fellowship with the Methodists (in revenge to a member of the society) I soon became more miserable than I ever was before.

After I had spent some years thus, I began to think from whence I had fallen, and to struggle to get free and come again to God. But alas! I could not pray. I was also ashamed of the people of God, and they were ashamed of me. Besides, all the powers of my soul were corrupted. Thus was I for years, Christless, prayerless, and friendless, fast bound with the chain of my sins. Notwithstanding this, I was determined to keep under the word. Though for the most part it had no more effect on me than if I had been a dead corpse.

About four years ago Mr. H. my neighbour, spoke a kind word to me now and then. He told me, he thought it was not with me as in times past. I made him little or no answer, but his words (though few) never left me.

From this time I began to hope that the Lord would heal my backslidings. Yet I oftener feared he never would; and if he did, that I should never be so happy as I had been in times past, because I had so wantonly lavished away the grace he had freely given. Within this last year I have been encouraged by his bounty in temporal things, and have often said to myself, 'This is the Lord's doing.' I began now to find a comfortable hope, and called upon him with more boldness—and was made more willing to part with everything, if he would but restore me again to his favour. But the 18th of last month I received a great blessing under those words, 'Comfort ye, comfort ye,'²

At present I can truly say, 'O Lord, thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption; for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back'; and want words to express what a change of heart I now feel! All things are indeed again become new! I can, through mercy, say I have not felt evil in my soul for some time. And I hope I never shall any more. But if I should, I will immediately declare it. I will deceive no man.

As I formerly wanted words to express the horror I felt in my fallen state; so now I want words to express the happiness I find in God my Saviour, who hath done so great things for me. But I am not without heavy and great trials, such as I have not had in all my life. I want help and advice, but am ashamed to speak to anyone, and everyone seems as careful not to speak to me, though I often lay myself in their way. However, as my time is short, I hope the few remaining days I have to live shall be spent to the glory of God. In order to this end I wish to be again united to his people, and hope that my latter days will be a greater comfort to them than many of my former. Would they count me worthy of an interest in their prayers, how greatly would that oblige

Their unworthy brother in Christ!

H. D.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 10 (1787): 521–22.

¹See Matt. 8:3, Mark 1:41, Luke 5:13.

²Isa. 40:1ff.

From James Shacklock ¹

[Misterton]
c. April 30, 1786

Elizabeth Shacklock was born January 19, 1753. When she was about 12, or 14 years old, serious thoughts about her soul being impressed on her mind, she began to attend the word of God where it was preached in sincerity.

When she was young in years, I got an acquaintance with her. She was very serious in her conversation with me, and told me some very solemn dreams which she had at times; and that if she did not avoid such and such things, the devil would fetch her (as she expressed it), which made deep impressions on her mind.

When she was about twenty-two years old, we were married, June the 13th, 1776, and in a little time after she joined the Methodist society in Misterton.

On March the 15th she was brought to bed, and was very ill. And not being likely to recover (and knowing she was not fit to die) began to cry out for mercy—when the Lord was pleased to hear her prayer, and set her soul at liberty. On this she rejoiced in the Lord, and was glad in the God of her salvation, and said, ‘The room is full of glory, and I think I shall die.’ On this she called for me, and telling me she should die, I said, ‘My dear, are you afraid to die?’ She answered, ‘No, my dear, I am not. The room is full of glory, and if I die I shall go to heaven.’ She then desired to see her father and mother. When they were come, she told them what God had done for her soul, and repeated the words, ‘The room is full of glory, and if I die I shall go to heaven.’ When they spake of her getting better, she answered, ‘I had rather go to heaven.’ But her end was not yet. The fever abated, and she recovered.

Enjoying but a poor state of health from this time, she could not attend the preaching as she desired (particularly at night), nor her class as she wished to do, being tender, and apt to catch cold. Yet she would press upon me and all the family to attend as much as possible.

During the time of our marriage, which was between nine and ten years, she would often say, ‘My dear, I could love to see us go hand in hand to heaven. O what a happy thing would it be if we could go on rejoicing together in the ways of God! Then we should bring up our children in the nurture and fear of the Lord.’

On January 22, 1785, she was safely delivered of her fifth (and last) child. After which she had a long illness, in which time she was much troubled with doubts and fears, and could hardly look up for fear she should not hold out to the end.

On December 25, 1785, she was at a love-feast, and afterwards went to her class, by which means she caught cold. From that time growing worse and worse, she said, ‘I think I shall not get better. But if I was happy I should not mind it.’ I said, ‘My dear, I doubt not but you will be happy. Nevertheless you shall have help.’ A doctor being sent for, he encouraged her; and telling her he hoped she would get better, she answered, ‘I believe I shall die. But my grief is, I am not happy. I am afraid after all I shall be lost. O that I was but happy! Pray for me, pray for me!’ I said, ‘I do pray for you, and I doubt not but you will be happy.’ She then said I had a better faith for her than she had for herself. On my going out of doors about business, she soon sent for me, and on my return said, ‘My dear, I cannot think of your leaving me. For as soon as you are gone I begin to despair, and think I shall be lost after all!’ I encouraged her to keep near to Jesus in earnest prayer, and said, ‘If you perish, be resolved to perish at his feet.’ After this I went into the fields again. But she again sent for me; so that when I was present she was a little comfortable, but when I was absent, she was always cast down, and often said, ‘I cannot rest. For I am afraid after all I shall become a castaway. O I have nothing but distress, and anguish of mind!’

On my repeating the following words,

¹Titled: ‘A Short Account of Mrs. Elizabeth Shacklock’. That is, Elizabeth (Theaker) Shacklock (1753–86), who married James Shacklock in Gringley on the Hill, Nottinghamshire, in 1776.

Though my sins as mountains rise,
And swell and reach to heav'n,
Mercy is above the skies
They may be still forgiv'n,²

she said, 'My dear, that is comfortable. But when I think of myself in my present state, as not fit to die, and of parting with my husband and children, whom I love so dear, I think it hard. They are nigh to me by the ties of nature. But my dear, I think we have made idols one of another, and God saith, "I will take away thy idols."³ She then said, 'Send for John Robinson to pray for me:' (he is one of the class leaders in Misterton). On his coming and praying with her fervently, she said, 'My heart seems as hard as a stone.' She then took up a hymn-book, and opened on this hymn, Thou shepherd of Israel and mine,⁴ After reading it she burst into tears of joy, and seemed much refreshed; but she was soon full of doubts, and fears again, and said, 'I fear, I shall not hold out to the end!'

At another time she took up *The Pilgrim's Progress* and said, 'I will open the book, and see if there be anything to comfort me.' She opened on a place which speaks of Mr. Fearing, and said, 'This is me; and though his name be Mr. Fearing, yet he plays upon the bass, which I suppose is the ground of music.' This encouraged her a little. It rejoiced me also to see her a little comfortable. When I saw her in distress and hardly knew how to bear, I said, 'O that I could see you rejoice!' To which she answered, 'O that I could rejoice! But to think of dying, and not to be happy, distresses me much. O pray for me!' On this I prayed as well as I could. But alas, I am not worthy to take the name of God into my polluted lips!

On the 13th of March, on my going into the yard, she immediately sent for me, and then calling for our servant maid she said to her, 'Go to prayer, for I am in great distress.' The maid rather objected. She then called upon me, but I could not pray. On which she said, 'If neither of you will pray, I must.' Accordingly she fell down before God, and began to pray. While she was praying, the Lord set her soul at liberty. On which she rejoiced greatly, and cried aloud, 'Praise the Lord! O what has he done for me! I can doubt no more! Jesus is mine, and I am his! Praise the Lord! O praise the Lord!' She then called upon me and the servant maid to praise the Lord along with her. Yea, she shouted aloud, so that she might be heard into the yard. The children, wondering what was the matter, said, 'What is the matter with my mammy?' But she still called upon us to praise the Lord, and said, 'O what a happiness is this! O what love I feel! I never was so happy before! I love everybody! I love my enemies if I have any!' My uncle Joseph Shacklock coming in, she said, 'O uncle, what a happy day is this to me! I never was, I never was so happy in all my life!'

It was not long before the comfortable sense of what she enjoyed in a measure was withdrawn, and she began to despond again, saying, 'O that I felt the same love and peace I did before! I think I shall get to heaven, but I want my evidence bright. I want to rejoice again. O that I could rejoice!' On this I encouraged her as well as I could, and told her I doubted not but the Lord would clear up her evidence as she desired.

John Robinson coming to see her, she said, 'John, I begin to fear and doubt again. I hope I shall get to heaven, but I want to feel that love which I once felt.' After encouraging her to pray on, he sung a hymn and went to prayer, when the Lord visiting her again, she broke out, 'O Jesus! I believe that thou lovest me, and that I love thee! I do love my Jesus, and he loves me. I do love him! I do love him! O how I would praise the Lord if I had strength! But if I get to heaven, I will make heaven ring with his praises! Then I will tell of his wonders, and sing of his love.' She then called upon all that were present to praise the Lord, and said, 'O what happiness is this, to know that Jesus is mine, and I am his! O that you all would seek the Lord before it is too late!' To my sister she said, 'Tell your husband to come here. But tell

²Cf. CW, 'A Prayer for Restoring Grace', st. 3, *HSP* (1742), 68.

³Cf. Isa. 57:13.

⁴CW, Hymn on Song of Sol. 1:7, *Scripture Hymns* (1762), 1:294–95.

him to leave the world at home, and not to mention a word about it. For what is this world to me! I have almost done with it. O that you would seek for better things!’

When my brother and sister came, she said,

I am glad to see you. but I beg you will not mention your worldly affairs here. I want to know what you think of the things which make for your peace. Do you think it is all a delusion? Do you think a dying person durst speak of such things if they were not realities? O seek Jesus before it is too late. For it is a happy thing to have Christ in us the hope of glory! O that I may meet you all in heaven! O that I could see my husband, my children, and all my relations. But I love Jesus before them all. O Jesus! when I think of thee, and of what thou hast done for me, my very soul rejoices! My husband, children, and relations may accompany my body to the grave, but Jesus will accompany me through the valley of the shadow of death, and bring me to the heaven of heavens! I imagine I see two angels standing at the window! O those lovely beings which shall accompany me to Jesus, and all the happy company above, where saints and angels are giving praise, honour, and glory to God and the Lamb forever and ever!

Several people coming to see her, and asking her how she was, she frequently said, ‘Very weak and poorly in body; but happy in my mind.’ One day an old man, a neighbour, coming to see her, she said, ‘I am happy. I am full of the love of Jesus, and trust I shall meet you in heaven.’ She then shouted aloud, ‘My Jesus loves me, and I love him! I do love him! I do love him! I do love him! O Jesus, thou art altogether lovely!’ John Robinson coming again to see her, she said, ‘John, I cannot be long here; I feel I am weaker and weaker.’ On his asking her if she was afraid to die, she answered, ‘No. The pains of death are trying to the body, but I shall soon be with Jesus!’ A little after he was gone, she rejoiced much, saying, ‘Jesus loves me, and I love my Jesus!’, etc.

When we spake to her of her happiness, she said, ‘It is all Jesus! I am a poor unworthy creature, but Jesus is good to me. He brings me through great tribulations, and supports me in a wonderful manner.’ John Robinson coming again, she said, ‘I am very bad. But I trust the Lord will not be long.’ When I expressed a concern for the loss of so loving a partner, she said, ‘I neither desire life, nor death. My will is resigned to the will of God. He may do what seemeth right to him. The prayers I have put up to God for you will not be forgotten. I trust you will reap the benefit when I am in my grave, and I hope to meet you in heaven where there are pleasures for evermore!’

When I spake to her concerning her sufferings, seeing she was worn away to skin and bone, she said, ‘My dear, Jesus makes my bed easy in my last moments. He is still with me, and bears me up above all my sufferings. Oh, what a happiness is this! Who would not have such a Saviour as thee, sweet Jesus!’ As I could not forbear weeping when she put her hands under her back, and pulled off two large pieces of skin, she said, ‘Do not fret; you only rob me of my joys.’ And seeing her mother weep also, she used the same expressions, ‘You rob me of my joys.’

When her brothers came to see her, she exhorted them to prepare for heaven and told them, ‘Though ye are young, yet ye know not how soon ye may die. But oh, if ye are not prepared, what will ye do? If ye think not of these things now, there will come a day when ye will think of them with shame and sorrow.’

On the 9th day of April, John Robinson came to see her again. But she was so weak she could scarce be heard to speak. But while he was at prayer, the Lord so broke in upon her before he had done prayer, that she cried out aloud and shouted the praises of God; so that John Robinson’s voice could not be heard. Among other things she said, ‘Oh how happy! happy, am I! Oh, dear Jesus! Loving Jesus! I am so overpowered with the love of God that I know not how to express it, I am lost in such wonder, love, and praise, as no tongue can express!’

I happened one time to drop a word concerning her experience being published for the good of others. But she would not hear of it, but said, ‘If Mr. L. preaches at my funeral,⁵ I desire he will not say a

⁵Thomas Longley was the Assistant for the Epworth circuit, which included Misterton.

word about me. For there is nothing in me but unworthiness. It is all Jesus!’

On the 12th of April she was dying to all appearance. On her being asked how she did, she said, ‘Very weak and poorly, but I trust I shall not be so long. However Jesus is still with me, and comforts me. And when ye all leave me, Jesus will still accompany me to the happy region, where there are pleasures without end! Husband and children have accompanied me almost as far as they can, and I am now going to take my last farewell of them!’

When I said, ‘My dear, I know not how to part with you’, she answered, ‘I can give you all up to God. He has promised to be a father to the fatherless, and a husband to the widow. And I trust I shall meet you all again in heaven!’

April 13th she seemed to be almost gone; only now and then she broke out in praises to God, and in calling upon us all to praise him with her.

April 14th we expected every minute to be her last, but about noon, the old man mentioned above coming in to see her, she took knowledge of him, and said, ‘I shall meet you in heaven presently.’ And then cried out, ‘Oh, my Jesus! Lovely Jesus! When I get to heaven, I will make heaven ring with his praise!’

When Mr. Brook, the apothecary, came to see her for the last time, she asked him to go to prayer. As he did not hear her, she called on me to praise the Lord.

Presently after she fell into a slumber, and in a few moments more, sunk into the arms of Jesus, April the 14, 1786, and in the thirty-second year of her age.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 12 (1789): 466–69, 518–20, 577–78.

From Andrew Blair¹

Birmingham
c. May 1786

About five years ago Ann Wright lived with one Mrs. Sarah Parks, who having lately found peace with God, strongly recommended religion to her. She not relishing this, withdrew from the company of Mrs. Parks and went so far as to take another lodging. But as she and Mrs. Parks wrought together in the same house, Mrs. Parks frequently spoke to her about the state of her soul; and feeling a particular concern for her, continued to entreat God, until he was pleased to convince her of sin. Upon this she desired to return and lodge with Mrs. Parks as formerly, which she readily consented to. About four months after, the Lord, having more deeply convinced her of her lost state, heard her cry and spoke peace to her troubled soul. She then joined the society, and continued to walk humbly with God and unreprouable before men. But at times she was much tempted to cast away her confidence; being naturally very diffident, and often much afflicted in body.

Mrs. Parks having received the pure love of God, spoke to Ann Wright concerning the necessity of it. But although she did not contradict, she did not see her want of it, until October last—when God discovered to her her inbred sin. On this she groaned, being greatly burdened, for some days.

One Sunday evening, as she and Mrs. Parks were returning from the preaching, she believed that God would set her soul at liberty. When they reached home, Mrs. Parks found much freedom in prayer for her. And while they were at prayer, Ann Wright felt a strong desire to give her whole heart to God. In a moment she thought she heard Christ say to her, 'Wash and be clean.'² On which she found her soul perfectly lightened of its load, and thoroughly cleansed.

Some weeks after, falling into a deep consumption, she was tempted to fear her sickness would be lingering, and that she would become burdensome to others. But as she made her request known to God, he inclined the hearts of those who wrought with her to make little collections for her among themselves on their pay nights.

In the former part of her illness she had a manifestation of the adorable Trinity; and such a distinct view of the personality of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as quite filled and ravished her soul. She did not attempt to describe it, but said it was such as she could not possibly have had any conception of before. Nor did she till then conceive how God could capacitate any soul for such views of himself while in the body. This greatly strengthened her faith, and supported her through her illness.

About a fortnight before she died, she had an extraordinary vision. For some time she was as if out of the body, and assembled with angels and saints, all singing praises to God, when she found both freedom and ability to join with them, such as she had never before experienced. In the midst of this company she saw the Lord Jesus. But after some time, he being removed from them, she was grieved. And not perceiving him there, she cried aloud, 'Come Lord Jesus, come quickly!' When she came to herself, she feared she was in some measure departed from God, and therefore gave all diligence to return to him.

I conversed with her a little the day before she died, and found her full of a glorious hope of being with God forever. Mrs. Parks asked her twice or thrice, while in the agonies of death, if she had any conflict? She always answered, 'No.' Being asked if she was happy, she answered, 'Perfectly so.' A friend reading to her the passage in *The Pilgrim's Progress* concerning Christian and Faithful crossing the river, she fixed her eyes on heaven, and expired without a sigh, on April the 27th, 1786.

A. B.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 10 (1787): 187–88.

¹Titled: 'A Short Account of Ann Wright'.

²2 Kings 5:13.

From James Rogers¹

[Dublin]
c. May 1786

Mr. Christopher Peacock was born at Swaledale, in the North Riding of Yorkshire, in the year 1753. When a child he was frequently convinced of sin, and wished for someone to show him how he might be saved from it.

About the year 1773, the Methodist preachers began to call sinners to repentance, at a small distance from his father's house. But he hearing many reports concerning this *new sect* (as strange as groundless), his mind was so deeply prejudiced that he would not hear them.

In the year following, Mr. Duncan Wright and I were stationed in the Thirsk circuit, of which Swaledale was a part. It pleased God that year to succeed his word. It ran, and was glorified in the awakening, and conversion of numbers in those parts, which caused a great stir in the neighbourhood where he lived. And several of his old companions (being also turned from the error of their ways, and filled with zeal for God, and the salvation of souls) frequently solicited him to hear preaching. It was sometime before they could prevail. But during the Christmas holidays he and some others formed a resolution to go and hear (for once) what these men had to say. It was my turn to preach, and being the first day of the new year, I preached on the 13th of Luke [vv. 8–9], 'Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it and dung it. And if it bear fruit, well; if not, then after that, thou shalt cut it down.' The word was accompanied with power. He felt that he was the spared sinner, and was affected in an uncommon manner. From that hour he broke off from all his ungodly companions, and soon joined the society. His convictions were now such that he could not rest, till the Lord manifested his pardoning love to his soul; which he did in a few weeks. As his sorrow for sin had been great, the change he now experienced was the more conspicuous, both to himself and others. 'Being justified freely, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, he rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory.'² The constant language of his heart was truly expressed in the following lines,

Oh! the rapturous height
Of that holy delight,
Which I felt in the life-giving blood!
Of my Saviour possess'd,
I was perfectly bless'd,
As if fill'd with the fulness of God.³

His attachment to the means of grace was now such that, with some others (converted about the same time), he would travel many miles, in the depth of winter and in the darkest nights, over dreary mountains and through lonely dales, to hear the word, because he could have it no oftener than once a fortnight near home. I have frequently heard him speak with singular pleasure of those times, saying how happy he was when returning from such and such places at midnight, singing hymns most of the way home.

Too many have I seen, who after their first love, suffered the holy flame to decrease, if not die away. But it was far otherwise with him. He drew not back, but daily advanced in grace—continuing to

¹Titled: 'A More Particular Account of the Life and Death of Mr. Christopher Peacock'. With a note: 'A Short Account of his Death was inserted in the July Number, page 355' [i.e., Hester Ann (Roe) Rogers to JW, Mar. 2, 1786, above].

²Cf. Rom. 3:24; 1 Pet. 1:8.

³CW, Hymns for One Fallen from Grace, #15, st. 7, *HSP* (1749), 1:124–25.

believe and press forward to the full and final salvation of his soul.

As it was soon manifest that he possessed tolerable abilities, his acquaintance began to solicit him to act in a more public way. But he had so mean an opinion of himself that he was not easily prevailed upon. He was followed, however, from time to time, with secret impressions that he was called to the work; and with strong fears, lest in refusing, he should be found to fight against God. His love for souls, being as a fire in his bones, constrained him to make a trial. This he did first at a little village in the neighbourhood, where the Lord opened his mouth to the edification of many, as well as to the encouragement of his own soul. He was then prevailed on to make a second trial. Soon after he had invitations to different places round about. This was about two years after I had left the circuit.

On my way from Edinburgh to Cornwall, I called at a place about twelve miles from his father's house. And being informed of his usefulness, I sent him word to meet me there. He came, and before we parted I was fully persuaded he was called of God to preach the gospel. I received many pleasing accounts of him afterwards, and especially of his great usefulness as a local preacher.

At the Leeds Conference, in the year 1781, I proposed him as a proper candidate for a travelling preacher. Accordingly Mr. [John] Wesley appointed him for Scarborough circuit, where he laboured with success, and gained a good report of all the people.

The next year he laboured with me on the Macclesfield circuit. Here I was an eyewitness of his indefatigable labours, and of the great good done by the blessing of God thereon. I was also an eyewitness of his fortitude, meekness, and patience under various trials we this year laboured under, occasioned by oppositions we met with from several quarters, on account of doing what we thought was most for the glory of God.

In 1783 he was sent to the Yarm circuit. Here it pleased God, more than ever, to crown his labours with success. He was greatly beloved by all the people, and the principal persons in the circuit wrote to Mr. Wesley to have him continued there another year. It might have been granted, but Dr. [Thomas] Coke returning just then from Ireland, mentioned Cork as being much in want of a faithful, steady assistant. I was myself appointed for Dublin, and being sensible of his real worth, the more readily proposed him for that station, rejoicing at the thought of having such a companion. He was judged by the Conference a proper person to fill that place, and accordingly appointed.

In three weeks, August 31, 1784, we arrived safe at Dublin. It had pleased God the preceding year greatly to bless the Cork circuit, while under the care of those faithful servants of Jesus, Mr. Henry Moore and Mr. Andrew Blair. And it contributed greatly to the furtherance of the work that they were followed by those who enforced the same plan, both of doctrine and discipline. He laboured among that worthy people indefatigably, till last Conference. Nor were his labours in vain: near one hundred being added to their number, and many truly converted.

As to his manner of life, how grave and spiritual, while in this city [Dublin], ye are witnesses! Many of you have cause to bless God you ever saw his face. Numbers, to my knowledge, have returned public thanks to the Lord for a sense of pardoning love, and others for sanctifying grace under his preaching and prayers. Nor was he in any wise puffed up by this; it tended rather to humble him. Hundreds of you can testify this! Witness his own declaration at the two last love-feasts he attended, especially our covenant night, when he shunned not to tell you his whole heart—particularly the time and manner of his conversion, twelve years from that very day. He continued to speak till (as you know) tears prevented his proceeding farther. And can you ever forget his prayers and cries to God for you all on that solemn occasion?

Many of you remember the last Sabbath he ever preached in this city. With what solemnity he declared the whole counsel of God, from these words, 'He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning, his blood shall be upon him: but he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul.'⁴ Ye are witnesses how, on that occasion, he delivered his own soul.

⁴Ezek. 33:5.

After sermon he spoke freely of his present happiness and past experience; especially of the blessings he received when labouring in the Macclesfield circuit, where he obtained a clear sense of the pure love of God.

With respect to his general character, 1) as a friend: He was truly affectionate, sincere, and constant, and would spare no pains to serve anyone he believed worthy.

2) As a Christian: He might be justly said to have learned of his Lord and Master, 'to be meek and lowly in heart'.⁵ He was strictly modest. A man of few words, yet in general cheerful. Always affable and sweet in his temper, patient and long-suffering toward all men. He lived daily in the spirit of prayer, and longed for nothing so much as still greater conformity to the will of his God. He took singular pleasure in singing the praises of the Lord, especially when he met with words applicable to the feelings of his own heart. As he believed religion to be an active, as well as an inward principle, when absent from his closet he was commonly going about doing good; visiting and sympathizing with the 'fatherless and widows in their afflictions',⁶ as well as labouring to 'keep himself unspotted from the world'.⁷

3) As a member of the Methodist society: He cordially approved of our whole plan of discipline, and laboured from the day he cast in his lot with us to keep every rule as laid down by the Conference. This he did, 'not for wrath, but for conscience sake';⁸ particularly that of abiding by the established Church. And so desirous was he for all our people to continue herein that (partly from inclination, and partly through fear of influencing others by his example) he could hardly be persuaded to enter the doors of a dissenting meeting house. Some may be ready to impute this to narrowness of spirit, want of charity, and what not. But his friends know it was otherwise, that he loved all 'who loved our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity',⁹ whether dissenters or others. Nevertheless, from motives of real Christian prudence, he believed it his duty thus to act.

4) As a preacher of the gospel: He was sound and scriptural in his principles and doctrines. His every sermon was calculated to discover

The native wretchedness of Adam's race,
The all-sufficiency of Jesu's love!

Enforcing constantly, repentance toward God, justification by faith, and entire sanctification or holiness both of heart and life, as absolutely necessary, previous to the stroke of death.

As the servant of Christ and his church, he was indefatigable in his labours, and ever ready to fulfil the meanest offices of his station. Nothing lay so near his heart as the cause of God, and the good of souls. No difficulties could hinder him from endeavouring to promote the interests thereof. Witness his two last journeys into the country, which were chiefly by his own choice. For being informed of numbers of poor careless sinners, perishing for lack of knowledge, and a door being now opened to receive God's messengers, he resolved to visit them; but the weather proving uncommonly tempestuous and wet, laid the foundation of the disorder of which he died.

His word being remarkably blessed to the people the first visit, a pressing invitation was sent for him to go a second time. A slow nervous fever was even then upon him, yet would he not utter the least complaint. So that his real indisposition was hid from us, and he went again in the name of his Lord and Master, whose gracious power assisted him to go through his labour. He was, however, still unwilling to complain, but spoke to the physician in private (whom he afterwards chose to attend him) hoping to get

⁵Cf. Matt. 11:29.

⁶Cf. James 1:27.

⁷James 1:27.

⁸Cf. Rom. 13:5.

⁹Cf. Eph. 6:24.

relief, so as to be able to continue his labour of love. But God, who seeth not as man seeth, had otherwise determined. For though the doctor faithfully attended, and every medicine judged necessary was prepared and taken, but in spite of all the disease gradually prevailed. When real danger appeared, two other physicians were called, who also faithfully attended early and late, and interested themselves in his life as if he had been a near relation of their own. But when death has got his commission to strike, vain is the help of man!

His nerves being much affected, his animal spirits consequently depressed with a weight of affliction, rendered it difficult for him to converse at all during his illness. What he did say was chiefly on the state of his own soul. From the first day he took his room he never expressed the least shadow of doubt or fear, but, on the contrary professed confidence in the Lord.

About thirty hours before he died, I found peculiar satisfaction in speaking to him about his approaching dissolution. He then testified of the preciousness of Christ, with a perfect deliverance from the fear of death and a full assurance that all would be well.

It was matter of great comfort that he had the perfect use of his reason to the last moment. Twelve hours before he departed (though he could then speak very little) his spirit remained in a sweet composure. When I took my leave of him for the night, being then near midnight, he fixed his eyes so intensely upon me that his nurse begged I would speak to him. I did so. He attempted, but could not reply. Offering to go away a second time, he looked so wishfully that I returned again. But he spoke no more. I took it as his last farewell. I believe he meant it so, and so it was. He continued labouring under a load of affliction, which he supported with invincible patience till five o'clock the next morning. Then bathed in a cold sweat from head to foot, and quite worn out with fatigue, after a sharp struggle of a few minutes, he expired, February 15, 1786.

'Thy judgments, O Lord, are a great deep!'¹⁰ How is it that a man should be taken away in the prime of life, aged but thirty-three years, and in the very midst of his usefulness? 'The Lord giveth no account of such matters.'¹¹ At least for the present; but let it suffice us 'that he hath done it'¹² and that 'what we know not now, we shall know hereafter'.¹³

But though we are sure death is to him eternal gain, we are at the same time sensible our loss is inexpressibly great. You¹⁴ being deprived so suddenly of a faithful minister, and I of so affectionate a fellow labourer. Conscious of my insufficiency to fill my own place properly, much less that of another added to it, I have no resource but to entreat your prayers in this time of sore trial! Continue to remember me at the throne of grace. It is the only favour I ask or desire. Nor am I capable of a better wish for you, or myself, than that we may through every vicissitude of life acquit ourselves as well as our brother did.

The following account of him, I received from Mr. [George] Merryweather, of Yarm, in Yorkshire:

Dear Brother,

I was much affected by your account of good Christopher Peacock's death. From what knowledge I had of him, I can say he was a very modest, chaste, well-behaved, self-denying, pious, devoted, and laborious man; whose heart appeared to be always in heaven. He was universally beloved by all serious people, and that most justly; for I am persuaded no flaw was found in his character. I am the more free to say thus much of him because he lodged at my house the whole year he was at Yarm. In a word, he was all that in a Christian is amiable and

¹⁰Cf. Ps. 36:6.

¹¹Cf. Job 33:13.

¹²Cf. Jer. 30:24.

¹³Cf. John 13:7.

¹⁴Note in original: 'The Methodist Congregation in Dublin'.

good.—May we follow him as he followed Christ!

Extracts from two of his own letters:¹⁵

Hull, July 2, 1782

Dear Brother,

I have the pleasure to inform you I am very happy in the love of God, resigned to his will, and determined to spend and be spent in preaching the gospel. It is my great delight to call sinners to repentance. While I see them weep, I join the angels in rejoicing over them. And when a soul is born again, I no more remember the difficulties attending an itinerant life, for the joy arising from another brand being plucked out of the fire. I can also say with the apostle, 'I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth.'¹⁶

Dublin, December 8, 1785

Dear Brother,

I am glad to hear of your health, but more so, to hear of the happiness of your soul, and that you endeavour to do a little for God. I am thankful to hear that my dear parents and all the children are well. They cannot conceive what natural affection I feel, both as a son and as a brother; much less what I feel, as a Christian and a preacher, for their precious souls. God is my witness, and his people too, how much I long for the happiness of you all. For my full heart, in public as well as in private, often overflows with prayer, and mine eyes with tears.

With respect to myself, I bless God I am well in body. And as to my soul, I have great reason to praise him for his unspeakable kindness. He is showering his blessings down upon me daily. I enjoy sweet union with him, an open intercourse for prayer, a grateful heart, much pleasure in singing his praise, and in general my tongue is loosed in enforcing divine truths. I know nothing that shares my heart with God. I am determined through grace, to wear out my life in the service of Christ Jesus my Lord, and in following after his lambs and sheep. I wonder daily that God and his people bear so with me. O pray for me, that I may be kept in every trying hour, and remain happy and useful unto death! Lord help me!

While I am now writing, my heart fills, and my eyes overflow. O may God supply all your wants, and enrich you with his spirit to do and be all that is righteous in his sight! that if I never see you here, I may meet you with joy in his kingdom of glory.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 9 (1786): 540–42, 599–603, 651–53.¹⁷

¹⁵Editor's note before Letter 1: 'To his Brother'. Editor's note before Letter 2: 'To the same'. I.e., James Peacock (1748–1815) of Grinton, Yorkshire.

¹⁶Cf. 3 John 1:4.

¹⁷Rogers published a more complete account as a pamphlet: *A Short Account of the Life and Death of Mr. Christopher Peacock; addressed to the Methodist Society, in Dublin*. (Darlington: W. Appleton, [1786]).

From an Unidentified Correspondent¹

c. May 1786

In 1781 her mother died; soon after which she said it seemed to her as if she should soon follow her. In the spring of 1782, she was seized with appearances of an approaching consumption, which in the course of four years reduced her to a mere skeleton, which proved the means of her conversion.

March 18, 1781. She wrote as follows,

It was in this year (after I had received the holy communion for the first time) I received Jesus into my heart as my Saviour, and gave myself entirely to him. Since that blessed event took place, I neither have nor can doubt for one moment of the reality of that precious truth, 'My beloved is mine and I am his.'² At present our Lord is impressing on my mind the necessity of deep humility. He teaches me that I can only be so far united to him as I partake of that spirit of humility which was so evidently displayed in his whole suffering life in this world. That it is in that, I must imitate him. That it is by this means I can truly learn to comprehend his sufferings. And that the reason why I am yet so deficient in this point is because my greatness can in no wise understand his littleness.

August 8, 1781.

Having been for some time in a very barren state of heart, and the time for the holy communion drawing near, in my great perplexity whether I should go or not the following prayer was the language of my heart:

'O my Saviour, look down in thy tender mercy and pity on me! I have destroyed myself. But in thee is my help found! O may thy will be done in me! I am still thine, though I have proved an adulteress to thee. Look at my affliction and pain, and forgive me all my sins, O my God! I dare not approach thy table with an unwashed heart! I dare not go unto the marriage supper without a wedding garment. Clothe me, then that I be not found naked! My gracious Saviour, if thou wilt permit me to taste of thy supper, I will go as the prodigal, unworthy of the smallest crumb. I depend entirely upon thee, and I commit my whole self, body, soul, and spirit unto thee. Amen.'

September 4, 1781.

After much prayer, I ventured to taste of his supper, which was to me a divine repast. But before two days were elapsed, my Beloved had again withdrawn himself. From that time to this, I have been like one alone. Nothing affording me any joy, because my Love was gone. When I could pray, I poured out my groanings before him, for my spirit longed to be entirely devoted to him. But I seemed to be very far from this mark. I thought he had left me, because I had grieved him, but did not know the depth of mercy he intended by it. O what precious love has he at length shown me! I now know whereabouts I am, and what is the first thing I must learn before I can go any further: even to be as a worm before him, having my own spirit subdued and brought into subjection to the obedience of Christ. O may I be found faithful to his Spirit, not turning a deaf

¹Titled: 'Some Account of the Conversion and Death of Miss Barham, late of Bedford'. Martha Foster Barham (1760–86) was a daughter of Joseph Foster Barham (1729–89), a prominent Moravian from Bedford and Dorothea (Vaughan) Barham (1721–81). For an account of her mother's death see [Thomas Vasey?] to JW, c. Oct. 1781.

²Song of Sol. 2:16.

ear to any of his reproofs; but may every occurrence within and without tend to make me as nothing before my all-wise Potter.

March 10, 1782.

As every visit of my dearest Lord is an important season to my heart, I cannot pass by unnoticed many precious interviews which my soul has enjoyed since I wrote last. The work begun has been carried on, and I hope taken deeper root. I feel an eager desire to die with Jesus; that is, to have the old man in me crucified by the power of his death. When I shall be able to say with a divine certainty that this event has taken place in me, my Saviour only knows. But one thing he has assured me of—viz., that it shall be when he sees best.

For many days past my soul has been in great heaviness, because the enemy has such power over me, and I feel no spirit nor strength to resist him. But Jesus, my almighty Conqueror does not fail to step in when all my weak efforts have proved of no avail. My prayer is that this work of humiliation may be carried forwards every day. O Jesus, do with me what thou wilt! Only let me be as thou wouldst have me. I wish for nothing but what thou sees best. I want to come continually to thy light, that every work of darkness may be made manifest, and my soul may be brought into the full liberty of thy children.

November 7, 1784.

I have been alternately better and worse; and am still far from being recovered, so that it often seems dubious how it will end. Be this as it may, I am perfectly satisfied. During this illness I have had innumerable opportunities of seeing how deeply hidden self-will lies in the heart. I have endeavoured to rid myself of it, but this has answered no other end than to leave me hopeless of ever attaining my wishes. I have also been made to believe that the application of the blood of Jesus to the heart could effectually remove whatever was contrary to the divine nature. It is my great grief that I have so seldom made the experiment. Human reason is a powerful bar to the simplicity of faith; and if possible, would hinder my entering into this great reality of becoming a little child. Nothing but a close attention to the Holy Spirit's teachings, and a deaf ear to the voice of every stranger, can possibly effect a change so great.

I have been for some months past in a particular near connection with my dear Lord. Growing worse in my health, I thought this illness might finish my course. And though I never dreaded my departure, but felt a confidence in my Saviour, believing that if he took me he could soon finish his work, yet upon examining my heart strictly I found so many things contrary to the spirit of Jesus as often made me weep in secret before him. But this did not lessen my confidence. It only made me very jealous over myself, lest I should rest satisfied short of this pearl of great price. O how busy was the enemy at this period, when he saw that my spirit could not live out of Jesus. Grievously harassed have I often been, till, with Mary, I could sit at the feet of Jesus, and hear his words only. O blessed stillness of heart, when the voice of the Beloved is alone attended to, and every enemy keeps silence before him! What the Holy Spirit seems to be most active in at present is to lead me, or rather prepare me to understand the great mystery of the cross and passion of Jesus. My heart says amen to it a thousand times. For I long fully to experience the greatness of my redemption, that I may be able to love my Redeemer with a more pure affection. I am each day made sensible of my great unlikeness to my best Friend, whom however I try to imitate. But in the midst of all discouragements my heart cleaves to him, and can find no happiness out of him. If he pleases to take me by means of this illness, most gladly will I obey his will, and bid an everlasting adieu to all below. But if I am still to be a sojourner in this vale of tears, my only wish is that his blessed will may be fully accomplished in me.

Till the end of last year I continued in a blessed connexion with the sinner's Friend. No intervening cloud hid the beloved object for one moment from my view, but all was peace within.

No wonder my spirit was often winged with desire to be with him forever; especially as my declining health showed that event could be at no great distance. Indeed this seemed to be the only thing wanting to complete my happiness. As I was daily sensible of faults and wants, and felt myself defective in love to the suffering Saviour, my desire increased of experiencing full redemption in his blood. At these times it was impressed on my mind that I had a fiery trial to pass through, in which every disposition contrary to divine love must be consumed. I was not dismayed at this, but thought I could go through the valley of the shadow of death and fear no evil, if he would stand by me and manage the process. I felt an eager desire to have full deliverance from everything that could hinder me from attaining to his rest, and longed for a clearer manifestation of the dying love of Jesus. At last the Lord granted me the desires of my heart. When feeling myself the most unworthy, and least expecting a visit from him, he was pleased to reveal himself to me. O how thankful was my inmost soul for this revelation!

My wish now is that I may be kept in an humble state of mind, and never be suffered to rise higher than the cross. I am far from thinking the work is finished. O no! As long as I remain in this world there will be still something to do. But let me feel what I will, I know that there is a remedy for every evil in him. And I am divinely assured that whenever he pleases to take me home, he will receive my spirit to himself.

To conclude, on the 16th of February 1786, it was thought she was on the point of departure. But on reviving she said, 'I thought I had been going, and felt quite tranquil and serene.' The next morning she said to her sister, 'As my being saved appears to me as great a miracle of mercy as possible, I cannot open my mouth against anyone. They are all better than I am.' This she said with tears running down her cheeks.

March 6. She said, 'No one can guess how greatly I feel the need of patience! I am now more desirous that our Saviour may grant me that, than removed my sufferings. If his sufferings were but always rightly impressed on the heart, I think we might be carried above our own. In submission and patience the work will be soonest perfected.'

A little before her death she wrote to her father as follows, 'My heart is kept in a patient waiting for him. The chief concern I feel is lest I should retard the accomplishment of his work, through unbelief, by not suffering him to break me to pieces. My cry often is that he would show me what he has to say against me, and sit as a refiner to purge away all my dross. Ah, I am a poor worm! How glad should I be (as my late dying mother expressed it) to creep through and be saved, at any rate!'

On the 29th she said, 'It costs more to die than you can possibly be aware of! It is one thing to talk of it; another to experience it.'

April 4. She said, 'Dying requires perfect resignation. I am obliged to give up the very desire I had about departing.'

The night preceding her departure, she frequently cried out, 'My sweet Jesus, come and take me!' Accordingly, on the seventh of April, she fell asleep in Jesus, in the twenty-sixth year of her age.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 9 (1786): 603–07, 653–55.

From J[ohn] F[loyde]¹

Leeds
May 4, 1786

Some time ago a farmer had been drinking for several days and nights together. Rising early the next morning after his return home, his wife fearing he was going to the alehouse again, said, 'My dear where are you going?' He answered, 'I am going to hell, if the devil can find room for me!' So saying he immediately went out with his cart, which was waiting for him in the yard. He had not gone far before he fell down—on which the wheel went over him, and killed him on the spot!²

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 10 (1787): 26.

¹Titled: 'A Short Account of the Death of a daring Sinner: by Mr. J. F. of Leeds'.

²Editor's note: 'How dreadful is it, that beings who are to spend eternity, either in the joys of heaven or the flames of hell, should thus provoke the Lord to jealousy! Should thus dare him to the very face!

'But, "I am going to hell", said he, "if the devil can find room for me!" Undoubtedly there will be room enough for every daring sinner, who shall die without repentance. For as *wide* is the gate, and *broad* is the way that leadeth to destruction, and *many* there be that go in thereat; so Tophet is prepared of old, *deep* and *large*: and the pile thereof is fire and *much* wood, and the breath of the Lord, as a stream of brimstone doth kindle it!'

From J[ohn] F[loyd]¹

Leeds
May 5, 1786

A few weeks ago, a man in this neighbourhood who was weary of his wife, after buying a piece of beef and rubbing it well over with arsenic, ordered her to roast it for dinner. While it was roasting, the woman was taken so ill that, though he pressed her much, she could not eat a morsel of it. And he making some excuse for not eating of it himself, it was put by for the next day.

But the next day he brought home some fish, and ordered his wife to dress them for his dinner. This being done, he sat down and ate heartily. But before he had done, he was taken very ill. On asking his wife what she had fried the fish with, she said, 'With the dripping of the beef I roasted yesterday.' On hearing this he cried out, 'Then I am a dead man!' Then throwing down his knife and fork, he confessed what he had done, and died in about two hours!²

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 10 (1787): 26–27.

¹Titled: 'A Short Account of a Yorkshireman, who dug a pit for his Wife, and fell into it himself: by Mr. J. F. of Leeds'.

²Editor's note: 'Who that reads this account can help admiring, on the one hand, the providence of God, in preserving the life of this injured woman? And, on the other, his justice, in causing the very evil to fall on the head of this hard-hearted sinner which he so cruelly intended should fall on his wife!'

From the Rev. Dr. Thomas Coke

Dublin
May 6, 1786

Honoured and Very Dear Sir,

I have had the pleasure of spending four mornings with Mr. La Trobe on the practicability of an union between the Methodists and the *Unitas Fratrum*.¹ The result of our conversations is the following proposal:

That a conference be formed of an equal number of both societies, who shall meet at specified times to consult in what degree and by what methods a further union may be brought about, as far as it may appear to be for the glory of God, the good of his church, and the prosperity of both societies. The report of this conference to be laid from time, on the one hand before you and our general Conference (when it sits), and on the other hand before the Elder's Conference of the Brethren through Mr. La Trobe; and in consequence steps be taken for a further union as to the two governors of the two societies may be seen necessary. Also, if it be thought expedient, there may be more than one conference composed as above of delegates out of both societies—one for instance in England, another in Ireland, and another in America, for the same purpose.

This is all, it appears to Mr. La Trobe and me, that can be done at present, and such is the influence of Christian fellowship and converse that the conferences will *of themselves* have a tendency to promote union and love between the two societies.

Our first intention was that I should immediately lay the proposals before you, and Mr. La Trobe immediately write on the same subject and in the same manner to the Elder's Conference. But at our last meeting Mr. La Trobe expressed a desire of having first of all a private conversation with you yourself. I ventured to assure him that I had no doubt but you would willingly grant him one as soon as the opportunity offered. But he expressed in a delicate manner his fears lest you would afterwards publish the whole or part of the conversation in your *Journals*, supposing you could not come to an agreement. I wish you would be pleased to enable me, by your answer, to assure him that you will grant him a private conference on this important business and also that you will not take any advantage by publishing anything that passes, supposing you do not agree in sentiment.

As to the condition 'implicitly believe and implicitly obey',² I do not think, whatever might formerly have been the case, that any such condition is now even thought of by Mr. La Trobe, or will be proposed by him or any of the Brethren. The point which took up our conversation for two whole mornings, whether directly or indirectly—viz., the validity, expediency, and admissibility of our ordination—is so far given up by Mr. La Trobe that it shall not be (as far as his influence goes, which is not small) an hindrance to our union.

Indeed my dear sir, I know not a desire in my soul that is stronger than that of uniting all the religious societies in love and in the closest union that the circumstances of things will admit of. I think the desire of my own salvation is not superior. To use our utmost endeavour to gain this most favourable point as far as the grace and providence of God enables us is only to do our part to hasten the fulfilment of that blessed prayer which is even now presented before the throne by our great Intercessor, 'I pray that they also, who shall believe in me, ... that they may all be one ... that the world may believe that thou has

¹Rev. Benjamin La Trobe (1727–86) was born in Dublin, of Huguenot ancestry, and raised a Baptist. He was converted to the evangelical revival by John Cennick (now a Moravian) in 1746. Over the next year La Trobe played a role in transforming the initial Methodist work at Skinner's Alley, Dublin, into a Moravian society. La Trobe moved to England and became a leading figure in the Moravian community there, but one who continued to seek a union of Methodists and Moravians. See *DEB*, 663–64.

²See JW to Coke, c. Apr. 25, 1786, 30:452.

sent me.³

The great prop of infidelity would then be thrown down—the divisions among the professors of *vital* piety and the ancient wonder again be expressed in ‘See how these Christians love one another’. And the bigots of every party would gnash their teeth and melt away like snow.

I am, etc.,

T. C.

Source: Coke's copy sent to Benjamin La Trobe; Herrnhut, Germany, Unitätsarchiv der Evangelischen Brüder-Unität, R.13.A.43.a.⁴

³John 17:20–21.

⁴Transcription published in Vickers, *Letters of Coke*, 76–78.

From Mary Cooke

Duke Street, Trowbridge
May 8, 1786

My sister and I join in opinion that when my letter is wrote, it will not in worth pay its postage to Edinburgh. Yet you will bear with me. Ought not I then to catch a spark of the same humble spirit, enabling me to bear patiently with my own folly? This is what I want—even to be *content* to feel myself a fool; that as being stript of all of *self*, I may learn wisdom of him who alone is able to make me wise unto salvation.

Your last letter came in a time of need, on a day when I wanted much, and *more* than human aid.¹ Surely, dear sir, could sympathy have told your heart what I felt in those moments of sore distress, it would have dropped a tear for me. I was under the power of strong temptation: to my own apprehension sinking in deep waters, not espying the arm of my Deliverer stretched out to save me. Satan did indeed write grievous things against me, which my own heart was ready to subscribe to as truths. In the midst, I found no condemnation from God. But it seemed as though all the emissaries of hell were set against me, combined for my overthrow, and would prevail. Every moment I walked in fear of falling, and dreaded lest the next step would plunge me into sin. My soul was bowed down even to the dust, and my spirit sunk within me. My adversary reproached, and threatened I should have no help. But herein he was proved a liar, and in the height of his cruel triumph was confounded before me.

Previous to this trial of faith (for such I *now* see it) my heart was drawn out in strong cries for the destruction of sin and a renewal of soul. My spirit was wrestling with the Lord, looking for the accomplishment of his precious promises and hoping in him, when this overwhelming tide came on, seemingly ready to sweep me away. Yet over all I have been made more than conqueror. And this I find, that every trial shakes but to fix me firmer on the Rock of ages. My conflicts, though not so numerous as some time since they were, grew stronger. But *in* each, or *after* each (I scarcely know which; but rather think the strength is gained in the fight, though not so sensibly felt till afterward), I get new degrees of vigor, additional confidence, and a surer trust. Since this last storm has been blown over, I have had sweet views and convictions of the beauty of holiness, and the absolute necessity thereof. Particularly a few days ago, it appeared so reasonable, so desirable, and so impossible that without it any soul should see the Lord, as I cannot express. While I simply and calmly considered it, laying aside all the mysterious reasonings of my blind understanding, and seeing it in its *own* light, I felt my heart burn as with a peaceful flame, aspiring in even warm desires to the essential source of all perfection—to the Holy One whose dwelling is in light inaccessible—that he would impart of himself unto me, fill my soul with his pure love, and make me ‘partaker of his holiness’.² I want all this heavy clay removed, and to live a life concealed with Christ in God. I want to have these bonds broken off, and wholly cast away; that my soul may alway[s] dwell in heaven, while it yet shall be engaged on earth, in doing the will of him who hath called me to high and glorious privileges. He suffers me not utterly to faint in the way, but wondrous love stoops down to help me forward. I am amazed it should notice me.

But is this, nay *can* it be, greater than when it hung on Calvary, and bled for rebels such as me! Such astonishing instances ought to shame me when I murmur and am sometimes ready to cry, ‘Has he forgotten to be gracious! Is his loving kindness shut up in displeasure!’³ Would you think it possible I could be thus ungrateful, and unmindful of his benefits? But thus at times I feel, like a presumptuous creature, as though deserving of his mercies. I know too much the want of a grateful spirit: grateful for smaller blessings, while expecting greater. But looking forward to higher, I am too apt to forget what I

¹This letter is not known to survive.

²Cf. Heb. 12:10.

³Cf. Ps. 77:9.

already possess; and grieve for what I have not, instead of being thankful for what I have. Rightly considered, the least the Lord gives is large. This I want always to retain a deep sense of, that I may praise him for evermore. And in the strength of what I have at his hands received, go on strong in faith, and rejoicing in hope of having added thereto an abundant increase. Praise becometh the children of the Most High; and thanksgiving should banish all complaint from them, who are so highly favoured. O might my soul now rise, and never admit a murmuring thought again! I will think on the goodness of my redeeming God, and surely this will inspire with feelings of joy and notes of praise. Yea, I find it does. And while I think thereon, my full heart burns with love, and stands ready to do his will whatsoever it be. All glory to the Lamb! Who so truly loved, so dearly bought his people, and secures them for his own possession.

Between writing the forgoing and following lines, there was a pause of two or three days, during which I have enjoyed much divine consolation. I envy not the gay their pleasures; mine are more substantial. Nor the ambitious their honours; mine are far transcending. They come even from the King of glory. Neither shall the gold of the worldly-rich excite a wish in my heart; my treasure is more enduring, and laid up in the highest heaven!

My God, I am thine;
What a comfort divine,
What a blessing to know that my Jesus is mine!⁴

Not all below the skies can give the peace these lines convey. My soul says the words are mine. And what is better still, he who inspired the first writer of them is mine also. I would praise, but cannot in worthy strains, the God of my salvation!

My sisters [Anne and Frances] desire their respectful love, and beg with me a continued interest in your prayers.

At Edinburgh my list of the places you propose visiting ends. Nor do I after this know where to find you again till the latter part of July in Bristol. Wherever you are, may the God of peace abide with you, prosper the work of your hands, and pour out of the fulness that is in him both spiritual and temporal blessings in copious showers on you! And surely he will if he answers the petitions of

Your ever grateful,

M. C.

Address: 'The Revd J. Wesley / To be left at the Preaching-House / Edinburgh'.

Endorsement: 'Answer to Mr. Wesley's 8th letter'.

Source: manuscript copy for records; Bridwell Library (SMU), Mary Cooke Letter-book, p. 8.

⁴CW, 'Hymn for Believers, #16', st. 1, *HSP* (1749), 1:219.

From a Gentleman in Kent¹

c. June 1786

There are insects abroad, says he, much of the shape and size of a wasp. They are to be seen in great quantities where the land is light and sandy. They fly with great velocity, five or six inches from the ground, and catch small flies on which they feed. As there are always many small holes in the ground which they frequent, I suppose they lodge and breed there. At the death of any of them, there is a small plant that springs up from its head. It has the appearance of a small sprig of samphire, but it is of an ash-colour. The Negroes who know the proper time, dig them up and bring them to town, where they are sold as curiosities. And you may frequently see them in all the different stages of their vegetation, from the first bud on the back part of their head, till the plant comes to perfection. It is then about two inches long.

It is remarkable that the ants do not devour them, as they do the bodies of every other insect. But nature, which seems to have some other purposes to serve with them, guards them from those little ravenous animals. Their bodies being always found perfectly sound, with the plant adhering to them.²

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 10 (1787): 38–39.

¹Titled: 'An Account of curious Insects: by a Gentleman in Kent'.

²Editor's note: 'How manifold, and how marvellous are thy works, O God!'

From an Unidentified Correspondent¹

c. June 1786

The subject of the following observations being but little known, it was not her desire that anything should be said concerning her. But in an age when early piety is too seldom seen, whenever there is any appearance thereof it should not be wholly overlooked, since God does not light a candle to put it under a bushel.

Sarah Butler was born in the year 1769. And though for the first eight years of her life nothing remarkable occurred, yet she passed that period in great simplicity, seldom giving her parents any uneasiness by her undutifulness.

Her religious concern began at the time Mr. [John] Broadbent instructed the children weekly, which she has since often mentioned with great delight.²

Early in the last spring, as her disorder increased, her sense of sin increased also; which made her very earnest with God in seeking a sense of his favour. And it was not long before he answered her in the joy of her heart.

From the time she first knew the forgiving love of God, she retained such a growing confidence in him that no suggestion of Satan could shake it for any long continuance. Hence, if at any time she perceived her mother troubled, she would remind her that God had promised to provide for those that love and serve him. Hence also arose her patience under the most violent pains which she often endured.

For the last few months of her life she enjoyed close communion with God, and could approach him with a great degree of holy boldness on all occasions.

The fear of death, for some time before her departure, was so entirely taken away that the nearer she saw it approach, the stronger was her confidence in God.

The evening before her departure she spoke of the love of Christ in a manner very affecting. 'O', said she, 'if I was an impenitent sinner now, what would become of me! What should I do! But I am washed in the blood of Jesus, and shall soon be with him! O what a precious Saviour he is! No tongue can tell how I love him for what he has done and suffered for me! He was spit upon and crowned with thorns! He was nailed to the cross, and at last was crucified, that I might be saved! And glory be to his name, I am saved! I know that my Redeemer liveth! Come Lord Jesus! Come quickly! Make no delay! O what love I feel! And what a heaven do I behold ready to receive me! O how I long to be gone, and leave this body, this world and all that is in it behind!' After this she lay still a while, and then (May 10, 1786) fell asleep in Jesus, having just entered the seventeenth year of her age.³

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 10 (1787): 246–47.

¹Titled: 'A Short Account of Miss Sarah Butler'.

²Broadbent served the Gloucestershire circuit in 1779.

³Sarah Butler was buried May 12, 1786 in Northleach, Gloucestershire.

From Elizabeth Ritchie¹

Granby Row [Dublin]
June 2, 1786

Many thanks to my very dear and reverend father for his readiness to prevent my wishes. Your kind favour this morning found me engaged in family prayer,² and after reading it sent me again to the throne of grace to entreat my gracious Lord that every gospel blessing might be poured out upon you. He whose you are and whom you serve must reward you. May your cup run over. Lord let thy dear servant's glorious joy be full. May thy presence be his shield and his exceeding great reward.

Shall I exceed the bound of that reverence with which the love my spirit bears you has ever been deeply mingled, if I tell my dearest father oft times I have felt a resigned desire to know the real state of his soul? The Lord knows my only motive is that I may praise his name on your account, or more importunately wrestle with him for particular blessings. I am deeply sensible many are abundantly more likely in every sense to strengthen your hands in God. But the searcher of hearts knoweth how deeply my soul is often engaged with him for your holiness and usefulness. As a private Christian I long for you to get all that divine intercourse with God that shall more brightly reflect his glory in all your public character. My desires, my expectations are boundless on your account. The Lord hath done much, but he will do abundantly more. Oh that your capacious soul may be filled with God. Will you forgive my freedom? I know you will. O my dear sir, fully embrace for your own soul every truth you recommend to others in all their glorious fullness, and you shall more abundantly feel that in Christ Jesus all the promises are yea and amen.

On another account your kind favour sent me to my gracious Lord. It is an important time at Dublin for all who wish well to Sion to take heed unto their steps. I wish ardently to do all you advise. But my dear sir, how unequal am I for the work. The enemy is busy indeed, and will, as you observe, if possible, sow tares. Mr. [Edward] Smyth again and again assures me he hopes the chapel will prove a means of strengthening the Methodists' hand, as he hopes to get Arminian clergymen as well as moderate Calvinists if he can.³ They mean to ask Dr. [Thomas] Coke to preach on Sunday mornings when he returns. But Mr. [James] Rogers tells me he will not nor must not accept of the invitation, for that an union will be both impracticable and unprofitable. I am sure they will be much disappointed in Granby Row.

If the Lord spares you to come again, if you did not preach here, they wish to have the Arminian clergymen. It is only the laymen they mean not to admit, and that is not out of disrespect to them but out of compliance with the prejudices of the outward people, who they hope by this will be drawn to come to hear.

By the letter of Mrs. [Hester] Rogers I think she must have misinformed you.⁴ But I believe she thought as she had wrote until I gave her proof to the contrary. Mr. and Mrs. Smyth are indeed coming to England.⁵ But it is for their health. They intend visiting Burslem and Tunbridge. But as Mr. [Brian Bury] Collins is fully expected to come hither before they return, there will neither be room nor need for them to engage any other minister till next spring, as he is engaged to spend the winter with them.

¹Ritchie had travelled to Dublin, to visit James and Hester Ann (Roe) Rogers. See Bulmer, *Mortimer*, 107–08.

²This letter is not known to survive.

³Rev. Edward Smyth was now the chaplain of Bethesda Chapel on Granby Row, in Dublin.

⁴No recent letter of JW to Hester Ann (Roe) Rogers is known to survive.

⁵After the death of Agnes (Higginson) Smyth in 1783, Edward married Elizabeth Dawson (d. 1849) in 1785.

Mrs. [Agnes] Smyth kindly makes provision for my abiding here during her absence, as she fears I shall feel the effects of the air in White Friars Street. But with my Lord's leave, next week I mean to try, as it will be much more convenient for me to be with sister [Hester] Rogers, as this is a full mile from the room.

I now begin to get a little acquainted with the people, and indeed the Lord has some precious jewels here. Last Sunday I met Amelia Singleton's class.⁶ When I last wrote, I had scarcely seen her. But since then [I] have had some close conversation with her and find she is a precious soul that desires entirely to live to God. Sister B[ecky] Moore is another whom my spirit takes acquaintance with.⁷ I find I shall get many new relations in the divine life, and already feel much cause to praise my dear Lord for bringing me hither. I feel much of my own foolishness and weakness, but my Lord comforts me and sweetly assures me of his readiness to supply all my wants. Never did anyone, according to their power, more warmly wish to strengthen your hands in God than I do. But my weakness is inexpressible. Pray for me that I may see my Lord's will in everything.

I could speak freely to you about anything that occurred to my mind relative to the work, but cannot help thinking if I did to Dr. Coke he would be in danger of concluding me a forward person. You could bear with me, knowing my intention. I know not whether or no he could, as he knows so little of me. But as the leaders, etc., threw cold water on a separation from the Church here, I hope we shall hear no more of it. It seems quite forgotten and the people in general only concerned how to get forward in the way to heaven.

I am going today to drink tea with a few select friends: sister Singleton, Moore, etc. They give me plenty of work, and hitherto my Lord strengthens both soul and body. Adieu my dearest father. May the God of love abundantly bless you.

Address: 'Mr Wesley / Newcastle upon / Tyne'.

Source: manuscript draft in Ritchie's hand; Wesley's Chapel (London), LDWMM 2000/7959.

⁶Amelia Singleton was the leader of two classes in Dublin in 1788. See Dudley Levistone Cooney, 'Dublin Methodist Society Membership 1788', *Bulletin of the Wesley Historical Society in Ireland* 10 (2004/5): 44–62; here, 45.

⁷Rebecca Moore, sister of Henry Moore, was another class leader in Dublin; see *ibid*, 44, 52.

From Samuel Bradburn

Bristol
June 3, 1786

Reverend and Very Dear Sir,

When you left me at Gloucester last March I seemed like one awaking after a *frightful dream*.¹ During my visits there (which have been a good many) I had frequent opportunity of conversing with the *truly amiable* Miss Cooke.² I thought her more like my precious Betsy than anyone I ever saw, or expect to see. I therefore judged her the most proper person to supply her place, if she could be brought to consent. But I feared to speak to her, on account of my having *three children*.³ And yet I was not satisfied to lose her without making a fair trial. While I was musing about it for some time, and indeed *praying* with the *greatest sincerity* to be directed, the way was opened (*I believe by God Almighty*) in a manner that truly surprised me. Our friends in Stroud, Gloucester, and other places had talked to each other about us and had settled the matter among themselves, *without Sophia's knowledge or mine*.

I found my health considerably restored, and my preaching had made no small stir in that city. This made the people there very desirous of my stay among them. Miss Cooke, being of the greatest consequence in their esteem, was a mouth for the rest in this business. This put it in my power to open my mind fully to her, which I did with the greatest plainness and unreserve which so delicate a subject would admit of. I desired her to lay the matter *before God*, and to give me no answer till she had duly considered it. After some time I called upon her, to know her mind. She spoke in a manner worthy a Christian and a woman of *fine sense*, and frankly told me *she could not give me an absolute denial*, but that she could do nothing further *then*, not *at all without the consent of her uncle*, Alderman Weaver.⁴ Her uncle and aunt, through Mr. [Robert] Raikes's influence (who was warm in his praises of me), had heard me preach in the town hall. I was invited to dine at their house, and laid the matter before Mr. Weaver. He freely left Miss Cooke *to herself*. She then told me her *principal objection* was my *children, whom she would think it her duty to consider as her own*, if she married me. This last sentence pleased me above all. To have a *conscientious mother* over my little ones was the extent of my wishes. I therefore fixed it in my heart *to get her, if possible*. I have referred her to *you*, dear sir, for an account of me, and requested her to write you on the subject without reserve. I have ever found *you my friend*, and hope you will be so in the present case. I bless God, I know nothing of myself that I wish to conceal from her. You know her and her communications. She is a tried stone in God's building. I believe she loves God with all her heart, and is the *age and person* I could wish. She is a *real genuine Methodist*, and has suffered much for being such.

It is certain I might get [a] woman with *more money*, were I so disposed; for she has not quite three hundred pounds. But I believe there is a God, and that there is something better than even money. If she had *nothing*, in point of circumstances I can but be *where I was*. If she has a little to help out the stipend, it will tend *less troublesome to you*. I despair of every finding *another Betsy* in all respects. But life is short and I wish to improve it to its intended use, and truly *it is not good for me to be alone*. I must, however, be so *as long as you please*; as I fancy Sophia will be guided *wholly by you*. I had thoughts of being in the Gloucester circuit next year, as I have been *two years here*. But this *will not do now*. Should I go there, I should be among some of the *head people in the city*, who would likely *destroy what little*

¹His wife Elizabeth (Nangle) Bradburn had died on Feb. 11, 1786.

²Sophia Cooke (c. 1759–1834) was the daughter of John and Elizabeth (Weaver) Cooke, of Gloucester.

³Samuel's surviving children from his first marriage were: Maria (b. 1782), George (b. 1783), and Samuel (b. 1784).

⁴Thomas Weaver (d. 1805), a pinmaker, became an alderman in Gloucester in 1779. His wife was Mary (Baylis) Weaver. Sophia's father was apparently deceased.

religion I have, and in all probability draw me from the people with who I wish to live and die. Our friends in London would gladly receive me, if you think well of my being there next year.

Be this as it may, I am, and shall be, reverend and very dear sir,

Your truly affectionate son and servant,

S. Bradburn

Address: 'The Revd. Mr. Wesley / at his Preaching-house / ~~in Edinburgh~~ / at Hull'.

Postmarks: '5/IU', 'JU/9', '13/IU', 'Bristol', 'York'.

Endorsement: by JW, 'S Bradburn / June 3. 1786 / a[nswere]d 20'.

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/610/12.

From Henry Brooke

[Dublin]
[c. June 5, 1786]

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Most of the Methodist society were first called in the outward established Church, whether convinced by your preachers, enlightened by readings, or converted by the Spirit.

All have found the benefit and blessing of following the advice of the apostle and abiding in that state or communion in which they were called.¹ It has been productive of peace, quiet, and unanimity.

Therefore one and all are averse to innovation, and disturbing the minds of the people and the peace of the community, by an new-fashioned ordinations, or refined hierarchy. Such procedure may have been expedient in the anarchy of America; or acceptable to a Scotch presbytery;² but in Dublin it can be productive of nothing but disorder and disunion.

While admitted to hear instruction in the Methodist house without a breach of the laws of the land or infringement upon ecclesiastical establishment, we are willing to adhere to the old Methodist plan, and resort for church ordinances where our inclination or conscience may lead us.

Is it not the avowed character of the Methodist society to promote the revival of practical and experimental Christianity, without subverting or even encroaching upon the external forms of any Church wherein it has appeared? Has not the fall of almost all the revivals of religion been owing to their aiming at the reforming external abuses, rather than striking at the root of sin in each individual? Why then shall we, after 40 years of experience of the blessedness of the way of peace and subordination to the ruling power, renounce at once this glorious characteristic, turn more Dissenters or arrant Seceders, and fritter the little flock to pieces in endless independencies, divisions, and subdivisions?

I remain, reverend and very dear sir,

Your truly affection son, in a pure and holy gospel,

Henry Brooke

Source: secondary manuscript transcription; MARC, MA 1977/489, pp. 24–25.

¹See 1 Cor. 7:20.

²See the summary of JW's ordinations of 1784–86 in *Works*, 30:818–24

Michael Moorhouse to other Methodist Itinerants¹

Bristol
c. June 10, 1786

'I sat down and wrote a very long letter, containing seven or eight sheets of paper, laying down: some of the ill usage I had met with from time to time; the evil things that I had see among some great men; the unchristian manner in with the chancery deed, or the Deed Poll was drawn up,² with some remarks on the lordly spirit of some of "We whose names are underwritten";³ and the use my wife and I had met with at Burslem from that capital member of the Deed Poll, Mr. W[arrik];⁴ with a number of other articles too tedious to mention here. And I settled it in my mind that every travelling preacher should have one of these letters. But to write them, seven or eight sheets of paper on both sides in very small writing, two hundred times over would be almost endless. So I went down to Bristol in June 1786 and got this letter printed as private as I could; and when this was done, I sealed up every letter and directed them with my own hands.'

Source: published description; Moorhouse, *Defence*, 80.

¹Moorhouse had sent JW a long letter detailing the ways in which he believed that he had been treated unfairly by JW and several of the other preachers (see c. Aug. 15, 1789). In reply JW chided Moorhouse that 'Finding fault with others is not the way to recommend yourself'; see JW to Moorhouse, Sept. 10, 1785, *Works*, 30:377. This led Moorhouse, a year later, to send out the circular letter that is described here (for more sense of the charges he levels, see the rambling 128 pages of his *Defence*). The circular letter in turn led the 1786 Conference to remove Moorhouse from itinerancy 'for malice and obstinacy'; see *Works*, 10:597, n. 178.

²I.e., the Deed of Declaration in 1784, limiting legal Conference to one hundred men, selected by JW; Moorhouse was not included.

³Formal declarations signed by 69 itinerants in 1785, approving of the Deed of Declaration.

⁴Thomas Warrick was appointed Assistant of the Burslem circuit by the 1785 Conference. Moorhouse was appointed to Devon, but requested of JW to move to Burslem, and believed that JW's initial agreement to this request was rejected by Warrick. See JW to Mary (Mitchell) Warrick, Sept. 10, 1785, *Works*, 30:377–78.

From Adam Clarke

Plymouth
June 19, 1786

Reverend and Dear Sir,

May every spiritual and temporal blessing, with days manifold, be multiplied unto you, by him who has called you to glory and virtue! I feel grateful both to God and you, as your letters have been made peculiarly useful to my soul. May the Lord repay a thousand fold the labour of love!

In your last you were so kind as to give permission for my attendance at Conference.¹ This I looked on as a great privilege, and have frequently indulged the pleasing prospect of enjoying a comfortable season with *you* in the presence of my brethren. But there are so many *here* striving for the mastery, and waiting to take every advantage of enriching themselves with the spoils of Zion, that I feel myself constrained to relinquish the privilege of coming to Conference, in order to abide with the people, lest the circuit being left with only one preacher, our enemies might avail themselves of an opportunity (they seem ardently to long for) of proceeding in that mischief for which they have been already so remarkable.² I assure you, my dear sir, I feel it to be a cross to absent myself from an interview with you and my brethren, which repeatedly appeared to me in such a pleasing and profitable point of view. Nor would I relinquish it, only I am taught of God, in some measure, to renounce my own will, and sacrifice my private interests and pleasure, when it may be for the good of the people.

But I have one request to make—but must first entreat you, dear sir, to bear with the following narrative, as it will give you to see (better than I otherwise could) the propriety of the request. I have an only brother who served his apprenticeship to a surgeon, and after having attended the anatomical lectures in Dublin, in order to make a good fortune (as it is termed), went to sea in the accursed slave-trade; a trade which we might have supposed to be foreign to every dictate of humanity in its most corrupt estate, did we not see the works of the more pious heathen then daily fulfilled: '*Auri sacra fames, quid non mortalia pectora cogis?*'³ His success in the first voyage (having got prize money and large wages) tempted him to make a second. Well knowing this business to be a high abomination in the sight of God, I was led to fear lest the justice of God should meet and swallow them up in the mighty waters. In my mind I viewed the vessel devoted to destruction, and prayed earnestly to God to avert the threatened punishment and bring my brother once more back, and not suffer him ever to engage in the God-dishonouring trade again. God heard my prayers, but gave them sufficient evidences of his disapprobation by meeting them with tempest, which carried overboard all their masts and bowsprit; and, after causing them (in these circumstances) to walk hand in hand with death for three weeks, dashed the vessel to pieces on the rocks of Tralee, in the southwest of Ireland. But God lent my brother his life by permitting him to swim to shore on a spar. Behold the goodness and severity of God!

Some time afterwards he came to Liverpool to settle his affairs with the merchants, his employers. Providence opened a door for the introduction of his business in a place called Maghull, between eight and nine miles from Liverpool. I wrote several letters to him, entreating him to dedicate his soul and body to his Deliverer. But they seemed for some time destitute of any good effect. I persevered in writing to and praying for him, and the good Lord did not suffer me to labour in vain—the desired end was accomplished, my brother being truly convinced. But alas! He traverses the desert alone. Of the people there is none with him, for there is scarcely one in the place who fears God, and no preaching nearer than Liverpool, to which he can seldom go because of his business—particularly that branch of it,

¹JW to Clarke, Feb. 21, 1786, 30:429–30.

²Referring to William Moore, the former itinerant assigned to Plymouth, who left the Methodist connexion and was trying to raise his own congregation; see JW, *Journal*, Feb. 25, 1785, *Works*, 23:343.

³Cf. Virgil, *Aeneid*, iii.56–57: '*Quid non mortalia pectora cogis, auri sacra fames?*'; 'To what crime do you not drive the hearts of men, accursed hunger for gold?' (Loeb).

viz., man-midwifery, which in an especial manner prohibits his absence. He has wrote to me frequently, this and the last year, in a very affecting manner, entreating me to pay him a visit. The permission to do *which* is, reverend sir, the *request above mentioned*.

On the 17th instant I received a letter from him, a few sentences of which I beg leave to subjoin:

My dear brother, I am sure had you petitioned Mr. Wesley, he would have sent you to this circuit. The souls of your brother and sister are of as great value, and should be as dear to you as any of those you are among. And seeing our hopes are built on you and the blessing of God for a help to us, as we cannot get any here, you ought therefore to have strove by all means possible to have got to this circuit. We have nothing of vital religion preached among us. Our salvation is offered to us on a great deal easier terms than the Scriptures have proposed it. Our clergy inveigh bitterly against the *knowledge* of forgiveness of sins, and the witnessing Spirit. In effect we are taught to believe that, live how we will, if we are not notorious avowed condemners of God's word, that he will pluck us away to heaven in the fittest time he can find us, perhaps while we are thinking a good thought. This and such like is all we have preached, or have to believe, here. Think then what need these poor sinners have of knowing the truth as it is in Jesus.

I do not intend to make any choice. I leave myself cordially to be disposed of as you think meet. I have engaged myself to labour under you as a son in the gospel, when and where you appoint. I trust I shall always go cordially wherever you order me; and esteem it *ever* as I *do now*, my duty and interest to obey you in the Lord. May the Almighty in whose hands are the issues from death spare you long as a spiritual governor and father in him over the church. Amen!

Permit me, reverend sir, to subjoin the best comment I ever met with on Matthew 5:7, 'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.'⁴

John Nile, an inhabitant of the parish of Linkinhorne, Cornwall, was about twelve months ago convinced of sin. He attended the preaching at Trelabe constantly, and a little after we came to this circuit he invited us to his house to preach. The people among whom he dwelt, living several miles distant from the Church, and having no preaching near them, were consequently wicked enough—knowing nothing of the power and having nothing of the form of godliness. However, when we went, the novelty of Methodist preaching caused numbers to attend. We preached, God applied, and the felt the word of life. Many are convinced, a fine society formed, everyone of which knows more or less and the love of God and the great good done and adoining.

But while the Spirit was poured out from on high, and one and another stepped into the pool on the right hand and the left, poor John Nile continued to walk in darkness. Till one night some months back, when sitting in his house, he felt a very powerful impression on his mind 'to rise and walk out'. He knew not what it meant, and when he came to his door he knew of no business to call him out. His impression continuing, he walked into his orchard and went to prayer. After he had prayed, finding nothing to do, he was about to return to his house; but was prevented by an impulse directing him to walk into a turnip field which he had at some distance, though he could not conjecture why he should go. Coming to and walking into it he saw something before him by the help of the star light, which on a nearer approach he discovered to be one of his neighbours stealing his turnips. After having spoke to him concerning the iniquity of his conduct (the man standing speechless), he ordered him to take up the burden, lay it on his shoulders, and come along with him. All which the poor culprit did, without attempting to gainsay.

When John and his prisoner were come nigh home, he ordered him empty his sack, to see if he had got any of his seed turnips. And after taking two or three which he had reserved for that purpose, he ordered him to put them into his sack again and carry them to his own home, exhorting him never to steal any more. But if he was in distress at any time, to ask and he would give him a burden. John shook him

⁴JW excerpted, edited, and published this incident in *AM*; see next.

then by the hand, telling him he heartily forgive him and earnestly prayed the Lord to do likewise.

The thief being so mercifully dismissed, returned home, and John, coming to his house, went to private prayer. And having wrestled a few moments with God, he was filled with a strong evidence of pardoning love, which he holds fast to the present day. Thus, having forgiven his brother his trespasses, his heavenly Father also forgave him. The above is a positive fact. I had the recitation from brother Nile himself, who continues to evidence, by an unblameable conduct, the reality of what he then received from the hand of a merciful God.

The work of God continues gloriously among us, both in town and country. But that at Dock admits of no comparison with the greatest I have ever known. But I have already too much trespassed to give you any particular account. We labour together in love and unity. We pull all at once, and continue pulling. And God convinces the people of what they should be among themselves, by what they discover among the preachers. If the mercy of God send them three preachers next year who walk in eternity, having only his glory and the people's interest in view, a most glorious work will doubtless be carried forward. So for us, we have now, through mercy, almost fulfilled our course, and are willing to give place to the more able and faithful, which we trust God will send them.

Asking pardon for the length of this epistle, and the great favour of a few lines from you as soon as possible, I remain, reverend and very dear sir,

Your truly affectionate son in the gospel,

Adam Clarke

P.S. I have received a letter from Mr. Moorhouse.⁵ It is truly original, a piece so well fraught with ill nature and ignorance I have scarcely ever met with. Mr. Mill's(?) performance is a *billet dous*⁶ when compared with this. He is truly Ishmael; at least his tongue is against every man.⁷ The epistle has brought those words of the poet afresh to my mind '*Absentem qui rodit amicum, et qui non defendit, alio culpante; ... niger est; hunc tu, Romane, caveto.*'⁸ The character I think is truly just, and the advice seasonable.

Mr. [John] King and I desire to be together next year if you think it proper. But we leave ourselves willingly to your disposal. He has received your kind letter and returns you his thanks and duty.⁹ May the good Lord support and defend you for Christ's sake.

Address: 'The Revd. Mr. Wesley / at His Preachinghouse / in / Sheffield'.

Endorsement: by JW, 'Adam Clark / June 19. 1786 / a[nswere]d Jul. 2'.

Source: holograph; MARC, WCB, D6/1/74.¹⁰

⁵See the description of Moorhouse's circular letter above, c. June 10, 1786.

⁶'A love letter'.

⁷See Gen. 16:12.

⁸Horace, *Satires*, I.iv.81–85; 'The man who backbites an absent friend; who fails to defend him when another finds fault; ... that man is black of heart; of him beware, good Roman' (Loeb).

⁹JW to John King, June 1, 1786.

¹⁰An abridged transcription appears in Dunn, *Clarke*, 23–25.

From Adam Clarke

Plymouth
June 19, 1786

Reverend Sir,

Permit me to subjoin the best comment I ever met with on Matthew 5:7, 'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.'

John Nile, of the parish of Linkinhorne, Cornwall, was about twelve months ago convinced of sin. He attended the preaching constantly at Trelabe, and a little after I came to this circuit he invited me to his house to preach. I went and found a people destitute both of the power and form of godliness; and no wonder, for there was no church within three or four miles of the village, and the preaching was yet farther off, and a very few of them ever went to one or the other.

However, the novelty of preaching *at their own doors* induced many to attend. They heard with deep attention, and felt the power of the words. Mr. [John] Mason and Mr. [John] King, followed me with great faithfulness. Many are convinced of sin, a society is formed, and much good is likely to be done.

But while the Spirit was poured out from on high, and several on the right and left hand were made whole; poor John Nile continued to walk disconsolate, though apparently following hard after God. At length his spiritual burden was removed in the following remarkable manner.

A few months ago, sitting in his house late at night, he felt a very powerful impression on his mind 'to arise and walk out'. He knew not what this meant, and when he went to the door knew not where to go. The impression continuing, he walked into his orchard, where he kneeled down and spent some time in prayer to God. Having finished, and being about to return into his house, he felt the same unaccountable impression urging him to visit a turnip field which he had at some distance. Walking into the field he discovered something by the help of the star light, which on a nearer approach, proved to be one of his neighbours stealing his turnips. John spoke to him concerning the iniquity of his conduct, and the poor fellow having nothing to plead in his own vindication was speechless. He then ordered him to take up the sack (which was pretty well filled) and follow him to his house. The poor culprit, without daring to gainsay, obeyed.

When John and his prisoner had reached the house, he made him empty his sack to see if he had got any of his *seed turnips*. Finding two or three large ones which he had reserved for that purpose, he laid them aside, and ordered the thief to return the rest into his sack, and then helped him to lay them on his shoulder, and bade him carry them home with him; warmly exhorting him *to steal no more*; and adding, 'If at any time you are in distress, come to me and ask, and I will give you a burden.' He then shook him affectionately by the hand, and said, 'I heartily forgive you, and may God for Christ's sake do the same!'

Having thus dismissed the poor trembling sinner, he went in private and began to wrestle with God in earnest prayer. The Father of mercies instantly heard him, and filled his soul with a clear evidence of his pardoning love, which he holds fast to the present day. Thus having forgiven his brother his trespasses, his heavenly Father also forgave him.¹

He continues to evidence, by an unblameable conduct, the sacred fruits of that grace which, at the above time, he received from the hand of a merciful God.

I am, reverend and dear sir,

Your affectionate and dutiful son in the gospel,

A. Clarke

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 15 (1792): 440–42.

¹See Luke 11:4; and parallels.

From Mary Cooke

Duke Street, Trowbridge
June 23, 1786

Reverend and Dear Sir,

On the receipt of your letter,¹ I again experienced the truth of an observation I have often made, that a favour long withholden, much wished for, but almost despaired of, gives when it does come a double pleasure. In all things in its measure, 'Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh ...',² is it not sweet to the soul? I waited a long time (long it seemed to me) expecting every post to hear from you, but in vain. Disappointment succeeded disappointment, every day adding to the score. I had just yielded up my hope as fruitless, thinking you had not received my last, when your letter came. And even in the bare act of taking it, I felt a pleasure compensating for all the pain your long silence occasioned. These words (immediately distinguished, as noted in red) 'Missent to Witney', convinced me the delay was accidental—which quieted both the apprehensions and perverse reasonings of my mind, and made me in heart, as now by pen, thank you for your continued love and attention.

I will not tire you with a repetition of the unworthiness of the receiver, but will rather silently wonder at your condescending goodness and adore the Giver of that grace which made you such, so willing to bear the infirmities of the weak. And as it were looking back to encourage those who are just beginning to set out in the heavenly way: caring for the babes, taking them as in the arms of faith to the verge of a better hope, wherever to continuing to look they shall attain, and following 'them who through faith and patience inherit the promises',³ shall ere long partake the same.

I would begin in great simplicity of spirit to tell you what that grace does for me, but am almost withheld by a strange kind of doubt, chiefly arising from the very opposite feeling which I at different times experience. I mean no more than this. Perhaps last week, or some time ago, I might have had a *particular* discovery of my own weakness, depravity, ignorance, or something of the like. It may be *now* I am not so exquisitely sensible of it: convinced as in my judgment that it is so, yet not at this *present* moment so deeply *feeling* it. In such a case, suppose for instance writing to you, I was to say thus and thus I am; an helpless, sinful, foolish creature. Should I do wrong in so expressing myself? I know not how it is with others, but for myself I know that at some moments I can no more realize the feelings of the past than I can make a world. Now what I fear is speaking more strongly in any instance than what I at the *present* instant feel. It often seems that I have what I term a remembrance of what is past. But then I want to realize just *now*, whatsoever I *now* say. This has frequently been a bar to me, a kind of stumbling block both to my tongue and pen, which oft stops to enquire, 'Do I not go too far?' It has been an hindrance to my speaking. And I have at times thought (is it a reality, or only fancy?) that it may have prevented my reaping profit, by shutting up a possible way to seasonable advice. It would save me many a painful doubt, and I should indeed rejoice to be clearly convinced from what quarter it proceeds—whether from the too-oft grieved restraining spirit of all grace, from a naturally timid disposition, or from a watchful enemy, assiduous to perplex. I sometimes think it is one; and then as quickly suppose it to be the contrary, according to the state my mind is in. Yet I confess I am more generally puzzled, and break off the enquiry in the midst; and unable to solve, end as the safest way, in silence.

Often when writing or speaking such discouraging thoughts possess me as almost deters me from attempting either the one or the other. It all the while seems to be the labour of the head, rather than the expressive feelings of the heart. The thought whereof greatly frightens me, and more than once has caused me to throw aside my pen. Yet if after a few days I look over what is written, I feel it is the genuine experience of my soul. This it is which renders writing a task. Yet why should I complain? As the cross is

¹This letter is not known to survive.

²Prov. 13:12.

³Heb. 16:12.

usually followed by a good degree of satisfaction. Something would tell me that what I would now say is half, if not wholly, mere imagination; and I had better not repeat it. But surely was I at this time silent, my Lord might number me with those of whom he justly says, 'If these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.'⁴

He has been peculiarly gracious to me of late, making me stronger than mine enemies and giving me to commune intimately with himself. He lifts up my weak hands, and bids me 'Be strong in faith, giving glory unto God.'⁵ For a few days I found such an union with him, particularly in prayer, as it is impossible to describe. Never was a visible object as 'intimately nigh'.⁶ I felt this is the state I long for; even a continual abiding in this heavenly frame; this Divine nearness, and unity with the Father of spirits. Surely, I said, 'his service is perfect freedom'.⁷ And 'where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.'⁸ A liberty greater than words can express, or thought conceive, till the heart sweetly feels and rejoices therein. Not with bursts of noisy joy, but with a calm tranquility unspeakable—communicated by the Holy Spirit of harmonizing peace, whose operations in this respect Satan nor self can imitate. For Satan and self, or unrenewed nature, are discordant. And though these often lull to stupidity, they cannot ape the active principle, the lively peace, the divine persuasion, the calm deep satisfaction which, while enjoyed, out-argues the most subtle injections of an adversary, casts down the imaginations of proud reasonings and whatever temptation may say in an heavy hour. Yet under the feeling sense of divine realities, the heart easily silences all its charges, and repels its fiercest assaults.

Yesterday morning that word was brought to, and abode on my mind, 'Thou shalt call me Ishi.' I thought it a strange expression; knew not what it meant, or where to find it. But it was accompanied with such a kind of powerful sweetness as promised me some great thing. Within an hour afterwards, in reading, I happened to light on the prophecy of Hosea; and was indeed much struck to see it thus written. 'Thou shalt call me Ishi; and shalt call me no more Baali.'⁹ The margin of my Bible gave the explanation; and most comfortably spake unto me, 'Thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of Hosts is his name.'

I could say much more. I could tell you still how abundantly gracious my God has been unto me. But while talking of myself, I forget your patience, and my own paper; on the latter of which I have yet to mention much business, which will require some room. Now then for the present I drop my own immediate concerns, and yet I know not but self will have a share in the succeeding part, though more remotely, or concealed.

As Conference draws near, will you, dear sir, give me leave to remind you of your conditional promise of sending Mr. Adam Clarke into our circuit? His past usefulness makes us look forward with much satisfaction in the prospect of future good. He has been made a blessing to this people. They love him, and I believe he loves them. I doubt now if he is stationed amongst us, but many souls will have reason to praise God for his coming hither. Think not, dear sir, that these solicitations imply a setting up our own judgment in preference of yours. Nor suppose that we suppose you cannot choose so wisely for us as we can for ourselves. Nay, we abhor such a thought. Each year has shown the contrary. And never perhaps were we more sensible of it than this last year, wherein you sent us preachers well suited to the people. I do not mean to speak slightly of either. I have a great love and esteem for all. But in a more particular manner has Mr. Day been blessed unto me, and to several others. His preaching is deep, clear,

⁴Luke 19:40.

⁵Cf. Rom. 4:20.

⁶Cf. CW, Hymn on Deut. 4:7, *Scripture Hymns* (1762), 1:89.

⁷BCP, Collect for Peace.

⁸2 Cor. 3:17.

⁹Hosea 2:16.

solid, convincing; searching and instructive: calculated to inform the judgment, and amend the heart.¹⁰ From the consideration of his numerous little family (which it is not easy to carry from one place to another) we have from the beginning built our hopes of keeping him another year. And now as the time of general change draws on, there is a still stronger tie. His wife is weakly at the best, but has now such bad health that in her present state it would be highly imprudent to remove her.¹¹ She has been apparently on the borders of the grave, in a deep decline; true several nights it was expected would have been her last. But now by a miracle (no less can I deem it) she is on the recovery, gains strength though slowly, and with *time*, and *great* care, there is a probability that she may be given back to the prayers of her dear partner and the pleading wants of her helpless offspring. For the sake of these I earnestly wished her return to life. But considered only as an individual, the wish had been cruel. Her state of mind was such as in dying circumstances is most desirable. The heaven of her soul beamed on her countenance. And even had her praising, grateful tongue been silent, one might have gathered instruction and encouragement from her look. If we thought Conference would deprive us of this valuable pair, we should indeed regret its arrival. But we hope better things.

Once more I begin with satisfaction to look forward to the expected time of your being at Trowbridge, and trust the usual blessing shall not be wanting. It is a long anticipation, but I have some hope of seeing you before. If it is possible, and my mother consents, I promise myself to be in Bristol for a few days during Conference. I feel a very strong desire to be there, and a little thing will not keep me away. But if I am disappointed, it will be an heavy heavy cross indeed.

My sisters [Anne and Frances] desire to be kindly remembered *to*, and *by* you. I trust we shall all be kept hungering for the best things—sensible that we deserve not the crumbs, yet craving the children's food. Evermore by faith feeding on the bread of life, and nourished continually with the wine of the kingdom. Satisfied, yet ever asking more. Content to be nothing, yet earnestly pursuing a crown of righteousness and a throne of glory. Pray, dear sir, that we may attain the fulness of our gospel hope, and then when time's short day shall cease, we will meet you at the right hand of our approving God, and help to complete your crown of rejoicing throughout eternity! Amen. Amen. So be it, Dear Immanuel!

M. C

Address: 'The Revd J. Wesley / To be left at the Preaching-House / Sheffield / Yorkshire'.

Endorsement: by Cooke, 'Answer to Mr. Wesley's 9th letter'.

Source: manuscript copy for records; Bridwell Library (SMU), Mary Cooke Letter-book, pp. 9–10.

¹⁰Simon Day (1745–1832) was admitted 'on trial' as an itinerant in 1766 (see *Works*, 10:317), but desisted at next Conference (10:343). In 1779 he returned to the itinerancy, and travelled until infirmity required him to settle in Frome as a supernumerary in 1817. See *Minutes* (post-Wesley, 1832), 7:112.

¹¹Grace (Bucknell) Day was the wife of Simon Day (married May 1769).

From J[ames] D[ickinson]¹

c. July 1786

Mrs. Susannah Bridgmont was born at Cullompton, in Devonshire, 1756, of very honest parents.² But her mother dying when she was very young, she was brought up by an uncle, with whom she lived ten years. But here she was exposed to great danger, seeing nothing but open rebellion against God continually.

In the year 1776 she returned to her father. One Sunday being at church, under the second lesson, which was the seventh of St. Matthew, the Lord was pleased to convince her that she was a lost sinner; but that there was help laid upon one who is mighty to save. To him therefore she looked, and earnestly begged for his salvation. Accordingly it was not long before he revealed himself to her, by shedding abroad his love in her heart. On this she cried out, 'My beloved is mine, and I am his,'³ and from this time walked steadily in the ways of God.

It was not long before the Lord showed her there was a greater liberty to be attained. As she expresses it in a letter, which she about that time sent to a friend.

This (said she) is to let you know what the Lord hath done for my soul. Some time ago I was convinced of the necessity of being totally delivered from the carnal mind, in order to my being fully happy. On informing Mr. W. of it, he greatly encouraged me, and prayed for me. While he was at prayer, the Lord was pleased to set my soul at perfect liberty. The peace I then enjoyed was sweeter than the life itself. And I have his presence always with me. Accordingly I go about in peace, lie down in peace, and rise again in peace—for the Prince of Peace is ever with me. O how sweet is he to my soul! Because of the savour of his good ointment, his name is as ointment poured forth. Therefore doth my soul love him. He is as a well of water within me, springing up to everlasting life! O it is a blessed thing to live by faith on the Son of God! I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. Regard not what the world says about your preciseness, but live daily on invisible things, which is the earnest desire of an unworthy partaker of the kingdom and patience of Christ.

From this time she walked on in a steady course of loving and fearing God.

About the beginning of the year 1785, she grew very weak in body, but declared that when the earthly house of her tabernacle was dissolved, she knew she had a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. And therefore, though she had a kind husband, and two small children to leave behind, I never heard her once express a desire to live.

About a quarter of a year before her death, I being with her one night, her soul was so happy that it seemed to be at the very gate of heaven. She cried out, 'I want you to praise the Lord with me! I want all the people of God to come and help me to praise him. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me praise his holy name. Praised be his name that he looked on such a worm as me! That he called me to seek his face while I was in health.' On her husband coming into the room, she said, 'My dear, do not come here with any sorrow. I want to hear nothing but praise.' At another time she said, 'I have had a blessed prospect. I have seen two angels holding out the crown of righteousness to me!' On my saying,

¹Titled: 'A Short Account of the Life and Death of Mrs. Susannah Bridgmont'. This account is most likely from James Dickinson (b. 1727), who had been a linen draper near Bishopsgate, London. He had entered the Excise, and was now Superintendent of Excise at Taunton (about 15 miles northeast of Cullompton).

²Susannah Marchant (1756–86) married George Bridgmont in Cullompton in June 1780.

³Song of Sol. 2:16.

you will soon receive it, she answered, 'Yes, I shall.' At another time she said to her brother, 'While I am praising God, I feel no pain.' And then with strength renewed she rose up in bed and clapped her hands, saying, 'Praise the Lord! O my dear brother, take courage. We shall meet again to praise him forever!'

A few days before her death, she had some sore conflicts with Satan, who tried to persuade her that she would not be able to declare the goodness of God in her dying hour, and that he who had been so good to her all her days would leave her at last. On this she said, 'Ah, my dear Lord, do not leave me now! I have trusted in thee, O let me never be confounded!' I said, 'The Lord will not leave you. He will enable you to declare his goodness in your last moments.' To which she replied, 'You have more faith for me than I have for myself.' But it was not long before she was able to shout victory through him that had loved her. Again she cried out, 'O my blessed Jesus, why are thy chariot wheels so long in coming!'⁴ Some friends being in the chamber, she begged of those who knew God to go on in the good way; and to some that did not know him, she desired they would be in earnest for the faith once delivered to the saints. About this time she sung the first and third verses of that hymn, 'O love divine what hast thou done ...',⁵ and desired her brother to help her in singing that, 'O heavenly King look down from above.'⁶ The last words she was heard to utter were, 'I am drinking full draughts of the love of Jesus!' Having said this, she sunk into the arms of Jesus, and went away to paradise, June 15, 1786.

J. D.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 10 (1787): 462–65.

⁴See Judg. 5:28.

⁵CW, 'Desiring to Love', *HSP* (1742), 26–27.

⁶CW, 'A Thanksgiving', *HSP* (1742), 119.

From an Unidentified Correspondent¹

c. July 1786

1. Elizabeth and Margaret Mathers, with Isabella Mitchell, sister-in-law to Margaret Mathers, are three elderly women of unblemished character, and exemplary behaviour. They have lived together for many years at Drumaran, near Gilford, in the County of Down. In the year 1780, about a week before Christmas, Margaret Mitchell going to spin as usual, missed the whirl of her wheel, which she sought for everywhere. But it was not to be found till, as she was sitting about eight days after, it was laid upon her lap. The next evening, Molly Steward (a girl about ten years old that was with them) laying down her spool, it was whipped away. But half an hour after, it lay at her side broken. The night after, when she had just done spinning, her wheel hack was broken. And so were several of their hacks, within a few days after. The same night when they went out of the room to family prayer, they left the candle burning in the chimney. When they returned, they found it was taken out of the candlestick, and put into another at some distance.

2. After Isabella Mitchell was gone to bed, with her pocket as usual at her head, it was snatched away and thrown at the bed's feet. Her sister took it up and gave it to her. Quickly it was thrown thither again. She gave it her again. It was snatched a third time and thrown upon the floor. She then rose and put it under her side, and it was taken away no more. In the morning when she rose, it was thrown after her on the floor; as was the Bible which she had laid under her head. She took it up and laid it on the dresser. But it was presently lifted up, and thrown at Thomas Ballance, whom it hit on the side.

3. While the class was meeting, many stones were thrown across the room, as if two sets of men had been pelting each other. One of these struck John Meltleton on the head and raised a large lump. Betty Mathers having had all her papers thrown about, had thought to secure the class paper, by putting it in the Bible. And this she laid close to her. But quickly it rose up before them all, and leaped into the window. She took it up, intending to take out the class paper. But it was not there. Quickly after, it was strewed over Robert White, being torn into a hundred pieces.

4. One of their neighbours sitting by, said it is an impudent devil, to dare to meddle with the Bible. Immediately a knife was aimed at her face, and came with the point foremost. But being intercepted by the head of her cloak, it did no harm. The same day several parts of their goods (which were not many) were either broke or taken away. And in general, whatever they had occasion to use, was just then taken away. But the greatest part of the things taken away, were brought again in a little while.

5. From this time they were troubled more and more. Everything was thrown about the house: trenchers, noggins, fire shovels, poker, tongs, pot-hooks and candlesticks. Many strangers, as well as neighbours came in, and most of them were struck on the head, breast, arms, or other parts, either with trenchers, noggins, potatoes, or stones. Yet none were considerably hurt.

6. Fanny Brennan, a young woman that lived at the next door, came in some days after, and sitting down by the fire said, 'Well, I never got any stroke yet.' Presently the rock of the wheel that stood over against her flew by her head and struck violently against the wall. 'Very well', said she, 'but it has not hit me.' She had hardly spoke when the bearer of the rock came swiftly across the room, and hit her a smart blow upon the forehead. She got up in great haste, and cried out, 'I will stay here no longer.' Margaret Mathers said, 'See the impudence of the devil!' The words were scarce out of her mouth, when a noggin of water was thrown in her face, and the noggin thrown into the fire!

7. A few nights after, Sarah Wood, our next door neighbour came in, and said to our girl, 'I hear your wheel is spoiled; but I will soon set it right.' While she was endeavouring so to do, the fore-standard vanished away. She sat down in surprise. Presently it dropped from the top of the house, and hit her on the collar-bone, with a considerable noise. She caught Betty Mather in her arms, and said, 'O that I was out of the house. But I dare not go by myself. Who will go with me?' Betty said, 'I will', and walked

¹Titled: 'An Account of some Disturbances, in the County of Down'.

across the room. As she walked, a stone struck her on the back, and as she opened the door, another stone struck violently against it.

8. Some days after, John Lindsay coming to see us in a stormy night, we desired him to lodge with us. When he went to bed, he put one of his stockings in the other, as his manner was. But in the morning, one of them was wanting, nor could it be found anywhere. But eight days after, it fell down from the top of the house. As he was then going away, he laid his stick out of his hand, and immediately it was gone. Neither could we find this anywhere. But a few days after we saw it standing behind the door.

9. Once and again the blankets were pulled off us when we were in bed. In the morning they were found, rammed in, behind the coupler of the house. One night a sheet was taken away, which we found two days after, folded up and laid in a box. While our girl was combing her head, her neck-handkerchief was carried away. Eight days after it was brought again and laid down, stuck full of crooked pins without heads.

10. When we had made up some yarn to carry to the market, it was not to be found. After some time we found one hank of it, thrust into a pitcher of water; another into a vessel of sowings. While Isabel Mitchell sat reeling yarn, she got several blows on the head and cheek—one time with a pewter plate, another with little stones, or with small clods of dirt or clay. Once several sharp stones were thrown down the chimney, which cut the yarn, as if it had been cut with a knife.

11. Frequently when they were washing or preparing to wash their clothes, either the clothes or the soap was taken away. And it was in vain to seek them, till after some time they were brought again. Frequently the potatoes they had boiled and were going to eat were snatched off the dish or plate, and after a little time thrown at them, so as to strike them on the face or breast.

While Margaret Mather was making a poultice, to apply to Mr. Blake's sore throat, several lumps of dirt and clay were thrown into it, so that it was quite spoiled. And for five weeks, almost every movable in the house was continually thrown up and down.

12. An account of these things coming to the ears of a neighbouring gentleman, Sir R. I—, he determined to search the matter to the bottom, and find out the imposture. With this view, he went to the house himself, with two or three other gentlemen. He searched every hole and corner of the house, but could discover nothing. At length he saw several large potatoes roll along the top of the house, and fell just before him, while the potatoes that were in a basket, rose up and flew all about the house. Meantime a large stone came out of the wall, flew with great force across the room, and rebounding from the opposite door, fell down just at his foot. He took up this, with several of the potatoes, and carried them to his own house.

13. When he came home he related what he had seen to his lady and her company. So he did afterwards to several others. But they were not ready to believe him. A fortnight after, he desired several of them to go and see with their own eyes. A little party of them agreed so to do, and went to the house together. While they were in the house, they saw many stones rattling upon the dresser. And many potatoes were thrown by unseen hands from every corner of the house. Insomuch that some of the company were not a little frightened, and made haste out of it. And everyone was fully satisfied that there was no fraud or contrivance in the matter. Indeed no reasonable man could suppose there was, as there was so great a number of witnesses who could not be deceived themselves, and could have no possible motive to deceive others.

The common report was that all these disturbances were owing to a man in the town. And what gave some weight to this report was that after a magistrate had examined him, and threatened to take another course with him if the house was disturbed any more, it was disturbed no more, but all things remained in perfect quietness.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 10 (1787): 94–95, 147–48, 205–06.

From Ann Loxdale

Shrewsbury
July 10, 1786

Reverend Sir,

I am often at a loss to form a judgment of my state: to know assuredly whether my soul grows in grace, and increases in the knowledge and love of God, or not. It does not appear to me that I either make much progress, or suffer much decay. Yet I believe it is an adopted opinion that there is not standing still; that if we do not gain, we lose ground. It is true, I always rejoice in a full assurance of the love of God. But oh for more love to him!

I clearly see my privilege is to walk before God in the beauty of holiness, having every thought brought into subjection to the will of God. I am sensible of my want [i.e., lack] of this. But I sometimes think, was I to feel the remains of sin a burden grievous and intolerable, I should never cease to struggle till I was released.

When I was with you at Birmingham,¹ I was much stirred up—my soul being filled with an earnest desire for full salvation. I sometimes think, was my lot cast amongst lively Christians, I should find it a blessing.

I therefore cannot but regret the want of a *lively* society in this town. One cause of this want, in my opinion is, the not having a good class-leader. There is not anyone who seems qualified for such a task. I have often wished that one of the preachers was stationed here, instead of Chester, and would take upon him that important employment.

My sister [Sarah] joins in love to you. I hope you will favour us with an interest in your prayers, and believe me, dear sir, to remain

Your friend and servant,

A. L.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 9 (1786): 679–80.

¹JW was in Birmingham Mar. 18–26, 1786, and had invited Loxdale to meet him there; see JW to Loxdale, Jan. 26, 1786, *Works*, 30:426.

From the Rev. Charles Wesley

Bristol
July 27, 1786

Dear Brother,

I cannot rest, living or dying, unless I deal as faithfully with you as I am persuaded you would deal with me, if you was in my place and I in yours.

I believe you have been too hasty in ordaining. I believe God left you to yourself in that matter (as he left Hezekiah¹), to show you the secret pride which was in your heart. I believe Lord Mansfield's decisive words to me, 'Ordination is separation.'²

Thus I have discharged my duty to God and his church, and approved myself

Your faithful friend and affectionate brother,

C. W.

Stop here. Ordain no more, but follow your own advice to Mr. H.: 'Spread this letter before the Lord, and he will give you light and strength.'³

Source: published transcription; *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* 90 (1867): 625.

¹See 2 Chron. 32:31.

²William Murray (1705–93), 1st Earl of Mansfield. Cf. CW to Rev. Dr. Thomas Bradbury Chandler, Apr. 28, 1785: 'Lord Mansfield told me last year that ordination was separation' (MARC, DDWes 1/38).

³Most likely referring to the sharp letter that JW wrote to his errant brother-in-law, Rev. Westley Hall, Dec. 22, 1747, *Works*, 26:269–73.

From Mary Cooke

Duke Street, Trowbridge
August 30, 1786

Bless the Lord, O my soul; and let all that is within me shew forth his goodness! He crowneth me with loving kindness, and tender mercies; and reneweth my strength day by day. I bless his holy name. The sacrifice of praise is not a constrained service. It is the free-will offering of a grateful spirit, triumphing in the joy of his salvation. O that I could worthily magnify his name, declare his goodness, and excite all around to taste with me the amplitude of his grace! The Lord is with me, and in his favor is life. His word is a map unto my feet, and his ordinances are the delight of my soul. Shall I then restrain the spirit of thanksgiving? Or shut up his love in my heart? Nay, but I will publish it abroad, and tell as I can how great is that peace which flows from God, which is derived from the Giver of all true consolation.

My confidence grows stronger and stronger, founded in the faithful promise of him who hath said that while he lives I shall live also. Satan rages, strives, and threatens; and often boasts he has all power. But I am more than ever kept above his temptations—enabled to look through, and in the end prove him a conquered foe, a liar as he was from the beginning, seeking to devour whom he may, and to beguile unstable souls. ‘But I know whom I have believed: He is able to keep that I have committed unto him.’¹ And through grace, I am determined more, and still more, to trust *him* and not be afraid. He blesses me with the evidences of his favour, the tokens of his love, the witness of his spirit. I joyfully take the gifts, and embrace the giver, as ‘My Lord and my God.’ Though he permits my faith to be tried, it is only for its increase, and to display more abundantly his saving power. Here will I raise my Ebenezer. Hitherto hath the Lord helped me, and done all things well. Glory! Unceasing glory, be ascribed unto him who upholds my feeble steps, and leads me in the paths of peace and truth.

Methinks I have but one prize to press after. I see but one thing attainable below that is worthy pursuit. I mean a thorough conformity to the will of God, a renewal of soul in his image. I hunger and thirst for this. Yea, my heart and my spirit pants to be fitted with perfect love. Sometimes I behold its beauties afar off, and sometimes I seem to be just ready to grasp it as mine own. I do believe it shall be given, and look expecting when the sanctifying word shall reach and fill my soul.

I found it good to be in Bristol. It was a time of humiliation, quickening, and I trust of lasting profit. I derived much instruction from those discourses that did not *immediately* concern me; but in a more especial and abundant manner your three last sermons were blessed unto me. When you was describing the preparatives for a full salvation, my heart cried, ‘These are what I want. Lord give them *now* to me!’ Your accompanying prayers came with an unction; and having found them beneficial, I continue to solicit an interest in them. Knowing that fervent supplication pierces heaven, I attribute much thereto; and expect, and I believe experience, many blessings in answer to the prayers of my friends, which I should to this day have been without had not their hearts been lifted for me, and their cries entered the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. Behold me then, dear sir, and bear me to a throne of grace, as a sick soul who needs a perfect healing. But to particularize: I want more simplicity, greater stability, and a spirit of unceasing prayer; a disposedness of heart continually to look to God, receiving by the moment grace and strength from him, living in constant dependence on him, by enjoyment this minute and faith for the next.

During Conference it was not a partial outpouring of the Spirit on Bristol only. Almost the first news on our return was that in one of my sisters’ classes three young women, whom we left mourning, were now rejoicing in a sin-pardoning God. A fourth was at that time under sore distress of soul. In great steadiness she had *long* been seeking justification, but apparently in vain. She was driven to the last extremity, her burden almost too heavy to bear. The gloomy morn preceded a joyful evening. As I was

¹Cf. 2 Tim. 1:12.

going with my sisters to a prayer meeting, we saw her at a distance with two companions. For as we could see her, we remarked the change in her countenance. With the most softened sweetness she said, as she turned back to meet us, 'Well now I can praise God. He has given me the blessing which so long I have sought. I felt uncommonly strong drawings for retirement, and there the Lord manifested himself unto me in such a powerful manner as I cannot express.' She thought one half hour's enjoyment of his love more than compensated, and made her forget all the pain she had gone through. She still retains her confidence, and is all athirst for righteousness. Her soul is *serenely* blest. Her countenance speaks heavenly mindedness, and all her words are made up of sweetness and love. The others yet hold fast by faith, and bid fair for the kingdom. A deeper work is carrying on in many souls. Several are earnestly contending for a full salvation, and seem just ready to receive the love which casts out all fear. There seems to be a revival of life, and much power throughout the society. God is in our assemblies in a most glorious manner, and wonderfully manifests his presence amongst us. We only want a larger preaching-house, that numbers who now go away for want of room may hear the glad news of salvation proclaimed through the Lamb.

Mr. [Adam] Clarke called on us to take leave. He wished to set forward a morning prayer meeting, at five o'clock. In our own mind we objected, because our evening prayer-meetings had not been so profitable as in many other places. We thought it would be only an unnecessary useless thing. However we submitted to his proposal, and have reason to rejoice that we did so. God abundantly owns and blesses them. We would not now give them up. They are the best of all. And even our other meetings are much more comfortable, lively, and powerful, since we have met in the morning. I do think God is with us of a truth, and that this is but the dawn of glorious days. I greatly rejoice in the hope that 'a little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong city'.² Nothing so gladdens my heart as to see Jerusalem in prosperity. O when shall it be that a nation shall be born at once!

By your visit to Holland, there has been a chasm in our epistolary regularity.³ But now supposing you are returned, or on your return, to Bristol, I wait not for a renewed permission to write—still looking on the former one as a sufficient warrant. I feel unwilling to have my blessings diminished, but rather seek their increase. In the number I may truly rank your highly-valued correspondence. You will not wonder that I follow you with letters, seeing a little thing will not make me forego my privileges. I am for keeping all I have, and still I covet more. Methinks I already read compliance in your look, while you enquire what farther I request? It is the presence, the company of my dear and honored friend and father I now wish for. The time of your usual visit draws very near. May I ask, is the time fixed for your coming to Trowbridge? The enquiry begins to circulate. Several have asked me, 'Do you know when Mr. Wesley comes?' I answer in the negative, but hope the next letter I am favored with will name the day. My memory, though too often treacherous, proves faithful to return the pleasing recollection that last September you favored us more highly than ever before, by spending great part of two days with us.⁴ This year we would solicit an *addition*—or even if this may not be, we trust a *shortening* of that time will not be thought of. Indulgence encourages importunity; and herein we have strong confidence that we shall not be rejected. May the God of all power and consolation be with you at all times, and bring you hither in the fulness of his grace, sincerely prays

Your grateful, expectant

M. C

My sisters [Anne and Frances] join in kind respects. And with full consent, in earnest hope of its acceptance, unite in my above petition.

²Cf. Isa. 60:22.

³JW was in Holland the last three weeks of Aug.

⁴JW was in Trowbridge Sept. 8–9, 1785.

Address: 'The Revd J. Wesley / Bristol'.

Endorsement: by Cooke, 'Answer to Mr. Wesley's 10th letter'.⁵

Source: manuscript copy for records; Bridwell Library (SMU), Mary Cooke Letter-book, pp. 10–11.

⁵This letter is not known to survive.

From Mary (Brooke) Lee¹

Bolton
September 9, 1786

Reverend Sir,

My dear husband's last illness began with a pain in his foot, which soon went up into his leg. When he mentioned it, we thought it was the rheumatism and applied many things to warm it. By these means it seemingly got better. After some time it ascended into his thigh, and became very exquisite. On the morning before he died, the violence of the pain abated a little. But in the afternoon it grew worse again; yet we had no apprehension of his death.

The evening before he died, he expressed great resignation to the will of the Lord. Though, as he said, the pains drank up his spirits, he said, 'I am the Lord's. And I feel that I am united to him. And I know I shall be with him forever!'

He preached twice the Sunday before he died—although he went to the preaching house on crutches, and sat all the time he preached. His first text that day was, 'All flesh is as grass, and the glory thereof is as the flower of the grass. The grass withereth, the flower thereof fadeth away. But the word of the Lord endureth forever; and this is the word, which by the gospel is preached unto you.'² His last text was, 'Surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear the Lord, ...'³ In this sermon he said, 'Perhaps this will be my last sermon.' And truly the power of the Lord was solemnly felt by most present. And, as if he saw his end was near, he gave out a funeral hymn. And when he came to those words,

By faith we already behold,
That lovely Jerusalem here;
Her walls are of jasper and gold,
As crystal her buildings are clear,⁴

he seemed to be quite transported at the thought of meeting Jesus.

The night in which he died I went to bed as usual. But before I slept, the pain flew up to his heart. On this I arose, and called in George Eskrick. We raised him up, and put something in his mouth, which came out again. He was so sensible as to take my handkerchief to wipe it up. We laid him down again. He sobbed several times, looked up once and smiled; closed his eyes, and gently fell asleep.

A few months before, he told me he had never such a view of God's love towards him as he had that morning in prayer. The following words were then made a great blessing to him: 'Fear not, for I have redeemed thee. I have called thee by thy name: thou art mine.'⁵ From that time, I believe he never had a shadow of doubt on his mind, concerning his eternal welfare.

I am, reverend sir, yours affectionately,

Mary Lee

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 10 (1787): 70–71.

¹Titled: 'A Short Account of the Death of Mr. Thomas Lee'.

²Cf. 1 Pet. 1:24–25.

³Cf. Eccles. 8:12.

⁴CW, Hymn VIII, st. 3, *Funeral Hymns* (1746), 11.

⁵Isa. 43:1.

From 'A. B.' to the Editor of the *Leeds Intelligencer*

Leeds
September 14, 1786

Sir,

Mr. John Wesley writes, in his *Journal* of 1780, among other things, as follows:

I walked to Fulneck, the German settlement. Mr. Moore showed us the house, chapel, hall, lodging-rooms. [...] I see not what but the mighty power of God can hinder them from acquiring millions: as they, first, buy all materials with ready money at the best hand; secondly, have above 100 young men, above 50 young women, many widows, and above 100 married persons, all of whom are employed from morning to night, without any intermission, in various kinds of manufactures, not for journeyman's wages, but for no wages at all, save a little very plain food and raiment; as they have, thirdly, a quick sale for all their goods, and sell them all for ready money. But can they lay up treasures on earth, and at the same time lay up treasures in heaven?¹

To this I answer: The settlement of the United Brethren at Fulneck, in Yorkshire, is no German, but an English settlement. The proprietors of the estate are of course born Englishmen. All who live in the place are English people, and no Germans among them except six persons—none of whom are employed in any manufacture, for one of them is an old lady, who lives upon her own means, and four of them are men of learning, who instruct children, and one who is a physician; and all these are come accidentally to live in the place, as some foreigners may happen to come and live in any other town.

The number of young men and married persons Mr. Wesley makes larger by more than one half than it is. But this exaggeration would best serve his purpose because, as he says, they work for no wages at all, 'save a little very plain food and raiment'. By which means the society, it seems, acquires millions (a great sum indeed! which might help to pay the national debt. But yet he thinks, for the comfort of the brethren, 'that the mighty power of God can hinder it'; and we shall see it is prevented effectually) for the well-known and manifest truth of the matter is that every master in Fulneck who carries on business, and employs journeymen, does it in the very same manner as it is done in every other town in England—viz., the master pays his journeymen their full wages, and they pay a moderate price for their board and lodging; and whatever the master and his journeymen may have left of their earnings, after the expenses of housekeeping and board have been paid, this is absolutely their own, and at their own free disposal. And out of this they *themselves* find their clothes and whatever else they think necessary. And as for buying and selling always for ready money, this is no otherwise the case in Fulneck, than it is among other prudent and industrious people, some being able at times to do so, and some not. The young women work also for their living by sewing, spinning, and the like, and receive just and proper payment for their work. And if they have anything left, when their board and lodging is paid, it is also entirely at their own disposal. Mr. Wesley says, there are many widows in Fulneck, but he is mistaken. For there are very few, and several of them so old, infirm, and poor that they are not able to earn their living, but must be helped.

This now being notoriously the state of the case, it must be left to Mr. Wesley to tell us where these millions of money he is speaking of are to come from? And in what manner the society, as a society, could possibly, by means of the work of the individuals, enrich themselves? I am rather inclined to think, that Mr. Wesley may very safely lay aside his great fear of danger arising to the Brethren's society in Fulneck, from their laying up treasures on earth.

It is a great pity, that the good old man should continue to the very last to expose himself so sadly to the world, by publishing such barefaced misrepresentations and untruths, and to suffer himself to be

¹JW published in 1786 the 19th *Extract* of his *Journal*. This account is for Apr. 17–18, 1780, *Works*, 23:165.

still carried away by his old deep-rooted envy, in such a manner, as to make use of such unworthy and unjust insinuations in order to gratify it, which surely cannot flow from a heart filled with the love of God and his neighbour.

May God forgive him! And those whom he has so often abused are willing to do so too.

A. B.

Source: published transcription; *Leeds Intelligencer* (Sept. 19, 1786), p. 3.²

²Reprinted in *Leeds Mercury* (Sept. 26, 1786), p. 4; and *London Chronicle* (Sept. 23–26, 1786), p. 301.

From the Rev. Freeborn Garrettson

Shelburne
September 25, 1786

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Lest my other letter did not reach your hand I send this. My time this summer has been spent principally between this [place] and Barrington, which has occasioned me many fatiguing journeys through the woods, many times half-leg deep in mud and water. Blessed be God, he has supported me under all my difficulties.

When I first made my entrance among the people at Barrington, Satan strove in every possible way to hinder. 1) The people were Dissenters almost to a man. 2) There was a party of those they call 'New Lights' who stood in opposition, and a preacher of that denomination warned the people against me, telling them I was legal and destitute of faith. 3) A letter was sent by a Calvinist preacher who had ministered among them, warning them against an American. For a few days I was under great exercise about leaving the town, despairing of ever being the means of planting the gospel under these and other disadvantages.

The second Sabbath I preached among them many came out to hear, and a recommendatory letter was written on many hearts. Before, I had scarcely a place to lay my head; since, I have not wanted friends. I visited a small harbour a few miles off, where there were about ten families. We had a divine display of the goodness of God: very few were left behind. Of these families I have joined sixteen in society, ten of whom know the pardoning love of God to their souls. About thirty young and old have been baptized. One man cried out bitterly against his wife; went out to hear, was cut to the heart, and now both are rejoicing in the Lord. At the head of the harbour we had a gracious display, very few families escaped conviction more or less. I visited almost every family, as also on the two islands, and most of them were willing to submit to our American plan, as it is called. At the head the meeting house stands where I have joined a prosperous society, as also at another harbour. Blessed be God, there have been many as clear and as powerful conversions in this township as I have seen in any part of the States. At different times this summer I have spent about eight weeks in the township, and have formed a small circuit, able and willing to support a preacher. There are about fifty members, twenty of whom I favourably hope have experienced the love of God. And many who are not in society are earnestly seeking. I appointed four leaders and two stewards. I am so far on my journey to Liverpool, and I expect to meet the Dr. [Thomas Coke] in Halifax, in which place we are to hold a conference the middle of next month.

My hope revives for Shelburne. There has been an addition, and the society has become more lively. I have given them my consent to take one hundred pounds on interest towards building a church. Most of the coloured people whom [John] Marrant drew off have returned. I shall not be satisfied till we get a preaching house in this place. I must beg some from Europe and some from the States.

Some months ago I received a letter from Mr. [Francis] Asbury, in which he intimated the desire they had of my being ordained to superintend the work in the north. I answered the letter. A few days ago I received one from *the Dr.* on the same subject. Three considerations caused doubts to arise in my mind in relation to this important question: 1) the great desire I have of seeing England sooner or later; 2) my unfitness for so great a work; [and] 3) there are many in your connexion so much more fit for the place. I love the connexion, and want to do everything in my power to promote it. Perhaps when I shall receive a letter from you, and meet with the Dr., more light will be cast on the subject. Don't think hard of my not sending my journal.

I have not heard from brother [James Oliver] Cromwell for some time. Brother [William] Black informs there is a moving in Halifax. I desire your prayers and counsel. God is love, and I wish to be more humble.

I still remain your affectionate, though unworthy son,

F. Garrettson

Source: published transcription; Bangs, *Garrettson*, 173–75.

From [Robert Carr Brackenbury]¹

St. Helier,² Jersey
c. September 30, 1786

1. In the middle of April 1783³ I was one day deeply troubled. It seemed, hell was just ready to devour me, for the sins I had committed against so holy and so merciful a God. But at night my concern gradually wore off, and I thought little about it for six days. But on the seventh of May, I awoke as out of sleep, and being more concerned than ever, cast myself before the Lord and implored his mercy. I had been about three hours in prayer when I saw by faith the Lord Jesus on the cross, and the blood streaming from his side. Immediately my load dropped off and I believed my sins were blotted out, though I had not yet a testimony from his Spirit that I was a child of God. Yet I enjoyed a calm, serene peace, and had no fear either of death or hell.

2. But the work of God in my soul so weakened my body, that I was obliged to take to my bed for some days. During that time what consolations did I receive, from my faithful Bridegroom! But one day I was afraid he was going to leave me. At this I was troubled, and said, I will not let thee go, unless thou bless me. Presently that promise came to my mind, 'I will not leave you comfortless, but will send another Comforter, and he shall abide with you forever.'⁴ I believed it belonged to me, and was so inflamed with love and gratitude as I am not able to express. At the same time, my mind was so enlightened that I saw Jesus was with me, and that all his promises belonged to me. On this my soul was filled as with marrow and fatness, and I praised the Lord with joyful lips.

[3.] Some time after, as I was going to bed one evening, I prayed to the Lord that his holy angels might encamp around me, to protect me from the powers of darkness. Falling asleep, I thought I saw myself in company with the Saviour of the world, while his holy angels encompassed my bed! Another evening, I dreamed that my spirit was suddenly wrapped up into heaven, where I was surrounded with light, and beheld the glory of God. And after I awoke the light seemed to continue with me a considerable time. O what favours are these which he has conferred on a poor worm! Indeed, they were so great that spiritual pride took occasion to attack me unawares. But I was convinced of it by a dear sister in Christ. While she spoke, my conscience pleaded guilty, and I lost the presence of my Saviour about a quarter of an hour. On this I wept bitterly before him, and he both pardoned me, and cleansed my soul anew.

4. After this the Lord conferred still greater favours upon me. My faith was so strong that I beheld the day of judgment as already come. And even this was little to what was afterwards revealed to me. For meeting one day with the people of God, I saw myself surrounded with light, and was taken, as it were, into the bosom of my Saviour! Another time, being at the meeting of the class, I saw the majesty of the King of kings in the midst of the assembly. Immediately I cast myself, all trembling, at his footstool! Some time after, being just ready to lay me down to sleep, I found myself again, as it were, in my Lord's bosom, who said, 'In a little time thou shalt be with me in paradise.'⁵ This gave me great joy, as I knew I

¹Titled: 'The Experience of J. B. of St. Helier in the Isle of Jersey'. This may be Jean Bishop (b. 1761), the daughter of James and Esther (Machon) Bishop of St. Helier (see her prior letter to JW, July 11, 1777). The account is largely quotations from her spiritual journal and letters, with some summary comments in another hand (inset to indicate), this is almost certainly Brackenbury, who was currently overseeing Methodist work on the Isle of Jersey. The occasion of this piece may have been J. B.'s death, though no record has been located to confirm this.

²Orig., 'Helliers'.

³Orig., '1785'; likely a misprint given following paragraphs.

⁴Cf. John 14:16–18.

⁵Cf. Luke 23:43.

should then possess all the *great and precious promises*.

5. One day I beheld the heavenly city just at hand, and the Lord Jesus said to me, 'In a little time, my child, thou shalt be in full possession of this glorious kingdom.' And he gave me so great a measure of light that I could already see the gate of the heavenly city, and the inscription thereon in golden letters. But I could not read it. I saw likewise the beams of the Sun of righteousness shining on the city with refulgent splendour. He then said to me, 'Thou shalt shortly be there. But first thou must suffer sharp trials for my sake.' I firmly believed it, and rejoiced that I was counted worthy to suffer for his name's sake.

6. I found myself from time to time under the wings of the glorious Father of lights. Sometimes I was prostrate before him, when he covered me with the cloud of his heavenly protection. Blessed be the Lord for all his precious and inestimable favours! I dreamed one night I was seated on a very high mountain, where was a river of living water, clear as crystal. I believe it was that mentioned in the Revelation, as proceeding from the throne of God and the Lamb.⁶ Not a few times have I been favoured with a view of that celestial city. But oh was there no other happiness than to be always in the company of the adorable Saviour, it were enough to ravish the soul with unspeakable and endless admiration!

7. Another time being on my knees before the great God, I was singing the first verse of the 42nd psalm.

For thee, my God, the living God
My thirsty soul doth pine:
O when shall I behold thy face,
Thou majesty divine?⁷

The Lord answered me, 'Shortly thou shalt see it.' Blessed forever be his holy name! O what hast thou prepared for those whom thou hast redeemed with thy most precious blood! O what happiness! O eternity! What joy must be in heaven, since the foretaste is so delicious! Who would not endure any sufferings here to enjoy thee, my Beloved, eternally?

8. My loving Saviour hath taken possession of my heart, and has shut the door, so that all my enemies cannot open it. He is my King and reigns in my soul. Hence I am in safety, being kept by the monarch of heaven and earth. O that the Almighty should discover his secrets to such a poor creature as me! One day, having been praying for my brother, the Lord said, 'I will give him the same blessing I have given thee.' And I know this will be fulfilled in due season.

9. Twice here I beheld myself washed by my Saviour in the clean water of his grace. And once he poured into my soul a large quantity thereof. O that these rivers of pure water may flow abundantly into my soul! How gracious is the Lord, who shows me by his divine light, the work of sanctification advancing in me! And one evening in prayer, I saw my soul in heaven, accompanied by the holy angels, and glorifying the Lord with all the blessed.

10.⁸ These experiences took up several months. She then visited some Christian friends in the country, in January 1785. At the conclusion of one of their assemblies, when most of them were gone away, she stayed with a few and prayed, when the power of God came upon them in an extraordinary manner. She told a friend, that she never saw anything like it before, and that her spirit was so absorbed in the joys of the blessed that she hardly knew whether she was in heaven or on earth. Soon after she came home, she was taken ill. What then occurred, she thus related.

⁶See Rev. 22:1.

⁷Psalms 42, st. 2, in Nahum Tate & Nicholas Brady, *New Version of the Psalms of David*, 2nd edn. (London: M. Clark, 1698), 83.

⁸This is the first section in a secondary hand; likely Brackenbury.

11. A few nights before my illness I had a frightful dream, but I gave myself to the Lord. The next night I had another, wherein my dear Saviour greatly comforted me. Awaking in the morning, I had much pain in my head and throat. But I did not suppose my sickness was mortal, as I had not experienced the trials which I had reason to expect. Ill as I was, I went to the meeting, thinking it might possibly be the last time. It was a blessed opportunity. But it was with great difficulty I got back to our house. The next day I was obliged to take my bed. My pains were considerable. But I hardly felt them, so ravishing was the sweetness which the Lord poured into my soul. Wednesday the 4th, I had a small combat with the enemy. But looking up, I was presently delivered. Meantime I continually tasted the great and ineffable sweetness of my Saviour. The following night, when I fell asleep, I found myself closely engaged with Apollyon, who with one of his hands, which was of an enormous size, seized me by the stomach. I waked, and he strongly assaulted my soul, telling me, my sins were too many to be forgiven. I answered him, I knew they were all forgiven; that I was a child of God, who had solemnly avowed fidelity to his service, and was resolved to be faithful even unto death. I began notwithstanding to be terrified. But in that moment the spirit of prayer came upon me, and immediately the gate of the celestial city was opened, where the Lord showed me I should have a place to all eternity. I was animated with new life, and entreated the Lord that I might continue in prayer till I was fully delivered. In a moment I was at perfect liberty, and sung praise in my heart to my merciful Deliverer.

12. After I fell asleep, the enemy came to me again. But I soon awoke and began to pray—on which he fled from me. And this was the last time he was permitted to assault me during my illness. Two months before this the Lord had discovered to me the corruptions that remained in my heart, inspiring me at the same time with an ardent desire of an entire deliverance from them. It was then I perceived my Lord coming, in order to set me free, and that the adorable Trinity came (as I observed before) to dwell in my heart. This grace was likewise renewed in me some weeks after, and increased continually till the happy moment of my full deliverance. The manner of this I shall now relate: (N.B. Which to me appears not a little whimsical. However I submit to better judgment, being unable to determine.⁹) The first day of my illness, about 7:00 in the evening, the Lord wrought in me a poor sinner this great salvation. I had spent some hours in fervent prayer for the blessing, when he came to my soul and plucked up every root of sin. I contemplated with an overflowing fullness of joy the marvellous work the Lord had wrought in me, but could not yet comprehend the manner in which the man of sin was destroyed. I saw the gate of the heavenly Jerusalem was open to me, and the Lord said, 'Thou shalt shortly enter in.' At the same time I was accompanied with the heavenly host, and was ordered to call all my family, in order to give them my blessing, and then to pray for the church of Christ. But O happy change, which I still experience! No more self-will, no more desire for anything on earth. Everything tasted of heaven, the Lord being the absolute master of every faculty of my soul. Friday evening the Lord bade me see how he destroyed the man of sin. But I cannot fully express it. I beheld sin as a horrible monster, which the Lord dismembered, till the whole appeared lifeless, and torn in pieces.

Twice he has given me to taste, though in different ways, the fruit of the tree of life. The discovery which he has made to me of the invisible world is inexpressible. I can only say, that the light of the celestial city shines refulgently bright on my soul.

13. While she was confined to her bed, often in violent pain, she expressed a lamb-like patience. When she was able to speak, she related the inward conversation which passed between her and her Beloved, who appeared to her in a bright, shining garment, of ineffable lustre. Meantime she saw herself in a glistening garment, near the river of death, waiting for a call to pass over to the city which she had continually in view on the other side. All this time she had a heavenly smile on her countenance, with the simplicity and sweetness of a little child.

All the members of the society in town, and many from the country who went to see her, were greatly edified. Everyone felt a divine attention in the things which she delivered. And

⁹This comment is likely by Brackenbury, not JW or the editor of *AM*.

they all supposed the soul would be soon dislodged from its earthly tabernacle. But she herself supposed this would not be soon, yet she never foretold either the hour or day. Her recovering was very gradual, it being some weeks before she was able to walk alone.

14. What follows is the substance of her experience from this time till midsummer.

January 1786. Being one evening in meditation, the Lord took me into his holy city and discovered to me a ray of his holiness, which forced me to cry out, 'O the holiness, the holiness of the Lord Jehovah! Who may walk in his presence!' After this discovery, one beam of which had made my body so faint that it could scarce recover, he showed me a ray of his glory, and I cried out, 'Ah who can endure this glory!' He answered, 'She whom I have cleansed, even thee!' I cried out again, 'O the glory and holiness of my King! I cannot yet sustain it.' Whereupon the Lord said, 'I have made thee gracious promises. Keep them in the secret of thy soul.' I also heard the blessed cry, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts!'¹⁰

15. I was afterwards in contemplation when the Lord said to me, 'Write these things; for in so doing thou wilt glorify thy heavenly Father.' I cried out, 'I *will* glorify thee, notwithstanding Satan's rage.' I then wrote as above. Being again in deep contemplation, the Lord discovered to me his love, his glory, and his holiness. At this view my body became as dead, and my soul was in an ecstasy. And I cried out, 'I cannot, I cannot yet support his cries! O immense goodness of my King! Let all thy dear children bless and praise thee forever!'

One Lord's day evening as I was singing the praises of God I thought myself in heaven, where the holy angels assisted me to sing in the presence of my King, 'Glory be given to thee forever!' Another time I heard them sing those words in the Revelation, 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty! Who was, and who is, and who is to come!'¹¹

16. About this time she went into the country for the recovery of her health. Having occasion to exhort in the house where she lodged, I advised her to keep low, lest she should be exalted by the multitude of revelations. Hereupon she wrote to me [i.e., Brackenbury] the following letter, dated the 9th of March.

The Lord's favours to me are innumerable. Yesterday he held me so closely united to himself that I was not able to converse with you. Since you spoke to me on the subject of humility, I have found an increase of the Lord's goodness, and I find more joy in considering my own nothingness than even in considering what he has done for me. And when the tears of humility flow abundantly from my eyes, it is then I find the most secret, the most holy, and the most solid joy. On Monday, being alone before the Lord, when I felt his love, together with deep humility, I rendered thanks to him for all his favours, and begged of him to show me what I needed. He said, 'Abide always at my feet, and take particular care never to depart from thence, lest Satan who is always at hand should seduce thee to evil.' I then begged that he would grant me the grace never to go out from thence. Upon which he said, 'My presence shall go with thee and accompany thee to the end.' I entreat you, sir, to speak to me much of humility, that I may never lose it; but increase therein more and more. I do not ascribe anything to you. But I know the Lord has used, and does use you for my good. To him be glory eternally!

I am, etc.

17. On March 11, she wrote thus.

¹⁰Isa. 6:3.

¹¹Cf. Rev. 4:8.

I find, thanks be to God, the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost, dwelling in my soul. After preparing the place, it is the will of the Holy Trinity to make their settled abode therein, as being their own house, and they have taken possession of it, to go out no more forever. O happy state, to be counted worthy to receive God, the Holy One—yea, holiness itself—whom the angels adore in heaven, and before whom they cover their faces with their wings! How pure then ought the place of his abode to be? Insomuch that, if his blessed Spirit did not cleanse the hearts of his children from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, the Lord would never deign to abide there as in his proper dwelling. Happy they who entertain this divine Ghost! They need no longer fear any evil, being in peace and rest under the government of so good a King! Glory be to our God, for giving me this happy lot! To have his kingdom set up, over all the faculties of my soul and body! May the Lord of heaven and earth be eternally praised for the same, through Christ Jesus!

18. March 29. I vowed to the Lord, not to eat bread or drink water, till I had a favourable answer in behalf of his dear people in the island, who are so persecuted for his sake. And this day being appointed for prayer on the occasion, I went to the meeting and entreated the Lord for them, and received a promise that they should be delivered.

It is remarkable that the persecution which had continued for several months, of which they had no hopes of obtaining redress by law, immediately ceased from this time. So did God hear the prayer. In the evening as I was praying, the Lord poured his Spirit into all the faculties of my soul. It is out of my power to tell the effect it had both on my soul and body. It seemed to run through all my veins. It animated my soul with more love than before, and united me more closely to God. I was as it were swallowed up in the ocean of the infinite love of God.

19. Sunday, April 2. This was a peculiarly solemn day to my soul. After dinner I went to the meeting, and during the sermon I felt a great work carrying on in my soul, in an incomprehensible manner. I was conscious the Lord was carrying on the wonderful work of my sanctification. It made me faint away several times. In the evening, while the preacher was representing to the rioters the judgments of God which hung over their heads, I had so clear a view of them as filled me with unfeigned love for their poor souls, and induced me to pray fervently for them. And I felt I could have poured out the last drop of my blood to retrieve them from ruin.

20. Tuesday, May 2. Being at prayer, I beheld the angels casting their crowns before the throne, and worshipping him that liveth forever and ever. And I was suddenly wrapped up into heaven with them. The same day, after dinner, I was quite absorbed in God. I saw him seated on his throne of glory. Indeed it was but a glimpse, an imperfect view, yet it was in a wonderful manner his glory beaming forth like the sun at noonday! The Lord be praised for granting me to be at all times closely united to himself; although it is true, I am some days more closely united than others.

Sunday 14. Being at the preaching, I was so overpowered, that I became quite insensible. But though my outward senses were locked up, I thought I heard the angels before the throne crying out aloud, 'Glory, and honour, and wisdom, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever!'¹² At present I can only say, O how happy are my days! I scarce know any difference between them; the Lord, who is nothing but love, giving me every day to rest in his bosom!

21. Tuesday, 16. I was strongly assaulted by the enemy of my soul. But my faith, instead of being weakened, was much confirmed by the conflict. Thursday, 18. He endeavoured to make me doubt. I retired to my closet, and prayed with uncommon ardour. I did not ask to be delivered from the conflict, but that I might not be overcome by it. While I prayed, I found great power to resist the enemy. And when the Lord gave the victory, the joy was inexpressible.

22. Friday, June 16. I was greatly tempted to doubt whether the Lord had really purified my heart. At length the merciful God was pleased to strengthen my faith to such a degree that I cried out, 'Though all the world should doubt of the work of God, yet will not I.' The same evening the Lord drew me to prayer, and while I was prostrate before him, and was thinking of the things he had done for my soul, and

¹²Cf. Rev. 5:13.

the afflicted state of his church in this island, the thought made such an impression upon my body that my countenance was changed, my eyes overflowed with tears, and all my limbs trembled. Nor do I remember to have been ever so affected before. But I have withal infinite cause to bless the Lord. And this I will do as long as I live.

23. Tuesday 23. The Lord's servant [i.e., Brackenbury] came to see me. He spoke to me of humility, and also advised me to guard against imaginary thoughts, which were only to divert the attention from God. Indeed I have often found useless thoughts in my imagination, perhaps without rejecting them so soon as I ought. When he was gone, I cast myself down before the Lord, imploring that I might be every day more humbled before him. And while I was yet praying I found an answer, feeling a greater measure of self-abasement. Ah who can express the redoubled joy which I then experienced! Before this time I had many conflicts. But in this happy moment the Lord himself put all my enemies under my feet, and I found myself swallowed up in God, who is my true centre. O the glorious and inexpressible joy which was given me in that hour! I plainly see there is no state here below more happy, than that of self-denial and self-abasement. However, notwithstanding the glorious victory which the Lord gave me over my enemies, I dare not yet flatter myself that my conflicts are all over. But it is enough that the God of peace will shortly bruise Satan under my feet.

24. Wednesday 21. I abundantly tasted of the love of God, and found myself like the dust in his holy presence. But immediately a doubt was injected into my mind whether I had not deceived myself! At that instant the Lord spoke these words into my heart, 'Fear not, for thy protector is the Holy One of Israel.'¹³ O what an abyss of love does the Lord continually show me! Therefore does my soul praise him, and all that is within me blesses his holy name! I cannot tell to what degree his love to me is carried. He often puts it into my mind to ask some favour of him for his dear people; and no sooner have I done it, than he gives me to know that he has granted my request. Praise the Lord, O my soul!

25. Friday 23. I was so taken up with the glory of the heavenly city, and at the same time so largely tasted of the goodness and love of God, that I was constrained to cast myself down at his feet. My soul was so ravished, that it seemed to me to be the very moment that I was to go and take possession of his glory. But I was not ravished so much with the glory of the place as with the tenderness of my faithful Spouse! O how closely is my soul united to him! But as the imperfection still remaining in my soul, while it inhabits the house of clay, does not suffer me to love him here below so much as I would, it reaches forth in strong desires after that world above, where it shall love him without any imperfection and adore him without end. It is not possible for me, during my present state of weakness and imperfection, to express what God hath given me to know of that delightful place where he eminently dwells. Although even while I am on earth, the Spirit of the Lord often transports me to those happy mansions, to which my Beloved is gone before, to prepare a place for me. Fain would my soul, which tastes so largely of his sweetness, be constantly employed in giving him glory here, till it is permitted to do it perfectly in eternity.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 11 (1788): 71–73, 127–30, 182–84, 235–37, 295–97.

¹³Cf. Isa. 41:14.

From Sarah Crosby¹

[Cross Hall]
c. October 1, 1786

Reverend Sir,

I think it my privilege, and have often found it a blessing, to comply with the request of my honoured father, which I now do also in great love to my valuable and much esteemed friends, Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher. I will therefore endeavour with the assistance of my gracious Lord to recollect and acquaint you with some particulars of the life and character of these truly devoted servants of God, with whose intimate acquaintance I have been favoured for near thirty years. But indeed I feel my great insufficiency to relate what might be said with the strictest truth of these worthies.

My acquaintance with Mrs. [Mary] Fletcher began when she was about seventeen years of age. She had from her early childhood been strongly drawn to seek the Crucified, and was now athirst for a clean heart, and longed to have a right spirit renewed within her. Nor did her desire to love God with all her heart lessen but increase her love to her neighbour, as I the most unworthy am well able to testify, to whom she has been a tried friend even to the present hour.

To give you a clear view of this, I need only transcribe part of a letter which she wrote to me May 23, 1757:

My Dearest Friend,

The Lord has been indeed merciful, above all we can ask or think. I found a greater blessing the last time I was with you than ever. I am more enabled to prayer, and to an earnest seeking after holiness. But what most stirs me up is, I seem to hear the Lord calling upon me, 'Depart ye, depart ye; go ye out thence. Touch not the unclean thing. Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.'² For some time, these words have been much in my mind, with both pleasure and profit. But within this day or two, the Lord has more clearly shown me the way wherein I ought to walk. He seems to call me out to more activeness, so that I am ready to cry out, 'What wouldst thou have me to do?' Then I consider, Can I do any more for the souls or bodies of the poor about me? But this does not seem to be the thing. What I am now led to wish for is, with both soul and body to serve those who are in Christ. And as soon as the Lord has prepared me for his work, and set me at liberty, my firm resolution is, by the grace of God, to be wholly given up to the Church. I plainly see, I have no more to do with the world than to allow myself the necessities of life. And though it has pleased God that I have no need to work for my living, yet surely that is no reason my hand should be idle. I would be like those described, 1 Timothy 5:10, 'To bring up children, to lodge strangers', to be ready to do the meanest offices for the saints, to 'relieve the afflicted, to visit the fatherless and widow, and diligently to follow every good work'. O pray for me that the Lord may shorten his work in me, and quickly make an end of sin! O that he would say to my soul, 'Thou art all fair, my love! There is no spot in thee.'³ O when shall I be

¹From letters of JW to Joseph Benson (Oct. 30, 1785, 30:395) and Mary (Bosanquet) Fletcher (Jan. 13, 1786, 30:422), we know that JW was soliciting information from several persons in preparing his *Short Account ... of the Rev. John Fletcher*. He apparently made additional requests in the summer of 1786, which drew this material from Sarah Crosby that he acknowledges receiving on Oct. 28, 1786. We have gathered the other undated accounts that JW includes in *Short Account* with this from Crosby, assuming they were sent by early Oct. JW introduced the present excerpt: 'As I think it highly expedient to premise some account of the person whom Mr. Fletcher chose as his companion for life, I am glad to find this done to my hand in the letter which I shall now subjoin.'

²Isa. 52:11.

³Song of Sol. 4:7.

wholly given up, both body and soul, to him who gave himself for me!

I admired the spirit of this letter; but little expected to see these good desires brought so fully into practice as they were in a few years after. And this may suffice as a clear proof that God fulfils the desires of them that fear him; yea, and shows unto them the path wherein he would have them to walk. That her light given before was not delusive is plain, as it is well known how many years she has 'brought up children, lodged strangers,' relieved the afflicted, and 'diligently followed every good work'.

With regard to the dear saint that is now swallowed up in his beloved employment, praise, and adoration, it is eight or nine and twenty years since I was first favoured with his heavenly conversation, in company with Mr. [Thomas] Walsh and a few other friends, most of whom are now in the world of spirits. At these seasons, how frequently did we feel

The' o'erwhelming power of saving grace!⁴

How frequently were we silenced thereby while tears of love our eyes o'erflowed! It sweetly affects my soul while I recollect the humility, fervour of spirit, and strength of faith with which dear Mr. Fletcher so often poured out his soul before the great Three-One, at whose feet we have lain in holy shame and divine silence till it seemed earth was turned to heaven! With what delight does my soul recall those precious moments! Yet a little while, and we shall all magnify his name together.

This heavenly-minded servant of the Lord resembled him likewise in his love to precious souls. I heard him preach his first sermon at West Street Chapel. I think his text was, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'⁵ His spirit appeared in his whole attitude and action, though he could not well find words in the English language to express himself. But he supplied that defect by offering up prayers, tears, and sighs abundantly. Nearly about this time he saw Miss Bosanquet, and began his acquaintance with her. But although they had a particular esteem for each other, yet they had no correspondence for above twenty years. It was not till the yearly conference drew near, in July 1781, that he paid her a visit at her own house near Leeds. They had much conversation together, and contracted an intimate acquaintance. After a few days Miss Bosanquet asked Mr. Wesley's advice concerning Mr. Fletcher's proposal, who approved it entirely, being persuaded it would be much to the glory of God. He spent much of his time at Cross Hall till the following January. His general conversation was praising God and speaking of the love of our dear Redeemer. He took opportunities likewise of speaking to everyone in the family concerning the state of their souls, and giving them from time to time such directions as were suitable thereto. At other times he met us all together and gave us proper exhortations and directions. Our daily meals were as a sacrament. When he drank to anyone it was, 'Heavenly health'! or 'The cup of salvation'! At or after the meal, he generally began or called us to begin that verse:

Still, O my soul, prolong
The never-ceasing song!
Christ my theme, my hope, my joy,
His be all my happy days!
Praise my every hour employ:
Every breath be spent in praise!⁶

After dinner he often sung several verses of 'Primitive Christianity', particularly that,

⁴CW, Hymn on Luke 14:7, st. 10, *HSP* (1749), 1:260.

⁵Matt. 3:2.

⁶[CW?], 'Third Hymn to Christ', *HSP* (1739), 170.

O that my Lord would count me meet,
To wash his dear disciple's feet!⁷

Sometimes he read many of those verses with tears streaming down his face. Thus did he walk with God, filled with the Spirit of his beloved Lord; confirming his love to all the family, and caring both for their spiritual and temporal concerns.

My soul was much affected when he asked each of us, in a sweet, humble manner, 'Can you give me your friend?' To think of parting was indeed grievous to us all. Yet we did not dare to withhold her from him, as we all believed the union was of God and would be to their present and eternal benefit. The first sermon which he preached in Leeds, on the Sunday morning before the Conference, will never be forgotten by any that heard it who desire to be perfected in love. He preached in many places while in Yorkshire, and to numerous congregations. I have heard of many who were greatly blessed thereby, some convinced, others set at liberty. And whenever he either preached or conversed, the comforts of the Holy Ghost were multiplied.

Monday, November 12, [1781] was the day appointed for the outward uniting of those whose hearts were before united by the Holy Spirit. On the morning of this day several friends met together on this solemn occasion, who can all, as well as me, truly say, 'I have been at one Christian wedding.' Jesus was invited, and truly he was at our Cana. We reached Cross Hall before family prayers. Mr. Fletcher was dressed in his canonicals. And after giving out one of Mr. Wesley's marriage hymns, he read the seventh, eighth, and ninth verses of the nineteenth chapter of the Revelation; and spoke from them in such a manner as greatly tended to spiritualize the solemnities of the day. He said, 'We invite you to our wedding, but the Holy Ghost here invites you to the marriage of the Lamb. The bride, the Lamb's wife, has made herself ready. This bride consists of the whole church triumphant and militant united together. Ye may all be the bride, and Jesus will condescend to be the bridegroom. Make yourself ready by being filled with the Spirit.' He was very solemn in prayer, and said, 'O Lord, thou knowest we would not take this step if we had not eternity in view, and if we were not as willing to be carried into the churchyard as to go into the church.' At breakfast he reminded us, 'The postilions are now ready to carry us to the church, in order to see our nuptials solemnized. But death will soon be here, to transport us to the marriage of the Lamb.'

On the way to the church⁸ he spoke much of the mystery which is couched under marriage, namely the union between Christ and his church. 'The first Adam', said he, 'received his wife from his side. Our heavenly Adam purchased his bride by a fountain opened in his pierced side.' They were married in the face of the congregation. The doors were opened, and everyone came in that would. We then returned home and spent a considerable time in singing and prayer. We were near twenty of us. I then presented Mrs. Fletcher with some wedding hymns. She looked them over and gave them to Mr. Fletcher. He read the scripture at the top, namely, 'Husbands, love your wives', and added, 'As Christ loved the church'.⁹ Then turning to us, he said, 'My God, what a task! Help me, my friends, by your prayers to fulfil it. As Christ loved the church! He laid aside his glory for her! He submitted to be born into our world; to be clothed with a human body, subject to all our sinless infirmities. He endured shame, contempt, pain, yea, *death itself* for his church! O my God, none is able to fulfil this task without thine almighty aid. Help me, O my God! Pray for me, O my friends!'

⁷This is part II, st. 12, of a hymn of CW that was first published at the end of the 2nd edn. of JW's *Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*; see *Works*, 11:93, or *HSP* (1749), 2:33.

⁸Batley Church, nearly two miles from Cross Hall.

⁹Eph. 5:25.

He next read, 'Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands.' Mrs. Fletcher added, 'As unto the Lord'.¹⁰ 'Well, my dear', returned Mr. Fletcher, 'only in the Lord. And if ever I wish you to do anything otherwise, resist me with all your might.' From dinner, which was a spiritual meal as well as a natural one, until tea-time our time was spent chiefly in fervent prayer or singing. After singing the covenant hymn,¹¹ Mr. Fletcher went to Mrs. Fletcher and said to her, 'Well, my dearest friend, will you join with me in joining ourselves in a perpetual covenant to the Lord? Will you with me serve him in his members? Will you help me to bring souls to the blessed Redeemer? And in every possible way this day, lay yourself under the strongest ties you can to help me to glorify my gracious Lord?' She answered like one that well knew where her strength lay, 'May my God help me so to do!'

In the evening Mr. [John] Valton preached in the hall from those most suitable words, 'What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord!'¹² His words did not fall to the ground; many were greatly refreshed. After preaching there was a sweet contest among us: everyone thought 'I in particular owe the greatest debt of praise'—till we jointly agreed to sing,

I'll praise my Maker while I've breath,
And when my voice is lost in death
Praise shall employ my nobler powers.
My days of praise shall ne'er be past
While life, or thought, or being last,
Or immortality endures.¹³

On the Wednesday following the select society met, and it was a precious season. Among other things, Mr. Fletcher said, 'Some of you perhaps may be a little surprised at the step my dearest friend and I have taken. But I assure you, it was the result of much prayer and mature deliberation. Five-and-twenty years ago, when I first saw my dear wife, I thought if I ever married she should be the person. But she was too rich for me to think of. So I banished every thought of the kind. For many years after, I had a distaste to a married life, thinking it impossible to be as much devoted to God in a married as in a single life. But this objection was removed by reading, 'Enoch begat sons and daughters. And Enoch walked with God, and was not: for God took him.'¹⁴ I then saw, if Enoch at the head of a family might walk with God, and be fit for translation, our souls under the gospel dispensation might attain the highest degree of holiness in a similar state, if too great an attachment leading the soul *from* God rather than *to* him did not take place, instead of that which should be a means of increasing its union with Jesus. Yet still many obstacles stood in my way, but at length they were all removed. Every mountain became a plain, and we are both well assured that the step we took had the full approbation of God.'

On January 2, 1782, we had a very solemn parting. But in the midst of all the sorrow which we felt was a sweet assurance that we should meet again, not only in this world, but

Where death shall all be done away,
And bodies part no more.¹⁵

¹⁰Eph. 5:22.

¹¹CW, Hymn on Jer. 1:5, *Scripture Hymns* (1762), 36–37; used in covenant service.

¹²Ps. 116:12–14.

¹³Isaac Watts, 'Psalm 146', adapted by JW in *CPH* (1737), 9–10.

¹⁴Cf. Gen. 5:22, 24.

¹⁵CW, 'At Parting', st. 8, *HSP* (1742), 160.

This brings to my mind a sentence which he wrote to us, a little before his death:

Time is short. It remains that we die daily. Stand fast in Christ, the resurrection and the life. That we may have a happy meeting is the wish and prayer of
Your affectionate friends,

John and Mary Fletcher

To repeat all the precious sayings of this servant of God would require many volumes, for his mouth was always opened with wisdom, tending to minister grace to the hearers. My earnest prayer is that the spirit of faith and love, and heavenly wisdom, may rest upon *you* also, and guide you in all your extensive labours, till they are swallowed up in eternal rest. I remain, reverend sir,

Your unworthy child and servant,

S. C.

Source: published transcription; JW, *Life of Fletcher*, 128–42.

From Mary [Thornton] Greenwood¹

[Stoke Newington]
c. October 1, 1786

Agreeably to your desire, I endeavour to recollect some particulars of Mr. Fletcher during his abode at Newington.²

When he first came, he was, by Dr. Fothergill's advice, under the strictest observance of two things—rest and silence.³ These, together with a milk diet, were supposed to be the only probable means of his recovery. In consequence of these directions, he spoke exceeding little. If ever he spoke more than usual, it did not fail to increase his spitting of blood; of which indeed he was seldom quite clear, although it was not violent. Therefore a great part of his time was spent in being read to. But it was not possible to restrain him altogether from speaking. The fire which continually burned in his heart, many waters could not quench. It often burst out unawares. And then how did we wonder (like those who formerly heard his Lord) at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth! He could not have sustained life without sometimes giving vent to his heart. No penance could have appeared so severe a cross to him as to be debarred from speaking of or to God. His natural vivacity, with his intense love of Jesus, continually impelled him to speak. But on being reminded of his rule, with a cheerful smile he was all submission, consenting by signs only to stir up those about him to pray and praise!

Whoever has read Mr. Fletcher's *Last Check* to antinomianism, and has had the privilege of observing his spirit and conduct, will not scruple to say that he was a living comment on his own account of Christian perfection. It is an alarming word which our Lord speaks to the angel of the Church of Sardis: 'I have not found thy works perfect before God.'⁴ But as far as man is able to judge from the whole tenor of his behaviour, he did possess perfect humility, perfect resignation, and perfect love. Suitable to this was the testimony concerning him which was given in Lady Huntingdon's chapel at Bristol, even by Mr. [Henry] Venn, a gentleman strongly attached to those opinions which Mr. Fletcher thought it his duty to oppose: 'I have enjoyed the privilege of being several weeks under the same roof with dear Mr. Fletcher. And during that time, I have been greatly edified by his perfect resignation to the will of God, and by being a witness to his exemplary conduct and uncommon grace.'⁵

When he was able to converse, his favourite subject was 'the promise of the Father, the gift of the Holy Ghost', including that rich, peculiar blessing of union with the Father and the Son mentioned in that prayer of our Lord which is recorded in the seventeenth chapter of St. John. Many were the sparks of living fire which occasionally darted forth on this beloved theme. 'We must not be content', said he, 'to be only cleansed from sin; we must be filled with the Spirit.' One asking him what was to be experienced in the full accomplishment of the promise, 'O', said he, 'what shall I say? All the sweetness of the drawings of the Father, all the love of the Son, all the rich effusions of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, more than ever can be expressed, are comprehended here! To attain it, the Spirit maketh intercession in the soul, like a God wrestling with a God!'

¹JW introduced this excerpt: 'One of the family, of whom I inquired concerning this part of his life, gave me the following information.'

²Fletcher convalesced from a bout with consumption in Dec. 1775 at the home of Charles and Mary (Thornton) Greenwood, in Stoke Newington. See Mary Bosanquet to JW, Feb. 7, 1776.

³John Fothergill (1712–80) was a Quaker physician in London.

⁴Rev. 3:2.

⁵Cf. Seymour, *Huntingdon*, 2:70–72.

It was in these favoured moments of converse that we found in a particular manner the reward which is annexed to the 'receiving a prophet in the name of a prophet'.⁶ And in some of these he occasionally mentioned several circumstances which (as none knew them but himself) would otherwise have been buried in everlasting oblivion.

One of those remarkable passages was, 'In the beginning', said he, 'of my spiritual course, I heard the voice of God in an articulate but inexpressibly awful sound go through my soul in those words, "If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself."' ⁷ He mentioned another peculiar manifestation of a later date, in which said he, 'I was favoured like Moses with a supernatural discovery of the glory of God, in an ineffable converse with him, face to face; so that whether I was then in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell.'⁸

At another time, he said, 'About the time of my entering into the ministry, I one evening wandered into a wood, musing on the importance of the office I was going to undertake. I then began to pour out my soul in prayer, when such a feeling sense of the justice of God fell upon me, and such a sense of his displeasure at sin, as absorbed all my powers and filled my soul with the agony of prayer for poor, lost sinners. I continued therein till the dawn of day. And I considered this as designed of God to impress upon me more deeply the meaning of those solemn words, "Therefore knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men."'⁹

The blessed state of his soul continually manifested itself by its overflowing goodwill to all that came in his way. And yet his spirit was so deeply impressed with those words, 'Not as though I had already attained',¹⁰ that the vehemence of his desire for a fuller manifestation of God seemed sometimes to border upon unhappiness. But his ardent soul only felt the full impression of those words of the apostle, 'Forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those that are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.'¹¹

One end of his retiring to Newington was that he might hide himself from company. But this design was in nowise answered, for company came from every side. He was continually visited by high and low, and by persons of various denominations. One of whom, being asked when he went away what he thought of Mr. Fletcher, said, 'I went to see a man that had one foot in the grave, but I found a man that had one foot in heaven.' Among them that now visited him were several of his beloved and honoured opponents, to whom he confirmed his love (however roughly they had treated him) by the most respectful and affectionate behaviour. But he did not give up any part of the truth for which he had publicly contended; although some (from whom one would have expected better things) did not scruple to affirm the contrary. Those of his particular friends who visited him here will not easily forget how he exhausted his whole soul in effusions of thankfulness. Mrs. Cartwright and Cavendish in particular,¹² with his faithful and affectionate friend Mr. [James] Ireland, will remember their interviews with him. And those of the family were almost oppressed by the outpourings of his love and gratitude whenever they showed their love and care in the most inconsiderable instance. Yea, so thankful in proportion would he be to

⁶Matt. 10:41.

⁷Matt. 16:24.

⁸See 2 Cor. 12:2.

⁹2 Cor. 5:11.

¹⁰Phil. 3:12.

¹¹Phil. 3:13–14.

¹²Whether the alteration of the last name is by Greenwood or JW, the two women mentioned are surely Bridget Carteret (1700–92), the unmarried daughter of Admiral Edward Carteret and his wife Bridget (Exton) Carteret; and Anne (Carteret) Cavendish (1703–92), the sister of Bridget Carteret and widow of Admiral Phillip Cavendish (d. 1743). Both were friends with CW's family and Fletcher.

even the meanest servant.

It was not without some difficulty that Mr. Ireland at length prevailed upon him to sit for his picture. While the limner was drawing the outlines of it, he was exhorting both him and all that were in the room, not only to get the outlines drawn but the colourings also of the image of Jesus on their hearts. He had a very remarkable facility in making allusions of this kind—in raising spiritual observations from every accidental circumstance; in turning men's employments, pleasures, and pains into means of edification. This he did in order to engage the attention of the thoughtless, the more deeply to fix the attention of the thoughtful, and to prevent the trifling away of time in unprofitable conversation. And such little incidents as used to pass away unnoticed by almost any other person, acquired from Mr. Fletcher's fine imagination a kind of grace and dignity. To give an instance. Being ordered to be let blood, while his blood was running into the cup, he took occasion to expatiate on the precious blood-shedding of the Lamb of God. And even when he did not speak at all, the seraphic spirit which beamed from his languid face during those months of pain and weakness was

A lecture silent, yet of sovereign use.¹³

One of those who visited him at Newington was Mr. William Perronet, a pious, sensible, and amiable young man, who was snatched hence in the bloom of youth. He often said the first sight of Mr. Fletcher fixed an impression upon his mind which never wore off till it issued in a real conversion to God; ever accompanied with a most affectionate regard for the instrument of that happy change.

Source: published transcription; JW, *Life of Fletcher*, 73–82.

¹³Edward Young, *Night Thoughts*, Night Two, l. 647; included by JW in *MSP* (1744), 2:260.

From Jane Thornton¹

c. October 1, 1786

I was desired by Mr. and Mrs. Ireland² (who took him down in April 1777) to bear them company thither, which I willingly did. Indeed I looked upon it as a call from God. Nor could I desire a greater honour than to share in the employment of angels, in ministering to a distinguished heir of salvation. At Brislington, near Bristol, he continued in the same holy, earnest course as at Newington. Every day he drank the Hotwell water, and it agreed with him well. So that he appeared to gather a little strength, though not so swiftly as was expected. And all the strength which he received, he laid out in labours of love for the benefit of all those, rich or poor, whom providence cast in his way.

Whenever he was in company, it was his general method, so far as his strength would admit, to pray particularly for every person present. And from his habitual prayer resulted that life and energy in his words which everyone that was blessed with his society felt, more or less. Now and then likewise he adventured to pray in the family. But he was not wary enough in this. He more than once so much exerted himself that he was brought very low. As soon as he was well enough to write, he was intent upon finishing two treatises for the press. The *Plan of Reconciliation*, in particular, lay very near his heart.³ He longed to conclude it before he died, which he wished to do, breathing peace to Jerusalem, and pointing out to the children of God the most probable means of effecting it—of uniting together in the bonds of peace and love all the true ministers and followers of Jesus.

Source: published transcription; JW, *Life of Fletcher*, 85–87.

¹Mary (Thornton) Greenwood was a daughter of Lazarus Thornton (1704–74) and Marie (Despaign) Thornton (1702–57), Methodist supporters in Canterbury. She moved to London and was a companion of Jane Catherine March until she married in 1770. At that point her sister Jane (b. 1738) took her place as March's companion, and helped care for Fletcher during his time at Newington (and, as this account shows, when he went to Bath). JW introduced: 'He continued with Mr. Greenwood at Newington upwards of fifteen months. The physicians then advised him to make a trial of the Hotwell water, near Bristol.'

²James Ireland's first wife, Constant (Norman) Ireland (b. 1739), died in 1769. Two years later James married Frances Godde (1734–1805).

³I.e., John Fletcher, *The Reconciliation; or, An Easy Method to Unite the Professing People of God* (London: R. Hawes, 1777).

From Samuel Webb¹

c. October 1, 1786

When I [John Fletcher] was a lad, I had a design to get some fruit out of my father's garden. The door being locked, I could not get in but by climbing over the wall. This was very high, but with some difficulty I got to the top of it. As I was walking upon it, my foot slipped and I fell down to the bottom. But just where I fell a large quantity of fresh-made mortar was laid. I fell exactly upon it. This broke my fall, or it might have cost me my life.

Once, as I was swimming by myself in a deep water, one end of a strong riband which bound my hair, getting loose I know not how, and twisting about my leg, tied me as it were neck and heels. I strove with all my strength to disengage myself; but it was to no purpose. No person being within call, I gave myself up for lost. But when I had given over struggling, the riband loosed of itself.

Another instance of the tender care which God had over me was as follows. One evening I and four young gentlemen in high spirits made a solemn agreement with each other to swim the next day to a rocky island, five miles distant from the shore. But this foolish adventure was within a very little of costing us all our lives. I and another indeed did with great difficulty and hazard swim to the island. But when we came thither, the rock was so steep and smooth that we could not possibly climb up. After swimming round several times, and making many ineffectual efforts, we thought we must perish there. But at length one of us found a place where he made a shift to crawl up. He then helped his companion after him. The others swam about halfway. A boat then took them up, when they were just sinking. Another boat, which we had ordered to follow us, afterwards came and took us home.

Some years since, I lived at a place very near the river Rhine. In that part it is broader than the Thames at London Bridge, and extremely rapid. But having been long practised in swimming, I made no scruple of going into it at any time. Only I was always careful to keep near the shore, that the stream might not carry me away. Once, however, being less careful than usual, I was unawares drawn into the mid-channel. The water there was extremely rough, and poured along like a galloping horse. I endeavoured to swim against it, but in vain, till I was hurried far from home. When I was almost spent, I rested upon my back, and then looked about for a landing-place, finding I must either land or sink. With much difficulty I got near the shore. But the rocks were so ragged and sharp that I saw if I attempted to land there I should be torn in pieces. So I was constrained to turn again to the midstream. At last, despairing of life, I was cheered by the sight of a fine smooth creek, into which I was swiftly carried by a violent stream. A building stood directly across it, which I did not then know to be a powder-mill. The last thing I can remember was the striking of my breast against one of the piles whereon it stood. I then lost my senses, and knew nothing more till I rose on the other side of the mill. When I came to myself, I was in a calm, safe place, perfectly well, without any soreness or weariness at all. Nothing was amiss but the distance of my clothes, the stream having driven me five miles from the place where I left them. Many persons gladly welcomed me on shore; one gentleman in particular, who said, 'I looked when you went under the mill, and again when you rose on the other side. And the time of your being immersed among the piles was exactly twenty minutes.'

Source: published transcription; JW, *Life of Fletcher*, 7–10.

¹JW introduced this set of anecdotes: 'The following accounts Mr. Fletcher himself gave to Mr. Samuel Webb of London, then residing at Madeley'. This was apparently the Samuel Webb who appears as a single man in the Foundery Band Lists, 1742–46.

From [Samuel Webb?]¹

c. October 1, 1786

Dear Sir,

My aversion to writing letters increases with my declining years. And yet I most willingly pay this debt to the precious memory of an old friend. I dwelt near him only two or three years, but our intimacy was great. And perhaps I may be able to present you with some particulars which you have not seen before.

About the year 1760 he showed me, at his lodgings, a rope with pulleys, which he used for exercise; and added, with a smile, that the devil often tempted him to hang himself therewith. I said, 'The desire of women is a temptation far more dangerous than this.' He answered with surprise (or rather, as it seemed to me, with a degree of contempt), 'In all my life I never felt that temptation; no, not in any degree.' But it is dangerous for a Christian, how great or good soever he may be, to despise another for being tempted. When we met again, he acknowledged he had been plagued, like other men, with that formerly unknown temptation.

Source: published transcription; JW, *Life of Fletcher*, 38–39.

¹JW introduced this response: 'In answer to some queries concerning him, a gentleman who was intimately acquainted with him for many years wrote to me as follows.' It may have been Samuel Webb again.

From 'C. D.' to the Editor of the *Leeds Intelligencer*¹

October 17, 1786

Sir,

It may be very indifferent to Mr. John Wesley who 'A. B.' is, as it is not his person but the contents of what he inserted in the paper Mr. John Wesley is concerned with. If Mr. John Wesley can prove that the account he published to the world in his *Journal* under the 17th of April, 1780, and published in this present year, is no lie but the truth, he will do something to the purpose. But as this is impossible, he had better be silent, and take shame to himself.

C. D.

Source: published transcription; *Leeds Intelligencer* (Oct. 24, 1776), p. 4.²

¹This is a follow-up to the letter of 'A. B.' dated Sept. 14, 1786, and JW's reply in the *Leeds Intelligencer* dated Oct. 6, 1786, 30:489–90.

²Reprinted without phrase 'and published in this present year' in *Leeds Mercury* (Oct. 24, 1786), p. 3.

From Mary Cooke

Trowbridge
October 24, 1786

My Dear, and Ever Dear Sir,

Your letters, whatever be their contents, always prove an effectual expellent of gloom and doubt. I rejoice in their receipt, and feel power and strength of soul communicated by the perusal of them. I received your last on the Monday after our Saturday's visit to you in Bath.³ That interview in a measure prepared me for the disappointment your letter conveyed, of not seeing you in Trowbridge this autumn. Had it not been so, the pain had been even more poignant than it now was—and surely in its most favourable circumstances, I bore it uneasily enough. Yet I bless my gracious God, I can submit to his will in these things better than I used to do.

I feel a daily growth of love for my friends. But still if in the disposals of providence we are kept asunder, or after enjoying their company they are taken from me, I can with a measure of resignation say, 'Lord, thy will is best, let it be done!' Ever to keep this in view I find is the only way to happiness. Yea, it is not merely the way thereto, but it is happiness itself. So far as my own is conformed to the divine will, so far peace possesses my mind, and runs through my actions. And thus I know it would always smoothly glide through every faculty of my soul, did not opposition arise from the unsubdued nature, to perturb and hinder its even progress. It is this bar I want taken away. The power and willingness of my God are, I know, engaged for its removal. I have for a season proved the exertions of both on my behalf, and from recent experience can testify how wondrous they are. The other day I caught my thoughts

Scattered o'er all the earth abroad,
Immeasurably wide from God.⁴

It was the grief of my soul that I could not collect and stay them where I would they should be fixed. But what I could not do myself, he who is greater than my heart, and who saw my desire, in a moment effected for me. Far as my roving thoughts were gone, his love extended; gathered in, and brought the wanderers back to himself, their desired centre, sweetly binding them his own by the gift of those powerful words,

On me thy quiet soul be stayed,
Till pure, as I thy God, am pure!⁵

Whilst I retained the gift I was completely blessed. I held by the Giver, and enquired, 'Why am I not always thus? Surely Thou wouldst I should be so, or I had not received this delightful taste as an evidence of what thou *canst*, and what thou *wilt* accomplish, even the utter destruction of mine enemies, and the full salvation of my soul.' These seasons are happy presages that my expectation shall not perish, or my hope of an abiding continuance herein be cut off.

Is it not right, my dear sir, that from the feelings of grateful hearts our tongues should bear testimony to the usefulness of those preachers whom God in his providential dispensations favours us with? If so, we are constrained to declare, that Mr. Adam Clarke, by his visit to Trowbridge, has been made the instrument of much and universal good. Universal I repeat. I mean to all who heard him. The

³JW had been in Bath on Saturday, Sept. 9, 1786; see JW, *Journal, Works*, 23:418. JW's letter to Cooke was written the same day; see *Works*, 30:482–83.

⁴CW, Hymn on Matt. 5:3, st. 2, *HSP* (1739), 98.

⁵CW, 'The Fourteenth Chapter of Hosea', st. 19, *Hymns for Times of Trouble and Persecution* (1744), 47.

disciples of Jesus amongst us are greatly encouraged to go forward. Without exception, *everyone* bears witness to renewals of strength in the divine life through his being here, and even such as ‘cared for none of these things’,⁶ evidence the power accompanying his word by saying, they would go many miles to hear him preach. He gave one invitation sermon, since which thirteen are added to the society. Were we to argue from these, and many other circumstances, which from their number and variety it is impossible now to relate, our inference would be that providence and Mr. Wesley are at unity in his *first* designation to this circuit. The obstacles which has been thrown in, and still continue to bar his passage to the Islands, seem to indicate that Mr. [Robert] Brackenbury’s request of having him there, however rightly intended, was not founded in the will of God.⁷ This we leave. Yet cannot but regret now more than ever our disappointment and loss, in being deprived of one who is so abundantly calculated for usefulness in these parts, if from the beginning we may be allowed to draw conclusions.

The general petition is, that as our hope in this respect is *now* cut off, we may at least have him the first year on his return to England. Against which time we must strive for a larger room; as great numbers of persons go away for want, not of a *sitting* but even of a *standing* place; which they would be well contented with could they be happy enough to get one *within* or *about* the door.

Will you not be pleased, my dear sir, to hear that we are at last got into bands? Mr. Clarke proposed them, and strongly insisted on their great utility. Many lions lay in the way. But courage overcame them all. After much opposition from our own ignorance, and from our arch foe, who would not that our souls should prosper, we were induced to make trial, and now rejoice in its abundant success. Our classes grow unwieldy, are obliged to be divided, and new leaders sought out. Since I wrote last, I have a band and a class appointed me. Almost I sunk under the consideration of my incapacity, well knowing this class to be the most deeply experienced in the society—and many amongst them far more able to lead than I am. But glory to my God, I do feel that out of weakness he ordains strength! And for all the trials and temptations which this new office subjects me to, he grants me peace of soul and himself as my portion!

Our morning prayer-meetings continue. Nor are our evenings spent without employ of similar nature. We have no time to be idle, no time to look indifferently about us; much less time to jar. But begin almost to want new days for our work. Love and concord reign! In short, we are ‘as a city at unity with itself’,⁸ blessed with harmony, increase, and prosperity! Who can have greater cause to love? Who greater cause to praise than we who are thus highly honoured, and favoured of our God?

I have room for no more, than to present my sisters’ respectful love, and to ask your prayers for a continuance and increase of our present bliss. Farewell, dear sir. I am indeed

Your happy

M. C.

Address: ‘The Revd J. Wesley New Chapel, City Road London’.

Endorsement: by Cooke, ‘Answer to Mr. Wesley’s 11th letter’.

Source: manuscript copy for records; Bridwell Library (SMU), Mary Cooke Letter-book, pp. 11–12.

⁶Acts 18:17.

⁷Brackenbury had persuaded JW to appoint Clarke to assist him in the Channel Islands at the 1786 Conference.

⁸Ps. 122:3.

From Elizabeth Ritchie

Otley
October 25, 1786

When I wrote the few hasty lines from Dublin [that] my very dear father received before he went to Holland, my intention was to write very soon and tell him the state things were in amongst our Irish brethren, as I knew it would give him pleasure. But I find by his last favour some of our friends have fulfilled my intention, and he is already acquainted with the prospect of peace that appeared amongst them.¹ I shall be truly thankful to hear White Friars and Bethesda help each other to save souls.²

Mrs. [Agnes] Smyth writes me word Mr. [Brian Bury] Collins went over with them. Their congregations increase and many clergymen come to hear. Mrs. [Hester] Rogers also tells me the work of God goes on among our people. But both inform me Mr. Collins is to preach no more among us.³ Pray, my dear sir, is anything the matter? Mrs. Smyth says he was sadly hurt when he heard it. I know Mr. Collins, though he perhaps might not think as we do in everything, really loved the Methodists and wished them prosperity in the name of the Lord. Many times he was useful, and the hearts of some are closely attached to him. I wish his being refused the free use of our pulpits may not hurt those.

I think I scarcely know anything relative to dear Mr. [John] Fletcher that ought to be inserted in his life [that] you are not already acquainted with. But as I am not a proper judge, I will mention a circumstance which, as I felt a divine unction attend the words, left a lasting blessing on my mind. The first time I ever say him, his salutation was the most solemn and singular I had ever met with. Mrs. Fletcher (then Miss [Mary] Bosanquet) introduced me to him by saying 'this is sister Ritchie'. He took my by the hand and, with eyes lifted up to heaven, said 'I am the resurrection and the life. Whosoever liveth and believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.'⁴ He then spoke to two other persons who Mrs. Fletcher likewise introduced to him, and turning to me again said, 'Sister Ritchie, there is one article of our Christian faith which you and I, and all who have been long walking round their own graves, ought to draw peculiar consolation from. That is, 'I believe in the resurrection of the dead.' He then talked to us for some time on this animating subject, and seemed filled with love to that precious saviour through whose resurrection's power every believer shall rise.

The account we heard at Birmingham relative to the man who wanted to deceive about the ten pounds there was no truth in. Mrs. Fletcher also informed me someone had misrepresented Mrs. Hill's words to you mentioned in the sermon.⁵ She said she believed Mr. Hill did utter an exclamation such as 'Well, I believe our tutor will be a Methodist!' But that she is a person who was never accustomed to use such words as they have told you. Another thing Mrs. Fletcher mentioned you had been wrong informed respecting—viz., Mr. Fletcher and his housekeeper living for two shillings a week. She said she believed one while his shambles meat did cost him no more, and that this having been mentioned to a friend who was wishing him to live better, the account you have heard has risen from it. But when he boarded and kept no servant, his board cost him seven shillings a week, which he used to find the cheaper way. I hope, my dear sir, you will excuse the freedom I take. I knew not whether the above would be inserted in his

¹JW's letter, in which he requested input from Ritchie for his *Life* of Fletcher, is not known to survive.

²I.e., the Methodists (at Whitefriar's) and Edward Smyth's Bethesda chapel.

³Cf. JW to Henry Moore, Nov. 4, 1786, *Works*, 30:499.

⁴John 11:25–26.

⁵See JW, *On the Death of John Fletcher*, III.2, *Works*, 3:615. Speaking of Susanna Maria (Noel) Hill, wife of Thomas Hill of Tern Hall.

Life or not. If it had, I should have blamed myself for suffering you to be blamed or give pain to anyone. If the materials you can collect for a *Life* will not be sufficient matter for a proper sized volume, I could let you have some very sweet letters, all but one or two wrote since Mr. Fletcher was in Dublin—which, if you judge them proper, would fill up. Please to let me know, and when you will want them, if you would wish me to send them.

My gracious Lord continues and restores my strength. And I believe will give me a little longer growing time in the church militant. Fain would I improve it to the uttermost. But still I blush before my compassionate Lord. This, to the glory of his grace, I must say: these last few months have been a growing time. But I see a depth in the promises which I long to prove. My faith has its foot on the faithfulness of god, and I see his love is boundless. Oh for an enlarged capacity to receive!

May you and I sink into the divine fulness, and every moment more deeply prove the fellowship of saints, prays, my dearest father,

Your truly affectionate daughter,

Elizabeth Ritchie

Source: holograph; Wesley's Chapel (London), LDWMM 2000/7025.

From Thomas Wride

Dover
October 17[–27], 1786

Reverend Sir,

My haste must be my advocate, and may excuse my inaccuracies.

Yesterday I heard something new and odd—viz., a method (discovered in France) of curing diseases by what they call ‘magnetism’.¹ The name was given because at first they made use of a magnet in the operation. But one of the pupils, by experiment, found that the motion without the magnet would do the same. The philosophical principle on which it is pretended to be founded, and the manner of operating in order to the cure, is neither difficult to understand nor to perform. But I forbear an attempt to describe particularly one or the other, because I refer you to my author,² to save you the trouble of reading a long letter and myself the trouble of writing. My author’s son is one of the operators, and has performed sundry times in the presence of his father and others.

First, a person adopted is (not only independent of his own will, but in spite of his or her own resolution) put to sleep, without either medicine or any previous watching. In his sleep he is made to describe in an anatomical manner the seat and nature of the disease and then to remove it. If they can persuade themselves to call it ‘magnetism’, I must beg the liberty to call it ‘magic’.

I desired Mr. Smith (my author) to impart it to you.³ He has no objection to it. He is of a very open temper, of a philosophical turn of mind, and will be as willing to relate to you the particulars as you will be to hear. I hope he has some measure of religion, although the ‘playing of a harmless game at cards to relax the mind, and fit it for prayer and family duty’ is what I do not well understand.

If, sir, you invite yourself to Mr. Smith’s house, or Mr. Smith to yours, I am quite confident it will be well taken. and I apprehend he can give you a circumstantial account of Lord Littleton. [His address is] John Smith, Esq., Number 31, Little Mary[le]Bone Street.

He sets off today for London, and expects to continue until about the third week of November. He is gentleman usher to the Queen.

I am, reverend sir,

Your dutiful son,

Thomas Wride

Chatham⁴
October 27, 1786

Reverend Sir,

My desire was to have sent [the above] by private hand, but I lost the opportunity. I had given up all expectation of your coming to Kent this season, for I was told that you were determined otherwise. I knew nothing of your being this way till several days after your return. I was at Dover, but the prudence of my Chatham friends was shown in keeping me ignorant of your visit and their own design. So I lost the opportunity of seeing you, or of speaking for my wife.

Indeed, I had not the least notice that they intended to accuse her. They had threatened her with writing, etc., etc. But I was out of the way and entirely unacquainted with it. My wife tells me that Mr.

¹I.e., the ‘animal magnetism’ espoused by Franz Mesmer (1734–1815).

²I.e., his source.

³John Smith (1740–1804) of Midgham, Berkshire, a captain in the guards, aide-de-camp to Lord George Germaine, and gentleman usher to Queen Charlotte.

⁴Wride had been moved at the last Conference from Norwich to the Kent circuit.

Mears⁵ had used her with language not very kind; viz., ‘What an imposition you are upon us—to have fire, house, room, and candle; and do nothing!’ Indeed, some was so kind [as] to tell her that she was to do what she could, and what she could not do she should get done for hire. I told Mr. Mears at my first coming how things were with my wife. I knew not but he was satisfied with my account.

But sir, I may use more freedom with you than would be prudent to do with such as Mr. Mears, who understands a *hatchet* better than he does a woman. My wife is 54 years of age, at the turn of life. She needed medicines, with which I provided her. An acquaintance of hers, for want of proper care at that season, was labouring under great affliction, which made my wife so very careful to avoid the same that she took anything which I advised for her. But she overdid the thing. My general prescriptions were to take as much as to have three or four stools. But in my absence, and without my knowledge, she would procure perhaps to the number of 30. The thing then feared is now far enough from her. But sir, you need not be told what consequences were likely to follow such a practice.

My wife has for 20 years been a careful attendant of her aged, infirm mother. In June 1785 her mother had her last sickness. For six weeks my wife closely attended her, day and night, having (properly speaking) no rest for that time. Her clothes never being off, all the while, unless to change her linen. When her mother breathed her last, my wife seemed also to die.⁶ The persons present affirmed that she was dead. But my wife says that she was at that time exceeding happy, though her heart was rent with grief. That she heard all that was said, but could neither speak nor stir.

The toil of body that she went through by the sickness of her mother, and her distress of mind occasioned by her death, has made no small impression on her constitution. But in the month of May last she received an account of the death of her only brother, one whom she loved (I think) to a degree of idolatry. these things, together with the usage she met with at Norwich, has exceeded her ability to bear. She is, I am fully persuaded unable to do the work that four preachers (beside her husband) stand in need of. I say ‘four’ beside her husband, because we have a preacher from London every four weeks, and many who call on journeying too and fro. Besides the lower part of the house is as common as a public house—several having keys for our entry door and of the preaching house. So that it is not very easy to keep all things clean below stairs.

But sir, whatever faults my wife may have, her accusers do not think she has enough without their adding what they must know to be utterly false. For I hear that Mr. Mears told you that she (my wife) would not loose the letters that came. I am really sorry for him. I wish he could blush. I cannot call this a ‘mistake’, for not to say only at that very moment stood a post letter on the mantelpiece directed to Mr. [George] Shadford which my wife had released and reserved for Mr. Shadford, but some time before that she took of the post directed to Mr. *Mears* a letter charged 9½ [d.]. Yea, she not only released it for him, but carried it to him. Indeed, sir, such behaviour does not permit me to see Mr. Mears in the most respectable light.

I am not much indebted to Mr. [Thomas] Rankin for telling my wife that she was not fit for a preacher’s wife. Supposing it true, Mr. Rankin would do well to learn and remember that distich:

In your discourse, observe the bounds of reason,
For sense is nonsense spoken out of season?

My wife was supposed to be fit for me, before she became mine. And supposing she had not become my wife, it is not impossible but another [preacher] might have sought her, for one of the preachers in free conversation of the subject of matrimony told me that he had ‘kind thoughts of the mantua-maker at Welburn’, until I told him ‘You are too late; for she is my wife’, which was not known to him before.

⁵William Mears (1758–1814) was a Methodist local preacher in Rochester / Chatham, Kent. Wride initially spells ‘Mares’ but corrects later in the letter.

⁶Ellen Woodcock was buried July 18, 1785, in Bulmer, Yorkshire.

But as Mr. Rankin thinks my wife not fit for a preacher, he should let me know what to do with her. How I shall make her a young, able, robust woman? Or even how to restore her to that degree of ability which by unremitted attendance on her old, infirm mother she now feels the want of. When Mr. Rankin has done this, I will endeavour to requite him by due thanks—and tell him gratis that our friends at Sheerness say that 'Mr. Rankin is not fit to travel with Mr. Wesley. We were glad to see Mr. Wesley, and we wanted to hear the dear gentleman talk a little. He used to talk to us, but there was no room for him. Mr. Rankin kept all the talk to himself. Mr. Wesley could only get in a word now and then between. When Mr. [George] Whitfield travelled with Mr. Wesley, then Mr. Wesley could speak to us; for if Mr. Wesley began to speak, Mr. Whitfield would be silent. But Mr. Rankin', etc., etc., etc.

My wife desires her duty to you. I am, reverend sir,

Your devoted son,

Thomas Wride

Source: Wride's manuscript copy for his records; MARC, PLP 115/9/36.

From Francis Wrigley

Penryn
November 1, 1786

Reverend Sir,

A few days ago one of our friends, a young woman, died very happy. Some time before her death, she was greatly distressed by fear. I was with her several times, within six days of her death. She was refreshed each time, and felt a confidence in God; but soon lost her comfort again. The day on which she died, one of her acquaintance called to see her and found her still greatly affected with fear. She fainted away. Those who stood by thought she would never speak any more. But in a few minutes her countenance changed, she opened her eyes, and looked remarkably pleasant. She said, 'Oh, I am in heaven! I am too happy to live! Praise the Lord!' She desired her father and mother to take their leave of her and go into another room, and then said, 'Now, lay me down, and let me die.' And in ten minutes she went to him whom her soul loved; aged about 21 years.

About May or June last, Mr. Joseph Andrew,¹ of Redruth, dreamed that he was telling Captain W—² (who had left the society) of the many happy meetings they had had together, thirty years ago, and asking him to come back. The same dream being repeated a second or a third time, he was much affected, and telling a friend of it, he said, 'I think I will go and talk with him on Thursday next.' His friend replied, 'Let us go now.' They did so, and affectionately entreated their fallen brother to return again to the fountain of life and happiness. Captain W. answered, 'I think you can have nothing in view but the eternal salvation of my soul. I think I will come back.' Brother Andrew asked, 'When?' He replied, 'Next Sunday.' At which time he came and met in class. He was soon filled with faith and love, and has continued so ever since. There is now a great awakening in the village where he lives; almost all the inhabitants being either convinced or converted. The last time but one that I was there I joined eight members, one of whom gave a satisfactory account of her conversion; this time I joined fourteen, four of whom are converted. One of them said, 'No one can tell the happiness which I have enjoyed since last Friday morning (the time when he received a sense of pardoning love). Wherever I am, it is always with me. Whatever I am about, it is always uppermost. Whatever I am talking about, it is always at top.'

We have a great revival at Redruth. The people, with their cries and prayers, mixed with thanksgiving, have been a means of diffusing new life to the old members. Some books being distributed among the boys and girls, when they read the *Word to a Sabbath-Breaker*, they left off all their play.³ The road from Redruth to Gwennap used to be crowded with them, to my great grief, on a Sunday. But now there is scarce one to be seen. Twenty-four of them have given in their names to meet together, and several have engaged to spend an hour with them every Sunday. I hope this revival will spread to other societies. A backslider was converted last week at Tuckingmill. I frequently feel my soul much alive to God. Blessed be his name, we have peace in all our borders. Begging an interest in your prayers, I am,

Your affectionate son in the gospel of Christ,

F. Wrigley

Source: published transcription; *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* 21 (1798): 441–42.

¹Joseph Andrew was a grocer in Redruth, active in the Methodist society.

²It is possible that this is Capt. Richard Williams, but he seems to have stayed active among the Methodists and in contact with JW during this time.

³An alternative title for *Bibliography*, No. 103.

From 'E[nemy of] F[alsehood]' to the Printer of the *Leeds Mercury*¹

Leeds
November 9, 1786

In your paper for Tuesday the 26th of September a letter was addressed to you, signed 'A. B.', in which the Rev. Mr. John Wesley was charged with misrepresenting various circumstances relating to the Moravian establishment at Fulneck in his *Journal* for the year 1780.² Three weeks after this letter appeared I saw, through the same medium, a note from Mr. Wesley himself calling upon 'A. B.' to give us his name, as the condition of an answer to the charges exhibited.³ I cannot help looking at this as a Wesle[y]an quibble, as a guilty evasion of a stubborn fact. If the old gentleman has told a lie, through misinformation, forgetfulness, prejudice, envy, or any unguarded imperfection of his nature whatever, he ought to sit down in penitential silence. If what he has sent through the press into the world be indeed true, ignorance of his opponent's name could be no obstacle to him in asserting his probity. He would come forth armed with all the fortitude of innocence, and successfully repel the malevolent attack made upon his own venerable character, and the dignity of that religion of which he calls himself a minister. Grieved on account of the many severe reflections that are cast upon his grey hairs, and wishing to see the affair cleared up to his own honour, and the public satisfaction, I hope 'A. B.' will not hesitate to give up his name in your paper. Having truth on his side, he has nothing to fear. Complying my request, as an enemy to falsehood, he will leave Mr. Wesley without excuse, and the world determined to consider his silence as an evidence of his guilt, and this evidence of his guilt as the high road to shame.

E. F.⁴

Source: published transcription; *Leeds Mercury* (Nov. 14, 1786), p. 3.

¹This letter is not directed to JW, and he never replied to it, but it provides context.

²Cf. 'A. B.', Sept. 14, 1786, above.

³JW to the *Leeds Intelligencer*, Oct. 6, 1786, 30:489–90.

⁴Perhaps signifying 'Enemy of Falsehood'.

From James Wood¹

[Sunderland]
c. November 15, 1786

John Penrith was awakened in Sunderland, above twenty years before his death. His conviction was clear and deep, and his distress of mind, on account of his misspent life, was great and lasting. This made him cry the more earnestly to the Lord for pardon and peace. Nor did he ever rest till he found redemption in the blood of Christ, the forgiveness of his sins. From that time he was constant in the ordinances of God, and careful to abound in the work of faith, in the labour of love, and the patience of hope. In this state of mind he continued upwards of eight years, generally happy, but often holding it with a trembling hand—having many doubts of his acceptance, and fears, if accepted, that he should not endure to the end.

About twelve years before his decease he was clearly and deeply convinced of his want of perfect love. The evils of fallen nature, though subdued, were not destroyed. The spirituality of the divine law appeared to, and was felt by him in a manner it never had been before. He loathed himself, and longed for an entire conformity to God. Not only that he might obtain eternal life, but that he might live to him alone, and bring forth much fruit to his glory. For this his soul agonized in fervent prayer, and not in vain. He soon entered into that rest, and rejoiced in God all the day. This made hard things easy, and laid the mountains low. His humbled soul was filled with peace and joy in believing, and with a firm hope of the crown of righteousness.

But alas, it was not long before he gave way to unprofitable reasoning, which robbed him of his confidence, and brought him into a degree of darkness! Often did he perceive *where* and *how* he had suffered loss, and lamented it before the Lord; but never found it so fully as before, till a little before his death. The last time he was at the public band meeting, he mentioned the loss he sustained through evil reasoning, and deeply lamented his case. And though he was at that time in perfect health, there appeared such a breathing of soul after God, for the restoration of it, as led those present to cry unto the Lord in his behalf.

When I returned from the country part of the circuit on Saturday, October 28, I found he was ill of a fever, but with no alarming symptoms. On visiting him the next morning, and asking the state of his mind, he said he had peace but no remarkable joy. On Monday morning I saw him again, when he informed me that the Lord had blessed his soul in the preceding night with such manifestations of his love as he had never before experienced. The promises were opened to his mind with such clearness and beauty as he could not express. The consolation he then felt was almost too much for his afflicted body to bear. And the assurance he had of eternal life made him long to depart that he might be with Christ. He desired us to praise God on his account, and added (though the physician thought there was no danger), 'I shall soon praise him in glory. I know that this affliction will end in my release from sorrow, and I shall then praise him in glory.'

On Tuesday morning I saw him again, and found him rejoicing in God his Saviour, but still confident that he should soon join the church triumphant. On Wednesday morning I called again, and found him quite sensible and remarkably happy. But his poor body was greatly altered, and the putrid symptoms were rapidly increasing.

On Thursday morning when I called he was quite insensible, and the next evening he appeared to be near his end. As some of his children were present (for whose conversion he had often and earnestly prayed) I embraced the opportunity of reminding them of the instructions he had given, the tenderness he had shown, and the example he had set them: the loss they were about to sustain, and the joy he was just entering into. Although he appeared quite insensible, and had lain speechless for a considerable time, yet

¹Titled: 'A Short Account of Mr. John Penrith'. James Wood was currently the Assistant of the Sunderland circuit.

when he heard of the joy that was set before him, he turned to me with a smile, mentioned my name, and seemed to wish to tell what he felt and had in view. But the cheerfulness of his countenance, and the lifting up of his hands, were strongly expressive of what he was too weak to utter. The next morning, November 4, 1786, about half past six, he fell asleep.

J. W.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 131–34.

From William Roberts

Tiverton
November 28, 1786

Very Dear Sir,

The distress I have feared for at least three years has at last overtaken me. I am obliged to lay open my affairs to my creditors, and have offered them an unreserved surrender (to such trust as may be appointed) for the benefit of all the creditors. The estimate of my effects is about £300 more than my debts. But I fear this will not be sufficient to discharge expenses and loss, and keep my creditors entirely unhurt.

I particularly desire your instruction, whether I shall place my debt with you, which is £70, in your's or another's name.¹ What I have to go through? What will be the issue? What the cause may suffer? How my brethren will bear the shock? How I can attempt to be of any public use in the future? All I must leave with him who governs all. I think no trial so severe. Creditors unpaid is the bottom and ground of all I dread. Without a home, without a garment, without food weighs nothing against this dreaded evil. I think it is an affliction Job never knew. My gracious God forgive me if this is murmuring, if impatience. Help me. Heal me. It is more than I can bear, unless by miracle. Yet I am willing to face it, to see it through.

I wish, I pray for life till the storm is over, that my end may be in peace. I have yet health. I have hope. My situation is yet a secret in this place. Would it not be well if you could send a preacher here who may be useful with honest Jerom?² This occasion may particularly require it.

Dear sir, commend to all-sufficient grace

Your greatly distressed, ever obliged, and unfeignedly sincere,

W. Roberts

Address: 'Rev'd. Mr John Wesley / New Chapel / City Road / London'.

Source: manuscript copy letter; Oxford, Lincoln College, Archive, MS/WES/A/2/9.

¹See JW to Roberts, Dec. 6, 1785, *Works*, 30:406–07.

²Joseph Jerom (d. 1798) was admitted 'on trial' as an itinerant at the 1783 Conference (see *Works*, 10:531). He was currently the Assistant for the Tiverton circuit, assisted by Peter Walker (*Works*, 10:599). Health issues required him to retire from travelling in 1792.

Jeremiah Clifford to the Printer of the *Leeds Intelligencer*

Fulneck
November 29, 1786

Sir,

In your *Intelligencer* of the 19th of September, I read a piece out of Mr. John Wesley's *Journal* of 1780, which gave an account of his being at Fulneck, to which there was an answer signed 'A. B.'

The 17th of October you publish that 'A. B.' shall hear farther from John Wesley, if he will tell his name to the public.

The 24th of October, you publish that it may be indifferent to Mr. John Wesley who 'A. B.' is, unless he can prove that what he published to the world in his *Journal* of the 17th of April 1780, concerning the settlement at Fulneck, is true, etc. 'C. D.'

The 21st of November your paper says to 'A. B.' alias 'C. D.' I advise you to know when you are well, for if you constrain me to speak (if you will tear open a sore that is almost healed), I shall say more than you will like. John Wesley

The last of which seemed calculated to draw the attention of the public from Mr. John Wesley's publication in his *Journal* (as it is not convenient for him to answer to that subject), and deter 'A. B.' or 'C. D.' from saying any more, and thereby leave the public lost to his publication, in wonder at what he could say if they urged him to it.

As I do not suppose that 'A. B.' intended by his answer to Mr. John Wesley in your paper of the 19th of September to enter into any controversy with him, only to show the world the fallacy of his publication, so I apprehend he will say no more on the subject.

And as I have been an inhabitant of Fulneck upwards of thirty-four years, and consequently affected as an individual, by the true or false representation of either friend or foe. I, by the channel of your paper, publish to the world, that the whole of Mr. John Wesley's insertion, published in his *Journal* 17th April, 1780, concerning the settlement of the Brethren at Fulneck (except that he says there are upwards of fifty young women) is totally false, and seems calculated to convey wrong and unjust ideas to the public. For if his memory did not fail him when he wrote that part of his *Journal*, he must know that Mr. Moore, whom he says showed him the houses, etc., nor any other person acquainted with the settlement at Fulneck, gave him any such information. And indeed it is out of their power so to do, consistent with truth. If Mr. John Wesley was wrongly informed by any designing evil-minded person, or if his memory was so treacherous to him as to represent everything quite the reverse to what he has heard, he is to be pitied. And if by such misfortunes he has been so unlucky as to publish falsehood to the world, would it not be more consistent with a Christian to acknowledge his mistake or error, either by silence or by writing, than to evade the truth, by the artful insinuation of threatening that he shall say more than 'A. B.' or 'C. D.' will like?

I am confident neither 'A. B.', 'C. D.', myself, or any of the inhabitants of Fulneck will like anything published contrary to truth. And I trust that anything Mr. John Wesley can publish, agreeable to truth, concerning the settlement of Fulneck will be such as the inhabitants of Fulneck (as a community) need not be ashamed of. For if he can relate anything of an individual who has not walked consistent with the word of God, the community are sorry for the conduct of such individuals, and pray God that he will prevent such people from coming amongst them in future.

The foregoing is merely the sentiments of my own mind, as I was an entire stranger both to Mr. John Wesley's *Journal*, and the answer to it, before the publication of your paper the 19th of September last.

Jeremiah Clifford

Source: published transcriptions; *Leeds Intelligencer* (Dec. 5, 1786), p. 3; *Leeds Mercury* (Dec. 19, 1786), p. 4.

From Mary Cooke

Duke Street, Trowbridge
December 4, 1786

Reverend and Dear Sir,

That all glory may be ascribed to him whose undoubted right *alone* it is, my God teaches me that I am nothing, and without him I can do nothing! That I am by nature a poor blind child of sin and error; and that it is only by his grace 'I am what I am'.¹ When I feel my ignorance, I most evidently see the depth of the fall. And encompassed on every side with the disadvantages of a fallen nature, I mourn for the bright image Adam lost! How great was that loss, I suppose *he* only could tell. Yet its consequents are fully known to his descendants. But though these clogs of defective understanding liableness to error, and all the weaknesses entailed on mortality, remain; still what an unspeakable mercy that in our second Adam is restored all which the first had forfeited! That in him is treasured up all the grace whereby we may regain the pure nature, the lovely likeness of our God. When my heart is rightly disposed for a due recollection of these things, my soul falls prostrate, 'Lost in wonder, love, and praise!'² I then want to know what it is to 'be filled with all the fulness of God'.³ To prove the heights and depths of that love which passeth understanding! Wherewith the carnal mind intermeddleth not, nor desireth the knowledge of it.

But I attain not hereunto by reason of the blindness that is still in me, and the remaining unbelief which clouds the clear perception of my spiritual senses. The smell, and taste are vitiated. The seeing eye is become dim. The hearing ear is deafened. And the feeling touch benumbed. I want all these restored to perfect soundness, that they may be properly used: to *smell* 'the savour of the good ointment'.⁴ To *taste* 'the good word of God',⁵ and *always* to find it sweet. To *see* continually 'him who is invisible'.⁶ Constantly to *hear* 'the voice of the Son of God'.⁷ And ever to *feel* him near who 'shall guide into all truth'.⁸ Yea, I want to be of the number of 'those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil'.⁹ All the faculties of my soul ardent in spiritual researches, and quick to apprehend divine things.

I see beauties unspeakable in that wisdom which descendeth from above. And my spirit gasps to be filled with heavenly knowledge. In comparison of these, all else appear vain. And whatsoever is *merely* of this lower world does indeed look too little to engage a desire for the possession of. Vanity, not only as it respects duration, but also from the unsatisfactoriness of enjoyment, is stamped on all these inferior things. I often stand astonished at man's eager pursuit of them, and find my heart athirst for a much higher good. 'As the thirsty hart panteth after the water-brooks, so longeth my soul for the continual presence of the living God!'¹⁰ To abide under the teachings of his Spirit; to live, to dwell evermore by faith in him, walking in the bright shining of his countenance; and in all my actions, words,

¹1 Cor. 15:10.

²CW, 'Love Divine', st. 4, *Redemption Hymns* (1747), 12.

³Eph. 3:21.

⁴Song of Sol. 1:3.

⁵Heb. 6:5.

⁶Heb. 11:27.

⁷John 5:25.

⁸Cf. John 16:13.

⁹Heb. 5:14.

¹⁰Cf. Ps. 42:1–2.

and thoughts, evidencing that I belong to him in whom is no darkness at all. Yea, comprehensively to sum up all, I want a pure heart, that I may at all times see and dwell in God!

He does continue gracious! Was I to repeat instances of his manifested goodness, it is only as saying, 'He is today as yesterday the same.'¹¹ In short, he is the unchangeable infinite in mercy, grace, and truth! But does my dear father ask how matters stand at *present* between this God and my soul? I think I am learning that 'God is love!'¹² Universally so, in every name he takes, in every character he assumes! But lately I chiefly learn it in this way. 'Like as a father pitieth his children: so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.'¹³ Herein I discover such an inexpressible tenderness as brings a sweet simplicity into my soul. I feel how weak, how helpless I am. But this does not discourage me, while I also feel, 'He knoweth my frame. He remembereth I am dust.'¹⁴ Therefore his love is bound to compassionate and uphold me. And his justice, instead of condemning, is engaged to support my feebleness, to protect in the hour of danger, and to save me from mine enemies. His pity pleads for me. And because his compassions fail not, I still live before him, casting myself as a dependent creature on his mercy, and receiving supplies of grace and new tokens of parental favour and indulgence from him.

Yet after the receipt of blessings more than my pen can number, I want an heart to praise him more, to love him better! Power to restrain all the wanderings of my thoughts—that when I more immediately approach him, every roving imagination may fly; and in my addresses at a Throne of grace, he who sits thereon may be the central point in which my every thought shall meet. But instead hereof, they are often running abroad, and bringing in objects unworthy their attention, to mar the sacrifice I ought to offer. *Here* I want your especial prayers: for a fixedness of mind, recollection of soul, an abiding in the continual, experimental remembrance of an omnipresent God! Then should my every power be stayed upon him, and all sweetly in his service join without the least distraction.

It has been said here that your health is in a very poor state. Such intimations alarm my every sensitive power with painful apprehensions! May I hope to hear soon from yourself whether there is any just foundation for such report? I hope there is not. But entreat him who is the giver of every good and perfect gift (and of this also as being precious) that he will grant unto you soundness of health, length of days, and every blessing connected therewith! And that for general benefit; as well as for the sake and advantage of

Your most unfeignedly grateful,

M. C.

My sisters [Anne and Frances] desire to be respectfully remembered; and beg a share in your affection and prayers.

Address: 'The Revd J. Wesley New-Chapel City Road London'.

Endorsement: by Cooke, 'Answer to Mr. Wesley's 12th letter'.¹⁵

Source: manuscript copy for records; Bridwell Library (SMU), Mary Cooke Letter-book, pp. 12–13.

¹¹Cf. Heb. 13:8.

¹²1 John 4:8.

¹³Ps. 103:13.

¹⁴Ps. 103:14.

¹⁵This letter from JW is not known to survive.

From William Shepherd

Oxford
December 18, 1786

Mrs. Peck was delivered on Wednesday last of two fine boys who are likely to live.¹ She remained tolerable well till Friday morning, when she complained of a pain in her bowels. Dr. Wall, of Oxford, was sent for, who used every means in his power to save her.² But it seems God had otherwise determined. For a scarlet fever came on furiously, attended with a putrid sore throat. Her milk likewise was kept back, which so affected her head that it took away her senses and threw her into a violent agony, which continued, with very little intermission, till twelve o'clock last night, when God took her to himself!

She was able only to speak once (after she was seized with the fever). When looking up to Mr. Peck, she said, 'I am now going home!' Her pain then coming on more violently, she spoke no more. But the smiles on her countenance, and the other motions she made, perfectly satisfied all who were with her that her mind was quite happy in God. They all said they never found the power of God so sensibly present as while they was commending her soul to him, just before she expired.

I have known her several years, and I cannot say I ever saw such a pattern of hospitality. Her house and heart were open to receive all who were travelling in the way to Sion.

But she had a peculiar regard for all the messengers of God, particularly Mr. [John] Wesley; and thought no expense or labour great, if she could but make them comfortable in themselves, and help them forward in their Master's work.

By her sudden and happy death, I seem to be more crucified to this vain and uncertain world; and more determined to give myself up to the service of God, and thereby to lay a good foundation against the time to come, that (through infinite mercy) I may lay hold on eternal life.

W. S.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 10 (1787): 189–90.³

¹John Peck had a drapery and textiles shop in Oxford, 1780–84. In Mar. 1784 he married Delia Wickens (d. 1786), the mother (out of wedlock) of William Upcott (1779–1845). The Pecks were active in Methodism and moved earlier in 1786 to Eynsham, just east of Witney. See JW to Ann Bolton, Oct. 12, 1786, *Works*, 30:491–92.

²Martin Wall, M.D. (1747–1824) was physician at the Radcliffe Infirmary in Oxford; and from 1785 to his death, the Lichfield Professor of Clinical Medicine at Oxford.

³Titled: 'A Short Account of the Death of Mrs. Peck, of E[y]nsham: written by Mr. William Shepherd'.

From Adam Clarke

Guernsey
December 20, 1786

Reverend and Very Dear Sir,

Being through the mercy of God in some measure settled, after coming through some severe fatigues and various trials, I esteem it my duty to transmit you some account of my present situation and work. On my arrival I met with almost every discouragement, from a view of the then state of the work. I was obliged to combat with some of the keenest feeling which, notwithstanding all my exertions, caused my spirit to sink within me. Instead of that enlarged sphere of action formerly allotted me, and in which I might do all I was capable of, I found myself contracted almost to a span, and so hemmed in on every side that there hardly appeared the smallest probability of enlarging my borders. The depth of the waters through which I then waded I cannot describe. Yet during the whole I was enabled to cast my burden on the Lord and, though permitted to suffer, yet was sufficiently sustained. Blessed be his name forever!

I first came to Jersey. But finding there was not the smallest use for any preachers there but those who could preach in French, I set off by the first packet for Guernsey. Here, though I found many more who could speak English than at Jersey, nevertheless the appearance of all things was distressingly bleak. There was hardly the vestige of an English congregation to be found. One there had been, but for want of an acceptable English preacher, and through the total neglect of discipline, it was almost entirely dissipated. On the English class paper there were only eleven names. When I met them, after an impartial inquiry, I found that perhaps two, or at the utmost three, had their names written among the living in Jerusalem. I leave you, dear sir, to conjecture what my spirit then felt. Several times I was tempted to write to you, and beg you to remove me. But I was enabled to baffle the temptation by determining through the strength of God to seek help in earnest prayer, and heave powerfully at the load, and continue thus for some time to make trial of what God would do.

The first Sunday after I came, a large congregation attended. Squire [Robert] Brackenbury began to read a French sermon, but was soon obliged to leave off. The waves of the sea lifted up their voice, and the billows clapped their hands. Such disorder and confusion I have never seen in the worst parts of Norfolk or Cornwall. I was obliged to get up afterwards, as the English preacher immediately succeeds the French on the Sunday evenings. The Lord fill my soul with boldness, and clothed my words with strength, and enabled me with much freedom to denounce judgments and proclaim mercy. Though Satan was busily employed, yet the Lord seemed determined to show his superiority, and I had perfect peace almost the whole time. The congregations gradually increased, and grew proportionably in quietness. And now, glory be to God, I have in general, every Sunday evening, three or four hundred, if not more, the major part of whom seem to hear for eternity. This hath the Lord wrought! I see little can be done to purpose without strict discipline. This I have striven to introduce and maintain, and blessed be God, not without success. The local preacher who preached here before I came is laid aside, his character being too exceptionable for any public office in the church. My little class is nearly doubled and greatly quickened, and I have well-grounded hopes of a greater increase.

Among the French the Lord is reviving his work also. There are some lately joined, and a hope of more shortly. Mr. De Quêteville is a real Methodist in principle and practice.⁴ And his people partake of the same spirit. We lodge in the same house, and are mutually helpful to each other. As we have sometimes mixed congregations of French and English, in order that all may be profited, he sometimes gives the substance of my sermon in French, and I his in English. This method I find is not only esteemed,

⁴Jean De Quêteville (1761–1843), a native of the Isle of Jersey, would be formally admitted as a travelling preacher at the 1786 Conference. He became the French-speaking patriarch of Methodism in the Channel Islands, translating many Methodist writings into French, and for thirty-four years editing the *Magazin Methodiste*. See Henri de Jersey, *Vie de Rev. Jean de Queteville* (London: J. Mason, 1847); and *WHS* 53 (2001): 42–45.

but profitable to the people. The most of those who have believed here, are going on unto perfection. We both preach it with our might, and I hear of none who attempt to gainsay it. Glory be to God, Calvinism has no place here.

For some time after I came I found it irksome to be confined to one place. I thought, as where I preached was a little way out of town, if I could procure one in town beside, it would answer a still better purpose. But as none was offered, I proposed it in class-meetings, and was readily furnished with a tolerably convenient house in a part of the town quite opposite to my lodging. This was just what I wanted. I went and had a large serious congregation. I continue to preach there once a week, and several are stirred up to seek the Lord. But still I was not satisfied, I wanted more work. In order to have it, I made a second motion similar to the first in the congregation, telling the people if any person present had a capacious house, in which they would permit me to call their neighbors to repentance, I would go, and thank them too, in the name of that God whose gospel I was going to declare without fee or reward. An odd circumstance now took place. A French woman (who was mistress both of her house and her husband), having heard by some second-hand the proposal I had made on Sunday evening, not being able to speak or understand a word of English, procured an interpreter and came to my lodgings next day, and informed me she had a large empty room on a ground floor, where I should be welcome once or twice. This is in another quarter of the town, an excellent situation indeed. I went that same evening. The woman had alarmed her neighbors, and a large congregation attended. Though she knew nothing at all of my language, yet she was wonderfully pleased with my sermon, and invited me to come again. She is since, God knows how, convinced of sin, and has joined the society. And I go regularly once a week to her bouse. This certainly is the Lord's doing. May his name be for ever praised! Amen.

I have set up morning preaching, a thing altogether strange in this part of the world. And the people attend very well, notwithstanding it is the depth of winter. I have now hardly a day at any time unemployed. Four or five nights in the week I preach, beside twice on Sunday, and meet my class, etc. So much confinement I find does not at all agree with my health. But through the help of God I will bear it as long as I can, and then I trust the Lord will help you to another who will be willing to supply my lack of service.

I suppose Mr. Brackenbury has ere now given you an account of the success of their lawsuit in Jersey. Of this I need say nothing. We had here a similar trial on the 16th instant. Mr. [Jean] De Quêteville had been much disturbed in one of the country places. The mob broke the windows, and committed several other outrages. The court was applied to for redress. Several things were spoken for and against us. But those who were on the Lord's side prevailed. The rioters were all cast, fined three livres a man, besides defraying all the court expenses, and the principal actor sent to the castle and confined. This, I believe, will be productive of salutary effects, and open a wider door for the admission of the gospel. Amen.

I believe we shall be obliged to apply to Conference for something to support us, as the poor people are able to subscribe but about £15 per year, besides their seven livres per week, which goes mostly to the procuring of candles, etc. But all is not sufficient to pay for Mr. De Quêteville's board, which comes to upwards of £18. Mine Mr. Walker furnishes gratis.⁵

My dear sir, be so kind as to write to me and give me every advice that you think requisite. In my present state of mind I have need both of instruction and comfort. A few lines from you now will be humbly welcome. While you are employed in it I believe you will be doing God service. Please give my love to Mr. [John] Broadbent. Direct to me at Capt. Walker's, Guernsey. May the Lord multiply grace and peace to you through Jesus!

I remain, with a heart full of affection, reverend and very dear sir,
Your obedient son in the gospel,

Adam Clarke

⁵Capt. George Walker was a member of the English class of the Methodist society in Guernsey, and hosted preaching in his home. See *WMM* 16 (1870), 237; and Lelièvre, *Méthodisme*, 215.

P.S. Several of the Cornish smugglers have come to hear me. Some of them have been cut to the heart. We are in great hopes they will relinquish their infernal employ.

Address: 'The Revd. Mr. Wesley / London'.

Postmark: '29/DE'.

Endorsement: by JW, 'Adam Clark / Guernsey Dec. 20 1786 / a[nswere]d. Jan. 3'.

Source: holograph; MARC, WCB, D6/1/76; draft at Duke, Rubenstein, Adam Clarke papers, Box 1.⁶

⁶A partial transcription published in Dunn, *Clarke*, 29–32.

From William Mallet¹

c. December 30, 1786

[I.] 1. My niece Sarah Mallet came to live with me, on January 3, 1780, being then in the sixteenth year of her age.² On the 10th she found peace with God, at my house in Long Stratton, Norfolk. She continued with me till March 1781, but was then obliged by ill health to return to her father at Loddon. On the 27th of May following, she went to Mr. Lamb's at Hadderson. The next morning at breakfast she was suddenly struck, went into another room, and lay down on the bed. She immediately lost her senses, and lay as dead, till 3:00 in the afternoon. When she came to herself, she said, she had seen two angels, who took her where she had a full view of the torments of the damned: and afterwards, of the happiness of the blessed: into which she asked, if she might not enter? But was answered, 'Not yet; she had work to do upon earth.'

2. In May 1785, she came again to live with me. In September following, she was taken very ill, and grew worse and worse, till we had little hope of her life. But she was wholly resigned to the will of God, choosing neither life nor death. She grew weaker and weaker till the 15th of December, when she was seized with an uncommon fit. From that time all her other complaints ceased; but her fits returned every twenty-four hours, and often continued four hours at a time.

They began thus. While we were talking together, she leaned back in her chair, and lost her senses, her eyes were wide open, her face like that of a corpse, her hands quite cold, all her limbs stiff and immovable. On the 18th, we concluded she was dying. But then something ulcerated broke within her, and her fits took a quite different turn. She began to speak in the fit. The first words I heard her speak were, 'Father, turn to God', with several other words to the same effect. In another fit she earnestly exhorted her sisters to seek God in their youth. In the following fits her voice grew stronger and stronger.

On the 25th Mr. [James] Byron came to my house, who entering the room, and seeing her sitting in her chair, and looking like one dead, he was so struck that he thought he should not be able to preach. Meantime she thought herself to be in the preaching house at Lowestoft, before a large congregation, and that she took her text from Revelation 3:20, 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock.' This discourse she preached in Mr. Byron's hearing. The next day she preached again in Mr. Byron's hearing, on John 7:37. She continued to preach in every following fit, speaking clear and loud, though she was utterly senseless.

4. From December 29, her fits came every second day; from January 15, every third day. I then called in some of the society to hear her. She spoke on Mark 16:16. More of them came to hear her on the 18th day, and still more on the 21st. The thing being now known abroad, many were desirous of hearing her, and did so on the 24th—when a mixed company being present, she spoke from Isaiah 58:1. I then permitted all that would to come in; particularly on the 27th, when she preached an hour on 1 Peter 4:18, 'If the righteous' On the 30th, she preached from Isaiah 55:1 to about two hundred persons. From that time her fits left her, and she spoke no more. She had one fit more on the tenth of April, but did not speak one word.

¹Titled: 'An Account of S. Mallitt'. 'By Mr. William Mallitt'. William Mallet (1736–1830) of Long Stratton, Norfolk, was a Methodist class leader there.

² Sarah Mallet (1764–1846) was the daughter of Robert Mallet (1741–1813) and Sarah (Butcher) Mallet (1740–91). She was convinced to preach by a series of epileptic fits, as described in this account. JW met her in Long Stratton, where she was staying with her uncle; see *Journal*, Dec. 4, 1786, *Works*, 23:426. He became convinced of her call and offered her encouragement in her public preaching over his remaining years. In 1793 Sarah married Thomas Boyce (1765–1821), a Methodist local preacher. She continued preaching till her death, despite the ban on female preaching imposed by the Wesleyan Methodist Church in 1803. See Vickers, *Dictionary*, 221; and David East, *My Dear Sally* (World Methodist Historical Society Publications, 2003).

5. Her fits frequently began thus. About 5:00 in the morning she felt a pain in her stomach. Afterwards it seized her head. Then she lost her senses. In about an hour and a half she began speaking. When she had ended her sermon, she usually prayed about ten minutes. In about a quarter of an hour after, she began to groan, and then in a short time opened her eyes and came to herself. Her behaviour all the time she was with me was unreprouvable. Indeed she 'adorned in all things the doctrine of God our Saviour'.³

[II.1.] In a letter to me she writes thus: I was born on February 18, 1768, at Loddon in Norfolk. I was much afflicted from my infancy. I began to seek God when I was about nine years old. I was first struck while my mother was instructing me and my sisters. She asked me, 'Who made you?' I answered, 'God'; and immediately felt an earnest desire to know who God was, and why he made me, and other creatures. This troubled me much, and my trouble so increased that I was deprived of my sleep, and often passed the night in weeping. I was frequently weeping in the day too, so that some thought I was going melancholy. One night as I was mourning by myself, the Lord took pity on me and revealed himself to me. In a moment all my sorrow was turned into joy, and I knew I was made to love and serve God.

2. I was now quite happy, and began to read the word of God, which I had never minded before. But having no Christian fellowship, and being ignorant of Satan's devices, I soon lost my love of God and nearness to him. About this time it pleased God to send the Methodists to Loddon, whom I heard at every opportunity. And under a sermon of Mr. [John] Floyd[e]'s the Lord revealed himself to me again, and I found a still increasing love to him and to his people. This continued about a year. I then was entangled with world acquaintance, but could find no happiness therein, my conscience still reproving me. I still attended the preaching, and was often convinced. But in a little time I began to neglect private prayer. I then soon lost my love both to God and his people. Yet I still attended the preaching, though I had a particular dislike to the preachers, and often sat with my back to them, that I might not see them.

3. At last I gave up all meetings and all prayer. Till one night, as I was going to bed with one of my sisters (about eleven years old), she said, 'You used to bid me say my prayers, and now you have left them off yourself.' This cut me to the heart, but I bid her mind herself. However when I thought she was asleep, I rose to pray, but found my heart as hard as a stone. I could not speak one word. I rose from my knees and said, 'I will not be beholden to God for his mercy', and laid me down in bed again. But I could not sleep, any more than they can sleep who are in hell. For I expected to have made my bed there before morning. The distress I then felt none knows but God. I wandered about seeking rest, but finding none. When I came from the preaching these words were in my mind, 'Must I give an account of this at the judgment seat of Christ?'⁴ One time being in great distress, it was impressed on my mind, 'Thou shalt have no peace till thou hast murdered thy youngest sister.' I was particularly fond of her, being about three quarters old. This followed me a considerable time; and one day, all the family being out, it was suggested, 'Now is the time.' My torture was more than I can express. I took a knife, and attempted to do it twice. The third time the Lord gave me to see through the snare, and I wept over the child; but still kept the devil's counsel, telling no one how I had been tempted.

4. Being now near fifteen, I continued in this despairing state almost a year. I frequently wandered in the fields, seeking the most solitary places. When I rose in the morning, I expected to be in hell before night. In the evening I expected to be there before the morning. During this time, the Lord brought my mother to the knowledge of himself. And in the beginning of 1780, both my father and she desired to be members of Mr. Wesley's society. This being the time for renewing the tickets, my father desired one for *me*, and told me, 'I was now a member of the society, and was to dine at Mr. [William] Crisp's, with the rest of the society.' After dinner one was saying, 'If the Lord was now to come to judgment, I hope there is not one soul among us who will not meet him with joy.' I looked round, and saw many of my family who had set their faces Sion-ward, and several of them at *my* instance. And I

³Cf. Titus 2:10.

⁴Cf. 2 Cor. 5:10.

thought, now they are set out for heaven, I am again setting out for hell! Yet I thought, if there is mercy for *me*, I will not rest till I have found it. But I despaired of finding any, thinking that I had in me more than seven devils. However on Sunday I went to the class. The leader asked me, if I had a desire to serve God? I answered I had, but I had no hope of finding any mercy from him. He told me I must use much prayer, and I should find he had mercy for me.

5. The next day I removed to my uncle's, at Long Stratton. On January the 10th, Mr. [George] Shadford held a love-feast there. And here the Lord spoke to my heart, 'O woman, great is thy faith. Be it unto thee even as thou wilt!'⁵ From that time I went on my way rejoicing, not having a cloud between God and my soul. But I found a necessity to use much prayer and to put on the whole armour of God. In a short time the Lord laid me in the furnace of affliction. But I found much of his presence there. Being very ill in March 1781, I was removed back to my father's. It was thought I would die. But this gave me no pain, for death was more welcome to me than life. But after I had suffered much, it pleased God to give me a little health. Till on the 28th of May, being at Mr. Lamb's, at Hadderson, while we were at breakfast, feeling myself ill, I retired into the next room, and laid me down on the bed, losing my senses immediately. I thought I saw two angels, who showed me the torments of hell, and the happiness of heaven. I would fain have stayed there, but was told I must go back, for there was work for me to do. About three o'clock I came to myself.

[6.] In October I left Loddon, and went to live in a family who had neither the power nor even the form of religion; and afterwards at a dissenting minister's. Here I found the smiles of the world more dangerous than its frowns. Here I was almost persuaded to believe, 'once in grace always in grace'. The cause of my leaning to this was I had a darling sin, which I wanted to keep and go to heaven. But I cried earnestly to the Lord, and he delivered me out of the temptation. Yet not long after, I drank into the spirit of the world, and followed its fashions and customs. But this followed me close, 'Is this the work thou camest back to do?' This roused my soul from its security and I besought God, if there was no other way to wean me wholly from the world, that he would again cast me into the furnace.

[7.] In April 1782 I returned to Loddon, and the Lord answered my prayer by laying his afflicting hand heavy upon me for twelve weeks. After I was restored, I saw more need of walking closely with God, and in order thereto broke off all intimacy with my worldly acquaintance.

8. In the beginning of the year 1783, I went again to my uncle's, at Long Stratton. Here the Lord deepened his work in my soul, and increased my deadness to the world. In October he laid his hand upon me again, and I seemed drawing near eternity. But it gave me no concern, knowing I was the Lord's. I was content either to live or to die. In December I removed to my father's, being thought to be near death. Yet in a short time I was restored, and returned to my uncle's in April 1784. Soon after the disorder was worse than ever, I felt not only sharp pain, but a severe conflict with the devil. He tempted me to have hard thoughts of God. But though my soul waded through deep waters, yet he suffered them not to overflow me, but manifested his love more abundantly to my soul. He visited me no more as a transient guest, but came and made his abode with me.

9. In May I was again removed to my father's, seeming to be again near death. Meantime I found a strong desire to exhort all who came in my way to seek the Lord. And if any passed unnoticed by me, I had trouble in my mind. In the beginning of June, I was frequently taken with surfeits as I never had before. In these I seemed as one dying, my eyes being fixed and all my senses locked up. They came first every day, then every second day, and then every third day. In one of these the sinews of my left leg shrank, so that I walked on the tip of my toe. In February 1785 the fits left me, yet I continued lame. But I regarded it not, as I had an uninterrupted peace, and constantly enjoyed the love that casts out fear, and walked without the least intermission in the clear light of God's countenance.

10. Thus I rejoiced evermore and in everything gave thanks, till being one day beset by the enemy, I began to reason with him. I let go my shield, doubting whether I had received pure love, because I thought, if I had, I could not be tempted. Yea, I began to doubt whether I had ever known God at all. But

⁵Matt. 15:28.

I tried my experience by the word of God, and was convinced there was no one upon earth that was totally free from temptation, and I resolved in the strength of God never to rest till I recovered all I had lost.

11. In the beginning of March, the Lord set my soul at full liberty, by applying those words, 'I will, be thou clean!'⁶ Now all darkness was dispersed, every doubt fled away, and I was filled with joy unspeakable. At this time I began to see more clearly the work I came back to do. It was impressed on my mind, to speak in public for God, and those words were continually before me, 'Reprove, rebuke, exhort!'⁷ Nor could I by any means drive them out of my thoughts. But I could not bear the thought, having been in time past no friend to women's preaching. I therefore resolved never to do any such thing, be the consequence what it would. From that moment it seemed as if the powers of darkness overwhelmed my soul, and I was forced to withdraw from the family and pour out my soul before God. I entreated a portion of his word, that I might know what to do! And opened the book on these words, 'No man lighteth a candle to put it under a bushel.'⁸ Yet I struggled with the devil six hours before he fled from me and I gave myself up into the hands of God, to do with me what he pleased. He then broke in upon my soul. And as the room seemed a little before to be filled with the powers of darkness, it seemed now filled with the glory of God. I spent that night in prayer and praise. One of my sisters, being in the room with me, bid me hold my peace. But I told her, if I held my peace, the stones would cry out. I then showed her the need she had of a farther work in her own soul. And she cried unto the Lord for a clean heart, and received the petition which she asked of him.

12. But my conflict with Satan, and the abundant pouring out of the Spirit of God upon me, were more than my body could bear. I was tortured with inexpressible pain for some hours. My mother asked what she should do for me? I answered, 'Nothing. The Lord himself will remove it when it pleases him.' While I was speaking, the pain was taken away, and I rose from bed immediately. I now returned to Long Stratton, where in the beginning of April, my leg was restored as the other, without any outward help. I was grieved to leave two young women with whom I had met in band. But I believed God called me, and so on the tenth of May, I returned to my uncle's. But I had still a burden upon my mind, not seeing what I came thither for. For I still reasoned against the conviction which followed me, that I must speak in public. Meantime my soul was filled with darkness and distress, while I was more and more convinced, that I ought to speak for God. I had none to reveal my mind to, and I knew not how to begin, being kept back by fear and shame. Many times 'my eyes gushed out with tears, because men kept not God's law.'⁹ Many times I said, 'O that my head was water, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the sins of my people.'¹⁰

13. In September the Lord visited me again with affliction, the particulars of which my uncle has given you better than I can do, for during my fits I was utterly senseless. But when I came to myself I could well remember the place where I had been preaching, and the words I had been speaking from. I grew weaker and weaker, and expected to die soon. But death was a welcome messenger, and the foretaste of those joys to which I thought I was just going took off the edge of my pains. In my sharpest pains I thought, 'What is all this to what I should have suffered, had not the Son of God suffered for me?' And I continually said, 'Lord, give me thyself, and then deal with me as thou pleasest!' In this affliction he weaned me from the creature, from all created good—so that the world was utterly dead to me, and I unto the world.

⁶Matt. 8:3, Mark 1:41, Luke 5:13.

⁷2 Tim. 4:2.

⁸Cf. Luke 11:33.

⁹Cf. Jer. 9:18.

¹⁰Cf. Jer. 9:1.

14. And in this affliction God made known, notwithstanding all my resistance, the work he had called me to do; and not to me only, but to all that were round about me, by opening my mouth, whether I would or no. While every sense was locked up, the Lord prepared me for the work which he had prepared for me. And I thought, if he should restore me, I would spend my latest breath in declaring his dying love to sinners. From this time my strength continually increasing, my uncle asked, 'Have you any objection to speaking in public?' I answered, 'Whatever is in your mind concerning me, I consider as appointed of God.' So in the beginning of February 1786 he desired me to speak in his preaching house. Fear and shame caused me to tremble at first. But the Lord gave me strength and loosed my tongue. At this Satan was much displeased. I had fighting without and within. Professors and profane seemed engaged against me. And I had no earthly friend to give me any encouragement but those with whom I lived. These words had followed me for near a year, 'Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake.'¹¹ And so did those, 'Fear not; for I am with thee. Be not afraid, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee. Yea, I will help thee. I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.'¹²

15. I now gave myself up to prayer and much watchfulness. I saw a greater need of close walking with God than ever, having the eyes of all upon me—and above all, the eyes of God. He showed me daily more of my own weakness, and of his willingness to strengthen me. Yet I often broke out, 'O Lord God, behold I am a child!'¹³ And often, sensible of the importance of the work, I said, 'Why me, Lord? What am I, or my father's house?'¹⁴

16. I was now appointed to speak in my uncle's house every other Sunday evening. The Lord gave me light and liberty, and I had great peace in my soul and more nearness to God than ever. I walked continually in the light of his countenance. And sometimes meditating on the dying love of Jesus to a guilty world, I have had such manifestations of his love to my soul as were more than my body could bear.

17. In this state I continued for some time. But then Satan came in like a flood, endeavouring to persuade me that I was not called of God to this work. Not prevailing this way, he tempted me to spiritual pride. And when he was not able to life me up, he strove to cast me down, telling me I had neither learning nor sense for such a work, and that all I said was mere foolishness. I entreated the Lord to stand by me in the trying hour. And those words were powerfully applied to my soul, 'If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God ... and it shall be given him.'¹⁵ During these temptations I scarce knew what it was to have one whole night's sleep in a week. Sometimes also my soul was so engaged with God that my sleep departed from me. And sometimes I spent whole nights in reading, chiefly the Holy Scriptures.

18. In the beginning of July, I was invited to a place six miles from Stratton. Believing it to be a call from God, I went, after crying mightily to him for help. I found much liberty in speaking, and a great blessing to my own soul. Many desired me to come again, which I did on the 18th of August, and again on the 10th of September. And in so doing I found a continual increase of love both to him and to his people. I now find my soul humbled to the dust before God. My whole dependence is on him. The language of my heart is,

Every moment, Lord, I want
The merit of thy death.¹⁶

¹¹Matt. 10:22, Mark 13:13, Luke 21:17.

¹²Cf. Isa. 41:10.

¹³Cf. Jer. 1:6.

¹⁴Cf. 2 Sam. 7:18.

¹⁵Cf. James 1:5.

¹⁶CW, Hymn on Isa. 32:2, st. 5, *HSP* (1742), 146.

And,

Every moment, Lord, I have
The merit of thy death.

I see I can stand no longer than I stand in Christ. If he left me a moment to myself, I should fall a prey to every temptation. But I see such fulness in God, and such beauty in Christ, as makes me long for more acquaintance with him.

19. Being to preach on the 22d of October, and having a violent headache, I was almost persuaded to give it up; especially as I could find but one text to speak from, and had but little light on that. One of my friends coming in, I told him my distress, and said, 'I fear you will have no preacher tonight.' He said, 'Will you be on the devil's side? Be on God's side.' I thought, so I will. I laid my cause before the Lord, and looked to him for strength. As soon as I begun speaking, the darkness fled away, and the Lord removed my pain, and gave me light and liberty with a particular blessing to the people.

20. I was so ill on the first of November that I expected to take my leave of this world. Not having an opportunity of seeing my friends, I could cheerfully leave them to God. I was frequently repeating those words,

And let this feeble body fail,
And let it faint and die!
My soul shall quit this mournful vale,
And soar to worlds on high.¹⁷

But I was willing to go, or willing to stay, just as the Lord should please. December 4, being much better, I designed to preach. But the pain in my head returned with such violence that I was not able to life up my eyes. This troubled me much, lest the people should be disappointed. I entreated the Lord, if it was his will to remove the pain. Before I had given out the first hymn, it was all gone, and the Lord gave a blessing both to me and the people.

21. December 12. I saw more clearly than ever the danger of trusting in any gift I had received. I saw I must give an account how I use every gift, and that gifts are not for *me* but for the benefit of others. It is not gifts that make me alive to God, but grace. Therefore I desire he would increase my gifts, for the good of others; and my grace, for the good of my own soul; that when he calls me to give an account of my stewardship, I may give up my account with joy. On the 25th of December, while I was preaching, my sight was taken away, together with my hearing, so that I could not see the people nor hear myself speak. For some minutes I thought the Lord was going to give what I had often prayed for, namely, that I might resign my breath, in calling sinners to repentance. But I recovered in a few hours, and gave an exhortation in the evening. And I thought, if I had many lives, I would give them all for him, who gave his own life for me!

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 11 (1788): 91–93, 130–33, 185–88, 238–42.

¹⁷Cf. CW, Hymn III, st. 1, *Funeral Hymns* (1759), 4.

Unidentified Correspondent¹

c. January 1787

Ann Nichols was a spotless pattern of Christian perfection. From the time she experienced this blessing, she never lost a sense of it for a moment. The case was the same in her justification. She walked under a true sense of her acceptance every moment till she was sanctified. A clearer witness of the doctrines taught by the Methodists I never knew; the same is generally believed by our friends who knew her. Her life was chaste and spotless, constantly displaying the length, and breadth, the depth and height of the love of Jesus. When she was on her deathbed, she clasped her arms round her nurse's neck, and said, with all the strength she had, 'The work of my salvation is finished! I can neither doubt nor fear, for Jesus is now with me!' She departed this life December 15, 1786, and in the 31st year of her age.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 10 (1787): 134.

¹Titled: 'A Short Account of Ann Nichols, of Wigan, in Lancashire'.

From M[atthias] J[oyce]¹

c. January 1, 1787

About five months before his death Mr. Charles Spear had a kernel in his groin, which was cut out by a surgeon in Kilkenny. This was followed by a cancer in that part, which in time ate his thigh away, and part of his belly. However, though his pain (as he expressed it) was as if a red hot bar of iron lay on his flesh, he was perfectly resigned to the will of God, and rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

December 24, 1786 (the night before he died) he lay about twenty minutes quite dead to all appearance; upon which his wife cried to God to let him come back, and speak to her once more. In a short time he revived and was able to speak. On her asking him, 'Is Christ precious to you?' he answered, 'Christ is present with me! And Christ is precious to me! God is love! God is love! Yea, everlasting love!' On his desiring her to be resigned, she asked him, 'Are you resigned?' 'O yes', said he, 'I am fully resigned to my Lord's will!' Presently after he said, 'Ha! I see the land! I hear the joyful bells ringing! O the joyful sound!' He then begged his mother to prepare to follow him, and exhorted his brother to repent. He then cried out, 'O death, where is thy sting, and where thy victory boasting grave!'² After this he prayed for the family, and for the prosperity of Zion. And having laid his hand on his wife's shoulder prayed, 'May Abraham's God and *mine* bless you!'

After this he requested a few minutes to meditate. Having done this, he looked up, and with inexpressible joy cried out, three times, 'The hour is come! The hour is come! The hour is come!' 'Yes', said his wife, 'The happy hour!' To which he answered, 'The happy hour indeed!' Then breaking out in a most triumphant manner, said, 'Glory be to God in the highest! On earth peace! Goodwill towards men! Christ is King! Christ is my rock! Christ is mine, and I am his forever!' After which he lay quiet about five minutes, and then fell asleep in Jesus.

M. J.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 12 (1789): 356–57.

¹Titled: 'Some Account of the Death of Mr. Charles Spear, late of Kilkenny, in Ireland'. Matthias Joyce was stationed on the Cork circuit, which included Kilkenny. See the additional comments in the letter of Jan. 18, 1787.

²Cf. 1 Cor. 15:55.

From Rev. Dr. Thomas Coke

Antigua
January 2[–5], 1787

Honoured and Very Dear Sir,

By the powerful hand of God we have been brought to this island, as you will see by the following journal.

On Sunday the 24th of September [1786], we sailed from Gravesend, and the next day were opposite the Isle of Wight. The wind then turning against us, we did nothing for five days and nights but sail, for four hours, in the midst of blustering winds and surging waves, from the Isle of Wight towards the south of France, and the next four hours back again; and so alternately. We were most part of this time sick. How surprising it is that any would think of riding this great monster, except for the service of God. But, for him

Labour is rest, and pain is sweet.¹

On Thursday the 28th, at night, we had a very providential deliverance from being run down by a large coal-ship, about three times as large as our brig. It was with great difficulty that we slipped on one side of her, after receiving from deck a general alarm of danger; but the Lord was with us. On the day before the Lord was extraordinarily present with me in my little bed-chamber. He did indeed pour out the consolations of his Spirit largely; and streams of filial, penitential tears did, in an unusual manner, flow from my eyes.

I esteem my little bed-chamber (or state-room) a peculiar gift of God. It is taken out of the steerage and is so far, on the one hand, from the common sailors, and on the other, from the cabin-passengers, that all is still and quiet. And here I can be with God. And blessed be his name he does make it my *sanctum sanctorum*, the Holy of Holies, filling it (my soul at least) with light and glory. Here is no one to disturb me but the two cabin-boys, who are separated from me by a partition, and whom I am able to keep in good order.

On Saturday the 30th, we were obliged to take shelter in St. Helen's,² and the next day got up to Spithead, which gave me an opportunity, with my brethren, of visiting our friends in Portsmouth. Brother [William] Warrener preached in the town in the afternoon,³ and I gave our friends a sermon on the necessity of the new birth in the evening on the common. On Monday evening my congregation was larger than on the day before, when I endeavoured to lead the people to Christ by the star which the wise men saw in the east. On Tuesday evening I took my leave of that kind people, showing them the necessity of a death unto sin, and of having their lives hid with Christ in God. After preaching we concluded with the Lord's Supper, and our Lord did assuredly condescend to acknowledge his own sacred ordinance. It was a precious time.

About midnight, the tide being a little in our favour, I set off for our ship, being engaged to return every night. I had seven miles to sail (viz., to the Mother Bank near the Isle of Wight), and the wind was so boisterous that my kind pilot (who is master of the Commissioners' yacht), after rowing me about two miles, advised me to return to his yacht which lay in the harbour. He and his men accordingly rowed me

¹CW, 'On a Journey', st. 3, *HSP* (1740), 127.

²A bay on the east coast of the Isle of Wight.

³William Warrener (c. 1750–1825) was admitted 'on trial' as an itinerant in 1779; see *Works*, 10:484. After serving seven years in Britain, JW ordained him for service in the West Indies, ministering to enslaved Africans. Warrener returned to England in 1797, and retired from the itinerancy in 1818. He settled in Leeds, where he remained active at a local level until near his death on Nov. 27, 1825. See *Minutes* (post-Wesley, 1826), 6:108.

there, where, after some refreshment, I lay down on a couch (there being no bed) and slept for about three hours. How much better off was I than my most honoured Master, who had not where to lay his head! — Early in the morning they brought me to the brig, and for eight days more we were detained by the winds.

On Thursday the 5th October we had the highest storm that has been remembered on that coast for these six years, according to the accounts of the neighbouring inhabitants. A small sloop got entangled in the cable of one of our anchors, which was likely to do us much damage and to ruin the sloop. But what small things are these to those whose anchor is cast within the veil. On Sunday the 8th, we read prayers and gave a sermon to the cabin passengers, the sailors not appearing.

On Wednesday the 11th we removed to Yarmouth harbour, in the Isle of Wight, and the next day were in great danger of being run down by a frigate, which by endeavouring to avoid us run on shore. But the shore consisting chiefly of mud, the frigate received no damage. On Thursday the 12th, we sailed into the Channel, and got to the Land's End on the 14th.

Sunday the 15th, brother [William] Warrener read prayers and I preached, endeavouring to explain the nature of our Christian calling, the necessity of walking worthy of it, and the way thereto, with a close application of the whole. The sailors for the first time were present.

Sunday the 22nd I went on deck about half an hour before sunrise, and had the pleasure of seeing the most glorious sight I ever beheld, except once on my former voyage to America. The eastern sky was covered with a most beautiful canopy of purple, which was all over decorated with spangles of gold. The heavens did indeed declare the glory of God. I would, I think, at any time go ten miles to see so noble a display of the handy work of my Maker. And this God is *my* God; what a ravishing consideration! Twice this day we read the prayers of our Liturgy. In the morning I enlarged on the nature of repentance and justification; and brother Clarke⁴ in the afternoon gave a rousing sermon on those impudent words of Pharaoh, 'Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?'⁵ But, alas! they are all like the deaf adder, that refuses to hearken to the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely.

Tuesday the 24th.⁶ We have had little else but storms and squalls since we sailed. But this morning a most alarming circumstance called forth all our attention. A leak was observed in that part of our ship which lies under the cabin; and we are now about half way between the two continents. However, after long examination, it was found that the leak was above the surface of the water, and that the water came in only when the ship heeled (as they term it). It was the opinion both of the captain and mate that nothing could be done to stop the breach; but that our pumps could easily command it, if it did not increase.

Last night they were obliged to shut up all the hatches, and for some time past they have shut all the windows in the cabin. This is indeed a time for the exercise of resignation. May I duly improve it, whether it end in life or death. The sailors this night, for the first time, joined us in family prayer.

Friday the 27th. Last night was the most tempestuous I ever knew at sea. The captain says that he has not known such a night these ten years. Though we lay to, they were very apprehensive that the wind would break the main-mast, and about midnight sent down for two hatchets, that they might cut it away if necessary. But our Lord sitteth above the water-floods. This morning we found that the leak lets in more water than it did yesterday. I retired in the morning to meditate seriously on that circumstance. I considered, What reason have I to desire to live? I have really forsaken all for Christ, and have neither

⁴John Clarke, an Irish itinerant, appears in the *Minutes* first in 1784 (see *Works*, 10:556). He was ordained by JW in 1786 for service in Newfoundland, but weather drove the ship he sailed on to the West Indies and he stayed to serve in St. Vincent. Clarke served there until 1790, before disappearing from the stations. His name reappears as a member of the St. Vincent society in 1806. Cf. George G. Findlay and W. W. Holdsworth, *The History of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society* (London: Epworth, 1921), 2:50.

⁵Exod. 5:2.

⁶Orig., '17th'; a mistake.

motive nor desire to live but for the Church of Christ. And why should my desires be so strong on that account? With what perfect ease can the Lord fill up my province with one that is infinitely better qualified? I am therefore willing to die. I do love my God, and have an indubitable assurance that whatever is wanting he will fully supply, before he takes me into the world of spirits.

Sunday the 29th. During divine service, most of the sailors being present, I delivered my soul; insomuch that one of the passengers, a gay, irreligious young man, retired after the service and wrote me a letter informing me that I was not his pastor, and insisted on receiving the usage which as a passenger and a gentleman he had a claim to. A few fair words brought him into good humour.

Tuesday the 31st. We find that our leak has not increased. I seem now to be sea-proof, and can devote my whole day to reading, writing, and religious exercises. A considerable part of the time I spend in studying the French language, particularly the grammar and the French exercises. Three or four hours I employ daily in conversing in French with our ever blessed Lord and the inspired writers. Sometimes, for a little variety, I read Virgil; and every day a canto out of the works of Edmund Spenser, the English Virgil. I am astonished the writings of Spenser are not more read. His genius and strength of imagination were amazing, and from his allegories may be extracted some of the most instructive lessons of religion. Indeed I grudge not the twenty shillings I gave for his works. With such company as the above, I think I could live contentedly in a tub.

Wednesday, Nov. 1st. We are likely to have a long passage. But this single consideration—that I am in the very place where God would have me to be, and am going on the very business which God has allotted for me—is a sufficient support under every trial. And this assurance, blessed be God, I do possess fully and satisfactorily.

Nov. 5. After prayers I endeavoured to enforce the necessity of believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, after explaining the nature of faith, and the salvation which proceeds therefrom. O that the Lord would open their dull ears!

Nov. 7. Brother Hammet⁷ was taken ill with a fit of the ague. But by administering to him an emetic on the next day, and a purge on the following, I trust it is gone, through the blessing of God.

Sunday 25. This day one of the main-stays of the main-mast broke, but it has been tolerably repaired.

Monday 26. The other main-stay has also given way, but is now repaired. Our tackling has received great injury from the severe gales of wind which we have met with, with hardly any interruption from the time we sailed. Brother Clarke's hair falls off wonderfully; but he bears himself up with great courage, as do the other brethren.

Thursday 30. A dreadful gale blew from the northwest. At ten at night, I heard the captain's wife crying out in the most dreadful fright, and presently Mr. Hilditch (one of the passengers) came running and crying, 'Pray for us, Doctor, pray for us, for we are just gone!' I came out of my state-room and found that a dreadful hurricane (I assuredly may call it) had just arisen. The ship was on her beam-ends. They had not time to take down the foresail, and were just going to cut away the main-mast as the last remedy, expecting every moment that the ship would be filled with water and sink. My brethren and myself at this awful moment got into a corner to pray, and I think I may say we all felt a perfect resignation to the will of God. Through grace, I think I may assert, that I was entirely delivered from the fear of death. But brother Hammet was superior to us all in faith for the occasion. His first prayer (if it could be called by that name) was little else than a declaration of the full assurance he possessed that God would deliver us, and his second address to God was a thanksgiving for our deliverance. It was not till after this, and after we had sung a hymn together, that the foresail was shivered in pieces, and by that means the masts were saved, and probably the ship itself. It is awful to hear the captain and one of the

⁷William Hammet (ca. 1756–1803) was an Irish preacher, appointed with Clarke to Newfoundland. In the event he was stationed in St. Kitts and served there and in other Caribbean islands. From 1789 he worked in Jamaica, in the face of persecution. In 1791 Coke took him to Charleston, SC, where he instigated the schismatic 'Primitive Methodist Church'.

passengers who was on deck during this tremendous tempest give a relation of it. It appeared to them as if the clouds, the air, and the water, were all mixed together. After the immediate danger was over, we drove with the wind, which carried us with nothing but the bare poles, at the rate of six miles an hour for eight hours and a half.

Monday, Dec. 4. This night was most dreadful. The sailors were just like the messengers of Job, coming one after another with dismal tidings, that now one rope was broke, and now another. All the hatches were closed, as they had been twice before. And now the whole ship began to ooze at every joint. The next morning we held a little council. The captain being convinced of the impossibility of reaching the port of Halifax this winter, it was the unanimous opinion of all that no other refuge was left us, under God but to sail with all possible expedition for the West Indies. At present our sails appear like wafers. Our ropes are quite white, all the tar being washed off. In short, the ship may already be said to be half a wreck. We have this day agreed to enter upon an allowance of water and several other things, but the greatest trial of all to me is the having hardly any candles remaining. But to the glory of God I can say that to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. It is very remarkable that since we came near the banks of Newfoundland, I have had a strong persuasion, and I believe a divine one, that we shall be driven to the West Indies. For about three weeks past we have gained upon the whole but one hundred and twenty miles, doing nothing in the general but lying at the mercy of the waves.

Dec. 15. This day we had the pleasure of seeing one of the tropic birds with a most beautiful plumage. Several of the clouds also in the morning appeared in columns in a manner I had never seen before.

A remarkable phenomenon appeared a few nights ago. The captain and all on deck saw a light, like the light which a ship holds out when it passes by another ship. They all said they could swear that they saw it. It seemed quite near to them. The captain called for his trumpet to speak to the people of the ship, but before the trumpet came the light was gone, and we knew no more of it.

Dec. 25. This day we landed in Antigua, and in going up the town of St. John's we met brother Baxter in his band, going to perform divine service.⁸ After a little refreshment I went to our chapel and read prayers, preached, and administered the sacrament. I had one of the cleanest audiences I ever saw. All the Negro women were dressed in white linen gowns, petticoats, handkerchiefs and caps and I did not see the least spot on any of them. The men were also dressed as neatly. In the afternoon and evening I had very large congregations.

Jan. 5, 1787. I have preached in this town twice a day. The house used to be filled in the evenings about an hour before the time of preaching; and I have made it a rule to begin about half an hour before the time. Our society in this island is near two thousand. But the ladies and gentlemen of the town have so filled the house that the poor, dear Negroes who built it have been almost entirely shut out, except in the mornings; and yet they bear this, not only with patience, but with joy. Two or three times I have preached in the country. Our friends who invite us to their houses; entertain us rather like princes than subjects. Herein, perhaps, lies part of our danger in this country. The country is very romantic. The cocoa-tree⁹ is very magnificent; and the milk which the nuts yield, is most cooling and delicious. Everything is new, and therefore the more pleasing. Last week my brethren with myself were invited to dine with Prince William Henry¹⁰ by the company of merchants, and (though I do not like those great feasts, yet) lest we should seem disloyal, which would be one of the farthest things from my heart, I consented to do myself

⁸John Baxter, a shipwright from Chatham, who arrived in Antigua in 1778 and as a local preacher, took over the Methodist society established by Nathaniel Gilbert. At the Christmas Conference in 1784 he was one of those appointed elders of The Methodist Episcopal Church, and was ordained by Coke at Baltimore the following summer; hence the reference here to his band. He later took charge of the Carib mission on St. Vincent.

⁹I.e., the coconut palm.

¹⁰William Henry, Duke of Gloucester (1743–1805), son of Frederick Louis, Prince of Wales.

the honour of going with my brethren. This day a gentleman with whom I dined intimated that if five hundred a year would detain me in this island, I should not leave it. God be praised, five hundred thousand a year would be to me a feather, when opposed to my usefulness in the Church of Christ.

We have held an infant-Conference. In my next letter I will send you a copy of our Minutes. A pressing invitation has been sent us to visit St. Vincent's;¹¹ and this evening we are to sail for that island. Brother Warrener is to remain here. We have about twenty recommendatory letters. We have, as far as we can at present judge, a fair opening in St. Eustatia. I have no doubt but it would be an open resistance to the clear providences of God to remove any one of the missionaries at present from this country. Just this minute (or a little while ago) brother Baxter received two warm letters of recommendation for St. Eustatia; and brother Hammet has just received one for St. Kitt's. In my next I shall be more particular concerning the wonderful openings we have in these parts.

I will beg the favour of you to write me a letter at Mr. Philip Rogers's, Baltimore, directing me to send two missionaries from the States to Nova Scotia, and one to Newfoundland.

We are all in remarkable good health. All is of God. If you think proper to read any part, or all, of this in the society, my friends (and I think they are all now my friends) will be glad of it. Will you tell them that I love them most affectionately, and pray for them every day!

I am, dear sir,

Your most dutiful, most affectionate, and most obliged son,

Thomas Coke

Source: published transcription; An Extract of the Rev. Dr. Coke's Journal from Gravesend to Antigua, in a Letter to the Rev. J. Wesley (London: Paramore, 1787).

¹¹Presumably by the Mr. Claxton mentioned on Jan. 9, 1787.

From Robert Scot¹

Derby
January 8, 1787

Thomas Thompson was born in the year of our Lord, 1715. When he was about thirty-six years of age, the Lord gave him a great concern for his soul; but as there was no preaching at Barrow, he frequently travelled on the Sabbath-day from thence to Grimsby to hear the gospel (about eighteen miles) and back again. By this means he soon saw the danger his soul was in, and became very diligent in using all the means of grace, having a full determination not to rest till he had found peace with God.

In a short time he was enabled to say, 'Though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me.'² From that time, instead of resting contented, as if all the work was finished, he gave diligence in working out his salvation with fear and trembling.

About seven years before his death, it pleased God to lay his hand upon him in a particular manner. One of his legs mortifying, after two years it was cut off. This he bore with such patience and courage as was astonishing to all who saw him. Before the operation began, he went to prayer and entreated God to strengthen him. And when it was over, he said, 'If I was certain it was the will of God, I could bear, not only to have the other leg, but my arms also cut off!' But this operation, instead of ending his affliction (as was expected) proved only the beginning of farther sorrows. For from that time to the day of his death, he scarcely knew what health meant, any otherwise than by the loss of it. Yet in all this he never was heard to murmur or complain, being persuaded that all things work together for good to them that love God. For the last four years he was literally Lazarus-like, full of sores. But in the furnace the Lord purified him.

Just before it pleased the Lord to set his soul at full liberty, he was strangely tempted to hang himself—which temptation was so strong that he was almost ready to despair. Yet still he continued crying to God to save him. At last the Lord spoke to his soul, saying, 'O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?'³ Immediately he felt a mighty change, and from that time was always happy and resigned: continually saying, 'Lord, not my will, but thine be done!'⁴

Some months before he died, he was so far reduced in his circumstances that he was obliged to accept of relief from the parish. And notwithstanding this, he was still so distressed as frequently to want a morsel of bread. But in this also he glorified God, and longed for nothing so much as a fuller enjoyment of him.

About six months after this, his sores all healed of themselves. But his inward pain was so great that many times he had no sleep for whole nights together. Yet (as those who lay in the same room declare) he was always either praying, or else praising God.

As he drew nearer his end, his soul seemed more entirely swallowed up in God. To one who attended him in his last sickness he said, 'Pray always, pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God concerning us.'⁵

I visited him twice after I came into the circuit, and always found him rejoicing in the love of

¹Titled: 'An Account of the Life and Death of Thomas Thompson, late of Barrow in the county of Lincoln: who died Nov. 29, 1785'. Robert Scot was admitted 'on trial' as an itinerant in 1782 (see *Works*, 10:519). He served the Grimsby circuit 1783–85, and nearby Gainsborough 1785–86. He served eight years, until expelled by the 1790 Conference (10:711).

²Isa. 12:1.

³Matt. 14:31.

⁴Luke 22:42.

⁵Cf. 1 Thess. 5:17–18.

God, and in joyful hopes of everlasting glory, longing for his dissolution. His last words were, 'Jesus is all and in all to me! He is altogether lovely! The fairest among ten thousand! Altogether lovely'. May all who are left behind be followers of him, who thus through faith and patience inherits the promises!

R. Scott

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 10 (1787): 132–34.

From Mr. E. Vaughan¹

North Green
January 12, 1787

My dear mother was first awakened by hearing the General Baptists, and was a member of Mr. Brittain's congregation for many years. She then walked in all the ordinances blameless, and was a great pattern of keeping the Sabbath-day holy, and of family prayer. In the last of these I shall never forget her strong cries and tears for her four children, with which she was left a widow.

I have often heard her say, 'There is a way better than this I am now in, though I know it not. Lord, show me the right way, and lead me in it!' At this time she had no thought of being a Methodist.

When I was convinced of sin, and had received a sense of pardon, she said, 'This is the right way', and never rested till the Lord spoke peace and salvation to her soul.

As she sat at work one day, she was taken ill of a violent fever. In the beginning of her illness she was in an extraordinary manner filled with joy in the Holy Ghost. Those who came to see her (being many) saw with wonder the mighty power of God. She clapped her hands, and said,

I know that my Redeemer liveth! And though after my skin, worms destroy this body,
yet with these eyes I shall see God! Glory! Glory! I once was as vile as Mary Magdalen,
Manasseh; yea, the very devil himself! Though I did not live in any outward sin. But now I am
made white in the blood of the Lamb! I shall praise him on Mount Sion, with all the redeemed
forever and ever! Forever and ever! Yes, my anchor is cast! Cast on a rock where I shall ever rest.
Oh, when will Gideon's pitcher break and let the lamp appear!

This she often repeated; and to the last, never expressed the least doubt or fear.

Two days before she died, she exhorted me to cleave to God, and told me I should drink of the cup of affliction in this world; but added,

Our souls are in his mighty hand,
And he will keep them still;
And you and I shall surely stand,
With Christ on Sion's hill.²

From this time, she had not a shadow of a doubt. Nor do I remember she once complained, although her affliction was very great!

The night before she died, she sang,

Come let us join our cheerful songs,
With angels round the throne.³

When she was speechless she several times endeavoured to sing. Though she had experienced deep convictions, and great temptations when she was first awakened, she was now very composed and free from all uneasiness. Satan seemed to have no power over her. She was indeed lost and swallowed up in God, her all in all!

About seven o'clock on Friday morning, she cried out, 'My Lord, and my God!' and gave up her spirit into the arms of Jesus, on October 1, 1772, and in the fifty-fifth year of her age.

E. Vaughan

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 10 (1787): 130–32.

¹Titled: 'An Account of Mrs. Vaughan: written by her Son'.

²Cf. CW, 'At Parting of Friends', st. 6, *Redemption Hymns* (1747).

³Isaac Watts, 'Christ Worshipped by All Creatures', st. 1, in *CPH* (1738), 34.

From Mr. J. Morgan¹

c. January 15, 1787

Thomas Legge was a man of a rough temper, and violent passions; and was given much to company and gaming. Walking one evening near the preaching house he thought he would go in, but would not believe what the preacher said, for he thought the Methodist preachers were the false prophets. Mr. G. was preaching on the nature and necessity of the new birth. At the close of the sermon he thought, if the preacher described it right, *he* must be wrong; but resolved to go home and search the third chapter of St. John's gospel. He did so, and was convinced that all his religion, without a change of heart, would profit him nothing, and therefore determined immediately to pray to God that he might be born again. In a few days God gave him some comfort. But the work was not deep enough to keep him from his old companions, nor consequently to keep from sin—so he soon lost the little he had received.

He went again to the preaching, when convictions began to come on sharper and deeper than before, and he was taken into the society. Now he saw himself on the brink of ruin, and began to cry mightily to God for mercy. The enemy opposed him when at the throne of grace, and all the day long. The people of the world all cried out now, 'Thomas Legge is mad, for he says he has been at Church forty years and never prayed in his life.' This is not the fault of the Church liturgy, but of those who do not tell the people what it is to pray.

His convictions and temptations grew sharper and stronger for seven weeks, till his very tongue cleaved to his mouth for thirst. He said, it was like coals of fire poured into his breast, till he was almost weary of life, and that strangling was preferable to life. However, a faint hope did bear him up, till at last he came to this determination to pray but for one thing—viz., that God would give him his Holy Spirit. It was not long before his prayer was answered. He was justified freely through the Lord Jesus Christ, and had the clear witness thereof.

Now the world wondered again, and were soon convinced that Thomas Legge was not mad, but spoke the words of truth and soberness. He was from this time a man of great faith, and of every grace. He still walked on like a man of war, and grew more experienced in the divine life, till he was so filled with love that he hardly knew whether he was in the body or out of the body. He began to exhort in our society, and was useful both in awakening sinners, and in comforting the children of God. What was wanting in eloquence, was abundantly made up in tears.

On the last Sunday he was out at a little society, he sung that hymn,

Come let us join our friends above,
That have obtained the prize: ...²

That verse,

Ten thousand to their endless home,
This solemn moment fly;
And we are to the margin come,
And we expect to die.³

And indeed the whole hymn so melted them into tears that they could hardly proceed. It dwelt on his mind all day, so that he sung it at several friends' houses, and said what a great thing it was to die; and that he should have no objection to go, if his little worldly matters were settled.

¹Titled: 'An Account of the Death of Thomas Legge. By J. Morgan'.

²CW, Hymn I, *Funeral Hymns* (1759), 1–2.

³*Ibid.*, st. 3.

In a few days he was taken ill of a cold, which terminated in an inflammation and mortification in his bladder. He had been subject to the strangury at times for some years. His pains at first were very violent. But he bore them with Christian patience, and looked forward with pleasure, saying, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that I shall see him for myself, and not for another.' He told the doctor, *he* also must know that, or never go to heaven. I visited him many times, and found him desirous to depart, but resigned to the Lord's will. The enemy often tried to beat him off the rock. 'O!' said he, 'today he has been tempting me to be angry with, and curse God. But he is gone now. If it should please God to restore my health, I trust I should live closer to him than ever, and be wholly devoted to him.' For, he saw he might have received more grace, might have improved his gifts, and have been more useful. However, he knew his Lord would give him some humble seat around his throne, if he should take him now. 'Oh at this moment', said he, 'how small and insignificant are all things besides God and salvation! God make me more diligent, if I am spared a little longer!'

On visiting him again, as soon as he saw me, with some other friend, he gave out,

Once more before we part,
We'll bless the Saviour's name;
Record his mercies, every heart,
Sing every tongue the same:
Hoard up his sacred word,
And feed thereon and grow;
Go on to seek, and know the Lord,
And practice what ye know.⁴

He sung every word, and concluded with a short spiritual prayer, and desired God would soon take him home; which he did on Saturday morning about two o'clock the sixth of January 1787, without a groan, in the 71st year of his age.

J. M.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 134–37.

⁴ Joseph Hart, 'Once more before we part'.

From Rev. Dr. Thomas Coke

Dominica
January 15[–19], 1787¹

Reverend Sir,

On Friday the 5th instant I sailed with brothers [John] Baxter, [William] Hammet, and [John] Clarke from Antigua. On Sunday the 7th we landed at this island. The night before we stopped on the coast, and brother Baxter and I landed, being informed by our captain of one Mr. Burn, a planter, a generous young man, who lives within half a mile of the sea and who probably would be very glad to encourage a mission in the island. After walking a quarter of a mile we came to a little river which we waded through. And on calling up Mr. Burn, who was gone to bed, he received us and entertained us courteously, and gave us every encouragement we could expect from an unawakened man. [He] assured us he should be glad to entertain the minister whenever he should visit his estate; that there were about four hundred Negroes in the neighbourhood; and that he had no doubt but the few neighbouring planters would give us the same encouragement. Here we met with two old Negroes who, I apprehend, had been formerly among the Moravians at Antigua, who exceedingly rejoiced at the thought that they were likely to have the gospel preached to them again.

When we came to Roseau (Dominica) on Sunday, we went to the house of a Mrs. Webley, a Mulatto-gentlewoman of some property, with whom brother Baxter had some acquaintance at Antigua. She received us with great joy and kindness, and gave notice I should preach in her house at 4:00 in the afternoon. The congregation was considerably larger than the house could contain, and heard in general with deep attention, whilst I endeavoured to display to them the elect, precious Cornerstone, and the way of being built upon him. I would have taken the street, if the brethren had not thought it best for me not to be too bold till I had waited on the governor, which I intended doing on my return. We also visited the barracks, and there found two soldiers who had been in our society in Ireland and expressed very earnest desires that a mission might be fixed in this island. In the evening we got into our schooner, and after sailing by Martinico and St. Lucia, we landed at Kingston, St. Vincent's, on Tuesday the 9th.

Here we have the most glorious opening that, I believe, was ever known among the Methodists in so short a time. Brother Baxter introduced us to one Mr. Claxton, a man of property. He was awakened by the ministry of Mr. [Nathaniel] Gilbert and met in class at Antigua for some time, but had never heard brother Baxter. He has much of the spirit of a Methodist. His wife also fears God. The evening after we landed, I preached in his house to a large congregation. On Wednesday the 10th, we set off for the plantation of Mr. Clapham, a gentleman of fortune, nearly related by law to sister Baxter. He was previously informed of our intentions to wait upon him, and sent horses for us. He lives about nine or ten miles from Kingston. We were received with very great kindness. In the evening I preached in his large parlour; and on informing him that brother Clarke was to remain in the island, he gave him a pressing, general invitation; observed it was possible he might have accidentally some company who would look upon a sermon as an intrusion, but in that case Mr. Clarke at the proper time might convene the Negroes into a large boarded room which was separate from the house; and that he would speak to Mr. Jackson, a neighbouring gentleman, who he did not doubt would readily enter on the same plan. In my way to Mr. Clapham's I called at the house of one Mr. Morgan, a gentleman of large property, whose lady (he not being at home) informed us that Mr. Clarke would be always welcome to instruct and preach to their Negroes at proper hours.

On my return to Kingston I found that our friend Claxton had fitted up with seats a large warehouse or cellar for a preaching-house; and also two small rooms for the preacher, one for his bedchamber and the other for his study. We also waited on the president of the Council, who acts as governor, the late governor being dead and the vacancy not yet filled up. He also received us with great courtesy, wished us success, and gave permission to brother Clarke to preach in the courthouse on

¹Orig., '1788'; in error.

Sundays. A gentleman of fortune in Kingston, Mr. Steward, who keeps a very large shop or warehouse, and with whom we dined, is rejoiced above measure at our visit. He made me a present of a large coconut shell very curiously engraved and set in silver. To brother Hammet he gave a seal, worth I suppose three or four guineas; and to brother Baxter a pocket dressing-table for shaving, etc., worth I suppose two guineas. To brother Clarke he said he would make no present then; for, says he, I shall have him near me when you are gone, and he shall never want. He was many years ago in our society in London, and through various vicissitudes is become a very rich man, though once poor. He and Mr. Claxton are beginning already to talk about ground for a preaching-house. I formed a class of six whites as an introduction. Besides these, there are six or seven of the soldiers in the barracks who are deeply serious; one of them exhorts. They have built a hut for their public and private meetings within their barracks, and constantly meet together at 5:00 in the morning—except when military duties interfere, and then they meet at half past 4:00 in the morning. Their ill-natured commander in chief will not suffer brother Clarke to preach within the barracks, but the poor soldiers were to meet him in class at Mr. Claxton's on the day after I left St. Vincent's.

On Friday the 10th we dined, by invitation, at Mr. Otley's, a member of the Council and one of the principal men, perhaps the second in the island. He lives about seven miles from Kingston. He is a very agreeable man, and his lady has something serious in her. Notwithstanding there were two thoughtless officers at dinner with us, he gave brother Clarke a general invitation to make his house his home. Sir William Young, on whom I waited at Antigua, and who received me with very great courtesy, has a large estate just by Mr. Otley's. In short there is a little circuit opened to us already in this island. Nor shall I be surprised if brother Clarke has, in a few weeks, five hundred catechumens under his care. In Kingston it is surprising with what eyes of affection the poor Negroes look upon us when we pass by them, and one of them was overheard telling his companions 'These men were imported for us.' There is a member of the Assembly, to whom I had strong letters of recommendation, on whom I had not time to call. There is also another gentleman who is personally known to brother Baxter, and who has six of our pious Antigua Negroes on his plantation, on whom also we had not time to wait. It is impossible to have any doubt concerning the will of God in respect to the appointment of a missionary for this island. In respect to Antigua and St. Vincent's, all is as clear as if it was written with a sunbeam.

The island of St. Vincent's is romantic beyond anything I ever saw before. The hanging rocks, sugar-canes, cotton and coffee plantations, etc., make such a beautifully-variegated scene that I was delighted with it—but, I trust, did not lose sight of the great Author of the whole.

Monday, January 15, we landed again at Roseau (Dominica). We intended being here yesterday, but were prevented by a calm. After breakfast we waited on the governor, who received us very politely, and signified his approbation of our plan of establishing missions among the Negroes. Afterwards we came to the plantation of Mr. Charurier,² brother to Mr. [John] Charurier one of the leaders of our society in Dublin. He expresses his great desire of having a missionary fixed in the island, assuring us that he will readily contribute to his support, and encourage his usefulness. I think the Lord will soon have mercy on this island.

This evening we examined minutely that wonderful little insect, the fire-fly. It appears as if he had a real spark of fire continually burning in his belly. We could see what a clock it was in a dark room with the help of one of them.

Tuesday the 16th, we set off for St. Christopher's, where we arrived on Thursday. On our arrival, we found that intelligence had been sent here from Antigua of our intention of visiting this island, and a house was provided for us to lodge and preach in. Mr. Cable, a Mulatto gentleman, a printer, has shown us the utmost kindness and attention. A Mrs. Seaton also, a Mulatto gentlewoman, has been very kind. The two last mentioned deeply fear God. One Mr. Bertie, a jeweller, is likely to become a sincere friend. On Thursday evening I had a good congregation, considering the notice given.

²Isaac Charurier (1746–c. 1813), of Huguenot descent.

On Friday the 19th we went with some recommendatory letters to the island of Nevis, which is very near St. Christopher's. But it proved to all appearance the most useless as well as the most expensive journey that we have taken. We were received politely, but every door seemed shut against our ministry.

On our return to St. Christopher's³ we received an invitation to preach in the courthouse. Brother Hammet preached on Sunday afternoon, and I in the evening. The crowd was prodigious in the evening. Six or seven principal gentlemen of the town have invited us to their houses, to some of which we have gone. Among the rest, was the parson of the parish. Our friends have rented a convenient house for brother Hammet. We have other openings of which I shall inform you in my next.

Your most affectionate etc.

Source: published transcription; *A Continuation of Dr. Coke's Journal, in two Letters to the Rev. J. Wesley* (London: Paramore, 1787), 3–9.

³I.e., St. Kitt's.

From an Unidentified Correspondent¹

Kilkenny
January 18, 1787

In 1776, he was deeply convinced of sin; but after some time he grievously fell away.

While he was in this state, he dreamt one night that he saw the great and terrible Judge looking down upon him with eyes of indignation. On this he strove to find a place to hide himself in, but strove in vain. For wherever he ran the same sight appeared full in his view, until he awoke as in the torments of hell. In this deplorable state he went to a minister to ask his counsel, who smiling at him gave him good advice. But it was not able to remove his distress. Soon after his wife died, which he believed was a just judgment inflicted on him, because he had sinned against God with so high a hand.

In the year 1778 he married again, and to one who knew a little of spiritual religion, who advised him to hear the Methodists, and then persuaded him to join in society with them. Taking her advice he soon got a clear view of his condition, and found some encouragement in hearing the word. Continuing to use the ordinances, he was soon enabled to believe that God, for Christ's sake, had pardoned all his sins. But he did not long retain his first love. For entering as an ensign among the Volunteers, he was again led astray from the paths of peace.

But Mr. A. (whose word had formerly been blessed to him), returning to Kilkenny, persuaded him to return to God again. And told him of the young man that St. John was instrumental of reclaiming, who (like him) had forsaken the Lord. By these means he was once more restored to the favour of God, on which he entered into a solemn covenant with him, to devote his all to him as long as he lived.

In December 1785 a cancer, which had been some months before taking root in the inside of his thigh, made its appearance; and kept increasing until it removed him into eternity.

About five months before his death, the Lord, in answer to many prayers, gave him a lot among those who are sanctified. After this he bore a great degree of pain; and with such patience, fortitude, and resignation, as cannot be easily expressed. So far was he from complaining, that he often comforted his comforters! And poured out many tears of gratitude and love, when speaking of his present heaven, and of the prospect he had of a blissful immortality.

He prayed often for his wife and three children, and committed them to the care of a faithful Creator, in hope that he would supply all their wants in time, and bring them to rest with him forever.

The night before his death, he was speechless for some time. After he recovered a little, his wife asked him, 'Is Christ precious to your soul?' To which he answered, 'Christ is precious! Christ is present! God is love! God is everlasting love!'

His mother coming in, he said, 'Farewell mother! Prepare to follow me. Remember this is the end!' One of his brothers asking his pardon and blessing, he lifted up his hands and said, 'O that God may give you repentance unto life, and shed a sense of his pardoning love abroad in your heart!'

December the 24th, about twelve o'clock at night, as he was moved in the bed, a large artery burst wide open. As he lay bleeding his wife read part of the 7th chapter of the Revelations, and repeated several verses of his favourite hymns; while he repeated after her,

Monster! where's thy sting!
And where's thy victory boasting grave!²

Adding, 'I shall soon enjoy that rest which God has prepared for his people. I see the land! And I hear the sound of joy, and bells ringing! O the joyful sound!' While he spoke these words, the place was full of the

¹Titled: 'A Short Account of the Death of Mr. Charles Spear'. Compare the briefer account by Matthias Joyce above, dated c. Jan. 1, 1787.

²Cf. Isaac Watts, 'Christ Dying, Rising, and Reigning', st. 5, *Horae Lyricae*, 441.

presence and glory of God. His wife kneeling down and asking his blessing, he put his hand on her shoulder and said, 'May Abraham's God and *mine* bless, and be with you my dear!'

About two o'clock in the morning, he said, 'Be resigned my dear'; on which she said, 'I am resigned.'

A little after he said, 'My Lord's will is now done in me. Give my love to all friends that love him; and give my blessing to the little ones!' meaning two of his children that were absent.

As his wife was reading, he desired her to be silent, that he might contemplate a little. Then looking up with triumphant joy he said, 'The hour is come! The hour is come! The hour is come!' On his wife's adding, 'The happy hour', he answered, 'The happy hour!' On her crying, 'Glory be to God!' he answered, 'Glory be to God in the highest, on earth peace, goodwill towards men!' On her saying, 'Christ is King', he answered, 'Christ is King! Christ is my rock! Christ is mine, and I am his forever!' and a few moments after took his flight to the mount of God.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 12 (1789): 17–19.

From Edward Coates¹

North Shields
January 24, 1787

Reverend and Dear Sir,

This is the first time I have had the honour of addressing you by letter. I am very sorry for the painful circumstance which occasions it. You are not unacquainted (I presume) with the opposition made by a party of disorderly men to your society at North Shields, in our building a chapel for the use of you and your preachers, as well as for ourselves. Now those men that oppose us say that they have *all along, even from the beginning, acted by your order and sanction*; and we also say (and that most truly) that we have from the *very first*, acted by your *order and sanction* in all that we have done respecting our building a chapel, etc. But can we *both* have acted under your sanction, in what we have done in this matter? While you were telling us you had '*nothing to do with those men*',² and desired us 'not to trouble ourselves about them, nor mind anything they might say'; were you telling them to 'go on and finish their house, and you would take care they should be properly supported'? Can this be possible? I was very much surprised to hear you say, when at Sunderland last summer,³ that 'Dr. Watson's house was to have preaching in its turn with us', *because* 'they had promised to give you the house as a deed of gift.' You may remember I then said they would never fulfil their promise. You answered, 'They had promised it before a dozen witnesses, *and if they went from their promise*, you would drop them.' They *went from their promise*, but you have not dropped them? The Conference informed us, it was left to Mr. [Andrew] Inglis to settle.⁴ But has it been so? Nay, a Mr. [James] Wood, in another circuit, says he is to settle it, and that by your order!⁵ What a pity that candour and truth should not have been more attended to in this affair (and that from the very beginning) than appears to have been the case from a review of circumstances. Does Methodism require deception and falsehood to support it? I am really sorry for some characters, who must suffer considerably when certain circumstances are made generally known. I assure you, sir, if we had ever thought that you would ever have given countenance, or encouragement, to any other party than ourselves in building a chapel in this town, we would not have built any. £700 or £800 is a sum by no means convenient for a few poor tradesmen to throw away. Nor is it any good work in preachers of the gospel to deal so largely in deception and worldly policy, and thus to sport themselves with the property of their poor friends. We think we have not only been unfriendly, but even unjustly, used. We have generously contributed to the necessities of the connexion for a number of years; and

¹Edward Coates (fl. 1780s), an upholsterer in Newcastle upon Tyne, had been a trustee of the first preaching-house in North Shields. When the lease on this house expired in late 1783, a split emerged between two parties over the location of a new site. One party was led by a Dr. Watson (and later John Reed), while the other (which sited its preaching-house in Millbourn Place) was led by Coates. Both parties appealed for JW's support, and he initially insisted that they reach a local agreement. Adding to the division, the itinerants stationed in Newcastle (with George Snowden as Assistant) backed Coates's party, with the intention of incorporating the new house into their circuit; while the itinerants stationed in Sunderland backed the other party, with the intention of bringing the new house into their circuit. JW's actions were ambiguous (at best) and the trustees were increasingly drawn to imitate Dewsbury in refusing to settle on the Conference plan (the Model Deed). In 1789 the Millbourn preaching-house went independent, and Edward Coates aligned with the Methodist New Connexion. See the extended (but one-sided) account of these developments in Coates, *New Portrait*.

²See JW to George Snowden, c. Dec. 1, 1785.

³JW was in Sunderland June 7, 1786.

⁴Orig., 'Englos'.

⁵Cf. JW to Andrew Inglis, Jan. 20, 1787, *Works*, 30:526.

when we had occasion for help from it, it was not only denied us, but the friends were *cautioned* and *charged* by the preachers not to give us any assistance. Adding to this an opposition encouraged by those very persons whom we had reason to expect would give us every reasonable support, and in whom we put the utmost confidence, is very hard indeed. But this religious policy is as bad as it is wicked. For two Methodist preaching houses in this town can never be properly supported for any length of time. One of them must fall or leave the connexion. But how dreadful must be the conflict, till that come to pass! Two contrary interests will naturally occasion great contentions, and keep the persons concerned at perpetual variance, and also be the means of sowing discord both amongst the preachers and people. The preacher cannot please both parties. What a reproach to the leaders of Methodism, when the circumstances of the opposition are considered! We commit our cause into the hands of him who judgeth rightly; and if our ways please him, he will help us, and turn the devices of our adversaries upon their own heads with shame and confusion. Wishing you, dear sir, a right judgment in this affair, and prosperity in all good things,

I am, your humble servant,

Edward Coates

Source: published transcription; Coates, *New Portrait*, 12–14.

From Thomas Taylor, itinerant¹

Leeds
January 26, 1787

Robert Calverley was born in Leeds, of honest parents. His mother heard the Methodists almost as soon as they came into the country, joined the society, and after some years died happy in God.

When Robert was very young, she used to take him with her to hear the word, which made deep impressions on his mind. But being bound apprentice, and getting among wild companions, the good impressions wore off; on which he grew wild and careless, and continued so for many years.

In the year 1763 he was much stirred up by the death of his father. But that also proved like the early dew which soon vanishes away.

Hearing a sermon on reprobation, he thought, 'If things are so, I may make myself easy. For if I am to be saved, I shall, do what I will; and if I am to be lost, I shall be lost, do what I can.' On this he determined to continue in the way he was, well knowing it was impossible to alter the unchangeable decree. While he remained in this state, he durst not hear the Methodists, for their word generally so fastened on his conscience that it made him very uneasy.

However, at last his sister prevailed on him to hear a sermon a little way from Leeds, when his conscience was sorely wounded. But keeping his mind to himself, and not going to hear again, it soon wore off.

Being out of employment in his own business (which was that of a cloth-dresser) he went to dig in a quarry. When once carrying a stone on his back which was too heavy for him, he broke a small blood vessel. This brought on a spitting of blood, which he was afflicted with at times for many years, and which in the end brought him to his grave.

Being very poorly at a certain time, he was prevailed upon to hear the word again—when conviction so fastened on his conscience that he saw himself a lost sinner. A person coming to see him, who told him he was much out of order, he answered, 'I care little about my body. My chief concern is about my soul.' Soon after this, God manifesting his love to him, his guilt and fears were all removed, and he was filled with peace and joy in believing.

But on discovering his inbred corruptions, he was so discouraged that he almost staggered through unbelief. But the Lord supported him in such a manner as enabled him to retain his confidence.

After some time he was made a class leader, and acted like a nursing father to his little company. For he was not satisfied to meet them at the stated times, but followed them and watched over them like one who expected to give an account.

During this time he longed for the full salvation of God. And in December 1779, he heard a sermon on, 'My grace is sufficient for thee',² under which he saw that the grace of God was not only sufficient to justify but also to sanctify. From this time he looked for that blessing, and soon after that word was sealed on his heart, 'I will, be thou clean.'³

Having received that blessing, he held his confidence for some time. But some family occurrences happening, he gave way to anger, which brought a cloud on his soul. But he was very sensible of his fault, and secretly confessed it unto the Lord, who lifted upon him anew the light of his countenance.

September 5, 1785, being at the preaching, he expresses in his diary how much the word was blessed to him. While he heard described, 'the things which are freely given to us of God',⁴ he could

¹Titled: 'A Short Account of Robert Calverley'.

²2 Cor. 12:9.

³Matt. 8:3, Mark 1:41, Luke 5:13.

⁴Cf. 1 Cor. 2:12.

sweetly rejoice that he had received them.

As he was going to meet some friends, he was suddenly seized with a violent vomiting of blood, insomuch that he thought he was near his end. But all was well, for he felt such a sweet rest in Jesus as made pain, and death, and everything else easy. But he never recovered this attack. For although at times he was considerably better, he had such frequent returns of bleeding as brought him very low.

At the same time he had occasion to exercise all his faith, patience, and resignation. For not being able to work, he was very low in worldly circumstances. Yet he observed, 'God raised me up friends, and so opened their hearts, that I wanted for nothing.' Indeed he was much known, and well beloved. For the change which God wrought in him was so remarkable, from that of a swearing, fighting, drinking man, to that of a temperate, meek follower of his Saviour, denying himself and taking up his cross daily, that I do not know either saint or sinner who had anything to lay to his charge.

He continued his diary till the 10th of December. From that time, I suppose, he was not able to write. But he still expressed much confidence in God, though in much pain; patiently bearing what the Lord had laid upon him, and exhorting his family, and all who came to see him, to cleave unto God with full purpose of heart. Thus he continued till the 7th instant, when he entered the joy of his Lord.

T. T.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 10 (1787): 629–31.

From Rev. Dr. Thomas Coke

St. Eustatius
January 31, 1787

Reverend Sir,

Since my last a gentleman in the island of Nevis (Mr. Brazier, a member of the Assembly¹) has sent an invitation to brother [William] Hammet to come over to preach to the Negroes. The son of the president of the Council of Nevis (Mr. Herbert) has also given brother Hammet an invitation to preach in his house at Charleston, the principal town in the island of Nevis. So that our journey to that island has not been so fruitless as we imagined. We have lately seen a curious fish exactly like a land hedge-hog, but when dressed, it eats as well as a turtle.

On Wednesday the 24th we sailed from Basseterre, St. Kitt's, and stopped at Sandy Point, a town in the same island, where we called on one Mr. Sommersal, a gentleman of property, at whose house Mr. Tunnell,² one of our American elders who took a voyage to St. Kitt's for his health, once preached. He promised that he would consult with some of his friends in the neighbourhood, and with them endeavour to procure a proper place for Mr. Hammet to preach in.

In the afternoon we landed at St. Eustatius and were met by two black men, who asked us whether we were not some of the brethren (I thought they meant the Moravians, but afterwards found they meant the Methodists). I told them we were of the same kind. Then, said they, if you will come with us, we will show you your home. I told them that we wanted to see Captain [Isaac] de Lion,³ the captain of the Blacks, to whom we had recommendatory letters. You had better, said they, go home first. And accordingly they brought us to a very comfortable house belonging to a family of free Blacks, where we have been most hospitably entertained. Some serious free Blacks had received intelligence, I find, from St. Kitt's of our intention to visit them, and had joined together to bear the expense of supporting us. In the evening a pretty congregation, without any regular notice, was gathered together. But being now in the dominions of a foreign power (Eustatius belonging to the Dutch), I thought it prudent to inform people that I should not preach that evening, as I had not waited on the governor. And yet, notwithstanding, we were obliged to pray three times, and sing twice, before they would go away. The Lord raised up lately a Negro slave whose name is Harry (who was brought here from the continent, and who was formerly a member of our society) to prepare our way.⁴ Harry did so grieve in spirit at the wickedness of the people around him that at last the fire broke forth, and he bore a public testimony for Jesus. The governor came to hear him, and approved of what he said. But in a little time the poor slaves were so affected under the word that many of them fell down as if they were dead, and some of them would remain in a state of stupor for some hours. One night sixteen of them fell down in this manner. Then the governor sent for Harry, and forbid him to preach any more under severe penalties. He would have ordered him to be whipped, if the Fischal or supreme judge, who was present at the same time, had not observed that he had done nothing worthy of corporal punishment. Harry has awakened about twenty souls, who are willing immediately to be put into class. There is also a black woman here who came from America, who loves God. The day after Harry's mouth was stopped we landed, to the joy of his poor little flock; and on the day we landed the governor was taken ill.

¹William Brazier would later join Hammet and another Methodist missionary.

²John Tunnell (1755–90), of Fredericksburg, VA, was converted in 1776 and became an itinerant the following year. He died in 1790 after eight years of declining health: a simple-hearted, artless, childlike man ... a good historian, a sensible, improving preacher, a most affectionate friend, and a great saint' (Asbury, *Journal*, 1:645).

³Coke gives his first name in his letter to JW of Feb. 3, 1789.

⁴Not to be confused with Harry Hoosier.

Thursday the 25th, we waited on the captain of the island who now represents the governor, and on the Fischal or judge. The Fischal told us that we must be private, till the court had considered whether our religion should be tolerated or not. The Captain also ordered us to prepare our Confession of Faith and credentials, and to present them to the court on Saturday; with all which we complied. We have been since informed that they were highly satisfied with our confession. But they ordered us to wait till the next court for an answer, which will be held on Wednesday in the next week. They could all speak English except the Fischal, and yet they would converse with us only through an interpreter. This is, I suppose, the custom. Indeed, there is much more English than Dutch spoken in this island.

Sunday the 28th a private message was sent me that the captain and council would be glad to meet me in the afternoon in a private house, to which the captain of the Blacks would bring me, and hear me preach. I met them accordingly at the time appointed, and preached before them on 1 John 5:12, 'He that hath the Son, hath life.'

Our friend Captain de Lion tells me they were highly pleased, and in the evening the interpreter of the court sent us one of his black maid-servants to be instructed and prepared for baptism. She really seems, in some measure, to feel herself a sinner.

We have seen here a most curious fish. It is small, but has two horns on the top of its head, two horns behind, and a tail like a paddle; its head and eyes are exactly like those of a hog. When dressed it eats like the flesh of chicken.

Tuesday the 30th, I waited on the captain again, to resolve two questions: 1) Why do you call yourselves Methodists? 2) How are your ministers supported?

I must conclude, lest I should lose the English packet. The beginning of next week I intend to sail, God willing, for Charleston. But I shall preach in this island with or without leave, the Lord being my helper.

Give my most affectionate love to our London society. Never does a day pass, I think I may say, but I bear them fervently and particularly before the throne. The only return I desire is that they will do the like for me.

I am, with the greatest fidelity,
Your most affectionate son,

Thomas Coke

Source: published transcription; A Continuation of Dr. Coke's Journal, in two Letters to the Rev. J. Wesley (London: Paramore, 1787), 9–12.

From Mary Cooke

Duke Street, Trowbridge
February 1, 1787

Through the tender mercy of our God, we are once more delivered; or at least, we have a respite from that outward tumult with which for some time past we have been encompassed. I embrace the comparatively quiet season to write to my dear father, my kind friend.

We have lately been much disturbed by riots. We have dwelt amongst [ones] who are enemies to peace. (I do not mean in the religious, but in the trade way.) Yet 'the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!'¹ Even he who restraineth the rage of the heathen, and stilleth the madness of the people. Who shall harm whom the Lord preserveth! Or confound those who trust in him! We have truly proved that he holds the reins of government in his own hands, and that all events are at his disposal. Threats have been plenteously bestowed. And had we not a stronger than an arm of flesh to confide in, our hope had been in ruins. In the midst of apparent danger, I have been kept without fear, except for one hour; and even this proceeded from worn out animal spirits rather than a real fainting of soul. I feel more in prospect of future consequences than for the rising and present effects of this mob. I do not mean with respect to temporal affairs. Now it is quelled, I know not that these will be materially injured thereby. May the dear Jesus grant that more important concerns be not involved! However, these things are but darkly foreseen. There is a possibility they *may* be averted.

Although these outward disturbances have not been suffered to distress or hurt my soul, yet my body bears all their weight. The whole nervous system (never at the best very strong) feels to myself as all ruination—and this through unusual noise and hurry, broken sleep, daily alarms, and frequent nocturnal surprises. Herefrom arises an incapability of performing with care the most trivial action. Even the writing these few lines is too much. I feel as it were *all over* distracted, and weakness to the very points of my fingers.

I trouble you with these complaints as an apology for everything, of every kind, that is amiss. Nor should I in such a state have attempted to write, but I remember it is *long* since I received your kind letter, and I fear that my silence will either give uneasiness or be attributed to some wrong cause.² Besides, I have a still more prevailing motive—viz., a recollection that the usual time for your visit to Bath and Bristol approaches. And when put to the proof, I find that both success and disappointment have the same tendency, when the desire of obtaining any favour is strong. The past discouragement which arose from your not visiting us last autumn, instead of preventing, rather excites me the more earnestly to solicit your company next month. My very soul weeps while I say, *Perhaps* this will be the *last* time I shall ever have an opportunity of seeing you *in Trowbridge*! But more of this when I know more assuredly myself. I will still hope. — All is *yet* uncertain.

If you *will*, if you can thus oblige us, we shall be very happy to see you. Shall I have a letter naming any time when we may expect you, so as to give it out for your preaching here? And I trust the hoped-for visit will be lengthened as much as possible.

My sisters [Anne and France] join in respectful love. Pray for [us]! Pardon all the trouble I give you with all the incoherencies and foolishnesses of this scrawl, and believe that I feel myself to be

Your affectionate, and gratefully obliged

M. C.

Address: 'The Revd J. Wesley / New-Chapel City-Road / London'.

Endorsement: by Cooke, 'Answer to Mr. Wesley's 13th letter'.

Source: manuscript copy for records; Bridwell Library (SMU), Mary Cooke Letter-book, pp. 13–14.

¹Rev. 19:6.

²Cooke was replying to JW's letter of Dec. 12, 1786, *Works*, 30:513–14.

From John Spencer¹

Thorne
February 7, 1787

The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away my dear wife. Yes, she that never gave me an angry word, nor so much as the shadow of an angry look, is now numbered among the dead! My loss is so truly great, that I am sure none but God can repair it. But I submit. Father, thy will be done!

Under her great affliction she set such an example of patience and resignation as is seldom seen. And as she lived, so she died, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost.

A little before her departure, she said, 'I hear such delightful music as is beyond the power of any mortal to describe!' And then in a rapture cried out, 'See! God is so good, as to send his angels to take care of me! See! see! O the great goodness of God to me!' After this she lay still a while, and then fell asleep in the arms of Jesus.

As to her character, it may be truly said she was one of the excellent of the earth. She took great delight in private prayer, and often retired to pour out her soul before God. Her reverence for his word was such that she seldom read it but on her knees. She frequently rose at midnight to praise God, be the weather cold or hot. She took great delight in visiting the sick and the distressed, and in relieving them according to her ability. But she took care to go nowhere, at any time, without a probability either of getting or doing good.

I cannot recollect that she ever missed any public ordinances, be the weather ever so severe.

And as to evil-speaking, I never heard her once utter a disrespectful word of anyone. And when others did, she reproved them in good earnest, and at the same time with the utmost meekness: saying, 'Are you doing to that person what you would he should do unto you? Have you forgot what the Holy Ghost says by St. James, "Brethren speak not evil one of another."'²

Thus she lived, and died, holy in all manner of conversation, as he who had called her is holy.

John Spencer

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 10 (1787): 300–01.

¹Titled: 'An Account of Mrs. Spencer, who died January 16, 1787'. John Spencer (1754–1812) was a cooper in Thorne, Yorkshire. The details on his wife have not been located.

²Cf. James 4:11.

From Robert Carr Brackenbury

Channel Islands
c. February 10, 1787¹

**The Experience of Thomas Basker
of Ashby near Spilsby, in Lincolnshire²**

I was born in the year of our Lord 1729. The first convictions of sin I can remember were about the seventh year of my age, which I was often distressed in mind. This distress was not a little increased by a dreadful habit of swearing, which I contracted even at that early period. My employment was to look after cattle. They were often very unruly, which was a continual provocation to me to commit that sin.

At length, being very uneasy, I resolved to change my calling, and put myself apprentice to a weaver. Here I was freed for a time from temptation, till, beginning to weave myself, bad work and want of experience in the business provoked me still more. So that I have frequently swore till I could speak no longer. At other times, when the work succeeded to my mind, I accounted myself happy. However, any passion so often got the better of my reason that my master, taking notice of it, used to say, 'The devil will come and fetch you.' I believed him, and dreaded it greatly, being then about fifteen years of age. Through these apprehensions, and my prayers to the Lord, I was greatly restrained till I quitted my master—but was still a poor miserable sinner, ignorant of my duty in every other respect, and alienated from God, both in temper and conduct.

I then set up for myself, and being free from any outward restraint, resumed my former course of profaneness. Not contented with this, I gave the reins to my passions and addicted myself to drunkenness and uncleanness. I continued in rebellion against God more than twenty years—all which time I had an earnest desire of hearing the people called Methodists, but had no opportunity till a young man whom I hired for my journeyman reproved me for my sins. As he was very serious, his words took great hold of me. But what most of all affected my heart was the following circumstance.

We had a cow (for I was now married) which had just calved.³ And as she was likely to afford us plenty of milk in the winter, and the business increasing, I began to flatter myself with hopes of a more prosperous condition. I went one Lord's day morning to fetch a churn from my mother's. As I returned with it I indulged my imagination with a train of those ideas, and was exceedingly happy. In the evening I attended the cow, to appearance in perfect health. But to my great grief and astonishment, when I went to her the morning after, I found her dead. This was so unexpected a trial, and withal so grievous a loss, that from that moment I relinquished all hopes of earthly felicity.

I then went to hear the Methodists for myself. The word of God was quick and powerful. I was convince of all, and judged of all. But what then particularly fastened on my mind was that 'if these people lived as they preached, and professed to believe, they were certainly of God'. Being desirous of instruction, I joined myself to them without delay, my wife also going with me. But as yet I had no knowledge of the true God or of his Son Jesus Christ, knowing only the spirit of bondage to fear, and endeavouring to establish my own righteousness by the works of the law. Not that I expected to

¹JW mentioned receiving this account in his reply to Brackenbury of Feb. 16, 1787, *Works*, 30:535–37.

²An editorial comment at the end of the account reads: 'The above narrative was taken down from his own lips about three years before his decease by a person on the strictest veracity and exemplary piety [Brackenbury?]. From whom we further learn that Thomas Basker continued to the end of his pilgrimage to demonstrate the reality of the work of grace on his soul by his meek, humble, patient, and loving spirit, and by his modest and upright deportment. He entered into his eternal rest in the month of July 1784.' Thomas Basker (1729–84) was buried July 5, 1784 in Ashby, Lincolnshire.

³Basker married Frances Horton (1736–98) on May 14, 1753, in South Thoresby, Lincolnshire.

recommend myself to God by the performance of duties, but being ignorant of the free justification of a sinner by faith in Christ, I was still seeking after some qualifications in myself for obtaining pardon, and hoped in this way to receive the blessing.

At this time believers were very scarce in our parts. I knew but one woman in all the neighbourhood who made profession of having found the Lord, which was no small discouragement to me. At length, however, the Lord was mercifully pleased to send me deliverance, which happened as follows. I went to preaching as usual. And the man of God spoke from Matthew 5:25: 'Agree with thine adversary quickly' The manner in which he opened the words was this. The adversary was God, the judge was Christ, the officer was the devil, and the prison [was] hell. These things being brought home to my heart by the Spirit of the Lord, I was arraigned, cast, and condemned. And surrendering to God at discretion, I was instantly released from my bondage and rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

My peace was uninterrupted for a season, and I was ready to think I should learn war no more. But it was not long before the Lord showed me what was in my heart. Then the enemy assaulted me with doubts and fears, both as to the certainty of what was past and also as to what was yet before me. Still I held fast my confidence, knowing my pardon was sealed in heaven. But being ignorant of Satan's devices, I was often in perplexity respecting my temporal affairs.

The enemy involved me in trouble by insinuating that my family was increasing, and that nothing but contempt and poverty were before me. I could not doubt of the Lord's favour with regard to my eternal concerns, but as to the prospect of approaching calamity, I found it difficult to disbelieve the devil's lie. And I was also afraid of bringing reproach on the truth, and that others would be offended through me.

Another device of Satan was by placing (what we commonly call) the eternal and absolute *decrees* in my way, which I was mightily inclined to believe, from the strong confidence I found towards God. But observing their influence on my daily walk, how my inward experience began to decline, and how I was turning the grace of God to lasciviousness, I suspected the deceit—and plainly perceived their evil tendency: first, to beguile me of my simplicity; and then, to plunge my soul into endless and irretrievable perdition. I then humbled myself in the sight of the Lord, who mercifully condescended to lift me up, and I was again established in the grace and truth of the gospel.

After this, persecution arose because of the word. The principal person of the village, whose tenants we were, having long beheld the Methodists with an evil eye, determined at last to rid himself of them, by ejecting them out of their places. He sent his servant to take observation of such as frequented the private meetings. Hitherto I had been graciously supported, and had also been helpful in supporting others. But through reasoning with the enemy, the Lord withdrew from me. Immediately my countenance changed and all that were present observed the perturbation of my mind. I was sensible of my weakness and called upon the Lord. He instantly answered me, and my confidence returned. Finding I must either be turned out of my house, or Christ out of my heart, I resolved, by his assistance, on the former. And my dear wife, who had always strengthened me to bear the cross, concurring with me therein, we quitted the place. As did several others who were joined with us in society. This proved a great blessing to us all, both before and afterwards. We loved as brethren while we dwelt together, and when separated from each other we still experienced the faithfulness of our God.

Another good effect presently ensued, which was the spreading of the gospel in several places we repaired to—the Lord over-ruling the trial for this blessed end, thus making, as the Psalmist had long before observed, the wrath of man to praise him.⁴ My wife and I cast ourselves upon the parish we belonged to, and were sorely exercised for a season, having little preaching and none of our neighbours believing our report. Hereupon carnal reasonings began to multiply upon me. I was ready to ask, 'Why did the Lord send me here?' But afterwards he was please to reveal *even this* unto me. The ensuing winter a neighbour promised to accompany me to the preaching. He did so, and was convinced. And afterward persuading his wife to go likewise, they both joined us, with diverse others of the place, and the work of

⁴See Ps. 76:10.

God prospered in our hands. We invited the preachers to our little village (Ashby near Spilsby), and blessed be God, they have continued to come to this day. Things thus turning out even beyond my expectations, my faith was increased, and I had great joy in beholding and admiring the wonders of the Lord.

Still something was wanting to relieve my anxieties and to content my mind. I often felt risings of corrupt nature within, which I could not prevent, though at the same time sin had lost its dominion. I saw the good land of promise at a distance, and wanted to enter in. About this time Mr. [Thomas] Westell preached at my house. He clearly described that holiness I had long been seeking after, and insist[ed] that it was a present salvation, to be received by faith. I was enabled to believe his testimony. I had experience a great variety of temptations, my enemies thrusting sore at me, to make me fall. But the Lord was my helper. He led me in a path I had not known, and gradually prepared my heart for the reception of his best and divinest treasure.

I walked in glorious liberty one whole year. But having none to converse with upon the nature of that work, I insensibly fell from grace and found myself again open to the incursions of Satan. But on brother Norris's coming into the circuit, the Lord, of his infinite goodness, revisited my soul.⁵ He showed me I must come as at first. And applying his word, from time to time, to my heart, I could find no rest in my spirit till the happy hour of my deliverance was come. Being at work one morning at the loom, I was meditating on the goodness of God and he said to me with power, 'Arise my love, my fair one, and come away.'⁶ This was, if I remember right, in the year 1780. Since that time my peace has been without interruption, and by many and precious promises the Lord has confirmed me in his love, giving me continual openings of heaven in the inner man, and feeding my soul with the delights of paradise.

I am not, indeed, freed from temptations—and sometimes very strong ones too. But in the midst of all, Jesus is my life. He rebukes the tempter, and says to sin and temptation, 'Hitherto shall ye come, and no farther.'⁷ The Lord is daily teaching me the lessons of his grace. And although I am a very dull disciple of so kind and indulgent a master, yet one thing I trust I have learned of very great importance: viz., that without him I am nothing and can do nothing; and that the nearer the soul advances to its center, the clearer discoveries it obtains of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and of the absolute necessity of self-emptiness and deep poverty of spirit, in order to the true enjoyment of the divine riches.

I am now waiting for my change, which I have long looked for with joyful expectation, which being unclothed of this body of corruption, my soul will be clothed upon with its house from heaven, and see the glories of the adorable Saviour whom it here loved. For I know in whom I have believed, and am firmly persuaded with the apostle that, by the grace of God, neither life nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor this present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus my Lord.⁸ To whom be glory forever and ever, Amen.

Thomas Basker

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 15 (1782): 638–43.

⁵John Norris (1738–81) first appears in the 1778 *Minutes* as an itinerant 'on trial', appointed to the Grimsby circuit (see *Works*, 10:477). He was admitted to full standing the next Conference and appointed to nearby Epworth (10:486). He was appointed to Epworth again in 1781, where he died in Oct. (10:520).

⁶Song of Sol. 2:10.

⁷Job 38:11.

⁸See Rom. 8:38–39.

From Robert Carr Brackenbury

Channel Islands
c. February 10, 1787¹

**The Experience of J. B.
of St. Helier in the Isle of Jersey²**

[1.] In the middle of April 1785 I was one day deeply troubled. It seemed hell was just ready to devour me for the sins I had committed against so holy and so merciful a God. But at night my concern gradually wore off, and I thought little about it for six days. But on the seventh of June I awoke as out of sleep, and being more concerned than ever, cast myself before the Lord and implored his mercy. I had been about three hours in prayer when I saw by faith the Lord Jesus on the cross, and the blood streaming from his side. Immediately my load dropped off, and I believe my sins were blotted out, though I had not yet a testimony of his Spirit that I was a child of God. Yet I enjoyed a calm, serene peace, and had no fear either of death or hell.

2. But the work of God in my soul so weakened my body that I was obliged to take to my bed for some days. During that time what consolations did I receive from my faithful Bridegroom! But one day I was afraid he was going to leave me. At this I was troubled, and said, 'I will not let thee go unless thou bless me.'³ Presently that promise came to my mind, 'I will not leave you comfortless, but will send another Comforter, and he shall abide with you forever.'⁴ I believed it belonged to me, and was so inflamed with love and gratitude as I am not able to express. At the same time, my mind was so enlightened that I saw Jesus as with me, and that all his promises belonged to me. On this my soul was filled as with marrow and fatness, and I praised the Lord with joyful lips.

[3.] Sometime later, as I was going to bed one evening, I prayed to the Lord that his holy angels might encamp around me, to protect me from the powers of darkness. Falling asleep, I thought I saw myself in company with the Saviour of the world, while his holy angels encompassed my bed! Another evening I dreamed that my spirit was suddenly wrapped up into heaven, where I was surrounded with light and beheld the glory of God. And after I awoke the light seemed to continue with me for a considerable time. Oh what favours are these, which he has conferred on a poor worm! Indeed they were so great that spiritual pride took occasion to attack me unawares. But I was convinced of it by a dear sister in Christ. While she spoke, my conscience pleaded guilty, and I lost the presence of my Saviour about a quarter of an hour. On this I wept bitterly before him, and he both pardoned me and cleansed my soul anew.

4. After this the Lord conferred still greater favours upon me. My faith was so strong that I beheld the day of judgment as already come. And even this was little to what was afterwards revealed to me. For meeting one day with the people of God, I saw myself surrounded with light and was taken, as it were, into the bosom of my Saviour. Another time, being at the meeting of the class, I saw the majesty of the King of kings in the midst of the assembly. Immediately I cast myself all trembling at his footstool! Some time after, being just ready to lay me down to sleep, I found myself again, as it were, in my Lord's bosom, who said, 'In a little time thou shalt be with me in paradise.'⁵ This gave me great joy, as I knew I

¹JW mentioned receiving this account in his reply to Brackenbury of Feb. 16, 1787, *Works*, 30:535–37. The account switches between first person and third person, indicating that Brackenbury was taking extracts from Bisson's journal and adding comments of his own.

²'J. B.' is Jeanne Le Gros Bisson; for details see her letter to JW of July 11, 1787.

³Gen. 32:26.

⁴Cf. John 14:16.

⁵Cf. Luke 23:43.

should then possess all the 'great and precious promises'.⁶

5. One day I beheld the heavenly city just at hand, and the Lord Jesus said to me, 'In a little time, my child, thou shalt be in full possession of this glorious kingdom' And he gave me so great a measure of light that I could already see the gate of the heavenly city, and the inscription thereon in golden letters; but I could not read it. I saw likewise the beams of the Sun of righteousness shining on the city with refulgent splendour. He then said to me, 'Thou shalt shortly be there. But first thou must suffer sharp trials for my sake.' I firmly believed it, and rejoiced that I was counted worthy to suffer for his name's sake.

6. I found myself from time to time under the wings of the glorious Father of lights. Sometimes I was prostrate before him, when he covered me with the cloud of his heavenly protection. I dreamed on night I was seated on a very high mountain, where was a river of living water, clear as crystal. I believed it was that mentioned in the Revelation as proceeding from the throne of God and the Lamb.⁷ Not a few times have I been favoured with a view of that celestial city. By oh was there no other happiness than to be always in the company of the adorable Saviour, it were enough to ravish the soul with unspeakable and endless admiration!

7. Another time being on my knees before the great God, I was singing the first verse of the 42nd Psalm.

For thee, my God, the living God
My thirsty soul doth pine:
O when shall I behold thy face,
Thou majesty divine?⁸

The Lord answered me, 'Shortly thou shalt see it.' Blessed forever be his holy name! O what hast thou prepared for those whom thou hast redeemed with thy most precious blood! O what happiness! O eternity! What joy must be in heaven, since the foretaste is so delicious! Who would not endure any sufferings here to enjoy thee, my Beloved, eternally?

8. My loving Saviour hath taken possession of my heart, and has shut the door so that all my enemies cannot open it. He is my King and reigns in my soul. Hence I am in safety, being kept by the Monarch of heaven and earth. O that the Almighty should discover his secrets to such a poor creature as me! One day having been praying for my brother, the Lord said, 'I will give him the same blessing I have given thee.' And I know this will be fulfilled in due season.

9. Twice here I beheld myself washed by my Saviour in the clean water of his grace. And once he poured into my soul a large quantity thereof. O that these rivers of pure water may flow abundantly into my soul! How gracious is the Lord, who shows me by his divine light the work of sanctification advancing in me! And one evening in prayer I saw my soul in heaven, accompanied by the holy angels, and glorifying the Lord with all the blessed.

10. These experiences took up several months. She then visited some Christian friends in the country in January 1786.⁹ At the conclusion of one of their assemblies, when most of them were gone away, she stayed with a few and prayed, when the power of God came upon them in an extraordinary manner. She told a friend that she never saw anything like it before, and that her spirit was so absorbed in the joys of the blessed that she hardly knew whether she was in heaven or on earth. Soon after she came

⁶2 Pet. 1:4.

⁷See Rev. 22:1.

⁸Nahum Tate and Nicholas Brady, *A New Version of the Psalms of David, fitted to the Tunes Used in the Churches* (London: M. Clarke, 1696), 83.

⁹Orig., '1785'; a mistake.

home, she was taken ill. What then occurred she thus related.

11. A few nights before my illness I had a frightful dream; but I gave myself to the Lord. The next night I had another, wherein my dear Saviour greatly comforted me. Awaking in the morning, I had much pain in my head and throat. But I did not suppose my sickness was mortal, as I had not experienced the trials which I had reason to expect. Ill as I was, I went to the meeting, thinking it might possibly be the last time. It was a blessed opportunity. But it was with great difficulty I got back to our house. The next day I was obliged to taken my bed. My pains were considerable, but I hardly felt them—so ravishing was the sweetness which the Lord poured into my soul. Wednesday, the 4th, I had a small combat with the enemy. But looking up, I was presently delivered. Meantime I continually tasted the great and ineffable sweetness of my Saviour. The following night, when I was asleep, I found myself closely engaged with Apollyon, who with one of his hands, which was of enormous size, seized me by the stomach. I waked and he strongly assaulted my soul, telling me my sins were too many to be forgiven. I answered him I knew they were all forgive; that I was a child of God, who had solemnly avowed fidelity to his service, and was resolved to be faithful even unto death. I began, notwithstanding, to be terrified. But in the moment the spirit of prayer came upon me, and immediately the gate of the celestial city was opened, where the Lord showed me I should have a place to all eternity. I was animated with new life, and entreated the Lord that I might continue in prayer till I was fully delivered. In a moment I was at perfect liberty, and sung praise in my heart to my merciful Deliverer.

12. After I fell asleep the enemy came to me again. But I soon awoke and began to pray, on which he fled from me. And this was the last time he was permitted to assault me during my illness. Two months before this the Lord had discovered to me the corruptions that remained in my heart, inspiring me at the same time with an ardent desire of an entire deliverance from them. It was then I perceived my Lord coming, in order to set me free, and that the adorable Trinity came (as I observed before) to dwell in my heart. This grace was likewise renewed in me some weeks after, and increased continually till the happy moment of my full deliverance. The manner of this I shall now relate. (N.B. Which to me appears not a little whimsical. However I submit to better judgment, being unable to determine.¹⁰) The first day of my illness, about 7:00 in the evening, the Lord wrought in me, a poor sinner, this great salvation. I had spent some hours in fervent prayer for the blessing when he came to my soul and plucked up every root of sin. I contemplated with an overflowing fulness of joy the marvellous work the Lord had wrought in me, but could not yet comprehend the manner in which the man of sin was destroyed. I saw the gate of the heavenly Jerusalem was open to me, and the Lord said, 'Thou shall shortly enter in.' At the same time I was accompanied with the heavenly host, and was ordered to call all my family, in order to give them my blessing and then to pray for the church of Christ. But oh happy change, which I still experience! No more self-will. No more desire for anything on earth. Everything tasted of heaven, the Lord being the absolute master of every faculty of my soul. Friday evening the Lord bade me see how he destroyed the man of sin. But I cannot fully express it. I beheld sin as a horrible monster, which the Lord dismembered till the whole appeared lifeless and torn in pieces.

Twice he has given me to taste, though in different ways, the fruit of the tree of life. The discovery which he has made to me of the invisible world is inexpressible. I can only say that the light of the celestial city shines refulgently bright on my soul.

13. While she was confined to her bed, often in violent pain, she expressed a lamb-like patience. When she was able to speak, she related the inward conversation which passed between her and her Beloved, who appeared to her in a bright, shining garment of ineffable lustre. Meantime she saw herself in a glistening garment, near the river of death, waiting for a call to pass over to the city which she had continually in view on the other side. All this time she had a heavenly smile on her countenance, with the simplicity and sweetness of a little child.

All the members of the society in town, and many from the country who went to see her, were greatly edified. Everyone felt a divine attention in the things which she delivered. And they all supposed

¹⁰This is apparently Brackenbury's parenthetical addition.

the soul would be soon dislodged from its earthly tabernacle. But she herself supposed this would not be soon. Yet she never foretold either the hour or day. Her recovering was very gradual, it being some weeks before she was able to walk alone.

14. What follows is the substance of her experience from this time till midsummer. January 1786, being one evening in meditation, the Lord took me into his holy city, and discovered to me a ray of his holiness, which forced me to cry out, 'O the holiness, the holiness of the Lord Jehovah! Who may walk in his presence?' After this discovery, on beam of which had made my body so faint that it could scarce recover, he showed me a ray of his glory, and I cried out, 'Ah who can endure this glory!' He answered, 'She whom I have cleansed, even thee!' I cried out again, 'O the glory and holiness of my King! I cannot yet sustain it.' Whereupon the Lord said, 'I have made thee gracious promises; keep them in the secret of thy soul.' I also heard the blessed cry, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts!'¹¹

15. I was afterward in contemplation when the Lord said to me, 'Write these things, for in so doing thou wilt glorify thy heavenly Father.' I then wrote as above. Being again in deep contemplation, the Lord discovered to me his love, his glory, and his holiness. At this time my body became as dead, and my soul was in an ecstasy; and I cried out, 'I cannot, I cannot yet support his cries!' O immense goodness of my King! Let all thy dear children bless and praise thee forever!

One Lord's-day evening, as I was singing the praises of God, I thought myself in heaven, where the holy angels assisted me to sing in the presence of my King, 'Glory be given to thee forever!' Another time I heard them sing those words in the Revelation, 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty! Who was, and who is, and who is to come!'¹²

16. About this time she went into the country for the recovery of her health. Having occasion to exhort in the house where she lodged, I [i.e., Brackenbury] advised her to keep low, lest she should be exalted by the multitude of revelations. Hereupon she wrote to me the following letter, dated the 9th of March.

The Lord's favours to me are innumerable. Yesterday he held me so closely united to himself that I was not able to converse with you. Since you spoke to me on the subject of humility, I have found an increase of the Lord's goodness, and I find more joy in considering my own nothingness than even in considering what he has done for me. And when the tears of humility flow abundantly from my eyes, it is then I find the most secret, the most holy, and the most solid joy. On Monday, being alone before the Lord, when I felt his love, together with deep humility, I rendered thanks to him for all his favours and begged of him to show me what I needed. He said, 'Abide always at my feet, and take particular care never to depart from thence, lest Satan, who is always at hand, should seduce thee to evil.' I then begged that he would grant me the grace never to go out from thence. Upon which he said, 'My presence shall go with thee, and accompany thee to the end.' I entreat you, sir, to speak to me much of humility, that I may never lose it, but increase therein more and more. I do not ascribe anything to you, but I know the Lord has used and does use you for my good. To him be glory eternally!

I am, etc.

17. On March 14 she wrote thus: I find, thanks be to God, the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost dwelling in my soul. After preparing the place, it is the will of the holy Trinity to make their settled abode therein, as being their own house, and they have taken possession of it, to go out no more forever. O happy state, to be counted worthy to receive God, the Holy One, yea, holiness itself—whom the angels adore in heaven, and before whom they cover their faces with their wings! How pure then ought the place of his abode to be? Inasmuch that if his blessed Spirit did not cleanse the heart of his children from all

¹¹Isa. 6:3.

¹²Rev. 4:8.

filthiness of flesh and spirit, the Lord would never deign to abide there as in his proper dwelling. Happy they who entertain this divine Ghost!¹³ They need no longer fear any evil, being in peace and rest under the government of so good a King! Glory be to our God for giving me this happy lot! To have his kingdom set up over all the faculties of my soul and body! May the Lord of heaven and earth be eternally praised for the same, through Christ Jesus!

18. March 29. I vowed to the Lord not to eat bread or drink water till I had a favourable answer in behalf of his dear people in the Island [of Jersey], who are so persecuted for his sake. And this day being appointed for prayer on the occasion, I went to the meeting and entreated the Lord for them, and received a promise that they should be delivered.

It is remarkable that the persecution which had continued for several months, of which they had no hopes of redress by law, immediately ceased from this time. So did God hear the prayer. In the evening as I was praying, the Lord poured his Spirit into all the faculties of my soul. It is out of my power to tell the effect it had both on my soul and body. It seemed to run through all my veins. It animated my soul with more love than before, and united me more closely to God. I was, as it were, swallowed up in the ocean of the infinite love of God.

19. Sunday, April 2. This was a peculiarly solemn day to my soul. After dinner I went to the meeting, and during the sermon I felt a great work carrying on in my soul, in an incomprehensible manner. I was conscious the Lord was carrying on the wonderful work of my sanctification. It made me faint away several times. In the evening, while the preacher was representing to the rioters the judgments of God which hung over their heads, I had so clear a view of them as filled me with unfeigned love for their poor souls, and induced me to pray fervently for them. And I felt I could have poured out the last drop of my blood to retrieve them from ruin.

20. Tuesday, May 2. Being at prayer, I beheld the angels casting their crowns before the throne and worshipping him that liveth forever and ever. And I was suddenly wrapt up into heaven with them. The same day, after dinner, I was quite absorbed in God. I saw him seated on his throne of glory. Indeed it was but a glimpse, an imperfect view; yet it was in a wonderful manner—his glory being forth like the sun at noon-day! The Lord be praised for granting me to be at all time closely united to himself! Although it is true, I am some days more closely united than others.

Sunday, [May] 14. Being at the preaching, I was so overpowered that I became quite insensible. But though my outward senses were locked up, I thought I heard the angels before the throne crying out aloud, 'Glory, and honour, and wisdom, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever.'¹⁴

At present I can only say, O how happy are my days! I scarce know any difference between them. The Lord, who is nothing but love, giving me every day to rest in his bosom!

21. Tuesday, [May] 16. I was strongly assaulted by the enemy of my soul. But my faith, instead of being weakened, was much confirmed by the conflict. Thursday, [May] 18. He endeavoured to make me doubt. I retired to my closet and prayed with uncommon ardour. I did not ask to be delivered from the conflict, but that I might not be overcome by it. While I prayed I found great power to resist the enemy, and when the Lord gave the victory the joy was inexpressible.

22. Friday, June 16, I was greatly tempted to doubt whether the Lord had really purified my heart. At length the merciful God was pleased to strengthen my faith to such a degree that I cried out, 'Though all the world should doubt of the work of God, yet will not I.' The same evening the Lord drew me to prayer; and while I was prostrate before him, and was thinking of the things he had done for my soul, and the afflicted state of his church in this island, the thought made such an impression upon my body that my countenance changed, my eyes overflowed with tears, and all my limbs trembled. Nor do I remember to have been ever so affected before. But I have withal infinite cause to bless the Lord. And this I will do as

¹³The manuscript may have read 'Guest'.

¹⁴Cf. Rev. 5:13.

long as I live.

23. Tuesday, [June] 20.¹⁵ The Lord's servant came to see me. He spoke to me of humility, and also advised me to guard against imaginary thoughts, which were only to divert the attention from God. Indeed I have often found useless thoughts in my imagination, perhaps without rejecting them so soon as I ought. When he was gone, I cast myself down before the Lord, imploring that I might be every day more humbled before him. And while I was yet praying I found an answer—feeling a greater measure of self-abasement. Ah who can express the redoubled joy which I then experience! Before this time I had many conflicts; but in this happy moment the Lord himself put all my enemies under my feet, and I found myself swallowed up in God, who is my true center. O the glorious and inexpressible joy which was given me in that hour! I plainly see there is no state here below more happy than that of self-denial and self-abasement. However, notwithstanding the glorious victory which the Lord gave me over my enemies, I dare not yet flatter myself that my conflicts are all over. But it is enough that the God of peace will shortly bruise Satan under my feet.

24. Wednesday, [June] 21. I abundantly tasted of the love of God, and found myself like the dust in his holy presence. But immediately a doubt was injected into my mind whether I had not deceived myself! At the instant the Lord spoke these words into my heart, 'Fear not, for thy protector is the Holy One of Israel.'¹⁶ O what an abyss of love does the Lord continually show me! Therefore does my soul praise him, and all that is within me blesses his holy name! I cannot tell to what degree his love to me is carried. He often puts it into my mind to ask some favour of him for his dear people; and no sooner have I done it than he gives me to know that he has granted my request. Praise the Lord, oh my soul!

25. Friday, [June] 23. I was so taken up with the glory of the heavenly city, and at the same time so largely tasted of the goodness and love of God, that I was constrained to cast myself down at his feet. My soul was so ravished that it seemed to me to be the very moment that I was to go and take possession of his glory. But I was not ravished so much with the glory of the place as with the tenderness of my faithful Spouse! O how closely is my soul united to him! But as the imperfection still remaining in my soul, while it inhabits the house of clay, does not suffer me to love him here below so much as I would, it reaches forth in strong desires after the world above, where it shall love him without any imperfection and adore him without end. It is not possible for me, during my present state of weakness and imperfection, to express what God have given me to know of that delightful place where he eminently dwells. Although even while I am on earth, the Spirit of the Lord often transports me to those happy mansions to which my Beloved is gone before, to prepare a place for me. Fain would my soul, which tastes so largely of his sweetness, be constantly employed in giving him glory here, till it is permitted to do it perfectly in eternity.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 11 (1788): 71–73, 127–30, 182–84, 235–37, 295–97.

¹⁵Orig., 'Tuesday 23'; a printer error.

¹⁶Cf. Isa. 41:14.

From Adam Clarke

Guernsey
February 23, 1787

Reverend and Very Dear Sir,

Hearing some time ago that you intended to visit Plymouth Dock, I wrote the beginning of this month to Mr. [John] Broadbent, begging him to entreat you in our stead 'to come over', if possible, 'and help us.'¹ Having still a strong persuasion that your visit would be accompanied with an abundant blessing, I write again to second, and render more urgent if possible, the former request. May the Lord incline you to come, and direct your every step here. And I am sure his presence will be with you in this place. There are some secular matters we require your advice in, especially concerning the importing and vending some particular goods. My advice is asked, but I find myself incapable of determining, and cannot well state the case so satisfactorily as to capacitate you to judge aright. However important these things may be, yet matters of much greater moment strongly solicit the earnestly requested visit.

If your route leads by or near Bristol, then Southampton is your nighest and readiest way. And as there are several packets that are continually coming and going, and can sail to and from each place with several points of the wind, so there will be little danger of a detention beyond your mind. I informed Mr. Broadbent that if you pleased to accept, I should esteem it a privilege to give you the meeting in any place in England, within a stage-coach day's journey from Southampton, which you should appoint, and convey you over.

My spirit is much confined here. I have not room enough to do my work. My soul is frequently diffused through all the little islands round about. I long to be more extensively useful. But it seems at present almost impossible, as I cannot preach in the language of the natives. A few days ago I gained a piece of intelligence, that gave my soul comfort, and enabled it to presage good things—viz., that the general part of the inhabitants of the island of Alderney understand English. I purpose immediately to go there, assuredly gathering from several circumstances that God has called me. Tomorrow, if the Lord spares health, and wind and weather permit, I am to sail for that place. Lord Jesus, direct and prosper my steps! I know not a soul in it, nor of a house to lay my head, nor a place to preach in. Yea, the governor, who has heard of my coming, has threatened to prohibit my landing. But this is perhaps more than the Governor of the universe will permit.

Wishing you every excellency heaven has to confer on man, I remain, reverend and very dear sir,
Your loving and obedient son in the gospel,

A. Clarke

Endorsement: by JW, 'A Clark Feb 23. 1787 / a[nswere]d. March 2'.

Source: holograph; MARC, WCB, D6/1/80a.²

¹Acts 16:9.

²A previous transcription published in Dunn, *Clarke*, 33–34.

From the Rev. John Pawson³

Glasgow
February 26, 1787

Soon after it pleased God to bring *me* to the knowledge of the truth, which was in the year 1758, my brother-in-law, Mr. Henry Tarboton (who had been all his life what the world calls a sober man) was prevailed upon to attend the ministry of the Methodists.⁴ He no sooner heard the word but saw himself a lost sinner, and accordingly set out in good earnest to seek redemption in the blood of Christ. At that time, his foes were those of his own household: my sister and his father (who lived with him) strongly opposing him. But soon after, my sister was awakened, and some years after that, his father also.⁵

He never had any deep convictions, or any painful or distressing views of the displeasure of God. But from the very first he was favoured with remarkable views of the love of God in Christ toward returning sinners, and of his willingness to save them. Many a time I have seen him sit under the word with tears of love flowing from his cheeks. And sometimes I have seen him so overpowered with the love of God that he was unable either to walk or to stand. Yet he could not believe that his sins were forgiven; I suppose because he had never had any deep convictions.

In the beginning of the year 1760 he and seven others of our family joined the society, and soon after he found a clear manifestation of the love of God to his soul. And from that time to his death, he was remarkably steady and uniform in all his conduct. He was truly simple-hearted, sincere and upright, zealous for God and his cause, and uncommonly diligent in attending all the means of grace, from the first to the last. When he was made leader of a class, he was very useful in that, and in assisting at prayer-meetings; and for many years received the preachers into his own house. He also kept up the worship of God in his family, and brought up his children in the fear of the Lord, who are all at this day members of our society.

At one time it pleased God to send conviction to the heart of a poor carnal workman who was doing a little business for him. The man happened to be in the house while he was asking a blessing at breakfast, and this proved a means of salvation to his soul. He never could forget it, nor do I believe he ever will, for he is now a steady Christian. By such little things does the Lord sometimes work upon the minds of men, even when those which are greater have no effect.

He had for some years prayed for and taken all possible pains with his aged father, apparently to no purpose at all. But the Lord found out a way to do him good, which man could not have thought of. He was one Lord's Day, in the interval of public worship, teaching one of his children the *Instructions for Children* (a little girl of eight or nine years old). When the child was repeating these words, 'Take care that you do not draw near to God with your lips, while your heart is far from him. Beware you do not say anything to God which you do not mean. You must not tell a lie to God,'⁶ She was so deeply affected, and indeed so effectually awakened, that she could not stand, but dropped down on the floor and cried aloud for mercy. His poor old father, seeing and hearing this, was cut to the heart, saw himself a lost and ruined sinner, and cried out in the bitterness of his soul for pardoning mercy. About a month after this, my brother Marmaduke Pawson called to see them one morning and they were just going to family prayer.⁷ He very readily joined with them, and was led to pray earnestly for the old man. The Lord sent an answer

³Titled: 'An Account of the Death of Mr. Henry Tarboton'.

⁴Henry Tarboton (1729–87), of Thorner, Yorkshire, married Sarah Pawson (1727–89) in June 1751.

⁵His father was Henry Tarboton (1696–1766).

⁶JW, *Lessons for Children*, Sec. II, Lesson 1 (*Works*, vol 15).

⁷Marmaduke Pawson (1740–98), of Thorner, Yorkshire.

of peace, and gave him a clear sense of his pardoning love. He lived happy in the enjoyment of it about a year, and then died in peace. May not this encourage everyone to continue praying for, and striving with their relations, notwithstanding they see no immediate fruit? God can find out a way to answer their prayers which they little think of.

Last spring he was taken with a most violent rheumatic complaint, which although he used every means which was thought necessary, it grew worse and worse. I saw him last July [1786], when with the utmost difficulty he got up to the preaching house. We prayed for him there, and for some time he was a good deal better. But afterwards the disorder returned with still greater violence.

In November last my brother wrote to me concerning him as follows:

What will be the event with respect to brother Tarboton I cannot tell, but there seems to be but little ground to hope that he will recover. Last Tuesday night I was sent for in haste, and he seemed to be in the very agonies of death, which appeared to me the most severe I ever saw. Yet he was perfectly calm, and fully resigned to the will of God, patiently waiting and longing for his release. His whole animal frame seemed to be in motion, and he was in the most violent pain. Yet he triumphed over death, and him that had the power of death. In the intervals of his violent agonies he first ordered everything respecting his funeral with the utmost composure. He then called his wife [Sarah], and took an affectionate farewell of her. He kissed her, blessed her, prayed for her, and greatly encouraged her to trust in the Lord. Then calling his son,⁸ he kissed and blessed him, and solemnly charged him to keep close to God, and to train up his children in the fear of the Lord. He then called his two daughters,⁹ and took the same method with them, and charged them to beware of loving the present world; but rather to love and serve God; adding, 'of the world you will have enough, as you will very soon be called to leave it'. He then called my little Patty,¹⁰ and blest her and prayed for her, and charged her to be a good girl. When he had done this, his agonies returned. In the next interval he broke out into strong and earnest prayer. He first prayed for the church of God in general, and then for all the preachers, that the Lord would pour out his Spirit upon them, and prosper their labours. He then remembered you, and prayed very affectionately that the Lord would bless you and yours. He then prayed for and praised God on my account. He thankfully acknowledged the goodness of God in raising me up, and delivering me from my late dangerous illness; and earnestly prayed that the Lord would spare me, and make me a blessing to my family and the church in general. In the next interval of ease he gave out and sung with a loud voice,

Come ye that love the Lord,
And let your joys be known, ...¹¹

Adding, 'Yes, we shall soon be with him.' About four in the morning he began to get a little rest, and I left him for that time.

Some days after this (my brother says) he was led to pray much that the Lord would be pleased to direct them to something which, by his blessing might be of use to him. In a day or two he heard of a medicine which had been of use to several in the same condition. This we procured, and it was a means under God of removing the violent pain, and of settling the swelling in his legs and thighs. He then

⁸Henry Tarboton (1753–1824).

⁹Grace (Tarboton) Dalby (1756–1829) and Elizabeth (Tarboton) Gilson (b. 1760).

¹⁰Martha Pawson (1784–1848).

¹¹Isaac Watts, 'Heaven Begun on Earth', included by JW in *CPH* (1737), 28–29.

complained of a violent oppression at his stomach. My brother applied the brimstone plaster and it took it entirely away, so that he got a good deal better. But afterwards the disorder returned with greater violence than ever, so that my brother wrote last week concerning him as follows:

My brother Tarboton is now no more an inhabitant of this miserable world. He died in great peace on Monday morning, February 5 [1787]. Our union continued and increased to the last. I was led to sympathize with him in his long and most painful affliction, which he bore to the last with uncommon patience and resignation. I often found very great liberty in prayer with him, and was abundantly blessed in my own soul. When I arose from prayer, he would often say, 'O how sweet! O how sweet is prayer to my soul.' I think that word was remarkably fulfilled in him, 'Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation.'¹² For the devil was never suffered to molest him from first to last, neither had he ever any doubt or fear to the last moment of his life.

I was with him till near twelve o'clock on Sunday night, when I prayed with him with great enlargement of heart. I then asked him if we should sing a hymn? He said, 'Yes; you know I always loved singing.' And accordingly he joined with us as well as he could. And when we had done, he said, 'O how sweet!' I said, 'But it will be sweeter very soon.' He said, 'I believe it will.' I then took a most affectionate farewell of him, and in about two hours he fell asleep in the Lord.

He was indeed a most tender, affectionate husband. A blessing to his children in every respect, having both their temporal and eternal interest greatly at heart. A loving and most kind brother. A useful member of society. And a pattern of Christian simplicity, and serious godliness. Many of our preachers knew him well, and dearly loved him.

J. Pawson

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 11 (1788): 578–83.

¹²Rev. 3:10.

From the Rev. Freeborn Garrettson

Halifax
March 10[–15], 1787¹

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I received yours dated London, September 30.² As I have not had an opportunity of writing for a long time, I shall be the more particular in this. By a storm Dr. [Thomas] Coke was driven to Antigua, and it is not certain when he will be here. We are much disappointed, but hope it will all work together for good.

My time this winter has been spent mostly in Horton, Windsor, and Cornwallis. In the former there has been a divine display—many convinced and converted to God. A few months ago the place was famous for the works of the devil; now for singing, praying, and hearing the word. If the work continue much longer as it has done, the greater part of the people will be brought in. I have had a blessed winter among them. The work greatly revives to the west. James Mann (a young man God has lately given us, whose praise is in the churches) writes, 'God is carrying on his work in a glorious manner in Barrington. The people flock from every quarter to hear the word. Many have been convinced, and about fourteen have been set at liberty, some of whom were famous for all manner of wickedness. The fields here seem white for harvest.'

Brother [James Oliver] Cromwell has had his station in Shelburne, but is very poorly. He writes, 'There seem to be very dull times in this town. Hundreds have the smallpox, etc. The Lord enabled me to go on as far as Cape Negro. I could only stay to preach a few sermons, etc. It would do you good to see the dear people, some rejoicing and others mourning. In this way they continued good part of the night. Depend upon it there is a blessed revival here. I returned to Shelburne very poorly, and expect, if God spares my life, to go home early in the spring.'

Brother John Mann at Liverpool writes, 'I am greatly comforted under an expectation of an ingathering here. The society is very lively; several added, and several lately converted,' Dear sir, it would cause your heart to rejoice to know what a deadly wound antinomianism has received in the town of Horton. My dear master has given me one of the first lawyers in Cornwallis, and his lady.

Brother [William] Black is very steady and zealous in our cause, and has gone for a few weeks to the country. I can say this for Halifax, they are very kind in supporting brother Black's family. I think they give a guinea a week, and they have got a famous chapel nearly ready to preach in. It will contain a thousand people. Religion, I fear, is not very deep as yet.

William Grandin, a young preacher whom I mentioned in a former letter, has returned to his friends. I am under a necessity of going to the west to relieve brother Cromwell. I know not what will become of the young work in Horton. God can raise up or send us a preacher. Poor Cumberland is still mourning for want of one.

I have received no books since I came to the province. We thought it expedient to have about fifty pounds worth printed, as the printer was at leisure this winter. He printed several tracts very reasonably. Shall I ever see your face? Lord grant that I may be found worthy to meet you in heaven. So far I have been kept by the power of the Spirit, and I hope I shall never bring a reproach on the good cause. I want to be more given up to the work, with a greater nearness to God.

I remain, as ever, your affectionate son,

F. Garrettson

¹When JW replied to this letter on July 16, 1787 (*Works*, 30:582), he indicated it was sent on Mar. 15. This was likely the date of the concluding postscript.

²See JW to Garrettson, Sept. 30, 1786, 30:488–89.

P. S. Since I wrote this letter I received one from brother Mann at Liverpool, saying, 'The Lord has broken in, in a wonderful manner, among the people, especially among the young. Within a few days twenty have been set at liberty: nine were converted one night.' Surely the Lord will do great things for us.

Source: published transcription; Bangs, *Garrettson*, 171–73.

From an Unidentified Correspondent¹

c. March 15, 1787

It pleased the Lord to lay his hand upon her about the beginning of the year 1786. Her affliction from that time was truly heavy. To all appearance her end was near about the middle of May last. At that time she could not resign herself to meet death—she was too much attached to earth and earthly friends. Yet at times she had good desires and heard with great attention the advice given her concerning her soul.

A little time after that she seemed to get something better. But it was of very short duration, as the disorder baffled the powers of medicine. She suffered so greatly in her body that she was scarcely ever free from pain, day or night, from the beginning of her disorder to her end.

In the beginning of January 1787 her strength decreased very much, and at times she thought she should die; but still had a fear of death, because she had no assurance of being happy.

Mr. [George] Shadford, one of the preachers, and a few friends came to visit her and related the happy death of a young person, which much affected her, though she was ashamed then to speak of the impressions it made. She would frequently say to her father and mother, 'I hope God will show me the way to heaven. I know none else can help me.' When Mr. Gore talked to her about the things of God, she felt much comfort, especially under his prayer.²

Mr. Shadford came again to Dover on Saturday, February 21. She was then much affected under his prayer, but [not] truly awakened to a sense of her need and danger until [Fri]day the 26th. She was then worse in body, and therefore no longer flattered herself with life; but was certain she must die, and found herself unprepared to meet God. She asked her mother [Mary] if there was mercy for her, and then called earnestly upon God. On this we sent for Mr. Shadford, who came immediately. As soon as she saw him she said, 'I am glad to see you.' He said, 'It is good news to me to hear this, and to see you distressed for a Saviour. I hope the Lord will soon set you at liberty, and that you will find this the happiest day you ever knew.' When he prayed with her, it was a moving time. After prayer he pressed her to believe in Jesus, and told her that he had borne the punishment due to her sins, and that he was then interceding for her before the throne of God. When he left her, to go to preach, she desired him to entreat God for her in the congregation, which he accordingly did. And the Lord answered for himself, for about two hours after she broke out, 'The fear of death is gone! Jesus hath pardoned all my sins!' Her mother said then, 'Becky, you can now apply this hymn to yourself:

Jesu thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress,
Midst flaming worlds in these array'd,
With joy shall I lift up my head;³

To which she answered, 'That I can, my dear mother! O my sweet Jesus! O my dear Jesus, what hast thou done for me! O I can never praise thee enough!'

When her father came in she said, 'My dear father, how shall I praise my blessed Jesus enough,

¹Titled: 'An Account of the Death of Rebecca Thornton, of Dover: who departed this life March 1, 1787, aged fifteen years'. Rebecca Thornton, daughter of Eleazer and Mary (Pascall) Thornton, was baptized in Dover in Oct. 1771.

²James Gore (c. 1759–90) was the fourth preacher assigned to the Kent circuit, along with Shadford (Assistant), William Bramwell, and Thomas Wride. Gore had just been admitted 'on trial' at the 1786 Conference (see *Works*, 10:596); he died in service, in early Feb. 1790; see the obituary note in the 1790 *Minutes* (10:713).

³Nikolaus von Zinzendorf, 'The Believer's Triumph' st. 1, as trans. by JW in *HSP* (1740), 177.

who hath done so much for me! He hath pardoned all my sins, and I know I shall go to heaven. I trust we shall all meet there.' She then repeated these words,

Give joy, or grief, give ease or pain,
Take life or friends away;
But let me find them all again
In that eternal day.⁴

She then cried out, 'Praise the Lord, oh my soul, and forget not all his benefits! Sing unto the Lord! Exalt him on high!'

Tuesday 27. Her cousin Polly Marten came in, to whom she said, 'I am dying; but I shall go to heaven and hope to see you there. There is Jesus who will forgive all your sins. He hath forgiven mine! I once thought as you do, that there was no need of it. But now I know there is. O do not put off to a sick-bed to seek him! I wish I had begun sooner. Yet after all I now love him, because he first loved me!' After this she dozed most part of the day. But when she awoke, the praises of God were continually in her mouth.

In the evening she was so full of the love of God that her soul seemed to be quite carried away into heaven; and though exceeding weak in body, yet the preciousness of Christ to her soul made her forget all her pain. For she frequently said, 'My pain is nothing. Christ puts underneath me his everlasting arms! He supports me above all my bodily afflictions! The Lord is my strength and my salvation! I hope soon to be with Jesus, to sing his praises for evermore! I hope we shall all meet to make heaven ring with the cry of his blood!'

She then exhorted all her relations that came in, particularly her eldest brother.⁵ To him she said,

'O my dear brother, I am going to heaven! And I hope to see all of you there. Surely you do not wish to be left out! I cannot bear the thought of not having you there. But you cannot go there in the state you are in. Therefore, my dear brother, turn from the evil of your ways, and God will have mercy on you. O leave off swearing! Pray, do not swear any more, nor tell lies. I have told lies, but God hath forgiven me, because I asked him. And so he will you. If you pray to him he will enable you to leave sin. O I must speak to you! The words are put into my mouth! I must utter them! I cannot help telling you my concern for your immortal soul. O think of your never-dying soul. Do not be ashamed of God's messengers. For he hath said, he that is ashamed of me, and of my word before men, of him will I be ashamed before my Father and his holy angels.⁶ If Mr. Shadford talks to you about your soul, stay and hear him. I have cause to bless God that ever he came to see me, for he is a man of God.

Although by this time she was much spent, yet she raised her dying voice to sing the following hymn,

Come ye that love the Lord,
And let your joys be known,
Join in a song with sweet accord,
While ye surround the throne.⁷

⁴Cf. CW, Hymn III, st. 9, *Funeral Hymns* (1759), 6.

⁵Lazarus Thornton (1761–1837).

⁶See Luke 9:26.

⁷Isaac Watts, 'Heaven Begun on Earth', included by JW in *CPH* (1737), 28–29.

In the night she said,

The Lord my pasture shall prepare,
And feed me with a shepherd's care:
His presence shall my wants supply,
And guard me with a watchful eye.⁸

Wednesday 28. She spoke very earnestly to some friends who called to see her. Toward night there was a great alteration; for death seemed to approach very swiftly.

Thursday morning she said, 'I am now going to the God of love!' A little after, a friend came in and brought her a cake. Her mother just said to her, 'Can you eat it?' She said, 'O do not talk to me about eating! Talk of Jesus! My dear Jesus, who has done so much for me!' About two hours before she died, her mother said, 'My dear, I believe you are now in the valley.' To which she answered,

Though in the path of death I tread,
With gloomy horrors overspread:
My steadfast heart shall fear no ill,
For thou O Lord art with me still!⁹

A little after she said, 'Jesus supports me! He puts under me his everlasting arms!' Between the hours of 4:00 and 5:00 she said,

Ready for me the angels wait,
to triumph in my blest estate!¹⁰

After this, she lay till about half past five o'clock, and then sweetly resigned her soul into the arms of Jesus!

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 11 (1788): 466–70.

⁸Joseph Addison, 'Psalm 23', st. 1, included by JW in *CPH* (1738), 4.

⁹Cf. *ibid*, st. 3, p. 5.

¹⁰Cf. CW, Hymn on Luke 14:7, st. 4, *HSP* (1749), 1:259.

From Adam Clarke

Guernsey
March 16, 1787

Reverend and Very Dear Sir,

As in my last I intimated my intention to visit the Isle of Alderney. I think it my duty to give you some particulars relative to the success of that voyage.

My design being made public, many hinderances were thrown in my way. It was *reported* that the governor had threatened to prohibit my landing, and that in case he found me on the island, he would transport me to the Casketts, (a rock in the sea, about three leagues west of Alderney, on which there is a light-house). These threatenings being published *here*, rendered it very difficult for me to procure a passage—as several of my friends were against my going, fearing bad consequences; and none of the captains who traded to the island were willing to take me, fearing to incur thereby the displeasure of the governor, notwithstanding I offered them anything they could reasonably demand for my passage. I thought at last I should be obliged to hire one of the English packets, as I was determined to go by God's grace at all events.

Having waited a long time, watching sometimes day and night, I at last got a vessel bound for the island, in which I embarked. And after a few hours of pleasant sailing, we came to the southwest side of the island, where we were obliged to cast anchor, as the tide was too far spent to carry us round to the harbour. The captain put me and some others on shore with the boat. I then climbed up the steep rocks, and got to the top of the island, and heartily thanked the Lord for my safe arrival.

Being arrived I found I had some new difficulties to encounter. I knew not where to go. I had no acquaintance in the place, nor had any invited me thither. For some time my mind was perplexed in reasoning on these things, till that word of the God of *missionaries* came powerfully to me, 'Into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house, ... and in the same house remain eating and drinking such things as they give' (Luke 10:5–7).

From this I took courage and proceeded to the town, which is about a mile distant from the harbour. After having walked some way into it, I took particular notice of a very poor cottage, into which I found a strong inclination to enter. I did so, with a 'Peace be unto this house!' and found in it an old man and woman, who having understood my business, bade me 'welcome to the best food they had, to a little chamber where I might sleep, and (what was still more acceptable) to their house to preach in'. On hearing this, I saw plainly the hand of the Lord was upon me for good, and I thanked him and took courage.

Being unwilling to lose any time, I told them I would preach that evening, if they could procure me a congregation. This strange news spread rapidly through the town, and long before the appointed hour a multitude of people flocked together, to whom I spoke *of the kingdom of God*, nearly as long as the little strength held out which remained from the fatigues of my voyage. With much difficulty I could persuade them to go away, after promising to preach to them the next evening. I then retired to my little apartment, where I had scarcely rested twenty minutes when the good woman of the house came and entreated me to come down and preach again, as several of the gentry (among whom was one of the justices) were come to hear what I had to say.

I stepped down immediately, and found the house once more quite full. Deep attention sat on every face, while I showed the great need they stood in of a saviour, and exhorted them to turn immediately from all their iniquities to the living God. I continued in this good work about an hour, having received peculiar assistance from on high, and concluded with informing them what my design was in visiting their island, and the motives that induced me thereto.

Having ended, the justice stepped forward, exchanged a few very civil words with me, and desired to see the book out of which I had been speaking. I gave it into his hand. He looked over it with attention, and asked me several questions, all which I answered apparently to his satisfaction. Having bestowed a few more hearty advices on him and the congregation, they all quickly departed, and the concern evident on many of their countenances fully proved that God had added *his* testimony to that of

his feeble servant.

The next evening I preached again to a large attentive company, to whom I trust the word of the Lord came not in vain. But a singular circumstance took place the next day. While I sat at dinner, a constable from a person in authority came to solicit my immediate appearance at a place called the *Bray* (where several reputable families dwell, and where the governor's stores are kept), to preach to a company of gentlemen and ladies who were waiting, and at whose desire one of the large store room was prepared for the purpose.

I went without delay, and was brought by the lictor to his master's apartment, who behaved with much civility, told me the reason of his sending for me, and begged I would preach without delay. I willingly consented, and in a quarter of an hour a large company was assembled. The gentry were not so partial to themselves as to exclude several sailors, smugglers, and labourers from hearing with them. The Lord was with me, and enabled me to explain from Proverbs 12:26 the character and conduct of the righteous; and to prove by many sound arguments that such a one was beyond all comparison 'more excellent than his' ungodly 'neighbour', however great, rich, wise or important he might appear in the eyes of men. All heard with deep attention, save an English gentleman, so called, who walked out about the middle of the discourse, perhaps to show the islanders that *he* despised sacred things.

The next Sabbath evening I preached in the same place to a much larger congregation, composed of the principal gentry of the island, together with justices, jurats, constables, etc. The Lord was again with me, and enabled me to declare his counsel without fear, and several were affected. Surely there will be fruit found of this, to the honour and praise of God. Even so, Lord Jesus! Amen!

The next day being the time appointed for my return, many were unwilling I should go, saying, 'We have much need of such preaching, and such a preacher. We wish you would abide in the island and go back no more.' The tide serving at about eleven o'clock in the forenoon, I attended at the beach in order to embark. But an unexpected providence rendered this impracticable. The utmost of the flood did not set the vessel afloat, and though many attempts were made to get her off by hauling astern, etc., all were in vain. I then returned to the town, the people were glad of my detention, and earnestly hoped 'that the vessel might sit fast, at least till the next spring tides'.

Many came together in the evening, to whom I again preached with uncommon liberty, and God appeared more eminently present than before, giving several to see at least 'men as trees walking'.¹ This, with several other observable circumstances, induced me to believe that my detention was of the Lord, and that I had not *before* fully delivered his counsel. The vessel being got off the same night about twelve o'clock, I recommended them to God, promised them a preacher shortly, and setting sail I arrived in Guernsey in about twenty-one hours. Glory be to God for ever! Amen.

Several very remarkable circumstances attended this little voyage. the relating of which I omit. From the whole of which I conclude that an effectual door is opened in that island for the reception of the everlasting gospel, and am convinced that I did not mistake the call of the Lord. One thing I believe greatly contributed to the good that may have been done—viz., a day of fasting and prayer, which I got our societies both in town and country to observe, Were this method more frequently adopted, we should not attempt the introduction of the gospel into *new* places so much in vain.

There is not the smallest opposition, nor likely appearance of any. As to the clergyman, he is absolutely a Gallio;² for on being informed that a Methodist preacher had got into the island, he said, 'A Quaker came apreaching here some years ago, and he did not convert one, and it is probable it will be the case with this Methodist also.' And so *he* rests perfectly contented. I am, reverend and dear sir,

Your affectionate and obedient son in the gospel,

Adam Clarke

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 15 (1792): 104–08.

¹Mark 8:24.

²See Acts 18:12–15.

From Mary Cooke

Trowbridge
March 24, 1787

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Once more ere you leave England I have permission, through spared life and health, to address you; and to testify of the continued loving kindnesses of him whose blessings fail not, whose mercies are fresh every morning—yea, renewed every moment! This, of an allowed correspondence with his highly-favored servant, I reckon not amongst the most inconsiderable privileges I enjoy. O that my heart might return suitable gratitude, and my life show forth the praises of him who, in such unnumbered instances, manifests his favor toward me! My desire is unto the Lord, and to the remembrance of his name! But oh how far short do I come of where I would be! I know that heights and depths, at present inconceivable, lie before me. I sometimes have a glimpse in prospect, but I want them in possession.

I lately find much satisfaction in retaining a sensible evidence within that I 'am not of the world'.¹ This is a truth of which Satan, not long since, tempted me to doubt. But glory be to Jesus, his promises are yea and amen! And he hath declared that he 'will with the temptation also make a way to escape'.² Faithful is he who hath promised; he also hath done it! Rescuing the captive spirit, delivering my soul from the fowler's net. Sometimes, when deeply exercised, faith begins to waver; and I almost question whether it is so, 'that all things work together for good to them that love God'.³ Yet always the given victory shames my timid fears, and rebukes my unbelief. I feel repentance for the ungrateful suspicion. Confusion overwhelms me, and I think I will do so no more. Yet here I stumble again and again, thinking if the *past* trial was for my good, the present one cannot be so. But when I get out of it, I am constrained to acknowledge that *this* also was right. That God is wiser than man and gives, or permits, what is BEST. However in this respect, my confidence in him does increase. Parabolical as it is to nature, every new conflict strengthens me, and in a measure is as a preparation for the next fiercer combat. I could not know the power of God to sustain and deliver, but by *thus* proving it. And every fresh proof thereof is as an added bulwark to my trust that he who hath brought me through so many, will not forsake me in any trouble, or leave me alone to grapple with my foes. Difficulties, or at least a deliverance from them (and without the former, the latter could *not be*), makes my hope to bloom and is productive of good fruit. 'Tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; etc.'⁴

At this present time, I have great room for praise. That peace which passeth all understanding possesseth my mind, and I feel the love of Christ constraining me to every good work. It enlarges my heart in universal good-will—hereby evidencing its divine extraction. It expands my soul, and fills it with vast *unutterable* desires to work for God! But a sense of my nothingness makes me to cry out, 'O that I were sufficient for these things!' O that my ability equalled my largest wish! To love, how sweet is obedience! When this is the actuating spring, how excellent, how easy is every precept! Then indeed it is a 'delight to *run* the way of his commandments'.⁵ A bare sense of duty causes the spirit to drag on heavily, and gives an after-reward in the consciousness of having done right. But love wings the soul, and brings its own reward in the act itself. At least experience teaches me thus. Is it not genuine? Is it not general? It is love that 'makes my willing feet in swift obedience move'!⁶ While at other times, the command comes, 'It *must* be done!' and then I hardly do it.

¹Cf. John 15:19.

²Cf. 1 Cor. 10:13.

³Rom. 8:28.

⁴Rom. 5:3–5.

⁵Cf. Ps. 119:35.

⁶Isaac Watts, 'Love to God', st. 3, included by JW in *CPH* (1738), 40.

I may truly say it was good for me to be at Bath. You was made the messenger of good news to my waiting soul, which greatly needed the reviving it then felt. That evening I was richly fed.⁷ The word of life was indeed sweet unto my taste. Yea, 'sweeter than honey and the honey comb!'⁸ Neither, I trust, was my visit to Bristol in vain. I there enjoyed many precious privileges, which I think will not be easily forgotten. When I saw you, I forgot one thing which I intended mentioning—viz., the occasion of that trouble which I strangely expressed in my last letter.⁹ On account of the riots, and consequences, it was determined that we should remove from Trowbridge. Had this been all, it might though painfully have been borne! But the place fixed on for our future residence was miserably destitute of the means of grace. Methodists would have been strangers, and preaching such as we love, there is none! In this shocking prospect was there not a cause for all the distress my mind underwent? But now, since quietness has taken place, these dreadful resolutions are happily altered.

I direct my letter by London, because I am informed that is the only safe and speedy way. I hope it will reach Manchester before you set sail for Ireland. May that Almighty power which rules the sea, say to the waves thereof, 'Peace: be still!' while you pass over! And whither you are going, may his outstretched arm be seen—not only in your preservation, but also in gathering by the word of your ministry many, many souls unto the knowledge of himself! Amen! Amen!

M. C.

My sisters [Anne and Frances] desire their most respectful love.

Address: 'The Revd J. Wesley / To be left at the Preaching House Manchester Lancashire / By the London Post'.

Endorsement: by Cooke; 'Answer to Mr. Wesley's 14th letter'.¹⁰

Source: manuscript copy for records; Bridwell Library (SMU), Mary Cooke Letter-book, pp. 14–15.

⁷JW preached in Bath on Mar. 7; then went on to Bristol.

⁸Ps. 19:10.

⁹Cooke to JW, Feb. 1, 1787.

¹⁰This letter, c. Mar. 15, is not known to survive.

From John Booth¹

c. April 1787

1. As I frequently visited Mrs. Walker,² during her last illness, I wrote down from time to time the most remarkable passages, which I hope may be a help to others, as they were to myself.

The first time I saw her, she was in the garden, where we had a little conversation together. She was then weak in body, but her soul was very happy. I promised to call when I came next that way. I did so, and preached. Afterwards we conversed very freely. Her will was quite given up to the will of God. She said, 'If I live a few years, it will be well. If not, the will of the Lord be done. All is well. He cannot err.'

2. On March 3, 1787, she was seized in so violent a manner that there was little hope of her recovery. But as soon as her pains abated, her tongue was loosed to declare the goodness of God, and to exhort all around to praise him and seek him with their whole heart. March the 8th, I went to preach there. She sent for me into the room and said, 'When I was in health, I made a profession of loving God with all my heart. So I do now that I am in a dying state. Glory be to God for all his mercies!' She added, 'If you think my name worthy to be mentioned when I am gone hence, let a sermon be preached on these words, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."³ But lay the emphasis here, *without holiness* no man shall see the Lord.'

3. March 16, she was apparently seized with death. Her speech and all her faculties failed her. But after a while they were restored and she declared the praises of God in a wonderful manner. She then said, 'I am happy, perfectly happy. It is not a vain thing to serve the Lord. O what a place is heaven! O that you did but know what I see! What a sight do I now behold! I see Hannah and my dear sister. They are two bright spirits in glory. And I shall be with them soon. I only wait thy word. I am happy, happy, happy! O Lord, thou must either enlarge the vessel, or suffer it to break.'

4. She then in a very affecting manner took leave of all her children. Mary standing near the bed, she cried out aloud, 'Mary, my dear Mary!⁴ Are you determined to be wholly the Lord's?' She replied, 'By the grace of God I am.' She answered, 'O rest not in having light, but be a real, inward Christian, and the Lord will bless you. He blesses you in a measure now! And if you cleave to him, he will bless you more abundantly.' She then called Rebecca,⁵ and said, 'Will you begin to pray, and turn unto the Lord? You were left an orphan by your father when six weeks old. He said upon his deathbed, "Who can tell, but you may be the greatest comfort to your mother, when all the rest are gone?"' The Lord loves you, and is waiting to bless you with present and everlasting salvation.' Charles then coming in, she caught him in her arms and cried out, 'O Charles, my dear Charles, I have loved *you* with the bowels of a double mother.⁶ God is my witness, I could lay down my life, for the salvation of your soul. O Charles, my heart bleeds for you! You have good desires, but are led astray. You have a kind father; let not his hairs be brought with sorrow to the grave. I am going to glory, and there is room for you all. O taste and see, that

¹Titled: 'Some Account of the Death of Mrs. Walker: late Mrs. Clapham, of Leeds' 'By John Booth'. John Booth (d. 1820) had just been admitted to the itinerancy 'on trial' at the 1779 Conference (see *Works*, 10:484). He would serve for 40 years. See his obituary in *Minutes* (post-Wesley, 1820) 5:96.

²Ann Hall (1738–87), of Leeds, married William Clapham in Feb. 1759, and was widowed in 1767; she subsequently married Robert Walker in Oct. 1784.

³Heb. 12:14.

⁴Mary Clapham (b. 1765).

⁵Rebecca Clapham (b. 1767).

⁶Charles Walker (b. 1770) was her step-son.

the Lord is gracious.' Betsy being ill in the next room, was brought and laid down by her.⁷ To whom she cried, 'Betsy, my dear Betsy; you are not for this world; there is a better place prepared for you in glory. I love you dearly. You lie near my heart. You have always behaved well. If the Lord does take you hence into his kingdom, well yes, my dear

There we shall see his face,
And never, never sin;
There from the rivers of his grace
Drink endless pleasures in.⁸

'Yes, glory be to God, all tears will there be forever wiped from our eyes! There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain. For the former things are passed away, and behold all things are new.'⁹

5. Looking and seeing one of the servants standing by, she said, 'Nancy, give my kind love to Lydia and all downstairs, and tell them unless they be born again, they cannot see the kingdom of God. If your coming here should prove the salvation of your souls, you will have cause to praise God to all eternity.'

6. Turning to her husband, she cried out aloud, 'O Robert, can this be death? O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory!¹⁰ This enemy is forever conquered. But if Christ had not died, we must have died forever.'

After this, turning over in the bed, she saw Hannah weeping by her.¹¹ Tenderly embracing her, she said, 'Thou wast always tender over thy mother. Thou hast been a very dutiful child. The Lord has often called thee, and is now waiting to be gracious. It is much if you survive your mother long, but we cannot tell what is in the womb of providence.'

7. She then distinctly counted eight children and said, 'The Lord has just given me this promise, I will contend with them that contend with thee, and I will save thy children.'¹² She added, 'What! them all!' And was answered, yes, not a hoof shall be left behind. Turning to her husband, she said, 'Robert, here we are, and the children which he hath given us. I see places in glory for them all. I shall soon be there, and I leave you in good hands. Give my dying love to everybody. For I love them all, friends and enemies:

With open arms of charity
Embracing all mankind.¹³

Then she sang aloud,

O what hath Jesus bought for me!
Before my ravish'd eyes
Rivers of life divine I see,

⁷Elizabeth Walker (1767–89), her step-daughter.

⁸Isaac Watts, 'Heaven Begun on Earth', st. 5, included by JW in *CPH* (1737), 29.

⁹Cf. Rev. 21:4–5.

¹⁰1 Cor. 15:55.

¹¹Hannah Clapham (b. 1761).

¹²Cf. Isa. 49:25.

¹³CW, Hymn 9, st. 4, *Nativity Hymns* (1745), 13.

And trees of paradise!
I see a world of spirits bright,
Who taste the pleasure there!
They all are robed in spotless white,
And conqu'ring palms they bear.¹⁴

‘What Lord, a palm for such a worthless worm! Yes, Jesus tells me, a royal crown, a crown of glory.’

8. She went on, ‘He has spared me to see the gospel brought under this roof. And I trust it will be preached here as long as one stone is left upon another?’ She then earnestly prayed that God would hasten the time when the whole earth should be filled with his glory. As she expressed a particular desire to see *me*, a messenger was sent for me. I came in the evening, and saw such a sight as I never saw before. Her eyes sparkled, as if her soul was just ready to leave the body. She caught hold of my hand and said, ‘Blessed art thou, O man of God! I was very desirous to see *you* before I left the world, that we might rejoice and praise God together. You were an angel of God to this house. Your Master sent you, and he will reward you! Will you permit me to be your teacher?’ On my replying, ‘I am willing to be taught by anyone’, she said, ‘Then abide by the old Methodist doctrine. Turn not aside either to the right or left. The Lord give you many seals to your ministry! I am going to glory! The Lord is waiting to receive me! My heart cries, Come whenever thou wilt, thy will be done!’

9. Then pointing to J. H. she said, ‘There is another. When he prayed in a class at Henley, seven or eight years ago, I told them he was to be a preacher, and I hope he has been a faithful labourer in his Lord’s vineyard.’ As soon as we came up from family prayer, she broke out,

Happy soul, thy days are ended,
All thy mourning days below:
Go, by angel-guards attended:
To the sight of Jesus go.¹⁵

After this she cried out, ‘The whole place is filled with the glory of God. He is now waiting to bless you! Seek him with all your hearts, and you will be enabled, with a poor woman, to give praise and glory to God.’ We thought she would not live till morning. But she told us death would not come that night.

10. March 17, I asked her how she was. She answered, ‘Happy, happy!’

Not a doubt can arise
To darken the skies,
Or hide for a moment my Lord from my eyes.¹⁶

‘This is something uncommon: these are not like former blessings. Glory be to God, I am willing to go, or to stay till my Lord calls. Tell it to all around, what God has done for a poor sinner!’ After prayer she broke out,

The world recedes! it disappears!
Heaven opens on my eyes: my ears
With sounds seraphic ring!
Lend, lend your wings: I mount, I fly!
O grave, where is thy victory!

¹⁴Cf. CW, Hymn 3, st. 5, *Funeral Hymns* (1753), 5.

¹⁵CW, ‘For One Departing’, st. 1, *HSP* (1749), 2:75.

¹⁶CW, ‘Hymns for Believers, #18’, st. 5, *HSP* (1749), 1:221.

O death, where is thy sting!¹⁷

11. On Sunday several called to see her. She preached Jesus to them all—who said they had never seen such an instance of the power and glory of God before. She cried out, ‘O that I could describe the glory of the place to which I am going! But you will soon follow. Be faithful unto death, and the crown is ready.’

Him eye to eye we there shall see,
Our face like his shall shine,
O what a glorious company,
When saints and angels join.¹⁸

12. After supper we paid her another visit, and found her crying out, ‘The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin; yea, from *all* sin. But eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.¹⁹ But God has applied them to my heart. I feel a thousand times more than I can express.’

I ride on the sky,
Freely justified I,
Nor envy Elijah his seat!
My soul mounts still higher
In a chariot of fire,
And the world it is under my feet.²⁰

When we were at prayer, she cried out, ‘Pray in faith for my father Walker, that an old man may become a little child.’ As soon as we rose from prayer, she got him in her arms and said, ‘You have been a good father to me, and the Lord is waiting to make you as happy as I am. And that is as much as anyone is able to bear in this world. He will give his angels charge over you—this room is full of them!’

13. March 21. I called upon her, and asking her how she was, she answered,

Come, let us join our cheerful songs
With angels round the throne:
Ten thousand thousand are their tongues,
But all their joys are one.²¹

He is my wine to cheer, my bread to stay.²²

‘He more than supplies all my wants. I have been in my mind round the world to tell what Jesus is ready to do for them.’ While one was at prayer, she took hold of my hand and said, ‘See! see! This place is full of heaven!’ And I believe, everyone that was present, tasted of the same.

¹⁷Alexander Pope, ‘The Dying Christian to His Soul’, st. 3.

¹⁸CW, ‘At the Parting of Friends’, st. 7, *Redemption Hymns* (1747), 69.

¹⁹Cf. 1 Cor. 2:9.

²⁰Cf. CW, ‘Hymns for One Fallen from Grace, #15’, st. 6, *HSP* (1749), 1:124.

²¹Isaac Watts, ‘Christ Worshipped by All Creatures’, st. 1, in *CPH* (1738), 34.

²²Cf. Paul Gerhardt, ‘Living by Christ’, st. 12, trans. by JW in *HSP* (1739), 158.

14. On the 22nd, being asked how she was, she replied, 'Full of God! full of God!' On the 24th, one asking, 'Shall we pray?' she answered, 'Rather give thanks. O tell to all around what God has done for a poor sinner! He does all things well; for my own good and for his own glory.'

My soul breaks out in strong desire
Thy perfect bliss to prove:
My longing heart is all on fire
To be dissolv'd in love.²³

Sunday 25. Two of her brothers coming to see her, she spent herself in begging them to be ready whenever God should call them. On the 27th, her husband said, 'If God should spare you a little longer, you will have cause to praise him.' She answered, 'If he take me to himself, I shall praise him forever. But I have no choice. I leave all to him that cannot err.'

15. On the 29th, while Mr. Walker was reading to her the thirty-seventh Psalm, and the fifty-fourth chapter of Isaiah, she rejoiced in a wonderful manner, and cried out, 'I am filled with God! filled with God!' In a while she looked earnestly at the bed's feet, and cried, 'O Satan, get thee behind me! Glory be to God, thou hast no dominion over *me*. Thou art forever conquered.' The next day, without either sigh or groan, she delivered up her spirit to God.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 11 (1788): 188–91, 242–46.

²³Cf. CW, Hymn on Acts 16:31, st. 11, *HSP* (1742), 96.

From [William Bulgin]¹

c. April 1787

When she was very young, Janeway's *Tokens for Children*,² made such impressions on her mind, that she often got by herself, and wept over it. One day she informed me that going into her father's warehouse, she found among some old papers a book of prayers, which was of great service to her in stirring her up to call upon God—which she seldom missed doing five or six times every day. Another great help she found from the private conversation of the preachers, particularly from Mr. [Thomas] Rankin.

When she was about thirteen years of age, she met in class with Mrs. Ewer.³ And one Sunday afternoon while her leader was at prayer, she roared aloud for the disquietude of her soul, and continued on her knees for the space of three hours. Not many months after, she was set at liberty at a prayer meeting, and was constrained in the midst of the people to declare what the Lord had done for her soul.

Soon after, she was much stirred up to wrestle with God for full sanctification; but found a check from one who said she thought a person receiving that blessing so soon after justification was very liable to fall.

For many years she went on her way, very comfortable at times. And though, during her long illness, she was often cast down, yet as long as she was able to attend the means of grace, no weather, or any other small hindrance could prevent her.

Some time before the last Conference [late July 1786] she was much distressed in mind, through the fear of death. But Mr. Charles Wesley visiting her frequently, his conversation was much blessed to her. She also received great comfort from the following hymn, which he made on purpose for her:⁴

Jesus, in whose name I trust,
Nearest those who need thee most;
See, thy helpless creature see,
Touch'd with my infirmity.

While I sensibly decline,
Unassur'd that thou art mine,
Pain'd in life, of death afraid,
Let me feel thy present aid.

Calmly with submission mourn,
For the Comforter's return;
For the reconciling kiss,
Seal of my eternal bliss.

¹Titled: 'An Extract of the Experience and Happy Death of Mrs. Sarah Bulgin'. Sarah (Colmer) Bulgin (1758–87) was the wife of the printer William Bulgin (1758–1831), one of the trustees of the Bristol New Room. They married in 1780.

²James Janeway, *A Token for Children: Being an exact account of the conversion, holy and exemplary lives, and joyful deaths, of several young children* (London: Dorman Newman, 1672).

³Mary Lewis (1746–1824) was converted at age 15 and two years later was appointed by JW to lead a class of young women. She would serve over fifty years as a class leader. In 1780 she married James Ewer (1754–1815) of Bristol. See her obituary in *WMM* 3 (1824), 647.

⁴See earlier drafts: CW, MS Sarah Bulgin; and CW, MS Miscellaneous Verse (1786), 8–9.

When his coming from above,
Reassures me of thy love,
Stamps thy image on my heart,
Ready am I to depart.

Or if so my Lord ordain,
Still I in the flesh remain,
Neither life, nor death request;
Sure whate'er thou wilt is best.

Till thy welcome will is done,
Hang I on my Lord alone;
Happy thine in life to be,
Happi'r still to die in thee!

One day she said to me, 'My dear, you cannot conceive what a blessing I have just felt. I know Mr. [Charles] Wesley has been praying for me. I bless God, the fear of death is now taken from me! I now can give you up; but I could not before. I could not bear the thought of leaving you behind.'

Soon after Mr. Wesley came in, she looked on him with a smile and said, 'O sir, I have found a great blessing! the fear of death is taken from me. I can now give up all for Christ. Have not you been praying for me!' 'Yes, my dear', said he. 'I have with a few particular friends had a prayer meeting on your account.'

She was now in general very happy, and frequently had pleasing prospects of eternity. But at times the enemy sorely buffeted her, so that she often said, 'O what a foul enemy thou art!'

Thursday, February 22 [1787]. For some days past she felt a strong desire after full redemption, but Satan used all his power in tempting her to mistrust the goodness of God. Early the next morning she acquainted me with the conflicts she had felt, and said, 'O there is a greater work to be done! I was convinced of it last night under Mr. R—'s prayer, and am determined to have the blessing. O that God would give me a promise that I may take comfort!'

For several hours she was in great distress, and seemed to be deeply engaged with God in prayer. I could hear her say with great fervour, 'Come Lord Jesus, come quickly! I will not let thee go! O thou Son of righteousness, arise with healing in thy wings!' A few minutes after, she looked round on a friend who attended her, and said, 'My dear, I am now wrestling with the Lord for the blessing. I will not let him go until he does bless me.'

Soon after, the presence of the Lord so overwhelmed her that, though she was before as weak as an infant, she sprang up in the bed and with great power cried out, 'Now I will praise thee, oh my God! For thou hast dealt bountifully with me! I will take the cup of salvation from thy hands, and praise thee from the ground of my heart!' Then looking on me she said,

O my dear! God has applied that promise to my soul, 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love!'⁵ O did you but feel what I do at present! My dear, I am happy! happy! happy! I now can love the Lord with all my heart, mind, soul and strength! My cup runs over! I am full! I am full! I am full! O why did I doubt! I long to be gone! I feel a heaven on earth, and am going there! If this is but a taste, what shall I feel above! O how would I now flee away and be at rest! But I am contented to stay the Lord's time! Yea Lord, I will wait patiently, for thou hast redeemed me! I feel the presence of the Lord in such a measure that it does not seem as if I was in the body! He has sanctified me, body, soul and spirit! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! If the room was full of people, I would tell them what the Lord

⁵Jer. 31:3.

has done for my soul! To think that he should show such love, to such a vile, unworthy creature as I am, how astonishing! O never doubt! Follow on; press forward; take encouragement by me. The kingdom of heaven is taken by violence, and the violent take it by force. O my dear, I wish I could take you in my arms to glory! But I trust we shall meet there! I'll come and meet you. O the length, breadth, depth and height of the love of God! God only knows the love of God! God is love! I do love thee with all my heart, soul and strength.

On my sending up a relation to see her, she looked upon him with a smile and said, 'O cousin, turn to the Lord! Flee from the wrath to come! You cannot think what happiness there is in serving the Lord. There is no happiness in the world. You do not find any, do you? No; nothing but pain and toil. When the world has given its most, what can it give? Some time ago you were serious. Turn again. Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation.' On perceiving him weep, she said, 'If you feel yourself a lost, undone sinner, you are a fit person for the Lord. There is room for you and for all the world. Be found in the use of the means and the Lord will bless you.'

To her sisters who were sitting by, she said, 'Remember your Creator in the days of your youth. I did, and the Lord has rewarded me for it. O fear the Lord! It is a happy thing to walk in the ways of God.' Thus she continued speaking for several hours, till she was quite spent. In the evening, after receiving the sacrament, she said, 'The Lord has given me fresh strength. O what a banquet is this!'

The next day she addressed her brother William in a very affecting manner.⁶ 'O brother', said she, 'I am happy! happy! happy! The Lord has done great things for me! I can rejoice in God my Saviour! Now brother, seek the Lord with your whole heart. You have been a backslider from him. You were once very serious. I know you were, for we often took sweet counsel together. You were then happy. But you are not so now. Turn to him, and he will bless you. I have great hope for you. The Lord has laid you on my mind. I have been wrestling with God for you and he has given me a promise. I know he will call you again, only use the means of grace. O it is a blessed thing to serve the Lord!'

The following three or four days she spoke to the servants, warning them against sin and begging of them to turn to the Lord in their youth.

Sunday, March 4. She said to me in the morning, 'My dear, you cannot conceive how Satan has been trying me. He even tempted me to wish to live longer in the world! But I cannot bear the thought! O he is a foul enemy indeed! Lord deliver me!'

In the afternoon she said, 'The Lord is gracious. I feel his presence. Blessed be his name, I feel him near! O what glorious views of eternity! Glory! Glory! Glory!' On seeing the tears run down her cheeks, I asked what was the matter. She replied with a smile, 'They are tears of joy. I almost envy Mrs. Theobald's getting the start of me.'⁷ But I must be resigned. O Satan, thou art a foul enemy! I now find thy darts are of no avail. Thou art at a great distance. Bless the Lord, O my soul!'

Monday 5. Being to all appearance near her dissolution, she said the following words had been strongly impressed on her mind, 'This day thou shalt be with me in paradise.'⁸ On which she cried out, 'I am happy! happy! happy! I feel a great change! I am near at home! I feel him precious! Glory! Glory be to God! Lord Jesus I am just ready! Glory be to Jesus! Thou art coming to release me!' She now remained silent for half an hour. But her looks, and the motion of her hands and eyes, bespoke the great consolation of her mind. After a while she spoke as follows with great fervour: 'Shall I be in paradise today! Blessed Lord, thy will be done! O I have glorious views of paradise!'

Monday 12. This morning she was much buffeted. Satan came with his last assault, tempting her to doubt of the work God had wrought in her. For two hours she seemed to be under a cloud, and addressed me thus, 'My dear, how is it that my spirit is so cast down! Do you think I am safe? Surely I

⁶William Colmer (b. 1761).

⁷Mary (Smith) Theobald was buried Mar. 6, 1787 in Bristol.

⁸Luke 23:43.

did feel that the Lord sanctified me, body, soul and spirit. And I know that I have not done anything to grieve him. I hope he will take care of me. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly, and remove this cloud!’

At her request I went for a friend who had often been of use to her. He had not conversed long with her before I perceived a smile on her countenance. Soon after she broke out with great power, ‘Glory—Glory—Glory be to God! He is come! He is come! He is come! Blessed Jesus! I will praise thee with my latest breath! I do feel him precious! Glory—Glory—Glory be to Jesus! I shall soon be with him! He has removed the cloud. Blessed be his name, I feel him near!’ O what a rest remains for me! I shall soon be there! I have lived, and I rejoice to die a Methodist. Come, Lord Jesus! My sweet, dear Jesus! But I will wait his time!’

On my asking her if the world did not appear contemptible, she lifted up her hand and said, ‘Trash! Trash!’

The next morning, which was Wednesday, March 13, about four o’clock she appeared to alter for death. At 5:00 she seemed to revive; but at 6:00 the welcome messenger drew near. About an hour after, she fixed her eyes upwards and said, ‘There—There—There—Sweet Jesus!’ And at eight o’clock fell asleep in his arms, aged twenty-nine years and thirteen days.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 10 (1787): 301–03, 351–54, 410–12.

From an Unidentified Correspondent¹

[Lisburn]
c. April 1787

When the Methodist preachers visited Lisburn, Mrs. Cumberland, went to hear them, when the word soon found place in the heart, both of her and her husband [Hans]. For some time she was in a great strait between hope and fear. Sometimes she hoped what she heard was true; yet at others, she feared it was not. In this state of despondency she cried earnestly to the Lord for wisdom, and was determined to continue so to do till she received light from him! One day as she was walking in her garden, calling upon God to give her light, he brought home to her heart that place in St. Luke, where it is said, that repentance and remission of sins should be preached, in the name of Christ, among all nations.² And that in St. Matthew, 'And lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world.'³ As she was clearly convinced that this was from God, she was fully satisfied, and never more doubted the doctrines of the Methodists to the day of her death.

Having thus embraced the word, she soon received the preachers thereof under her roof; where they found a kind reception, and continue so to do unto this day.

But though she never more doubted the truth of the doctrines she heard, she was often distressed lest she should die without experiencing what they taught. For she could not think herself a true Christian believer till she found the witness of the Spirit that she was a child of God. Nevertheless she was often visited with divine consolation, which made her heart like melting wax. But whenever she felt any stirrings of sin in her she would say, I dare not conclude that I am in the favour of God.

Though the society she was a member of for many years was in a low condition, she was never ashamed of it, or the cause of God, nor ever moved from her attachment to what she thought was his will.

The last two years of her life (especially in the winter) having a violent cough, and shortness of breath, she got exceeding little rest. So that the weakness of her body, together with her frequent distress of mind, made her sometimes appear almost impatient.

Sometimes in the bitterness of her soul, she would say, 'How it will end with me, God only knows! Yet he often visits my soul with his sweet influences.' This she would often utter with abundance of tears. A few weeks before her death her bodily strength decreased very much. But her confidence in God so increased that she could no longer doubt of her being in his favour. To some who stood by her she said, 'I have not the shadow of a doubt, but firmly believe that all will be well with me. I am quite delivered from all things, and only wait for the welcome messenger of death.'

One asking her if she found any doubt now, she answered, 'A doubt! O no! Not even the shadow of one!' On being asked if there was any particular thing which she wished for, she said, 'Nothing, but that you will pray, that God may soon come and take me to himself!'

After this, she lay three or four days, like clay in the hands of the potter, and then calmly breathed out her soul into the hands of Jesus, March 7, 1787.

Thus this good woman, with many doubts and fears, held her integrity to the last; when God was pleased to lift up the light of his countenance upon her, in a time she needed it most, and as a token that she should see his face in righteousness forever and ever.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 11 (1788): 16–17.

¹Titled: 'A Short Account of Mrs. Jane Cumberland, of Lisburn, in the North of Ireland'. Jane (Duprey?) Cumberland (d. 1787).

²See Luke 24:47.

³Matt. 28:20; orig., 'St. Mark', a mistake.

From the Rev. Charles Wesley¹

[London]
[Monday] April 9, 1787

I served West Street Chapel on Friday and yesterday. Next Saturday I propose to sleep in your bed.² Samuel Bradburn and I shall not disagree.

Stand to your own proposal: 'Let us agree to differ.'³ I leave America and Scotland to your latest thoughts and recognitions; only observing now that you are exactly right: 'He did nothing before he asked me.' True, he asked your leave to ordain two more preachers, *before* he ordained them. But while your answer was coming to prohibit him, he took care to ordain them both.⁴ Therefore, his asking you was a mere compliment. This I should not mention, but out of concern for your authority. Keep it while you live; and after your death, *detur digniori*—or rather, *dignioribus*.⁵ You cannot settle the succession. You cannot divine how God will settle it. Have the people of _____ given you leave to die E.A.P.J.?⁶

I never knew a genius that came to good. What can be the reason? Are they as premature in evil as in good; or do their superior talents overset them? Must every man of a superior understanding lean to, and trust and pride himself in it? I never envied a man of great parts. I never wished a friend of mine possessed of them.

Poor John Henderson!⁷ What has genius done for him? Ruined his fortune, and ruined his body. Last night I heard he was dying of a putrid fever. We prayed for him at the table, but I know not whether he is alive or dead. His sickness was sent to prepare him either for paradise or for [clergy] orders. Such a messenger may perhaps take Sam or Charles from the evil.⁸ I never sought great things for them; or greater for myself than that I may escape to land—on a broken piece of the ship.⁹ It is my daily and hourly prayer that I may escape safe to land; and that an entrance may be ministered to you abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Source: published transcription; Whitehead, *Life*, 1:367–69.

¹CW was replying to (and quotes from) a letter of JW that is not known to survive.

²I.e., CW would stay at JW's house next to City Road Chapel.

³Cf. JW to CW, Sept. 13, 1785.

⁴CW is referring to Thomas Coke, who ordained Robert Johnson and William Hunter as deacons, for service in Scotland, on Oct. 24, 1785.

⁵An allusion to the dying words of Alexander the Great. 'Let it be given to *one* who is more worthy of it; or, rather, to *those* who are more worthy of it.'

⁶*Ecclesiae Anglicanae Presbyter J[uratus?]* 'sworn presbyter of the Church of England'. Samuel Wesley Jr., JW, and CW used these initials at times after their ordinations. Cf. Frank Baker, *John Wesley and the Church of England* (London: Epworth, 1970), 31–32.

⁷CW was currently in frequent correspondence with Henderson, who was sickly. Henderson would die at Oxford on Nov. 2, 1788, and be buried at St. George's, Kingswood.

⁸CW's two sons.

⁹I.e., the Church of England.

From Samuel Wesley Handy¹

Bracca Castle
April 18, 1787

Dear Sir,

Sarah Finlay, widow to the late Archibald Finlay, is an object worthy of notice, sixty three years old and not able to procure the common necessities of life.

I am, dear sir, with all respect,

Your very assured friend and humble servant,

Saml. Wm. Handy

Address: 'Revd John Wesley'.

Source: holograph; MHS Ireland Archives.

¹Samuel Wesley Handy (1751–1829) was the son of JW's old friends Samuel and Ruth (Bertrand) Handy. The son inherited the manor his parents had in Coolalough (3 miles west of Killbeggan) and referred to it now as Brackagh (or Bracca) Castle. JW visited Coolalough on Apr. 18, 1787, at which time Handy prepared for him this note.

From Rev. William Black Jr.¹

Halifax
April 27, 1787

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Dr. [Thomas] Coke came within three days sail of this province, and was then driven off the coast to the West Indies. After visiting Antigua, St. Vincent's, St. Kitts and St. Eustatius, he sailed for Charleston, South Carolina, leaving the preachers designed for this province in the islands.

Brother [Freeborn] Garrettson is gone to meet him at the Baltimore Conference. The work of the Lord has continued to spread in this part of the vineyard since my last. At Liverpool there has been an astonishing outpouring of the spirit. Nine were set at liberty at one meeting. Of forty who joined society in a few weeks, seventeen profess faith. I do not know any part of the province in which the work of God has gone on as in this place, with so little declension for six years or more. The manners of the people are entirely changed. If the work spreads as rapidly as it has done, much longer, almost all in the place will be brought in. Brother John Mann has been with them all this winter. The people seem all on fire for God, especially the young people, and exhort all they see to make their peace with God.

At Barrington the work is also going on. About fifteen more profess to have found the Lord. At Horton, also, about the same number. Brother Garrettson and I have laboured alternately in the town and country during the winter. About six weeks ago (the last time but one I was there), I preached at Horton from 'Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life.'² One young woman came into the meeting laughing. But the power of God soon carried the word to her heart. It was sharper than a two-edged sword. She went home weary and heavy-laden. This happened on Wednesday afternoon. When night came, she was afraid to go to sleep, lest she should awake in hell. All the next day she remained in great distress. O how dreadful were her feelings when she saw the sun go down, to think 'Another sun is setting, and I am still in my sins, unconverted, and out of Christ. Perhaps this will be the last setting sun I shall ever see.' Her distress increased, becoming greater the nearer her deliverance approached. On Friday night the Lord filled her with peace and joy. Such was her agony of mind a short time before she experienced salvation that she was deprived of her reason. But her extremity was God's opportunity. And then, O how did she exult in her Redeemer! And exhort her parents and all that were in the house to seek God, declaring what great things he had done for her soul!

At Halifax the work has not advanced much lately. I know of only one who has found the Lord since I last wrote. Our congregations are larger than ever. O that God would begin a powerful work here! The society still remains small. But surely so much seed is not sown in vain. To Cumberland, Annapolis, Digby, and the whole province of New Brunswick, we can at present give no assistance, for want of preachers. I wish brother [John] McGeary was here instead of being at Newfoundland; he would meet with a very different reception. We have just got our new preaching house up. I preached in it for the first time on Easter Sunday.

This town is much divided in religious matters. There is one large English church, one small Dutch church, one Presbyterian meeting house, one Roman Catholic chapel; besides a small society of Quakers, one of Sandemanians, and one of the followers of Swedenborg, together with a few of Lady Huntington's society, and a great swarm of infidels.

I am, reverend and dear sir, your son in the gospel,

William Black

Source: published transcription; Richey, *William Black*, 187–89.

¹Black was replying to JW's letter of Feb. 20, 1787, *Works*, 30:540–41.

²Cf. John 5:40.

From Mrs. Mary Taylor (autobiography)

[St. Kitts, Caribbean]
c. May 1787

I was born in the year 1753, in the Isle of St. Christopher's. My father died when I was about five years of age. I was his thirteenth child, and the only girl. My mother endeavoured to bring me up in the strictest morality, and in the fear of God. But she had no objection to what is commonly called innocent amusements, and harmless diversion. I had bad health, and therefore was very peevish and naturally fretful; so that I was greatly indulged by my mother and the rest of the family. I was fond of dancing and card-playing, and soon became eminent for both. I made no distinction of days. On the Lord's day I went to church at ten o'clock, repeated the prayers with as much devotion as others did, but in the afternoon I would dance or play at cards. My mother indeed forbad our playing at cards on the Sabbath, but we would go out of her sight and continued in this practice. Yet I never did it without a dread on my spirit, insomuch that I was often led to pray to quiet my conscience.

When I was about sixteen, I found a spirit of resentment reigning in me, with self-will—which I endeavoured to smother, and was thought by all who knew me to be a very good-natured person. About this time we had a dance at our house on Saturday night, and danced until it was near day; then made a party at cards, and about nine o'clock our minister called upon us, and seemed as much surprised at our Sunday morning's amusement, as we were at seeing him. The sight of him, and the words he spoke, made a greater impression on me than all the sermons I had heard him read. I was convinced of having done wrong, and was ashamed to appear at church. I was afraid to read the Bible. There was something so terrific in the revelations that I gave over reading anything but novels, histories, and playbooks. Yet I would not go to bed without saying prayers, neither would I sleep by myself, as I had a constant slavish fear on my spirit.

In the year 1772 we had a most tremendous hurricane, in which I perceived the wrath of God and was greatly terrified. This made me more in earnest to save my soul. I had a great desire to receive the sacrament, but I feared I could not keep the covenant and therefore should eat and drink my own damnation. When I spoke to those who I thought knew better than myself, they said that I was very good. Here I rested, expecting on my deathbed to be forgiven. In the year 1775 my mother died, at which time I determined to give myself to the Lord. In that year I went to England with a gentleman and lady with whom I was acquainted, expecting I could be a better Christian in that land than at home. On board the ship the lady made me read a book which made great impressions on my mind. But after we got to London we had no time to go to church, as too many pleasures interfered. We went to Kensington one Sunday to dinner. I went in the afternoon to prayers, and felt a satisfaction for having waited on the Lord. But I never had an opportunity of going to church or chapel in London.

In December 1776 we went to France, where was a new field of pleasures. I was like a bee roving from flower to flower, to suck the sweets—but at last found them all empty and vain. From the playhouse I went to the card table, and then to the ball. But I refused dancing on the Lord's day. And when Monsieur Labbey asked my reason, I replied, 'It is sinful, and they do not dance in England on the Lord's day.' He assured me there was no sin in it. I then asked him to be my partner. He said he would with pleasure, but his habit forbad him. He with the rest of the company prevailed on me, so I danced. For five years I continued in this life of dissipation, yet with the strictest regard to my character. And all this time I would contend with the Catholics about religion.

We returned to England in 1782, and spent the winter at Bath, where I heard the Methodists preach. I do not know that I was any ways affected by them, but was much taken with the singing, which was solemn and pleasing. I got acquainted with some families who were called Methodists. But I was a great plague to them, for I took cards in my pocket when I went to visit them, to entice them. And when they visited me, I would have the card table or fiddle in readiness. But they bore with me, and were fond of my company. They would get me a ticket whenever I liked to go in with them, and I would seem very

attentive, but never was affected under the word. As soon as I returned home, I made a jest of what I had heard and seen, and the playhouse took up more of my attention than the chapel.

In 1783 we went to America, and had a dreadful passage; and on the 29th of May we gave up all hopes of ever seeing land again. Now I saw my error in not profiting during the time I was at Bath, to make my calling and election sure. I prayed that the Lord would spare me until I was fit to die. He was pleased to deliver us out of this danger, and I now began to discern the mercies of the Lord to me in every period of my life, and reflect on them with a sense of my unworthiness. I prayed as usual with the book, as I never was without my prayer book in my pocket, and was remarked for picking up every bit of an old Bible or prayer book that I saw when I was a child.

We stayed one year in America, during which time I kept myself from making any acquaintance. I read my prayer book when I was not engaged with my lady, and while we travelled on a dangerous road I was always praying. I was laughed at for so doing, yet I did not mind it, but often reproved Mr. P—for swearing, taking the Lord's name in vain, and depending so much on himself. They often called me a 'Methodist', a name I did not deserve. For ten months I kept myself from any kind of diversion. But when we came to Charlestown, I was again enticed to dance, an amusement which I could never withstand if the company was agreeable. I went to four dances, and at last was taken ill of a fever and ague, about the time of our leaving the place. We sailed notwithstanding my illness, as the doctor thought the sea air would be beneficial to my health. But I continued ill the whole time. After twenty-eight days' passage, we arrived at St. Kitt's in the year 1784. I was five months in this state of health, before I began to recover. I now began to find something pleasing in the Bible, and said I would begin and read it through with attention. But I had so many hindrances I did not get through it at the time appointed. I frequented the church oftener, and read the Bible when I came home, but I still loved dancing, and would dance the hornpipe to please my sister and other female friends.

It is remarkable that I had the Methodists so much in my mind that I prayed the Lord would send us one here. And soon after, in the beginning of the year 1787, I heard that Doctor [Thomas] Coke was arrived with two ministers, and that one of them was to be stationed here. I was very glad of it, without having a thought of joining the society. They waited on the president who lived near us, and then called on us. But at the first sight of them I was seized with a palpitation of the heart, which seemed to affect my whole body, so that I could not put the needle into my work. My nieces took notice that I had not much to say to them, and did not know what was the matter with me. Nor did I know myself.

On Sunday there was preaching at the court-house. I went and heard Mr. [William] Hammet at 4:00 in the afternoon, and Doctor Coke at 7:00 in the evening. I did not hear them again until Mr. Hammet returned from St. Eustatius, on which night was my last dance. I went to hear him thrice, but the crowd was so great I could scarce hear him. However I heard the hymn to my profit, for as he repeated

All ye that pass by, to Jesus draw nigh,
To you is it nothing that Jesus should die?¹

The words came with power to my heart, and truly convinced me that I was a sinner before God. I had almost fallen down with confusion and grief, but was supported by the people standing so close together. I desired a friend to ask him when he would have a private meeting, as there was no comfort in such a crowd. He fixed on Saturday night, for which I waited with impatience, and was there first. He was glad to see me, but I could not break through to tell him my uneasiness. He sung, 'Come ye sinners, poor and wretched:'² 'Ah!' thought I, 'he invites me.' I joined the society that night, but desired it might not be mentioned, lest I should incur the displeasure of my friends.

¹CW, 'On the Crucifixion', st. 1, *Festival Hymns* (1746), 8.

²Joseph Hart, 'Come, and Welcome, to Jesus Christ', *Hymns Composed on Various Subjects* (London: Everingham, 1759).

On Sunday whilst he was preaching I said to myself, 'What kind of man is this, who can tell me all that I have done?' I went at every preaching time, and returned home more heavy-laden than when I went. This stirred me up to pray, and at times I felt the drawings of the Lord with such comfort that I thought my sins were pardoned. But when I met in class I found guilt still remain. Mr. Hammet said, 'Unbelief keeps many from the blessing; but the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.'³ I now prayed for true belief in the Lord Jesus. On Good Friday I fasted and prayed, and saw my sins worse than ever. I asked Mr. Hammet if I should come to the Lord's table? I thought I should find mercy there, though I was not worthy, for my advocate was with the Father.

After returning from class meeting, I was determined to give up all, to forsake friends and relations, and to follow my Lord. When I got home I went into my chamber heavy-laden, sick of sin, and of the world. I read three or four chapters and found my faith increase. I then called upon the Lord with my whole heart, and thought, 'Though he slay me yet will I love him, and if I die, it shall be at his feet calling for mercy.' I thought if I knew where to find my Lord, I would go and wash his feet with my tears, and wipe them with the hair of my head. I lay down but could not rest. I got up and would not lay down again until I was delivered. I thought of Jacob whilst I was on my knees, and about 4:00 in the morning the Lord spoke peace to my soul; after which I fell into a sweet sleep, and awoke praising the Lord. I could now withstand persecution and all that was said to me. I had gained the pearl of great price, and all things seemed to be put under my feet.

On Sunday morning, being Easter Day, I arose at four o'clock, being the first time I waited on God so early. One standing by asked me when I had seen the morning star last? 'Ah!' said I, 'about two months ago, when I was serving my old master. But now I am come on another errand to my loving Master.' And I did not go in vain, for I returned home rejoicing with a full assurance that God had for his dear Son's sake pardoned all my sins. This was a glorious day indeed, for I found the love of God shed abroad in my heart. I loved everybody, sung and prayed. And when the family would persecute me, I exhorted them to quit the vain things of this world, to leave the husks, and come to Jesus where they would find substantial food.

I thought I should never mourn, nor feel trouble again. But now my warfare began. Satan tempted me to doubt of the blessing. My relations and acquaintance persecuted me. And my evil heart was prone to start from the living God. I watched, and prayed to the Lord for grace to subdue my evil tempers, and to renew my heart. When Mr. Harper came to us, I was just giving way to carnal reasoning.⁴ But surely the Lord speaks through his ministers to the needy souls. I now determined to double my diligence; and blessed be the Lord he soon gave me to see myself by his own light, and that my heart was my greatest enemy. I cried to the Lord, 'Cleanse my heart from inbred sin.' Like David, I watered my pillow with tears by night, while I poured out my soul to the Lord in silent cries. I found my faith increase by these words, 'They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.'⁵ And when the Lord visited my soul with that portion of grace, I thought I should have fallen down. But I cried, 'Good Lord support me.'

³Matt. 11:12.

⁴John Harper (d. 1815), of Irish descent, was admitted 'on trial' as an itinerant in 1786 (see *Works*, 10:597) and stationed in Clones. At the 1787 Conference he was ordained by JW for service in the West Indies. He served there through the early 1790s, marrying Henrietta Hawes, of Antigua. About 1794 he moved to the continental US for his wife's health, but she died soon after. Harper got on well with Francis Asbury and in 1796, after the usual probationary period, he was ordained elder in the Methodist Episcopal Church (neither his time of service in the Caribbean or his ordination by JW were recognized). In 1803 he located in Columbia, SC, where he founded a Methodist church on Washington Street, and in 1805 he took on duties at Mount Bethel Academy until his death. See *MM* 22 (1799), 261–62; and John Garraty and Mark Carnes (eds.), *American National Biography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 10:130.

⁵Matt. 9:12.

And the next woman that stood by me fell down and wept bitterly.

Thanks be to my dear Redeemer, I have continued in the faith, going on in my labours of love, in simplicity and sincerity. And while I am endeavouring to water the souls of others, I find my own abundantly watered from the fountainhead. I have received great blessings at the Lord's table. Surely the Lord is in this place. I can behold his works with wonder, love, and praise, while I sink into humility at my own nothingness. There is now a free and open intercourse betwixt God and my soul. I am enabled to cast all my care upon him, firmly believing that he careth for me. I have discerned love in all his dealings and dispensations towards me, even from my youth up until now. He has taken away the root of sin, and I find constantly the witness of the Spirit, as well as a constant tranquillity of mind. My soul cries out for love, and hungers and thirsts for more, and to be more united to him who is my all in all.

M. T.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 613–19.

From Peter Mill¹

Scarborough
May 5, 1787

Reverend and Dear Sir,

It is a pity I cannot furnish you with more memorandums of a man of so much good sense, and unaffected piety as Mr. Henry Foster, who is now with God.² I looked over his papers, but found not what I could wish. One reason was he was unable to write long before he died; another, he kept no journal of any consideration; lastly, his friends (however much they esteemed him) neglected to make those remarks which could have been wished for on an occasion so interesting.

One thing that appears to me to set his piety in a very strong point of view is a solemn covenant-dedication of himself to God, which he subscribed with his own hand, and is as follows:

Eternal and unchangeable Jehovah, thou great Creator of heaven and earth, thou adorable Lord of angels and men; I desire, with the deepest humiliation, and self-abasement, to fall down in thy awful presence and earnestly pray that thou wouldst penetrate my heart with a suitable sense of thine unutterable and inconceivable glories!

Trembling may justly take hold on me when I, a sinful worm, presume to lift my head to thee, and to appear in thy presence on such an occasion! What am I, O Lord God? What is my nature, and descent? My character and desert? That I should speak of being a party in a covenant, where thou, the great King of kings and Lord of lords, art the other!

I blush and am confounded even to mention it before thee. But, O Lord, as thy majesty is great, so also is thy mercy! If thou wilt hold converse with any of thy creatures, thy excellency must stoop infinitely low! And I know that in and through Jesus, the Son of thy love, thou condescendest to visit sinful men, and to allow them to approach unto thee. I know that the way and method of doing this thou hast graciously condescended to lay before us.

To thee therefore do I now come, and laying myself at thy feet, with shame and confusion of face, I say, with the humble publican, God be merciful to me a sinner!³ I acknowledge, O Lord, that I have been a great transgressor! That my sins have reached to the heavens, and that mine iniquities are lifted up to the skies! The base affections of my corrupt nature have, in ten thousand instances, wrought in me to bring forth fruit unto death. And if thou shouldst be extreme to mark iniquity, I must be silent, under a load of guilt, and immediately sink into destruction.

But thou hast graciously invited me to return unto thee, though I have been a wandering sheep, a prodigal son, a backsliding child. Therefore, O Lord, I come unto thee! I come convinced, not only of my sin but of my folly! I come, from my very heart ashamed of myself, and with deep humility confess that I have played the fool, and erred exceedingly, and am confounded at the remembrance of these things. But be thou merciful to my unrighteousness, O Lord, and remember not against me my transgressions!

Permit me, O Lord, to bring back unto thee those powers and faculties which I have ungratefully and sacrilegiously alienated from thy service. And receive, I beseech thee, thy poor revolted creature, who is now convinced of thy right in him, and desires nothing in the whole world so much as to be thine. Blessed God, it is with the utmost solemnity that I make this

¹Titled: 'An Account of Mr. Henry Foster: in a Letter to the Rev. J. Wesley'. Peter Mill was the current Assistant for the Scarborough circuit.

²Henry Foster, was admitted 'on trial' as an itinerant at the 1780 Conference (see *Works*, 10:496). He was forced to take disability leave in 1786, and died in Apr. 1787 (see *Works*, 10:624).

³See Luke 18:13.

surrender of myself unto thee.

Hear O heavens, and give ear O earth. I this day take, and avouch Jehovah the Lord to be my God, and I avouch and declare myself to be his covenanted child and one of his people. Hear O God of heaven, and record it in the book of thy remembrance, that henceforth I am thine, entirely thine. I would not merely consecrate unto thee some of my powers or possessions, or give thee a certain proportion of my services or all I am capable of for a limited time; but I will be thine, and wholly thine forever. From this day do I solemnly renounce all the former lords who have had dominion over me. Every sin, and every lust I bid, in thy name, an eternal defiance to. And also to all the powers of hell, which have most unjustly usurped the empire over my soul, and to all the corruptions they have introduced into the whole frame of my nature. All the faculties of my mind, and all the members of my body, I present to thee this day, as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, which is my reasonable service.

To thee I consecrate all my worldly possessions. In thy service I desire to spend all the remainder of my time upon earth, and beg that thou wouldst instruct me, so that whether my abode here be long or short, every year and month, every day and hour, may be used in such a manner as shall most effectually promote thine honour, and best serve the designs of thy wise and gracious providence.

And I earnestly pray that whatever influence thou givest me with others, in any of the superior relations of life in which I may stand, or in consequence of any peculiar regard which may be paid to me, thou wouldst give me strength and courage to exert myself to the utmost of my power, for thy glory; resolving not only that I will myself do it, but that all others, so far as I can rationally and properly influence them, shall serve the Lord.

In this course, O blessed God, would I persevere steadily to the end of my life; earnestly praying that I may be enabled, not only to hold on in that happy way, but daily to grow more active in it.

Nor do I only consecrate a part of myself to thee, but I most humbly resign and submit to thine holy will and service, myself and all I can call mine; and leave, O Lord, to thy management and direction all I possess and wish; and set every enjoyment and every interest before thee, to be disposed of by thee as thou pleasest. Continue or remove what thou hast given me. Bestow or refuse what I imagine I want, as thou Lord shall see good.

Use me O Lord, I beseech thee, as the instrument of thy glory. And honour me so far, as either by doing or suffering thy will in what thou shalt bring upon me, that there may some praise redound to thee and some good to the world in which I dwell.

And may it please thee from this day forward to number me amongst thy peculiar people, that I may no more be a stranger and a foreigner, but a fellow citizen with the saints and of the household of God. Receive, O heavenly Father, thy returning prodigal! Wash me in the blood of thy dear Son! Sanctify me by thy Spirit! And clothe me with perfect righteousness! Destroy, I beseech thee, the power of sin in my heart! Transform me into the image of Jesus, whom henceforward I acknowledge as my sacrifice, teacher, intercessor, and Lord. Communicate to me, I beseech thee, all the needful influences of thy Spirit, and lift up the light of thy countenance continually upon me!

Dispose of my affairs, O God, in a manner which may be subservient to thy glory and my own truest happiness. And when I have done and suffered thy will on earth, call me from hence at what time, and in what manner thou pleasest. Only grant that in my dying moments, and in the near prospect of eternity, I remember these my engagements to thee, and that I may employ my latest breath in thy service! And do thou, O Lord, when thou seest the agonies of desolving nature upon me, remember this covenant, even though I should then be incapable of recollecting it! Look down, O my heavenly Father, with a pitying eye, upon thy languishing and dying child! Place thine everlasting arm round and underneath me for my support! Put strength and confidence into my departing soul, and receive it into the embraces of thy everlasting love! Welcome it into the abodes of those that sleep in Jesus, to wait with them, for that glorious day when the last of

thy promises, to thy covenanted people, shall be fulfilled in their triumphant resurrection, and in that abundant entrance which shall be administered to them into that everlasting kingdom, of which thou hast assured them, by thy covenant; and in hope of which I now lay hold on it.

And when I am numbered among the dead, and all the interests of mortality are over with me forever, should this solemn engagement fall into the hands of any surviving friends, may it be a means of making deep impressions on their minds! May they read it, not only as my engagement, but as their own, and learn to fear the Lord my God, and with me put their trust under the shadow of his wings, for time and eternity! And may they also learn to adore with me, the grace which inclines our hearts to enter into covenant with God, and which condescends to admit us into it, when so inclined; ascribing with me, and with all the nations of the redeemed, to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost the praise which is so justly due, to each divine person for the part he bears in the sacred work of our salvation. Amen.

Henry Foster

To this covenant he often recurred in his last illness, and would frequently say, 'I am not my own. I am the Lord's and he is mine by covenant-agreement.' For when he entered into this covenant and subscribed it, it appears he was so blessed and comforted that he always believed God not only approved of it, but actually took him into a nearer union with him, than he otherwise would have been.

He often talked of eternity in transports of joy, and seemed to have a pleasure in it that was much better understood, from his expressive looks, than from his words.

I remember once, when I had been preaching about the near connection there is between us and the invisible world, he came into the house in an ecstasy unutterable, and said, 'I fear my desire to depart is too great.' Once at a love-feast in Malton, he was so filled with God that he cried out, 'Lord, stay thy hand, or the vessel will burst!' That he was delivered from the fear of death, and could look upon the approach of eternity with delight, appeared from the whole of his conversation, and also from a letter he wrote to a friend, which I here subjoin.

May 28, 1785

Dear Brother,

My life is far spent, and I am drawing near to the confines of eternity! But my life is hid with Christ in God. When I lose all, I shall gain all.

If I had any choice in such things, I should choose to be buried at Lastingham. But the will of the blessed Lord be done; for these bodies of ours, wherever laid, will soon be called from their native dust. Then shall we meet in the air, to be forever with the Lord.

O my full heart! I have much to say, but nature fails! I am not able to write. But if God should appoint my freed spirit [after death], to do you any kind office, oh how swiftly would I fly on the wings of love!

As he drew near his end, he was so weak that his friends were forced to be very careful in laying the bed-clothes on him, lest the wind of them should take away his breath. Yet a night or two before he died, he awoke and looked up to the tester of the bed,⁴ and with a loud voice, and a look full of heaven, and of God, said, 'The curtain is fallen!—I see Jesus!—I see his hands and feet, and the prints of his nails!—I see the prophets, and apostles, and the mother of Jesus!' But our friends were so fluttered, and at the same time delighted, with his words and heavenly appearance, that they could not remember a word more, though he spoke for above half an hour. After this he sunk down into a calm, and an almost insensible state; hardly noticing anything more, till his spirit returned to God, which was on April 12, 1787.

P. M.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 11 (1788): 516–18; 575–78; 629–30.

⁴A 'tester' is a canopy over a four-poster bed.

From Hester Ann (Roe) Rogers¹

Dublin
May 6, 1787

Dear and Honoured Sir,

I believe it will not be unacceptable to you to hear of the happy death of our late sister Phebe Moses; born and educated a Jewess, but truly converted, not only to the name of a Christian but to the experimental knowledge of Christ Jesus, and was both a living and dying witness of his power to save. The particulars I now relate I gathered partly from her brother, partly from different friends who constantly visited her in her last illness, and the rest from the testimony she bore to me at different times.

Her brother speaks thus:

From the time I left my family for Christ's sake, I prayed earnestly to that God who had shown mercy to me, that he would make known to them also his great salvation. Yet I was often discouraged by seeing no prospect of a change in any one of them, and tempted to believe it was all in vain to hope for it. But to my surprise and very great joy, after I had been a year and half from them, my dear sister Phebe told a friend of mine she was desirous to see me, and wished to know if I would meet her. I readily embraced the opportunity, and appointed the house of a friend, where we afterwards met frequently. I found the Lord had been at work with her, from the time of my conversion; that she was fully convinced of the error of her way, and had an earnest desire to come out of the darkness she now felt, and to become a living member of the church of Christ. But she was not yet delivered from the fear of persecution from her mother and friends—which added to the strong natural affection she had for the former, caused many struggles for some time. At last however, suffering me to introduce her to some pious friends, her heart was soon knit to them in love. And feeling her need of salvation more and more, she resolved to forsake all and follow Christ, to choose him for her Redeemer and Saviour, and seek him with her whole heart. But before she was brought to this, it cost her many nights of tears, with strong supplications to the Almighty to strengthen her, which he did in a wonderful manner.

When she left her family, she brought with her only a small share of her wearing apparel (believing that he for whom she forsook all would never suffer her to want necessities) and took refuge in the house of a Christian friend, and on Wednesday following was baptized. Soon after I prevailed on her to meet in a class, with which she was much pleased, and met a second time, and on the 9th of June joined the society. From which time she gave herself up entirely to the Lord.

About the beginning of August she found that peace which the world could not give, and was enabled to rejoice in the God of her salvation. Her evidence was remarkably clear, nor did she ever lose it.

Soon after this she had a severe fit of illness. But her soul was so kept in calmness and resignation to the divine will, that I was amazed. O how good is that God, who ever gives his feeblest creatures strength according to their day, and has promised that his grace shall be sufficient for them in all their difficulties! This was in truth accomplished in her. The Lord comforted her with the consolations of his Spirit, and enabled her to rejoice, even in the most exquisite pain, in a manner that astonished all who came near her.

She was not long restored from this illness before she felt evident signs of a deep decline. Yet she was always happy and resigned. When the physician pronounced her in a deep consumption, she soon became greatly afflicted in body; but had that witness within which bore her up above all pain, knowing that she was accepted of God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

After some time she was ordered into the country. But finding herself no better, she returned home again, that she might enjoy the privilege of being visited by her Christian friends.

¹Titled: 'A Short Account of Phebe Moses'.

Her brother having informed her mother of her illness and danger, she came near the house where she was, and sent in a young woman, whom formerly she loved much, to tell her if she would repent of her apostasy (as she called it) and renounce Christ, she would receive her and be as kind to her as ever. But she told the young woman, 'No! I never will renounce Christ. I would not for a thousand worlds! I never knew happiness till I knew him? He is my Lord, my God, and my Saviour! I am going to be happy with him forever.' The young woman would hear no more, but stopped her ears with her fingers, and ran out of the house! And the mother returned home and would not see her. When she was gone, Phebe rejoiced with joy unspeakable, that she had this opportunity of testifying her love to her redeeming Lord.

As to her pain, it was often very extreme, and her whole body was so swelled that, whenever she was lifted or moved at all, she suffered exceedingly. But through all her affliction she was ever rejoicing in her Lord and Saviour, and had that constant peace and serenity in her soul which passeth all understanding. At the same time all her delight was to be talking of the loving kindness of God to all around her: often praying for patience to suffer all his righteous will, and frequently saying, 'Not my will but thine be done!'²

Her brother sitting by her bedside, she asked him if he could resign her to the Lord? 'I think', said she, 'I can freely part with you.' On his asking her if she had any fear of her approaching dissolution, she answered, 'No! thank God! To me death has lost all his terrors! I can behold him with a smile. To me he is a welcome messenger! How pleasing is the thought that I shall close my eyes for a moment, and awake in the realms of happiness, in the kingdom of my Father!' She then repeated the latter end of the 15th chapter of the First of Corinthians from 51st verse, and rejoiced in the prospect of the change mentioned there.

Thus she continued from day to day, through an illness which lasted four months, without repining at the dispensation of providence towards her; but on the contrary, praised him for all, and rejoiced in hope of eternal life.

About fourteen days before she died the Lord was pleased to remove her swelling, when she was entirely free from pain. Many thought now she would recover. But she, having no hope of this, calmly waited the will of God.

The day before her death she received the blessed sacrament (which she had done before), and when it was over she rejoiced with joy unspeakable indeed, and full of glory. That day she took a very solemn leave of all her friends, some of whom she saw no more. The next morning she had very heavy sleeps. when she awoke, she called for something to drink, but was not able to take it. In a few minutes after, finding her dissolution very near, she threw herself back upon the bed, clapped her hands several times together, and cried out with all her strength, 'Glory! Glory be to God! The long desired! The long expected time is come!' She then prayed, but in so low a voice, by reason of her weakness, that she could not be understood.

After a while she had a severe struggle, when she and all around her thought her spirit was departing. But lying some time motionless, she suddenly revived, and cried, 'O I thought I was gone! I have been in a happy, happy eternity! But God has sent me back a few minutes, and I am now happier than ever! Do not think I am afraid of death! I am not! I have no fear! O the sights I have seen! The sights I have seen! O sweet eternity! Sweet eternity! I am just going to my Lord!' Here she would have mentioned something more which she had seen; but her strength failing, she sunk into the arms of God, February 12, 1787.

H. A. Rogers

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 11 (1788): 461–65.³

²Luke 22:42.

³JW (or the editor) added after the letter: 'Lord, remember thy covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and bring near the happy hour when all Israel shall be thus saved!'

From Adam Clarke¹

Kingswood
May 13, 1787

Reverend and Very Dear Sir,

I have for a considerable time entertained a desire to transmit you a particular account of the state of my health. But as long as any probability of it remained, so long (finding work to do) I was willing to try it to the utmost without troubling you with any intelligence of its decay. But now necessity enforces as a duty that which in desire I frequently opposed. Herein I also answer your affectionate inquiries concerning it, and am led to speak something of the real and *supposed* causes of my present indisposition.

As to 'loud speaking', I absolutely plead 'Not guilty.' I think I never did err here. From the beginning I never could see the propriety of *screaming* or *shouting*. I have been rather led to look on it as a piece of insanity, which in my eyes had not the most remote tendency to accomplish any valuable purpose. This view of it has been a principal preventative against what still appears not a small error. I have sometimes, yea *frequently*, exceeded in *length*. But not without self-reprehension, and consequent purposes of amendment. But of this error I am not yet entirely cured, though I have mended much.

But the plain fact is, I am now nearly worn out, and am incapable of performing the duty of a preacher at present. The most evident causes seem to be these. In a short time after my arrival in the islands, a nervous complaint, evidencing itself by universal tremors, shook my whole frame. All my system was surprisingly relaxed. Digestion became nearly extinct. Appetite entirely failed. Pains in the stomach, bowels, head, and back took place, and flesh and strength failed together. I contended with it as long as I could, and continued preaching while I was able to stand. At last, I was forced reluctantly to yield, to give up preaching entirely and submit to the doctor. His opinion was that, as relaxation of my frame in consequence of my confinement was the source of my present indisposition, and still threatened formidable things, nothing would be eventually useful but resuming my former method of *horse exercise*; which would be the most effectual means of bracing up my constitution, and preventing an extravasation of the bile, which already had materially injured me, and from which I should not in all probability be freed by any other means. This entirely coincided with my own experience, as I had always found that riding was the element in which my constitution could live, and that the lack of it was constantly injurious. Indeed, it seems, that both my body and spirit are calculated on very active principles, and that quiescence is an opposition to the nature, and consequently the bane of either. The doctor farther advised me as soon as strength would admit to take a voyage into England, which he believed would be productive of much advantage.

When, through the mercy of God, I gained a little strength, I purposed, according to the earnest request of the brethren at Dock, and *your grant*, to have visited them, but could procure no passage, as the only vessel which was to go at that time had sailed during my greatest illness. I therefore took the packet for Southampton. I have been about three weeks in England. And though my health is far from being established, yet I am about to return immediately. Since I came to England, I have sometimes attempted to preach. But I find that work is yet too much for me. Therefore I use it sparingly, but I cannot be quite silent.

As far as I have gone, this is a true statement of the case. I know not what to say, or how to act. If I stay in the islands, in all probability my health will wax worse and worse, as I cannot have the opportunity of that which is necessary. Nor am I likely to be of much service to the people while I continue to be so enfeebled as to be unable to preach. On the other hand, I am unwilling to leave an affectionate people, to whom the God of compassions has condescended to make my feeble ministry useful. My soul prays that the alone *will of God* in every respect, not *mine* in *any*, may be done in this matter! Amen. If you think it is best for me to abide in the islands, order it. I shall, by the grace of God, willingly consent, believing that God is always with you. I leave the disposal of myself with you. Let

¹Clarke was replying to JW's letter of Mar. 26, 1787, *Works*, 30:551.

your decision be what it may, so far as I am capable, I will abide by it. But I am purposed, if God spares life, to weather out the time to Conference (at least) in the islands.

I doubt not, my dear sir, you will be willing to hear how the gospel prospers in Alderney. For your farther satisfaction, I will add a few hints to what I before wrote. Immediately after I returned to Guernsey, I sent over Mr. [Jean] De Quêteville. The Lord was uncommonly with him, and he laboured a fortnight among them with much success. A power of *general reformation* accompanied his word. Many prejudices were removed, and the door still more effectually opened for the introduction of the gospel.

In my voyage to England now, we were obliged to put in at Alderney, and were detained three or four days by contrary winds. When the people got intelligence of my arrival (which was in the evening) they gathered together to know whether I would preach. In consequence of my great inability, I wished to omit it for that night, and promised to make a trial the next morning. But, to my surprise, a person came about 9:00 at night, and told me the people were still in waiting at the place where they used to meet. I could no longer forbear. I strove to forget myself, and immediately went to the place. I sang a French hymn, and gave them an exhortation, and the Lord was blessedly present. That night a gentleman sent for me to my poor lodging, insisted on my making my abode with him while I stayed. I went, and was used with such respect and kindness as I think I have never experienced in any part whee I have yet travelled. I was soon invited to preach in the English church (*nemine contradicente*²), only they desired that their minister might read a part of the service. I agreed to it. And he, in complaisance to me, made it exceedingly short each time I preached. And after he had done, I went on *my own way*.

I had also an interview with the governor. He spoke very kindly to me, and is prejudiced in our favour. Some of the principal inhabitants of the island had me at their houses, and entertained me with much affection; and the Lord has opened their hearts to receive the word of life. The day I embarked a respectable company, with the justice whom I mentioned in my last, escorted me to the beach. My soul acknowledges the immediate finger of God in the whole work, and desires to ascribe to him eternal praises for all the good that is or may yet be done! If I am constrained to relinquish my charge in these parts, I pray the Lord Jesus, the Shepherd of the sheep, to enable you to appoint one or two labourers, men of good gifts (for such are truly necessary) and eminent graces. In this and every other thing may the unerring Spirit of the almighty Jesus be your director! Amen.

Before I entirely conclude, I beg leave to make mention of a particular affair, which every portion of duty and gratitude commands me to acquaint you with, and for which I earnestly beg a favourable hearing. For a considerable time a very intimate connection has subsisted betwixt your esteemed friend and daughter, Miss Mary Cooke of Trowbridge, and me, which has been carried on as it began, in much of the fear of God. We dared not to take anything relative to it at second hand. We sought God, and a discovery of his will, from its commencement to the present time. And through the grace of Christ watched with godly jealousy over our own hearts, well knowing that an error in such an important affair might be pregnant with long, miserable consequences. The result is we have had numerous internal evidences, seconded by many concurring providences, to testify we acted in the will of God. And still both our souls, conscious of the union between him and his son Christ Jesus, reflect a clear testimony of the divine approbation. This, and I trust this only, has brought the matter to a *complete determination* betwixt her and me. I mention this, not to obtain your consent to take the last step in this affair *now*—as I would rather wait to see what God will do with my health first—but to obtain your advice. And if it in any measure it merits it, your *approbation*—which, next to the Lord's, I most abundantly value.

The whole affair is publicly known, and Mrs. Cooke has had a full avowal of it from her daughter.³ She, when informed of it, disapproved a connection with a Methodist preacher, as it was likely to be a source of trials, difficulties, etc. But now everything is, as far as I can learn, perfectly quiet. Whether *her* full approbation can be gained or not, I cannot tell. I have given it into the hand of God. May

²'No one objecting'.

³Mary Cooke's mother was Mary (Pitney) Cooke (1742–1809).

he work his own will in it, for Jesus's sake! Amen.

My reverend father, favour me with a few lines as speedily as you can to Guernsey, and the favour *you will reward*. As Mr. [Robert] Brackenbury rather intends not to go to the Conference, and as it is requisite someone should be there to give an account of the affairs in the islands, Shall I come if God spares a life and health? Earnestly begging pardon for the trouble I have given you, I remain, reverend and very dear sir,

Your unfeignedly affectionate servant and son in the gospel,

Adam Clarke

Address: 'The Revd Mr Wesley / At Clones'.⁴

Postmarks: 'Dublin' and 'MY/2?'.

Endorsement: by JW, 'Adam Clarke / May 15 1787 / a[nswere]d 27'.

Source: holograph; MARC, WCB, D6/1/82; Dunn, *Clarke*, 40–43.

⁴The second line is in a different hand; letter likely sent as part of a packet to Dublin.

From H[enry] B[ennis] of Limerick¹

Limerick
May 17, 1787

The wall of St. Mary's churchyard, in the city of Limerick, projected into the main street. On the inside of the wall were large elm trees, in which a number of crows had built their nests. This they had done annually for several years. In the month of August 1786, the streets being flagged, for the accommodation of foot passengers, it was thought proper to move the wall further in, and consequently to cut down the front row of elms. For some days, whilst this was in agitation, there seemed to be a great commotion amongst the crows. At last a day was appointed by the dean to hold a vestry, in order to determine this matter. When the vestry met, the trees were ordered to be cut down. But it was agreed that one which stood at a corner should stand, and that those which stood backward should remain as an ornament to the city. Before, and during the sitting of the vestry, the crows were continually together, and a loud chattering were heard on all sides. As soon as the vestry broke up, to the great astonishment of multitudes, the crows began with unremitting labour to remove their nests to those trees which were ordered to remain. Only the elm which stood in the corner, and was in a doubtful situation they passed by. All their nests were speedily removed, except an old nest which for a long time had been unoccupied.

These facts are well known by multitudes in Limerick, who were eyewitnesses! But who can account for them? Let him do it who can.

H. B.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 10 (1787): 647.

¹Titled: 'A remarkable Instance of Sagacity in Crows'.

From Margaret (Hutchinson) Simpson¹

c. June 1787

Jonathan Simpson, my late husband, was born at Horsley in the parish of Ovingham in Northumberland, in the year 1713, where he served an apprenticeship with his father who was a joiner by trade. Being educated an independent, in his younger years he had much of the fear of God before his eyes. On seeing his father omit family prayer, he and his brother asked leave to perform that duty, to which their father readily consented. Accordingly they performed it by turns, and the Lord blessed them much in so doing.

But Jonathan was often in such distress of soul that he forgot to eat his bread, and frequently watered his couch with his tears. And though he had none to direct him, yet he continued serious, and went on doing the will of God according to the light he had. Being convinced of the necessity of receiving the Lord's Supper, he joined with the independents in Horsley, that he might partake of that ordinance.

Some time after this, believing that two were better than one, and being desirous that the Lord would provide a helpmeet for him, he made his supplication to God for direction. And seeing the scriptures forbid our being unequally yoked with unbelievers, he made choice of one of the same profession in that neighbourhood, who joined in prayer with him that God's will might be done in this business. After waiting some time we were married in the year 1737, and immediately set up the worship of God in our family.²

In the year 1742, Mr. Charles Wesley was to preach at Tanfield. And as many were desirous of hearing this new sect, which was everywhere spoken against, my husband determined to hear for himself, when he was filled with admiration and wonder. Notice being given that Mr. Charles Wesley would preach at Ryton, he desired that I would go and hear him. Accordingly I went, and heard him preach from John 14:27 when the word made a deep impression on my mind.³ When he came a second time, he preached on, 'A certain man made a great supper,'⁴ A great crowd attended and heard with deep attention. The word was greatly blessed to us, and we saw that there was a privilege to be enjoyed which we had never experienced. We therefore began and searched the Scripture more diligently, and found the doctrine he advanced to be agreeable thereto.

A little after, Mr. John Wesley coming to our place, we heard him, when the word came with greater power to our hearts, and stirred us up to be more in earnest in searching the Scriptures. My husband, being more free from prejudice, attended constantly. But I being prejudiced in favour of the independents did not always attend. But a young exhorter coming to our place, curiosity drew great numbers to hear him. He read Mr. Wesley's sermon on *The Almost Christian*. This was so blest to me as to show me that after all my profession, I was not a Christian! On this I inquired of our minister if we might know that God, for Christ's sake, had pardoned our sins? He said, 'Some do attain to it.' I then believed that it was to be attained, and that I stood in as much need of it as any. And being in great distress one night, my sins being placed in array against me, and my husband also being in great distress, we agreed to seek the Lord by fasting and prayer the next day. The night following the Lord was pleased to manifest himself unto us both in a clear manner. We could now say, 'Come all ye that fear the Lord, and we will tell you what he hath done for our souls.'⁵ As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he

¹Titled: 'A Short Account of Mr. Jonathan Simpson, of Horsley upon Tyne' 'Written by his Widow'.

²Jonathan Simpson married Margaret Hutchinson in May 1737 in Stamfordham, Northumberland.

³This was on Thurs., Sept. 30, 1742.

⁴Luke 14:16ff. This was on Sat., Oct. 2, 1742.

⁵Ps. 66:16.

removed our sins from us!’⁶ On this I told my friends what I experienced, not doubting but they would all believe. But to my great surprise, they would not believe, though I declared it to them. We then told our minister what we had experienced, who also disputed the reality of what we professed.

On the Sunday following, the sacrament was to be administered. But the minister would not admit us to be partakers thereof, for no other reason but because we had declared what God had done for our souls! My husband being clerk, we now sung with such courage and zeal that it offended several of the elders; therefore he was discharged from that office. Indeed the powers of darkness were now so engaged against us, in order to try our faith and patience, that a day was fixed for us to answer such questions to the minister and elders as they should choose to put to us.

The question was, ‘Do you hold the same principles now, as you did before you heard those people?’ My husband having the Word of God in his hand, told them that he would declare what he held, and prove it by the Scripture. The minister said that was not the question he was to answer. My husband told them that if they would not permit him to speak what he thought right, he would not give any answer. On this, one of the elders said he should be permitted to speak. Accordingly he declared what God had done for his soul, which so offended the minister and some of the elders that they determined to excommunicate him! But as others were persuaded he was a good man, the congregation was divided. His enemies were now determined to try another scheme, which was that none of them should employ him in his business. But he was determined to trust God, and to work at the meanest labour rather than act contrary to his conscience, and about this time the Lord inclined the heart of a gentleman, near twenty-eight miles distant, to employ him at his seat.

Being still determined to save his soul, he cast in his lot with this much despised people. But I, being prejudiced in favour of the independents, was not willing to join them myself, nor that he should join them. But he told me, as everyone was to answer to God for himself, he would not be hindered. Soon after the Lord applied that scripture to me, ‘Remember Lot’s wife.’⁷ On this I saw that we must not look back when commanded to fly for our lives. So I went with my husband and joined the society immediately, and blessed be God, we have continued among them ever since.

In the beginning of May 1759 we lost our farm, and were in such a strait that, a few days before we were to remove, we knew not of a house to live in. At this the enemies of God rejoiced, in hopes that their reprover would be driven out of the place. But the Lord raised up one, who had formerly been a great enemy, who rode forty miles to provide us a house for the present. About twelve months after this the Lord provided us a more convenient place where we have lived ever since. Here he gave us favour even with the wicked, while our hearts and our house were open to the servants of God.

As to my dear husband, he was so deeply affected with a sense of the goodness of God towards us, even in temporal things, that I have heard him repeat, with tears in his eyes, the words of Jacob, ‘With my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands.’⁸ Being blessed with a family of six children, all grown to maturity, with a measure of the fear of God before their eyes. His daily prayer for his children was not for riches or honour, but for grace to keep them from the evils of this world, and that they might be a seed to serve God when he was gathered to his fathers. On this, and other accounts, his constant custom was to sing and pray in his family morning, noon, and night.

It was also his daily practice to pray for the two Mr. Wesleys, and those that laboured with them in the Lord’s vineyard, and constantly to return thanks to God for the good that was done through their instrumentality.

His last illness was an acute pain in the urinal passages. On the second day Mr. Forster (an old friend, with whom he had taken sweet counsel for near forty years) was sent for, to whom he spoke concerning his temporal affairs. But after this they gave him no concern. A doctor being sent for, he came

⁶Ps. 103:12.

⁷Luke 17:32.

⁸Gen. 32:10.

immediately; and though he stayed with him eight days, it was not in his power to give him any lasting relief. But though his affliction was so great, he was enabled to bear it with much patience, and to declare that the grace of God was sufficient, and did bear him up under all he endured.

When his friends and neighbours came to visit him he encouraged the serious, exhorted the careless, and declared that nothing but real religion would support them on a bed of affliction. In his greatest sufferings he blessed God that they were not the pains of hell. When the doctor used some means which caused the most acute pain, he pleaded the promise of God, and told him that he had engaged to strengthen him in his time of need, and prayed that he would now stand by him and support him.

One day being observed to lift his right hand, he was asked the reason; to which he answered, 'It is a sign of victory! Victory!' From this time he was daily exhorting me and my children to be in earnest, and to make the one thing needful our principal care; telling us that God would provide for us all temporal blessings, as he had done hitherto in a wonderful manner.

When the doctor performed the operation which caused the most acute pain, and which so affected us that we were ready to faint at the sight of it, he scarce complained at all, but lifted up his heart in prayer for strength to bear it. He also prayed for the doctor, and encouraged him to do his duty. And sometimes he cried out, 'Pain without pain!' And when no relief could be given, he was not in the least discouraged, but said, 'It is the Lord's doing, who does all things well.' Seeing the servant doing something for him, he said, 'Molly will step in for a blessing, for the least thing done for a servant of God shall have its reward.'

Under his sharpest pains he would say,

The fiercer the blast,
The sooner its past;
The troubles that rise,
Shall gloriously hurry my soul to the skies.⁹

He was sensible all the time of his illness, till within a few hours of his death.

When he was parting with one of his relations, he sent his love to an acquaintance, saying, 'Tell her that the way was passable.' And then added, 'Farewell world!'

On his daughter saying, 'Father, you are very ill', he said, 'We shall soon be better and better!' As he often slumbered, he frequently came out of them singing, and would give out a verse for us to sing.

A Christian woman coming in, and asking him if he found Christ precious, he answered, 'O yes; he cannot fail of his promise, only we must put him in remembrance.'

In his last agony, which continued about seven hours, he frequently lifted up his hand in token of victory. At last he gave a smile, and being observed by one present who said he is now going to Jesus, whom he so often conversed about, he gave another exceeding pleasant smile, and then sweetly fell asleep in the Lord about two o'clock on Saturday morning, on the 26th of May 1787, and in the 74th year of his age. Thus I was deprived for a little while of the company and assistance of a most affectionate husband, after living together, in the fear of God, for the whole space of fifty years!

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 12 (1789): 470–75.

⁹Cf. CW, 'On a Journey', st. 8, *HSP* (1749), 2:244.

From [Thomas Taylor, itinerant?]¹

[Leeds]
c. June 1787

Sarah Spirit was born at Leeds, of poor but honest parents; and being a loving, dutiful child, gained the affections of her parents in a very high degree.² Her mother, having experienced the power of religion, always made mention of her children in her addresses to God; but more especially of her daughter Sarah. On the other hand she always showed herself dutiful and affectionate to her mother, and was easily prevailed on by her to hear the word of God.

But as she advanced in years she grew very fond of dress. And having good hands, and plenty of employment, she soon procured almost everything her heart could desire.

One Lord's day, being dressed in her finery, she went to church—when the minister observed that young people, especially young women, took great pains in adorning their bodies; who he feared, took little thought about a covering for their naked souls. The Spirit applying the word to her heart, she went to one of her cousins and said, 'Cousin, I have been at church this afternoon, and Mr. A. has preached to nobody but me! What care have I taken to adorn this poor perishing body, which will shortly be a feast for worms. But alas, I have taken little or no thought about a covering for my poor naked soul!' From this time she began to be more in earnest, and although she did not seek God fully, yet she forsook all her loose companions.

Some time after this she got married, and after a while it pleased God to awaken her husband. She seeing him so earnest in seeking the Lord, was stirred up herself to double her diligence and to seek him with her whole heart. While she was doing this, at one time she had such a sight of her Saviour bleeding on the cross for her as constrained her to cry out, 'I know, I feel thou hast loved me, and given thyself for me!'

But she did not long continue in this happy situation before she met with various trials. For one of her children was seized with dreadful fits, which ended in death. After that a second, and also a third died. Presently, after the death of her children, she lost her employment. At the same time her husband had little to do. In these circumstances she was obliged to try her friends, particularly one whom she loved as her own soul. To her she communicated her distress. And this friend was a friend indeed, till Satan sowed discord between them. She was now obliged to look out for other friends, and found some she little expected. But notwithstanding these, more trials attended her till she was brought to bed of her last child.

But a cousin of hers, who was acquainted with all her concerns, invited her to come and see her. When she went her cousin expressed a concern lest she should have lost ground, and should leave this world before she was made ready for a better. To this she made but little reply.

All this while her disorder so increased that she grew weaker and weaker every day. Presently after she desired her husband to assist her, that she might go and see her cousin once more. When she came thither she said,

Cousin, as you seemed to be so much concerned about me the last time I was at your house, I am come to tell you that last night was the most happy time I ever had in all my life. For as I was musing on my foolish conduct, and making my supplications before God, these words came with power to my soul, 'Where I am there shalt thou be also.'³ I will never leave thee nor

¹Titled: 'An Account of Sarah Spirit'.

²This appears to be Sarah Beaumont, born in 1746, who married John Spirit in Leeds in 1774, and was buried Mar. 4, 1787 in Leeds.

³Cf. John 14:3.

forsake thee.’⁴ Dear cousin, my tongue can never express the thousandth part of the love, joy, and peace which I then felt, and still continue to feel. My heart is big with desire that all may come and taste what I now enjoy! I am very sensible that the time of my departure is at hand; but the sooner the better! I long to see him whom my soul loveth, that I may fall down and kiss his bleeding feet, and praise him forever and ever! I am fully satisfied that the contract between me and my heavenly husband is fully ratified and renewed. And therefore I long to be dissolved that I may enjoy his loving presence for evermore.

It may be proper here to remark that there were several things in her which were worthy of imitation, particularly the two following: First, whatever she saw amiss in others, she took the first opportunity of telling it to themselves alone. The second was a forgiving spirit. It was observed before, how Satan sowed discord between her and her friend, and how she could not be easy till she had found means of reconciliation. For when she thought of giving up her body and soul unto God, these words were impressed upon her mind, ‘Go thy way; first be reconciled unto thy brother.’⁵ She said, ‘I am in my own mind reconciled to my sister. But I remember she hath something against me. And although I was not the occasion of the offence, yet it is my duty to go to her. But as I am confined to this bed I cannot go. Yet I can send to her.’ And immediately [she] sent a messenger to desire her offended friend to come and speak with her.

After some time she came, and finding some people in the house, she asked how Sarah did. Sarah, hearing her voice, desired she would come near, and as soon as she could, caught hold of her. And pulling her close to her, saluted her with a kiss of peace. The offended sister was so much overcome by this that she burst into a flood of tears and said, ‘Now Sally I am fully persuaded you are going to glory. But oh, what will become of me, who am still burdened with a sinful nature?’ Tears, and kisses of love and reconciliation were now alternately returned. So that the snare being broken in a moment, it caused much wonder and astonishment in all present.

On her uncle, who was a class leader, visiting her, she spoke much of the goodness of God to her soul, and expressed her love and gratitude to the preachers who visited her, and for every kindness which she had received from any of them in her time of need.

A few days before her death two gentlemen, unknown to her, hearing of her happy state, came to see her: to whom she told her experience. On hearing it they were very well satisfied, and told her she should want for nothing as long as she lived. She thanked them for their kindness, but told them that for several months, if she ate or drank anything except water, with a very small mixture of brandy, she could not cease from retching night and day. Two ladies who were also present wept over her, being astonished to find an inhabitant of a house of clay so exceeding happy in God.

Some opiate medicines which were given her brought her into a dozing condition for two or three days, insomuch that her friends did not expect to hear much more from her. But contrary to all expectation, she began to take notice and speak again. ‘My temporal physician’, said she, ‘gives me something which makes me doze. But my heavenly Physician hath applied again and again that never-failing medicine, even his own most precious blood.’ Her expressions seemed to intimate that while she was in that dozing state she was favoured with a sight of the invisible world.

Some of her friends came, expecting to find her dead, or to see her at least dying. But to their great astonishment, they found her speaking with a loud voice, and extolling the unbounded mercy of God her Saviour. Her whole language was to this effect:

The promis’d land from Pisgah’s top
I now exult to see:

⁴Heb. 13:5.

⁵Cf. Matt. 5:24.

My hope is full, O glorious hope
Of immortality!⁶

O, this blessed hope! (said she); had it not been for this blessed hope, that is so sure and steadfast, and fixed so firmly within the veil, I should have utterly fainted. But now, blessed be his dear and holy name, he hath made me a partaker of the full assurance of hope! O what comfort have I received from those blessed words, Hebrews 6:19, 'Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both steadfast and sure, and which entereth within the veil.' Pray be so kind as to tell Mr. T.⁷ or the other preachers, if they should think proper to say anything about so worthless a worm as me, to speak from the above words.

When all present thought her strength was exhausted, she began to sing, and said to her leader, 'Give out this hymn, and let us join the hosts above, I can sing with the best of you!' The words she sang were as follow:

O what hath Jesus bought for me?
Before my ravish'd eyes,
Rivers of life divine I see,
And trees of paradise:

They flourish in perpetual bloom,
Fruit every month they give;
And to the healing leaves who come
Eternally shall live.

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.

O what are all our sufferings 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 friends or life away:
But let me find them all again
In that eternal day.⁸

When singing was over, she said, 'Yes, yes, I know my seat is waiting for me, as well as a glorious palm of victory! I shall soon join the innumerable multitude who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb! My dear mother will welcome me into those happy regions! And how it will heighten my happiness, should I be permitted to welcome all my dear relations into the paradise of God! I know you will follow me, one after another. I

⁶Cf. CW, Hymn on Rev. 22:17, st. 15, *HSP* (1742), 303.

⁷Thomas Taylor was the Assistant for the Leeds circuit from Aug. 1786–July 1787.

⁸Cf. CW, Hymn III, st. 5–6, 9, *Funeral Hymns* (1759), 5–6.

am most jealous of my sister Hannah, and my cousin Sarah!' One asking her why she was more jealous of these than the rest? She said, 'Because they are so unequally yoked, and will have all the battering cannon of this world to fight against; and some times such batteries will be opened upon them as they little expect. But oh, let the world take the world! But do you keep close to God by faith and prayer, and keep close to each other by love unfeigned, and he who has covered my head in the day of battle, will also bring you off more than conquerors.'

She continued to speak of the loving kindness of God her Saviour, and to encourage all who come to see her to go forward in all his pleasant ways, till he came to take them to himself! Thus she continued till after twelve o'clock, having spoken for above two hours.

After this she dozed and awoke alternately, till about five o'clock in the morning, when she cried out, 'Come, Lord Jesus! Come quickly!' And then went away to the joys of her Lord, 1787.⁹

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 12 (1789): 297–303.

⁹Orig., '1788'; an apparent editorial error.

From William Myles¹

Trewalder
June 1, 1787

Mary Rounsevell was born the second of February, in the year 1700, and died the third of May last, in the 87th year of her age.² For near thirty years she was a stranger to true religion, though she was often convinced that she was a great sinner. But about fifty years ago she was deeply awakened, and had a sense of the love of God shed abroad in her heart; which was some years before she heard the Methodists.

When she had been five years married, her husband died and left her a widow with three small children. Her distress on that occasion was very great, and made her think seriously of the vanity and shortness of life. In the midst of these thoughts, the Lord set her sins in array before her. Now her worldly grief was turned into godly sorrow, and her prayer was that God would remove her load, and give her his peace. As she had no one to direct her, the Lord who is rich in mercy had respect to her cries. For in about a quarter of a year he set her soul at liberty. On this she cried out to her father, 'The Lord has pardoned my sins! The Lord has pardoned my sins! I am as sure of the love of God to me, as I am of my own existence, and can rejoice in the Lord continually.'

Being thus exceedingly happy herself, she wished that all might partake of the same. Accordingly taking her Bible in her hand, she went to all the neighbours and told them that God had pardoned her sins. At the same time she reproved all who sinned in her sight, and endeavoured to convince them of the evil of their doings by reading her Bible to them.

While she continued thus, reading, praying, and exhorting, the Lord blessed her endeavours to several. Two in particular were brought to God by her means. C. Thom, an old bedridden man, was brought to see his lost condition. On this she directed him to seek the Lord by prayer, and to receive the sacrament. Accordingly he sent for the minister, and as soon as he had received, he cried out, 'My soul is lightened! My sins are pardoned!' For some time he continued happy in God, and at last died rejoicing.

Mary Slugget also was brought to think of her latter end by conversing with Mary Rounsevell. When the Lord gave her to see her wickedness, she prayed day and night till she knew that the Lord had pardoned all her sins.

For some time after this, the Methodists coming into the country, she longed to hear them. Accordingly she went to Camelford to enquire about them. And on one telling her they preached a great deal about Christ and the forgiveness of sins, she said they were the people of God, and went seven or eight miles to hear them. The first time she heard, her soul was much blessed. On this she joined the society, and continued a member of it as long as she lived.

During her widowhood she had many difficulties in her worldly circumstances. But she trusted in God that he would help her. One day she had not a morsel of food for herself or children. In the evening her dog brought in a great piece of bread. On her bidding him drop it, he did so. A neighbour who was present, asked her if she would eat what the dog had brought in? She said, 'I will; for the Lord has sent it, in answer to my prayer.'

Another time she had not a farthing in the world, and had made a promise to pay eightpence that day. In the morning, she prayed that God might enable her to fulfil her promise. After prayer she went downstairs and opened the door, and found a shilling on the threshold! On this she returned him thanks for answering her prayer.

¹Titled: 'A Short Account of God's Dealings with Mary Rounsevell, of Trewalder, in the Parish of Lantegloss, in Cornwall'. William Myles (1756–1828) was born at Limerick, and admitted as an itinerant in 1778 (see *Works*, 10:474). He continued in service until he settled in Liverpool in 1824. See *Minutes* (post-Wesley, 1828), 6:339–41.

²Mary Harris (1700–87) married Peter Rounsaval (d. 1738) in 1732 in Padstow, Cornwall.

As to her children, she brought them up in the fear of God; taught them to keep the Sabbath-day holy, and would never suffer them to play with wicked children.

The last year and half of her life she was bedridden, during which time she rejoiced in God, and frequently cried out, 'I shall soon see the glory of God.' For the last six weeks she had violent fits. Sometimes they lasted for hours; but as soon as she came out of them she said, 'The Lord is my strength: I shall soon see all his salvation.'

She never lost her peace from the first moment she received it to the last. And as to her behaviour, she was an ornament to her profession, and a credit to the society all the time she was in it.

After I came into the circuit, I frequently visited her, and always found her happy in God, and resigned to his will. She prayed much for Mr. Wesley and the preachers, that God would bless them abundantly.

Thus having employed about sixty years in seeking her own salvation and that of others, being quite worn out with age, like a shock of corn, fully ripe, she was gathered into the garner, May 3, 1787, and in the 87th year of her age.

W. M.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 10 (1787): 631–34.

From Marmaduke Pawson¹

Thorner
June 10, 1787

A few days ago we committed to the ground the body of my father's sister, Rebecca Smith. About six years since she was reduced to the greatest degree of poverty and wretchedness, and was ready to perish for want. I hearing of this, and knowing the wretched state her soul was in, being without any true knowledge of God and religion, my bowels yearned over her with deep compassion. On this I wrote to my brother and desired him to assist me in giving her a little to keep her from the parish, and observed also that by these means we might be instrumental in saving her soul. My brother complying, I fetched her to Thorner above five years since, and let her have a comfortable room to live in, with everything needful for her body.

On leaving her native place she rejoiced exceedingly, as she apprehended she should suffer want no more. But as to her soul, she has often said she had no thought of that. We therefore got her under the word as soon as possible, and gave her liberty to be present at the meeting of our class, which was a means of bringing her to the knowledge of her lost condition. On seeing this, how did she bewail her miserable state—while the tears ran down her aged cheeks even to the ground! Yet she was filled with gratitude to God who had graciously raised her friends to provide for her body, and at the same time to care so much for her immortal soul. And as the Lord had thus pitied her in her low and lost condition, she entertained a strong hope that he would one day or other show her his mercy, by manifesting himself to her as a God pardoning all her sin.

Accordingly, about eighteen months ago, it pleased him to lay his afflicting hand upon her body, so that we thought she was going to die, which made her cry out more earnestly for mercy. In her distress she one night sent for me in great haste, as she thought she was dying without a sense of pardon sealed upon her heart. On my praying with her, she was comforted. Before I left her I encouraged her to trust in the Lord, and to look for her salvation. I then left her calmly waiting upon the Lord. But before I got into my own house (which was only about ten yards from hers) she was fully set at liberty in her mind, and at the same time her body was healed. Such an instance of the love and power of God I never saw before; for when I left her she seemed as if she was dying, but when I went in again she ailed nothing, but was rejoicing in the God of her salvation!

This day three weeks [ago] we had a love-feast, which was a very profitable one to her. In the evening of that day she began to be ill, and grew worse and worse every day. But how different her state to what it was in her former affliction! For she was now filled with a hope full of immortality, while heaven appeared in her very countenance.

I never saw one more thankful to God and her benefactors than she was, viewing with delight the goodness and mercy of God in raising her up friends in her times of need. As I stood by her bedside, she cried out, 'All you have done was out of love to my poor soul. And surely he will love me forever. Yes, forever.' On my adding, 'Yes, and I hope you love him in return.' 'Love him!' she hastily exclaimed. 'Indeed I do, and that with all my soul! If I had wings I would fly away to him! O how happy am I! And I shall be much happier very soon, and be with him forever! O how glad should I be if I could come and let you know all the happiness I shall soon enjoy!'

Thus she continued happy in the love of God, praising and adoring him for his goodness to her as long as I was with her, which was till the Tuesday before she died. Being called away in Lancashire, I did not return till Thursday in the evening; when I alighted from my horse I was informed she was just fallen asleep in the Lord.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 12 (1789): 130–32.

¹Titled: 'A Short Account of Rebecca Smith' 'Written by Mr. M. Pawson'. Rebecca Pawson (1707–87) married George Smith (1705–81) in 1737 in Weston, Yorkshire. She was buried June 2, 1787.

From J[osiah?] D[ornford?]¹

c. June 15, 1787

Richard Russel was a shipwright in His Majesty's yard at Deptford. He was many years a member of the Methodist society there, and was truly an ornament to religion. The sweetness of his manner in reproving sin in high and low was such that none could be offended at him. He overcame all his enemies with love; and towards his latter end, was beloved and revered by all in the yard, both officers and men.

When orders came to work on the Lord's day, he could not be prevailed on to comply, though it was expected he would be dismissed on that account; especially as he was old and infirm. On these occasions he used to say, 'As the King of kings has forbid it, I cannot do it.' And therefore it was overlooked in him.

About a quarter past nine, on the evening on which he died, he was standing at his door, speaking to two men about their souls, and advising them to look unto Jesus. When they were gone, he came in, and asked for his supper. But soon after finding himself struck with death, he said, 'I am going to glory! I am going to my Father's house! Now I am going home indeed!' And began singing, 'Hallelujah! Praise the Lord'!

As he sat in his chair, he fell forward, and would have fallen to the ground had not his daughter caught him and prevented it. When he came to himself he desired to go into the yard, when his son, with another man, helped him. As he was going, he sung hallelujah so loud that the neighbours heard him. When they got him back into the room, they undressed him, and about half past ten o'clock, got him to bed—while he, all the time, continued praising God, and exhorting his son to follow him, as he had followed Christ.

When he was put into bed, he fell into a sweet sleep for about half an hour, and then awoke praising God. Soon after he fell into a doze again, and in about an hour slept in Jesus! The last word they could hear him speak, were, 'My Jesus! My Jesus!'

For many years he had been steady and uniform in his Christian conversation. And though a poor man, he was a credit to religion. He had, through grace, such a command over his passions that I knew not one who ever saw him out of temper. I verily believe, his continually speaking to all who came in his way was the means of his bringing many to God; especially one whom I knew that is now an excellent preacher of the gospel.

J. D.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 11 (1788): 630–32.²

¹Titled: 'An Account of the Death of Richard Russel, who departed this life June 13, 1787, in the 80th year of his age'. He was buried at St. Nicholas church of Deptford on June 17. The author of this piece may be Josiah Dornford.

²JW or the editor has added after the letter: 'Reader, go thou and do likewise!'

From S[amuel] W[ebster]¹

[Wainfleet, Lincolnshire]
c. June 15, 1787

Charles Steward, born in sin, continued so till two days before he died: when it pleased God to show him his condition and danger. He had been afflicted for some weeks before. But expecting he should recover, put death off at a distance.

On Thursday the 7th, coming into the shop where he used to work, I looked on him with an eye of pity, and said, 'Dear boy, do cry to God to have mercy on you for the sake of Christ. For he alone can do you good.' For the present he seemed to take but little notice; but went into the house, sat down, and remained silent a considerable time. He then went out of doors and laid him down upon some straw with his face to the earth. Presently my mother went out (thinking him long) to see where he was, and found him weeping. On her asking him why he lay there, he said, 'It is good enough for me.' She then asked him what was the matter. To which he answered, 'I know I am not fit to die.' On his going to bed he wept bitterly. The next morning when I went to speak to him, he cried out, 'Do pray for me; for my heart is so hard I cannot pray.' On this I kneeled down, but I had not uttered many words before we were both in a flood of tears.

When I went to see him again at night, my mother told me he had been praying aloud. I then asked him if he could believe the Lord would have mercy on him. He said, 'Some times I feel a hope. Do, let us pray again.' Accordingly I besought God to pardon him, and to give him a full assurance thereof, for the sake of Christ; to which he heartily said, 'Amen.' He was now resigned to the will of God, and clapping his hands, and exulting in the favour of God. We praised him from the ground of our hearts. From that time his soul was happy till he died.

On Saturday morning, June 9, he said, 'I shall not be long here. Tomorrow morning I shall be singing praises to God above.' He then broke out into raptures of joy, and clapping his hands, blessed the Lord that he was going to heaven; and said, 'I am fully resigned to go this moment! I love all! I forgive all from my heart!'

On wishing a certain friend would come and see him, I said, 'He can do you no good.' To which he replied, 'No, none but Christ who died for me.' As his affliction was very heavy he said, 'I fear, I offend my God in wanting to be gone. It is hard work to die; but my dear Lord died for me!'

In the forenoon he desired to see two of his companions that he might talk with them. When they came, he begged of them to cry to God for mercy, and to forsake their evil ways. He said, 'I set to my seal that God is true. Blessed be my Saviour he hath died for me, and hath forgiven me all my sins. If you are not so bad as me, yet you are not in the way to heaven. You should not spend the Lord's day in gaming, but go to Church and meeting if you think of getting to heaven.' He then held out his hands and begged of them to take warning by him.

In the afternoon he said, 'I am going! Praise the Lord!' A little before he died I said to him, 'Give God the glory.' On which he lifted up his hands twice. When I took my leave of him, I said, 'I hope we shall meet at the right hand of God to part no more forever.' To which he answered, 'I trust we shall.' A few minutes before he died, my mother asked him how he was; to which he replied, 'Happy!' and then breathed out his soul into the hands of his dear Redeemer, June 9, 1787.

S. W.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 12 (1789): 20–21.

¹Titled: 'A Short Account of the Death of Charles Steward, who died on Saturday, the 9th of June 1787: aged 18 Years'. Samuel Webster (b. 1764) was the son of Mrs. Elizabeth Webster (1745–1835), who was converted at age 20 and made her home in Wainfleet a base for Methodist preachers; see *WWM* 58 (1835): 806.

From A. Brown

Waterford
June 16, 1787

Andrew Delap took a fever a few weeks ago, which at times deprived him of the use of his reason.¹ But about nine days before he died, God was pleased to restore it to him again. On this, he said to one who enquired concerning the state of his soul, 'I am ready to stand before my Redeemer! My evidence of the favour of God is clear! I know Jesus is mine, and I am his!' After this he continued a while, full of the spirit of prayer and praise, and then went to God.

A. Brown

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 11 (1788): 69.

¹Andrew Delap was converted about 1770 in Ireland, admitted 'on trial' as an itinerant in 1774 (see *Works*, 10:427), and to full status in 1778 (10:473). But his name disappears from the *Minutes* after that year. All of his stations were in Ireland. See Crookshank, *Ireland*, 232–34.

From Daniel Jackson¹

Limerick
June 16, 1787

Reverend Sir,

The Lord has been pleased to take away my dear fellow labourer, brother Seaward.²

He went to a friend's in the country, and returned the 6th of June, apparently much better than he had been for some months. I therefore set out to the circuit on the 7th.

That evening he preached with much satisfaction to the people, and was remarkably cheerful after, and went to bed and slept four hours. But when he awoke he was very ill, and continued so for twenty-four hours, and then breathed out his pious soul into the arms of God.

The short time of his illness he had no fear of death; but was meekly resigned to his heavenly Father's will.

Ever since I was acquainted with him, I can truly say, I have not known a more steady, upright young man of his years. May the Lord sanctify this visitation to us, and help us to follow his example!

D. J.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 11 (1788): 518.

¹Titled: 'An Account of the Death of Mr. Seward: in a Letter to the Rev. J. Wesley'. Daniel Jackson (c. 1750–1824) was converted in 1773 and admitted 'on trial' as an itinerant in 1778 (see *Works*, 10:474). He remained on the circuit till 1810, when health issues led him to settle in Stockport, where continued active in visiting the sick and poor until his death. See *Minutes* (post-Wesley, 1825), 6:5–6.

²Orig., 'Seward'; using the spelling in his obituary in the *Minutes*. Thomas Seaward had been admitted 'on trial' as an itinerant in Ireland in 1786 and stationed along with Daniel Jackson in Limerick (see *Works*, 10:597, 601). His obituary appeared in the 1787 *Minutes* (10:624).

From the Rev. Dr. Thomas Coke

[Dublin]
[c. June 30, 1787]

Reverend Sir,

On Saturday, February 10, I set sail from St. Eustatius in a large Dutch ship, and after an agreeable voyage of eighteen days arrived at Charleston harbour. On taking leave of my poor black friends, they heaped upon me such a quantity of seed cakes, sweet biscuits, oranges, bottles of jelly, etc., that we had not consumed above one half of them on our voyage, although there were seven in the cabin to partake of them. Before I left St. Eustatius, I formed six regular classes, and I have no doubt but they are all (one person only, perhaps, excepted) at least deeply awakened; and that one has evidently good desires. If I had stayed there one day more, I think I should have formed a seventh class. Three of them I gave to the care of Harry, which I expect will soon multiply; two to our North American sister; and one to a black named Samuel.

The captain of our ship read some prayers and a portion of sacred writ to his people every morning and evening, and a sermon on the Lord's-day. And though I fear there was no vital religion among them, there was the greatest decency and propriety of conduct I ever saw in a ship. And this, I have been informed, is the case with most of the ships of Holland. During this voyage we were very successful in catching dolphins.

On the first of March I landed at Charleston, and spent a comfortable month with the infant society in this city. Soon after I came here I had the pleasure of opening a new church, which will contain about fifteen hundred people.¹ From that time my congregations were very large. At 5:00 in the morning about three hundred used to attend. Since my visit to the islands I have found a peculiar gift for speaking to the blacks. It seems to be almost irresistible. Who knows but the Lord is preparing me for a visit in some future time to the coast of Africa?

About a week before my departure from this city, Mr. [Francis] Asbury gave me the meeting. Our interview at first was rather cool, but soon the spirit of peace and love came upon us and all jealousies were immediately removed. The preachers who labour in this state and Georgia also met us here, according to the direction of Mr. Asbury. And in our Conference which we held together the spirit of concord and love did eminently preside. All was peace and harmony. And at the public ordination of two deacons, the Lord was pleased to pour out his Spirit largely upon us. As there are no more than forty whites here in society, the building of a church worth a thousand pounds sterling has filled the people in general with amazement. Great has been the work of God both in this state and that of Georgia for the little time we have laboured in them. While my soul is exulting in the prosperity of Zion, I feel an additional pleasure in the thought that Georgia was the residence and sphere of Mr. [John] Wesley's usefulness for some years—everything that is likely to give him pleasure, administering a proportionable pleasure to me.

Mr. Asbury (who is assuredly a great man of God) has treated me with much respect. For he has not only provided me a good horse with its proper attire, but (as there is no time to procure a regular publication of me at the places through which I am to pass) has delivered up to me his own plan and intends to accompany me to New York.

Much of the glory and of the hand of God have I seen in riding through the circuit called Pee-Dee, in South Carolina. When I was in America before there were but twenty in society in this circuit, and it was much doubted at the Conference whether it would be for the glory of God to send even one preacher to this part of the country. But now, chiefly by the means of two young men, Hope Hull and

¹This was the Cumberland Street Church.

Jeremiah Maston, the societies consist of eight hundred and twenty-three members.² And no less than two and twenty preaching-houses have been erected in this single circuit in the course of the last year. The preachers here ride about one hundred miles a week upon an average, but the swamps and morasses they have to pass through in the winter, it is tremendous to relate! Though it is now in the month of April, I was above my knees in water on horseback in passing through a deep morass, and that very late in the evening, when it was almost dark, in order to reach the house of Mr. De Busse (one of our friends), in whose neighbourhood I was to preach the next day; but we had with us a faithful guide.

In the course of our journey through North Carolina I preached (among other places) at the house of Mr. Hodgins,³ near the town of Salisbury. He was formerly a dancing-master and has amassed a considerable fortune, with which he has purchased a large estate; and is now a friend of the gospel, and some of his family are indeed friends of God. He has the finest prospect from his dwelling-house of open lands, woods, and water that I think I have seen in America. We have in this state got up to the Cherokee Indians, who are in general a peaceable people. I trust the grace of God will in time get into some of their hearts.

In travelling through Virginia, our rides were so long that we were frequently on horseback till midnight, after preaching in the middle of the day. Since I left Charleston I have got into my old romantic way of life, of preaching in the midst of great forests, with scores and sometimes hundreds of horses tied to the trees, which adds much solemnity to the scene.

In the course of my journey through this state I visited the county of Halifax, where I met with a little persecution on my former visit to this continent, on account of the public testimony I bore against Negro slavery. I am now informed that soon after I left the county on my former tour a bill was presented against me as a seditious person before the grand jury and was found by the jury, and ninety persons had engaged to pursue me and bring me back again; but their hearts failed them. Another bill was also presented in one of the neighbouring counties, but was thrown out. Many of the people, I find, imagined that I would not venture amongst them again. However when I came they all received me with perfect peace and quietness; and my visit, I have reason to believe, was made a blessing to many. Indeed I now acknowledge that however just my sentiments may be concerning slavery, it was ill-judged of me to deliver them from the pulpit. A man who pursued me with a gun in order to shoot me when I was in this neighbourhood before (but this circumstance was then secreted from me) is now converted to God and become a member of our society.

In Mecklenburg county in this state, where the Lord is not only increasing but deepening his work in a very glorious manner, we held our second Conference.⁴ After some little jealousies were removed, we renewed our love more closely than ever, and our whole business was conducted with great dispatch and most perfect unanimity. On the Lord's-day I had the largest congregation I ever saw in America, although there was no town within a great many miles of the place. I think there were about four thousand hearers. We here ordained five deacons in public, and it was a very solemn and profitable time, I believe, to very many.

One circumstance at this Conference gave me very great pleasure. Brother Hawes,⁵ one of our elders who last year was sent with a preacher to Kentucky, on the banks of the Ohio, near the Mississippi,

²Hope Hull (1763–1818) of Worcester County, MD, later became a Methodist pioneer in Georgia. After his marriage in 1795 he settled in Athens, GA, and became a founding trustee of the University of Georgia (Asbury, *Journal*, 1:535, 723). Jeremiah Maston was received on trial in 1785, ordained deacon in 1787, and located in 1790.

³According to Asbury (*Journal*, 1:537) this was a Mr. Huggins.

⁴According to Asbury this took place at the home of William White in Charlotte County.

⁵I.e., James Haw who, with Benjamin Ogden, was sent in 1786 to introduce Methodism into Kentucky.

wrote to us a most enlivening account of the prospect in his district, and earnestly implored some further assistance. 'But, observe!' added he, 'No one must be appointed for this country that is afraid to die! For there is now war with the Indians, who frequently lurk behind the trees, shoot the travellers, and then scalp them; and we have one society on the very frontiers of the Indian country.' After this letter was read a blessed young man (brother [Thomas] Williamson) offered himself as a volunteer for this dangerous work. What can we not do or suffer, when the love of Christ constrains!

In a few days after this we arrived at Richmond. Many of the inhabitants, I was informed, had said that I would not dare to venture into that town (which is the seat of government in Virginia) on account of a petition for the abolition of Negro slavery which had been presented to the General Assembly, and had been subscribed by a very respectable body of freeholders, the origin of which was attributed to me. But they did not know me, for I am a plain blunt man that goes directly on. However, instead of opposition, the governor of the state, who resides there, ordered the courthouse to be opened to me, and a very respectable and very attentive congregation I was favoured with.

From Richmond to Alexandria, which is a hundred and twenty miles or thereabouts, we have no societies. At one of the inns we joined a company of agreeable men, who were not unacquainted with the Methodists, though they were unacquainted with God. These gentry laid a plot for us, I have reason to believe. For in our first dish of tea there was a little taste of rum; in our second a little more; but the third was so strong, that on our complaining of a conspiracy, it seemed as if the rum had sprung into our tea of itself, for both company and waiters solemnly protested they were innocent.

On the last day of April Mr. Asbury and I arrived at Baltimore. And on the next day our third and last Conference began; when, behold! Satan exerted his utmost subtlety. Never surely was more external peace and liberty enjoyed by the church of God or any part of it, since the fall of man, than we enjoy in America, and everything seems to be falling before the power of the word. What then remained for the infernal serpent, but to sow the seeds of schism and division among ourselves. But glory be to God, yea glory forever be ascribed to his sacred name, the devil was completely defeated. Our painful contests, I trust, have produced the most indissoluble union between my brethren and me. We thoroughly perceived the mutual purity of each other's intentions in respect to the points in dispute. We mutually yielded, and mutually submitted; and the silken cords of love and affection were tied to the horns of the altar forever and ever.⁶

The Lord has done marvellous things in this land in the course of the last year. No less than six thousand six hundred have been added to the society on the balance in the United States alone And praise be the Lord, the work is deep as well as wide. O that I myself may be watered under this glorious shower, and lose nothing of my share in the blessings which the heavens are pouring down.

At this Conference another young man offered himself as a volunteer for Kentucky, and the two preachers are to be sent off as soon as possible, breathing the true spirit of missionaries.

I felt much of the power of God in all my public administrations at Baltimore, and I have no doubt but many of my hearers felt it too. The divine Comforter was also very graciously present at the ordination of two elders and eleven deacons.

On Tuesday, the 8th of May, Mr. Asbury and I paid a visit to our new college,⁷ which will be opened (we expect) between this and Christmas; and we trust, will unite together those two great ornaments of human nature—genuine religion and extensive learning. The situation pleases me more and

⁶The key issue concerned JW's attempt to direct the affairs of the American connexion from a distance, with Coke as his go-between. Wesley's appointment of Richard Whatcoat as superintendent alongside Asbury was rejected, and Wesley's own name was deleted from the list of superintendents in the *Minutes*. See JW's letter to Asbury, Sept. 20, 1788.

⁷A boys' school at Abingdon, MD, which they named Cokesbury College, was planned at the time of the Christmas Conference and opened in the autumn of 1787. Coke was its main advocate; Asbury's enthusiasm and support were qualified. The school closed in 1797 after a second disastrous fire.

more. Our object is (not to raise gospel-ministers, but) to serve our pious friends and our married preachers in the proper education of their sons.

We now visited our affectionate societies in Philadelphia and New York. In each of these cities we want a second church, and I believe the Lord will soon enable them to bring this to effect.

Not meeting with a suitable ship in the port of New York (and after taking an affectionate leave of my dear friend Mr. Asbury), I returned to Philadelphia. On the road I waited on Mr. Ogden, of Elizabeth Town, New Jersey, a minister of the Church of England, and a minister also of Jesus Christ.⁸ He is the only regular minister I have met with that enforces the Methodist discipline among his people. He has many classes under his care, and much of the life of God I doubt not is among them. In the evening I preached in his church.

On Sunday, the 27th of May, after preaching a farewell-sermon to our friends in Philadelphia, I embarked on board a merchant ship for Dublin. The captain, his wife, and another gentlewoman, who are my company, manifest as much decency, courtesy, and respect as can be expected from unawakened persons. But God is with me, his weak, sinful worm, glory be to his blessed name.

On Monday, the 25th of June, by the mercy of God, I arrived safe in Dublin bay after a passage of twenty-nine days, and was received in much love by our Irish brethren. I purpose to spend one year in Europe, and then, with your leave, I shall [make] my American friends, God willing, a third visit.

I remain, reverend sir,

You most obedient son and servant,

Thomas Coke

Source: published transcription; *A Further Continuation of Dr. Coke's Journal, in a Letter to the Rev. J. Wesley* (London: Paramore, 1787).

⁸Rev. Uzal Ogden (1744–1822) was a prominent Anglican evangelical who offered friendship and support to the Methodists (Asbury, *Journal*, 1:467).

From [John Booth?]¹

c. July 1787

Miss Elizabeth Waller had serious impressions from her infancy. When, at school or elsewhere, she was overcome with excessive levity, or any other of the follies of childhood, she would weep and resolve to be more watchful for the time to come. At the age of fifteen she began to hear the Methodists; and immediately saw the depravity of her nature, and the necessity of a change. She continued seeking the Lord, in much distress, for about a year. During this time she said little of her state, being naturally of a reserved disposition. She sought the Lord in all his appointed means, in which she was remarkably diligent. At length the Lord appeared to the joy of her soul, applying those words of Isaiah to her heart, 'Arise! shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.'² The fire being thus kindled, she spake with her tongue and immediately informed her mother what God had done for her soul.

Soon after, she was led to see the evil of her heart, and the necessity of a further work of grace upon her soul. She then forgot the things which were behind, and reached forth to those which she beheld before her, pressing towards the mark, of the prize,³ About the close of the year the Lord revealed himself in a powerful manner, applying that scripture to her heart, 'Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee.'⁴ After this time she continued to walk with God, and enjoyed constant communion with him. Her life seemed to be a continual offering up of her all, as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God. Notwithstanding her great enjoyments, she was very far from ostentation, and never informed even her mother of her diary.

During the whole of her sickness, she enjoyed much fellowship with God. She had not usually great overflowings of joy; but a steady, settled peace. When her mother pitied her, and expressed the feelings of her mind, she would say, 'You are more distressed in seeing my afflictions than I am in bearing them. I am so supported by God's presence that night and day are alike to me.' She was never known to murmur or repine under her afflictions. She fancied herself dying for a week before her decease, and frequently broke out into holy raptures. Particularly once, when Revelation 7:4 was applied to her heart, she cried, 'I shall be with the hundred forty and four thousand; I shall be one.' And again she expressed her joyful astonishment, 'I one!' On the day of her decease she spoke very little, being exceedingly weak. Her mother frequently asked her, 'Is Christ precious?' She always answered, 'He is precious, blessed be his name, he is precious.' She lived a life of holiness, and died triumphing over her last enemy, June 1, 1787, in the 19th year of her age.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 137–38.

¹Titled: 'Some Account of Elizabeth Waller'. This is apparently the Elizabeth Waller buried June 4, 1787 in Huddersfield. And the correspondent was likely John Booth, currently Assistant of the Huddersfield circuit.

²Isa. 60:1.

³See Phil. 3:13–14.

⁴Song of Sol. 4:7.

From Jeanne Le Gros Bisson¹

St. Helier,² Jersey
July 11, 17[87]³

Reverend and Dear Sir,

The subsequent lines contains a short account of my present feelings.

On Christmas Day the Lord Jesus manifested himself more particularly to my heart, giving me such a view of himself as I never had before—whereupon my soul adored him, in humble prostration at his feet. What has passed since surpasses all description. All I can say is that I have loved him supremely since that blessed day. All the crosses I now meet with, and the various changes of the creatures in respect to me, make no more impression on me than if I were dead. Thus do I unto the world. My Jesus reigns the sovereign of my whole heart, and causes every power, both of body and soul, to obey him.

Glory be to his holy name, his reign is a reign of peace and love. There is nothing in me but what would grieve to offend him. I have indeed no longer anything but Jesus and heaven in my soul. The Lord has richly endued my spirit with that love which is without partiality, insomuch that I can no longer find any preference for relations or friends beyond the rest of mankind—all the creatures being loved equally by me for the sake of him who is their creator and mine. I can no longer find any difference between honour and dishonour, esteem or contempt, health or sickness, life or death; for all things are mine, and I am Christ's. I know God as my Father, and Jesus as my saviour and spouse; who has written me on his heart, and graven me on the palms of his hands. I have as full an assurance that my name is written in the Lamb's book of life as if I had seen it there with my eyes. The divine light often shines into my soul with such brightness as overwhelms me in wonder and admiration. It shows me how beautiful and glorious God is; how good, how powerful, how pure and holy!

In a word, this sacred light discovers to me his amiableness and benevolence in such a manner as to constrain me to love him with all my heart and my neighbour as myself, notwithstanding all the oppositions I meet with from without. For as to my interior, it is in absolute subjection to the will of God. By my outward enemies I do not mean my body—my body and soul being both united to glorify God and directed by Jesus, who is the living stone that quickens and actuates this mass of clay and makes it move from place to place according to his will, without any more resistance than if it existed no longer. By my outward enemies then I mean the world, which displays its vanities to every advantage, in order to captivate the followers of the Lamb. But my soul cannot relish its charms. Satan also uses every means to seduce me. And in my opinion he will strive more than ever to effect his purpose, because he knows his time is short. He will therefore stir up all hell (if I may be allowed the expression) in order to destroy the kingdom of Christ in my soul. But in spite of him that kingdom shall be established, and Jesus be more abundantly glorified in me and all his saints. Amen! Even so Lord Jesus!

I am, reverend and dear sir,

Your most unworthy friend and servant,

J. B.

Source: published extract; *Arminian Magazine* 11 (1788): 323–25.

¹Jeanne Le Gros Bisson (1767–1830) was born in St. Martin, Isle of Jersey. Robert Brackenbury sent JW an account of her spiritual experience c. Feb. 10, 1787 (see above). JW's reply to Brackenbury of Feb. 16, 1787 (*Works*, 30:535–37) apparently sparked this letter from Jeanne. JW would meet Jeanne while on a preaching tour to the Isle of Jersey Aug. 20–29, 1787 (see *Journal*, *Works*, 24:53–54), and they would correspond until his death, continuing after Jeanne married William Cock (1765–1812) in St. Helier, Isle of Jersey, on Mar. 9, 1788. See the account of her death in *WMM* 9 (1830): 861.

²Orig., 'Helliers'.

³Orig., '1777'; a mistake, replicating the year of surrounding letters in this issue of *AM*. JW came to know of Bisson only in early 1787.

From Mary Cooke

Trowbridge
July 14, 1787

After several months silence, occasioned by your visit to Ireland, will you, dear sir, permit your unworthy correspondent once more to resume her pen and from the fulness of her heart to say 'Welcome, welcome again to England?'¹ And are you arrived in safety? And are you arrived in health? For this fresh instance of his care, praised be the almighty guardian of the children of men! He who especially careth for his saints and numbers their every hair!

Do I flatter myself, or do you in reality tenderly enquire for my welfare? Ah my reverend father, had you been near, it is more than probable you would have been troubled with many grievous tales, with many sorrowful epistles. I have indeed endured more than I can express! But still the God of Jacob has been with me; and by his grace I have been upholden.

Mr. [Adam] Clarke I know (if no one else) has informed you of a connection between him and me.² It is such a one as I am not afraid to have search through in all of its particulars, by the eye of omniscience, by the pure, the benevolent Father of Spirits. Yet in the opinion of some lesser mortals it is a grievous thing that I should entertain an affection for the despised servant of a despised master. That the world should thus judge, I do not wonder. But that Christians should be of the same mind, for this I cannot account.

So far as I am acquainted with myself, I am pure from every wrong principle herein. I know I sought the will of the Lord, and that with earnestness and in simplicity. And that I am now in it I cannot doubt. I draw not my conclusion from any idle fancy, but from the effect wrought in my own soul. Yet some tell me I am in a delusion, and violently combat it with sharp talking, harsh censures, defamation, evil-judging, and threatening condemnation. Now supposing I am in an error (which I verily believe I am not), these are strange methods whereby to convince me thereof, and not at all calculated to prevail, because they look not to me like the weapons of the Spirit of truth. I should hereby be rather established in my present opinion, because I feel not that it invites me to a similar return, but greatly the opposite. I find the most potent arms to be faith and love! By ever holding fast there, I doubt not but I shall overcome. And of this I am sure, the present reward of these is sure preferable to the other!

I know you have received, or will receive, a letter or letters respecting this affair; and that from some who really have very little right to interfere in what concerns me. And these letters, if I may judge from the spirit which breathes throughout the behaviour of the writers, will contain much of reproach and evil-speaking. They think you are our friend, and on that very account strive to prejudice you against me. Whatever they may say of self-will, etc., I do indeed think if opposers had previously sought counsel of God earnestly as we have done, they would not carry opposition to so great an height. Or at least I am *sure* it would not have been carried on in this malign spirit. As I would have my own conscience left free to its dictates, so I wish not, in the smallest point, to bind the conscience of others. If theirs say 'oppose', then let them oppose. Only in this matter I would have them learn moderation of him who advised: 'Refrain for these and let them alone. For if this counsel or the work be of men, it will come to naught. But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it lest haply ye be found even to fight against God. And to him they agreed.'³ So be it now! I am content to put it on this issue. Let God destroy it if it militates against his will. But let not *them* force, or attempt to guide the arm of omnipotence, or wrest the work of the Almighty from him. And if he sees fit to use them as instruments in the annihilating this engagement, let

¹Cooke was replying to JW's letter of Mar. 31, 1787. He had been in Ireland from early Apr. through mid-July.

²See Clarke to JW, May 13, 1787.

³Acts 5:38–40.

it be by *lawful*. I do—no I believe he—requires *an lawful* opposition from them.

I do not write now in a desire you assent to this connection, [or] any particular mark of your approbation. No, believe me, my ever dear sir, a wish of the kind arises not in my heart. Circumstanced as I at *present* am, I am convinced that your expressed approbation would involve you in censure; and *this*, if even undeservedly, I could not bear to be the occasion of to *you*. No. Rather myself would I bear ten thousand reproaches than that you should have one. Could unjust ones be transferred, I would gladly take the burden. I know your cares are already sufficiently weight, without having anything on my account in addition to the load. I also know the God whom I wish with all my soul to serve can, when he pleases, work marvels. If it is his work, to his wisdom and love I leave it. Let him do as seemeth him best!

I write only to ask a continuance of your Love. When I saw you last, you said, 'I thought I could never love you better than I did before, but I do now feel an increase of affection.' When I remember these kind expressions; when I recollect that I was then unworthy, and have not since done anything to render myself *more* undeserving of them; I cannot fear that you will be shaken by reports sent with intent to prejudice, and which might indeed tend to diminish an esteem less strong that that you have ever shown towards me.

Sir, another thing I designed mentioning is to ask when will you be in Bristol or Bath? At one of these places I propose meeting you if permitted. And there, if you give me leave, I will repeat exactly as my treacherous memory allows, the whole affair from its beginning to this present time. Of that which I am not ashamed before heaven, I am not ashamed before you. Nor shall I fear to tell each particular where I am not apprehensive of being stopped by irreverences, hard words, or smiles of ineffable contempt.

I know not what circumstances those must be wherein one cannot gain lessons of instruction. I examine my heart and inquire what of good I have acquired in this past furnace of affliction. By experience I have been taught not to give credence to all I hear. Groundless tales of myself teach me to be wary of receiving ill reports of others. I now endeavour to search out the truth thereof before I seal them as facts. Gross misrepresentations have shown me the necessity of speaking so that my meaning may be fully understood, of being careful what I say, and before when I speak. But a before-unknown feeling accompanies this: a kind of suspicion and fear of almost everybody.

Again, like a court-favourite, I see all are friends to those who are in favour; but if the tide turns in the least, it not only with violence carries away what is before it but draws with a kind of magnetic power all things after it. The proverb says, 'Adversity is the touchstone of friendship.' I have learned to estimate what human friendship *commonly* is, and finding it is in general a bubble crushed by every blast, I dare no longer depend in any measure thereon. My soul constrained to leave those dependencies, seek more unreservedly its all in the one source of unbounded good! My prayer used to be,

Cut off my dependence vain
On the help of feeble man.⁴

I have now an answer in a way I expected not to this petition. My soul feels as deprived of succour here, and looks more immediately than ever before to the strong for help. In all my trials my heart, with all its sorrows, all its wishes, all its thoughts, looks heavenward. And I do find they bring me into a blessed nearness to an holy God, to a compassionate redeemer!

Again, my joys, when I meet with them, look so large, and I see them so as coming from God, that without my previous advertence to the instrument, my soul as it were, penetrated and overwhelmed with gratitude, falls prostrate at the throne of mercy, and darts(?) itself in praise and thanksgiving to the great aim and cause of all beneficence! I never so sensibly felt my blessings so abstracted from, so independent of, the creature as now. I do not mean neither that gratitude towards the conveyer of benefits has no being in me. This never was more warm, more ardent. But then I feel it as only a secondary thing, as the channel through which, from the rich fountain, my mercies flow. I have not many arms of flesh to

⁴CW, Hymn on Isa. 2:22, st. 3, *Scripture Hymns* (1762), 1:307.

lean on, and though the lopping them [off] was painful, it was profitable too.

There is one things I scarcely know where to rank it. A blessing it is not. And I know not that it is a fault. There are some who used to profess great friendship for me, who now speak very harshly to me. There are others who say but little, yet they behave very coolly, and thereby cut one to the heart. Now towards all of these I feel not so strongly that love of affection I used to have. I love them in that way that I would do them any kindness that lay in my power. And my soul frequently goes out searching after, and in vehement desires to perform such acts; more especially towards those who have done me the greatest wrongs. And as soon as any mark of unextinguished affection appears in them, it begets the same in me. I feel the strong and almost overpowering kindling of affection, though they should continue to oppose, so that it be not done with severity. But soon as harshness, or cringing neglect show themselves, I feel so shut up, such a kind of shrinking of myself into myself, as I cannot describe. The uniting spark is, as it were, pushed out, and separating reserve creeps it. I am ready to compare it to those kinds of powers which expand to the benign rays of the cheering sun—but soon as these are withdrawn, or give way to the chilling cold of night, the unfolded leaves are again closed; all is contracted. I have often been grieved, not knowing what to do. Is this an evidence of the decline of real Christian love? Or is it a want of union, through opposite feelings, which may be dispensed with consistent with holding the gospel-charity in unbroken purity?

Particularly at *this* time my soul wishes you an abundant outpouring of the Spirit of wisdom, grace and strength! But do I not trespass too much on your busy moment? Pardon the intrusion! It shall not be much longer—only while I ask, shall I not hope that when I see you, it will be, as on mine, so on your part, with an unabated esteem? And that when you meet me, it will be with all that strength of affection, which since you have been acquainted with her, you have ever evidenced towards,

Your unworthy and obliged,

M. C—

Address: 'The Revd. J. Wesley / Manchester'.

Endorsement: by Cooke, 'Answer to Mr Wesley's 15th letter'.

Source: manuscript copy for records; Bridwell Library (SMU), Mary Cooke Letter-book, pp. 15–16.

From Mary Cooke

Trowbridge
July 20, 1787

Dear Sir,

A few days ago I wrote a letter, designed to send it to Manchester by Mr. [John] King.¹ But how greatly astonished was I last evening, at the contents of an epistle to him, from you, in answer to something he has said!² What that black *something* is, is best known to himself. But by your reply, I conclude it must either be absolute falsities, or gross misrepresentations. Whether of his own insinuating, or from common report, I cannot tell; I would charitably hope the latter.

But was I to listen to common report as Mr. King has done, what should I say? *It* says that all his efforts to break the connection (many unfair ones he has used) arise only from disappointed hope, and jaundiced jealousy.³ *Sure* it is he has been striving to depreciate Mr. [Adam] Clarke, by asserting as facts inference drawn from his own conjectures; and by half-expressed insinuations, conveying far more meaning than strong affirmations. He has been striving to lessen him in *my* esteem; and finding that ineffectual, has secretly wrote to prejudice your mind perhaps against both.

I did not intend to particularize anything against him. Nor shall I against others, till they like him compel me so to do. Mr. King writes to Mr. Clarke as an *offended*, as an aggrieved person. As *such* he talks to others. And this because *he* was not made privy to this connection. But where is the reasonableness of this, let any one of common sense judge. I grieve thus to write, but I am now constrained thereto. Opposers have a plausible foundation, they think, in the want of my mother's consent. But let them only act as she does, and I will not complain. They *pretend* it is for her sake; then let Christianity teach them to follow the example of her, who makes not the profession they do. If all this is *pure* religion; if nothing of *self* dwells in the opposition; if they are actuated by *gracious* principles; it is an hard thing methinks that grace should persecute more severely than nature, and say in the practice of its professors that it is not capable of teaching equal tenderness, equal moderation!

Still, if they see fit, let them persevere. They know not what they do. But the end, if I mistake not, will abundantly evince that they do not rightly. Provoke they still; through divine help I will not return it! I have not been angry or unloving yet in any thought towards them; and kept by the same grace, I *will not* be angry. For all that is past, I forgive them. And let them do what they may; be the consequences what they will; from my very soul, with every power thereof, still will I forgive them—and pray the Father of mercies to pardon them also!

I am

Your oppressed and afflicted, but never the less affectionate,

M. C—

Address: 'The Revd J. Wesley / Manchester'.

Endorsement: by Cooke, 'Copy of a letter to Mr. Wesley'.

Source: manuscript copy for records; Bridwell Library (SMU), Mary Cooke Letter-book, pp. 16–17.

¹John King was currently assigned to the Bradford-on-Avon circuit, which included Trowbridge, and was preparing to meet JW in Manchester for Conference, which began July 31. This suggests that Cooke's letter to JW of July 14 had not yet been sent.

²Neither King's letter to JW nor JW's reply are known to survive.

³I.e., King (8 years older than both Clarke and Cooke) was interested in Cooke himself.

From Adam Clarke¹

Guernsey
July 21, 1787

Reverend and Very Dear Sir,

At a time in which you must have many embarrassments in consequence of the approaching Conference, I allow only the importance of my subject can plead the excuse of my troubling you with this epistle. I received your kind favour from Clones,² and would testify my gratitude for that and every favour conferred by praying the great God (in whose power it is presently and eternally) to reward you for the affectionate regard you manifest for the welfare of my body and my soul.

Howsoever deficient I am in the discharge of it, yet my soul must allow that the duty of gratitude is scarcely more incumbent on any than on me. In the midst of unfaithfulness and unworthiness (a proper estimate of which can only be formed by God himself), my spirit is marvellously supported and blessed. The Lord Jesus is still the refuge of my soul, and his salvation is the portion of my cup. Since I came to these islands, the Lord has permitted me to wade much through the deep waters, and to be frequently cast into the furnace. But glory be to his name, he has never left me! And truly I can say he has hitherto made all things work together for my soul's good. At present I have a full conviction that, however varied his dealings with me are or may be, yet his thoughts towards me are thoughts of mercy and much love. May my soul be more abundantly humbled, and eternally grateful!

My bodily health, which was nearly shipwrecked, the kind God has marvellously restored. In the time of my greatest weakness the people kept days of public fasting and prayer for me, and the 'easy to be entreated' God did not permit them to pray or afflict their souls in vain.³ I now dwell in the country. The Lord has inclined the heart of a gentleman to take me into his house, where I have every necessary accommodation, breathe a pure air, and have frequent opportunities of riding, which before I had not.

On various accounts I have been led to consider these islands as places of much importance; not only with respect to themselves, but also in relation to the whole French continent. Several opening providences seem declarative that the time is at hand in which God will take unto him[self] his great power and reign over the nations, by giving a universal spread to the gospel of his grace. In all likelihood, he who delights in the progressive salvation of 'from the least to the greatest' will,⁴ by saving *these tents* of Judah, first unlock the entrance into the Protestant settlements of France; through them disperse it among all the inhabitants of that kingdom; and by that cause it to win its widening way through the German empire, Spain, Italy, and the other vast tracts of land which are all so immediately conjoined. These, I grant, are large expectations. But can we, dear sir, expect too much when we properly consider the infinite love and ultimate power of our Christ?

But at present it appears that there is a lack of means for the accomplishment of these glorious ends. I mean particularly with respect to more labourers. Surely our necessities in these islands are exceedingly great. There is a loud call here and in Jersey and Alderney. Were there preachers, I most cordially believe there is not one parish in Jersey but would receive the gospel. I have been lately there, and the Lord was with me of a truth. Very large congregations attended both morning and evening, and many were stirred up to seek and prove the efficacy of that blood which cleanseth from all unrighteousness. About a fortnight since, thirty joined in one parish at once.

¹Clarke had clearly not heard yet of the letter of John King to JW, which Mary Cooke wrote to JW about on July 20.

²See JW to Clarke, May 27, 1787, *Works*, 30:563–64.

³James 3:17.

⁴Jer. 31:34.

We have had a pressing invitation lately from Alderney. As soon as I returned from Jersey, I sent Mr. [Jean] De Quêteville there, who is just now returned. There is a little society now formed, in which is a gentleman, one of the principal inhabitants of the island, who holds three offices in the court, and is the governor's inspector. This man, when I first visited the islands, received the word with joy, and bore a public testimony to its truth. Here then is work enough, and a prospect of its increase in all the islands. But we are not able to do it ourselves. Truly conscious am I that brother De Quêteville and I have gone to the very uttermost of our strength, yet have not been able to do all the work. We want another preacher. Dear sir, send one, for God's sake. And if you have one who understands the French language, this will be more than a double blessing.

As the Lord has in much mercy restored my health in a good measure, I am willing, according to your own proposal, to abide here another year. But if you can get any that are more capable of filling the place, surely, surely, I shall give up my charge with readiness and gratitude to God. For as it has hitherto fallen mostly on my shoulders, it has proved almost more than I was well capable of bearing.

I had purposed to go to Conference and make a presentation of the above circumstances, but the necessities of the people were so great, and so loud a call for preaching, that I found I could not in conscience go and leave them destitute, whatever the consequences in other affairs might be. The kind God has dealt so bountifully with us here that we have been able to defray our expenses, and shall require no money from Conference this year.

Dear Sir, we are fully in expectation of the favour of your visit immediately after Conference. May the Almighty direct your way hither! Surely I think you shall not have reason to regret your journey.

Praying with all my soul that heaven's choicest blessings may be multiplied unto you, I remain, reverend and dear sir,

Your much obliged and affectionately obedient son in the gospel,

Adam Clarke

[on flyleaf]

We have now in Guernsey and Alderney ninety members in society. Of all who were awakened under Mr. De Quêteville's preaching in the country in the beginning of last summer, only fifteen remain. All the rest were fallen asleep before I saw the island. Had all continued who were awakened then and since that, we should have had a society of several hundreds. But persecution and reproach rising high, numbers who were much wrought upon were turned out of the narrow way. There is not a family in Sark that understands English. Had the inhabitants understood English, I would have visited it ere now. May the Lord Jesus direct your going out and coming in before the great people over whom he has made you overseer.

Address: 'The Rev. Mr. Wesley / in / Manchester / with speed'.

Postmark: 'JY/25/87'.

Endorsement: by JW, 'Ad. Clark / July 21. 1787 / an[swere]d 28'.

Source: holograph; MARC, WCB, D6/1/86.

Rev. Philip Cox¹

Brunswick County, Virginia
August 1787

Great news from Zion! Never was there so great a work of God in America (nor yet in England from what we have been able to learn) as is now in the Brunswick and Sussex circuits. At many of our preaching places we cannot meet the classes for the cries of the distressed. Sometimes *fifty* in a day are savingly converted to God. On Thursday and Friday, July 26th, and 27th, our quarterly meeting was held for the Brunswick circuit at Jones's chapel. It was thought, at the lowest computation, that upwards of two hundred were brought to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ at those two meetings. Indeed it is impossible for us to know exactly how many; but such a sight I never beheld before. They lay in rows on the ground, crying for mercy, being cut to the heart, and in the deepest distress. And what was more surprising, many of them were some of the principal gentry of the county. And divers of those who had opposed Dr. [Thomas] Coke when he delivered his testimony against Negro slavery, were now converted to God.

Brother [James] O'Kelly travelled with me in my circuit for four days, in which time at least sixty found the love of God in Christ Jesus. And the day after we parted, I preached a funeral sermon, at which season no less than thirty professed they found the pearl of great price.² And such was the power of God, and the earnestness of the people, that we could not break up our meeting till sunset. At many houses in the neighbourhood, in some of them three, some of them four, found a saving change, while at family prayer.

The next day I rode to Lane's chapel, but it would not contain the congregation, so I went out and preached under the trees; and at that time had reason to believe that about sixty souls were brought into the liberty of the gospel. Surely it may be said, 'What hath God wrought!'³

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 11 (1788): 486–87.⁴

¹Philip Cox (d. 1793) a native of Somersetshire, emigrated to North American after being drawn into the Methodist movement. He joined the itinerant ministry there in the late 1770s and served until his death.

²See Matt. 13:46.

³Num. 23:23.

⁴Described as an extract from the letter.

Rev. Hope Hull¹

Manchester, Amelia County, Virginia
August 1787

I have long waited for an opportunity to inform you of the wonderful work of God among the people in this circuit, but hitherto have had none. However I now sit down to write, though not expecting you will receive the letter for a long time.

I have great reason to believe my appointment here was of the Lord. I have enjoyed my health as well as I expected. The Lord has done wonders in the sight of all the people. Many sheets of paper would not contain the full account of the marvellous works that have been wrought. I expect the other preachers have informed you of the mighty work in their circuits, therefore I shall only give you an account of the work in this.

When I first came into these parts there was but little prospect. But the work broke out, and I can hardly tell how. And within these two months there cannot have been less than two hundred and fifty, or three hundred souls converted to God among the whites; besides blacks, how many I cannot tell. Some of the vilest opposers now come to the preaching—and with Paul they are struck to the earth, and cry for mercy.² The people of God get round them, and pray with them for five or six hours together. At last one will begin to praise God and say, 'My soul is happy! My soul is happy! The Lord has pardoned my sins!' Then they will run away to their relations, husbands to their wives, and wives to their husbands, parents to their children, and children to their parents, and begin to talk to them and pray for them. Presently they are deeply affected; then the people of God gather round them again, and begin to pray; and I have nothing to do, but stand still and see the salvation of God.³ And perhaps in one of these meetings twenty will find peace to their souls.

When this work first began, as I did not know what to think of it, I rather opposed it. But now I am satisfied it is of the Lord, for the people evidence the sincerity of their hearts by their upright walk.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 11 (1788): 488–89.⁴

¹Hope Hull (1763–1818), a native of Maryland, entered the itinerant ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1786. He travelled for ten years, then located in Athens, GA.

²See Acts 22:7.

³See Exod. 14:13.

⁴Described as an extract from the letter.

Rev. James O'Kelly

Sussex County, Virginia
August 1787

Amidst some things that grieve me, one thing greatly comforts me: to see the work of the blessed God prosper among us. Old Brunswick and Sussex circuits exceed anything I ever saw or heard of in America.

Whatever my brethren may think, I believe six thousand were assembled together at the quarterly meeting held a few days ago for the Brunswick circuit. Hundreds were crying for mercy as on the brink of hell. Many gentlemen and ladies, with many warm persecutors, have been made to worship at our feet, and to know that God hath loved us. Forty, fifty, nay a hundred in a day have professed to find peace with God. And more were awakened by the warm and earnest addresses of the young converts than by the preaching of the word. We judge that a hundred at least found a sense of the favour of God at the quarterly meeting held at Mayberry's chapel. And the whole settlement near Jones's chapel amazes me. You will scarce believe what the Lord is doing, unless you had seen it with your own eyes.

In each circuit, souls are daily coming into the fold of Christ. Old Methodists are taking a new growth, and going on in the power and spirit of the gospel. For some time past I have felt such an awful sense of the presence of God, as if Christ was coming in the clouds of heaven to judge the quick and the dead. The work is prospering in several other circuits.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 11 (1788): 487–88.¹

¹Described as an extract from the letter.

From Mary Cooke

Trowbridge
August 6, 1787

Dear Sir,

This morning I received your favour of the 1st instant.¹ Knowing you have but little spare time, I will not engross much by a relation of many affairs. But at the present leaving all other things, I think it my indispensable duty to remind you of a small mistake; which tho' trifling in itself, yet if not rectified, may be productive of much evil.

You say, 'Mr. [Adam] Clarke never spoke one word to me of what you now mention.' True; he never *spoke*, because he had not an opportunity. But when I said in mine of the 14th of July, he 'has informed you of a connection between him and me', I meant that he *wrote* an account thereof to you. If you recollect, his letter was dated Kingswood; it was put into Bath post-office, and directed to you in Ireland.² It made mention of his ill state of health, his coming to England, of his visit to Alderney in his way to Southampton, etc., and concludes with an account of our connection. To this letter, he has received an answer from you, since his return to Guernsey, dated 'Clones, May ye 27th.'³ wherein you say, 'Dear Adam, If friends had been wise, they would not have suffered you to return to Guernsey till you health was re-established. In all probability this is throwing away your life. While this hangs in suspense, it is certain you have no business at all to think of marriage etc.'

I would not have troubled you now, but thought if you should say to others, 'Mr. Clarke never spoke one word to me of the affair', and Mr. Clarke should assert that you did know something of it, from him, it might give fresh handle to his enemies for spreading reports to his disadvantage.

I remain, dear sir,

Your Affectionate

M. Cooke

Address: 'The Revd J. Wesley Manchester'.

Endorsement: by Cooke, 'Answer to Mr Wesley's 16th letter'

Source: manuscript copy for records; Bridwell Library (SMU), Mary Cooke Letter-book, p. 17.

¹This letter is not known to survive.

²See Adam Clarke to JW, May 14, 1787.

³See *Works*, 30:563–64.

John Pawson to Charles Atmore¹

Thorner
August 8, 1787

My Very Dear Brother,

Our conference ended on last Saturday. There were many preachers, and abundance of people, I think more than I ever saw at any conference before. Almost the whole time was taken up with temporal affairs. Mr. [John] Wesley was in great haste, as he and Dr. [Thomas] Coke were going to Guernsey and Jersey. There has been a general revival of the work of God. Mr. Wesley seems more determined to abide in the Church than ever. He talked about it again and again, in the public conference, in the society, etc.; and in such a hot, fiery spirit as I did not like to see. He talked of fighting with a flail, and of putting all out of society who do not go to Church. We are to be just what we were before we came to Scotland—no sacraments, no gowns, no nothing at all of any kind whatsoever. With much entreaty, I got him to ordain Mr. [Duncan] McAllum and [Alexander] Suter.² Two more were ordained—one for the West Indies, and one for Nova Scotia.³

Charles Wesley, the Sunday before the Conference opened, spoke to the society in London to this effect: 'I told you forty years ago that, from among yourselves, grievous wolves would arise, who would rend and tear the flock. You now see my words fulfilled. These self-created bishops, and self-made priests, are the very men. But I charge you all, in the presence of God, never receive the sacrament from any of them.' So you see, he has discharged the people from receiving the sacrament of his own brother; for who but he is the *self-created bishop*? O cursed prejudice! O furious bigotry! How does the fire from hell burn in that poor miserable man's breast!

Perhaps, if I live till next conference, I may petition to return to Scotland, as there seems to be no prospect of doing anything, but just in the old way, while Mr. [John] Wesley lives. Solomon says there is no new thing under the sun.⁴ But here we see something which, I believe, was never seen in the Christian church before—that men, approved of God and their brethren, and that for many years, should be regularly ordained, and act in the capacity of ministers, and yet should be deposed from that office by one single man, and that without any crime committed, great or small, real or pretended. Even the pope himself never acted such a part as this. What an astonishing degree of power does our aged father and friend exercise! However, I am satisfied, and have nothing but love in my heart toward the good old man. But really it will not bear the light at all.

Most affectionately yours,

John Pawson

Source: published transcription; Tyerman, *John Wesley*, 3:497–98.

¹While not to JW, this letter records his 1787 ordinations and CW's resistance.

²Alexander Suter (1756–1817), was converted in London by Thomas Olivers, and soon appointed by JW as a class leader there. He was admitted 'on trial' as an itinerant at the 1779 Conference (*Works*, 10:484). He would serve diligently for 33 years, before settling in Halifax, Yorkshire, where he died. See *Minutes* (post-Wesley, 1817), 4:292–93.

³John Harper for the West Indies; and James Wray for Nova Scotia.

⁴See Eccles. 1:9.

From James Grey¹

Elgin
August 24, 1787

Sunday the 29th of July last, Mr. Keighley gave us the sacrament, and such another day my eyes never saw, nor my heart ever felt before.

In the evening he complained of a coldness in his neck, by reason of too much perspiration. Monday he preached the Thanksgiving sermon, but with a severe swimming in his head. Tuesday he dined with me, which was the last time he dined on earth. In the evening he endeavoured to preach, but was obliged to conclude before the time. Wednesday, being confined to his bed, the doctor was sent for who gave him a vomit. Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, he had a slow fever (which is very epidemical here). Monday he was seized with a violent bleeding at the nose, which continued until next day, when his fever grew very strong. From which time he became insensible, and talked very wildly.

On the seventh of August he prayed for all sorts and conditions of men, not forgetting the preachers who were to come next to Elgin. On Thursday the 9th the doctor gave him up. His pulse was now so quick I could scarce follow them, and his eyes looked us almost out of countenance. Friday the 10th he preached a sermon, but was so low we could hardly hear him. When he had done he made an apology for his indisposition of body.

About ten o'clock in the forenoon death seized the extreme parts of his body, when his voice grew so low we could scarce distinguish what he said. He now struggled so hard with death that it required two persons to hold him in bed, while he made the whole room tremble where he lay! At last, about two o'clock in the afternoon, the tenth instant, he gave up his spirit into the hands of God, as unto a faithful Creator.

He never expected his illness to be unto death, till about three days before he died, when he said, 'You shall have a twofold preacher here before Sunday.'

As there was no preacher on the spot, I took charge of his remains, wrapped them in fine linen (like his Lord and Master), gave letters of invitation to ministers and magistrates, and a gentleman gave me the use of his tomb to bury him in, which I gladly accepted.

The people of Elgin greatly lament the death of this pious young man, whose preaching and holy conversation was made so great a blessing to many. And had it not been for the violence of his disorder, I doubt not but he would have borne as good a testimony for God in his last moments, as he had done before for many years.

When he was at Inverness last spring, he dreamed that he was condemned to die on the morrow. However he obtained leave of the judge to go and acquaint his father of his fate, and to prepare him for the shock. Which as soon as he had done, the judge appeared to him again and said, 'I have got you a short respite; but depend upon it, you shall die in Scotland.'

How unaccountable is this on the infidel and Sadducean supposition? But how plain on that of a Christian!

James Grey

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 11 (1788): 123–24.

¹Joshua Keighley (1761–88), a native of Halifax, Yorkshire, became an itinerant in 1780 (see *Works*, 10:496). He was the Assistant for the Pembrokeshire circuit in 1784 and returned there the following year. In 1786 JW ordained Keighley for service in Scotland, where he died two years later, just before a planned marriage (see 10:645).

Rev. John Dickens¹

New York
August 27, 1787

I have very extraordinary things to communicate. The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in Virginia. It looks like the dawn of the millennium. I have received the most authentic intelligence that since our last Conference several hundreds have been converted in the Brunswick and Sussex circuits. And it is computed that about Brunswick itself, not less than seven thousand souls are under deep conviction. The work is also very extraordinary in some parts of North Carolina. In some parts of Virginia the congregations on Sabbath days consists of several thousands, and many of the greatest persecutors are struck down as dead. Surely this is the arm of omnipotence. Ride on, Lord Jesus, ride on, till all are subdued!

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 11 (1788): 486.²

¹John Dickins (1746–98), born in London and educated at Eton College, emigrated to North America and was appointed a Methodist preacher in 1774. He served circuits in Virginia and North Carolina, then went to New York in 1784. He was one of the founding members of the Methodist Episcopal Church at the Christmas Conference in Baltimore in 1784.

²The title identifies this as an extract from a letter.

From John Walsh

Earl's House, near Fareham, Hants
September 4, 1787

I was very intimate with Mr. Brian I'Anson, at whose house I once met (I think in 1758) with his brother Sir Thomas I'Anson.¹ Sir Thomas told me with deep solemnity this story:

When the peace of Utrecht was advancing, Dr. [William] Harvey (celebrated for discovering the circulation of the blood) and a friend of his had a pass from the ministry to embark for France. Both showed their passes at Dover Castle to the governor; who politely approved of the other gentleman's, but looked with great seriousness on the doctor, and said, 'Sir, you are my prisoner' I omit the expostulation and vexation this occasioned. But the governor would give no reason for detaining the doctor, but treated him in the most respectful manner, at which he wondered. The next morning the governor said, 'You are now free, sir, to go where you please; and I will tell you the cause of my making you a prisoner. I never saw you till yesterday. But in a dream the night before, I was commanded to stop you as I did. The impression was so strong that I dared not disobey it. If I had, you would have been drowned as well as your friend; for the packet [boat] is cast away, and every soul on board is lost.'

I asked Sir Thomas if this thing was universally credited, or much talked of in those days. He said, 'Nothing could be more so; no not the brass cannon from France which are now in Hyde Park, nor any other public transaction. I could go to no coffee house or tea table, but that was the topic of conversation.'

John Walsh

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 11 (1788): 538–39.

¹Thomas Bankes I'Anson (1701–64), 4th baronet of Bassetbury.

From Mary Cooke

Duke Street, Trowbridge
September 12, 1787

Dear Sir,

I remember my conditional promise; and if I might, would gladly perform it. But I dare not! I said, 'I propose if permitted, to meet you in Bath.' But I am not permitted. Nay farther, I am absolutely forbidden going to Bath. But shall this prohibition prove to me an exclusion of the privilege of your company? That would be *hard* indeed! Rather shall not your kind promise, made to me in the spring, be fulfilled in visiting us at Trowbridge? Though his followers (O how poignant is this consideration!) may not come to our house, I am *yet* allowed to see my reverend father himself at home. Will you then, dear sir, favour your friends in Duke Street with your company? And give once more your expecting people *here* the opportunity of hearing the words of life from your mouth! The longer you could be with us, the greater would be our obligation. But surely at the least a few hours might be given unto us. Shall I press my request by urging the necessity of your coming, by endeavouring to show the great good which might thereby be accomplished? Or leaving all arguments, shall I trust to your love, which strongly impels you to do good.

Of myself I have only time to say that, 'God is Love!' My soul acknowledges this truth. Yea, not only acknowledges, but *feels* it. Glory! Eternal glory be ascribed unto him! He is my hope, my portion, and my sure defence! With the wish that you may come and tell us somewhat more of his goodness, I subscribe myself,

Your obliged and affectionate

M. Cooke

Endorsement: by Cooke, 'Copy of a letter to Mr. Wesley'.

Source: manuscript copy for records; Bridwell Library (SMU), Mary Cooke Letter-book, p. 17.

‘Benevolus’ to the *Hampshire Chronicle*

Newport
September 19, 1787

Sir,

With pleasure I observed in your valuable paper the subject of inoculation. I entertained no doubt but each inhabitant of that town who enjoyed their reason had or would inoculate every branch of the family who never had the smallpox, and not suffer the disorder to take fresh root and grow luxuriant at the expense of the lives of infant offspring.

But I find many of the followers of the Rev. Mr. [John] Wesley have not adopted this salutary antidote against the horrors of premature death, but have left their children to fate, as they call it, to take it in the natural way. I call this an unthinking act of cruelty. I would not here be thought to derogate from the credit they deserve as a pious and exemplary set of people. But the religious man, however deservedly esteemed, should not forget the duties he owes to the general good of society. Submission to the Divine will is the duty of every Christian; but a zeal that blinds the understanding can never be deemed praiseworthy, because it borders on presumption. The agonies that one of these little hapless victims felt the last week, ere death put a period to its sufferings, is beyond description; which, in all human probability had been prevented, and its life preserved, by a previous inoculation.¹

Our divine author has nowhere prohibited the use of means for the preservation of life or property. They are inseparably connected with our existence and our welfare; and without attending to them we cannot be said to acknowledge him ‘in all our ways’.² Suppose an inundation was threatened, and by timely notice there was a possibility of preventing it; which man is he who would not use his utmost exertions for that purpose? Or where is the father who, seeing his child in danger, would not risk his own life for its preservation? Suppose our houses were exposed to the devouring flames of a sudden conflagration; who could stand by and see his dwelling-place burned and his little all destroyed, without some endeavours for its preservation? If a famine threatens, who would not provide a due supply of corn? If an enemy assaults, who would not resist him? If sick, do we not take the nauseous draft with composure? Or if a limb be fractured, do we not suffer the agonizing torture of the surgeon’s lance with fortitude and resignation?

In short then, where is the difference between the neglect of any of these, or a careless inattention to the benefits of inoculation? Let it be remembered that this malady teems with ten-fold poison in the constitutions of those who take it by respiration. And, like a devouring pestilence, it spreads horror and death before it! The husbandman’s cottage becomes the seat of disease. Compassion dares not approach, and want triumphs over his misery, till death bears away the companion of his joys or strips him of his darling offspring! It flies on the wings of the wind, and numbers fall victims to the prejudices of a few! In town, business is put to a stand and the industrious poor are precluded from obtaining bread for their families. Such are the ravages of smallpox. And therefore it is the duty of every person to prevent as much as possible its fatal effects. This town would now have been totally free of the disorder, had not the misguided opinions of a few led to reject inoculation. And the deaths which have since taken place are the melancholy result. If these precautions should have the desired effect, and prevent in [the] future similar consequences, it will afford the highest gratification to,

Benevolus

Source: published transcription; *Hampshire Chronicle* (Oct. 1, 1787), p. 4.

¹The author adds a note: ‘Its toes are said to have dropped off with mortification some hours before its death.’

²Cf. Prov. 3:6.

From Adam Clarke

New Room, Bristol
Wednesday evening, September 19, 1787

Could my pen express what my heart powerfully feels, my reverend and dear father should find this epistle full fraught with the warmest dictates of gratitude. But this is a task which it is utterly incapable of performing. Many times heretofore your disinterested affection has been evidenced (to him who from the ground of his soul acknowledges himself unworthy of the smallest favour he has received from God through you), and gratitude has in consequence been felt, though not in proportion to the favours, yet equal to the capacity of my mind. But *now* your kind interposition in *our* behalf¹ (when our friends not only stand aloof from our aid, but have become our *sorest* enemies) is still more abundantly excellent, not only in respect of its *nature*, but also in respect of the *time* in which it is so peculiarly needful. For *this* I can neither sufficiently praise my kind God, nor testify my acknowledgments to you, my reverend father. Surely if my feeble prayers be of any avail at the throne of grace, not one of heaven's choicest blessings shall be denied you. My heart feels *much*, my lips would *speak much*, and my silence cries unto God in your behalf. May the Lord Jesus, from whose infinite benevolence you have derived the principle by which you act toward *us*, eternally prosper and reward you! Amen.

One thing, my dear sir, permit me to say. I would not wish that any of these persons who have acted foolishly, or *unchristianly* in the present affair should meet with any censure on the account, except that of a *verbal* nature. Nor could I at all wish even *this*, but because I believe it might be a means of deterring *them*, or others in *future*, from involving the innocent in *rude suffering*. The Lord be merciful unto them and me!

Should it meet with your approbation, I would be glad to travel with you a few days next week in the Bradford circuit; after which I propose, through God's help, to speed off for the islands.

Though already deeply indebted to your great kindness, yet am I willing to have the obligation increased by having an interest in your prayers for your affectionate daughter in tribulation (Miss [Mary] Cooke), and for him who with a heart full of love begs leave to subscribe himself, reverend and very dear sir,

Your dutiful son in the gospel,

Adam Clarke

Source: holograph; MARC, WCB, D6/1/88.

¹JW was encouraging Mary Cooke's mother and others to allow their marriage.

From Peter Maber

Bishopsgate Street [London]
October 23, 1787

Mr. Silvester, of Newington Butts, told me that in February 1784 he came home extremely ill, and said to his wife, 'I am taken so bad that I am not long for this world.' She being greatly alarmed, sent for a physician who lived within three or four doors of them. When he came he examined him, and found it necessary to call in another physician. To which Mr. Silvester replied, I desire no other; for I am in the hands of the Lord, and under his direction you will do very well. Accordingly the physician prescribed a draught for him. When it came, he drank it, and in a few minutes, to all appearance expired. He was then laid out, put into a coffin, and the ground bespoke for his interment. But he was kept fourteen days in a cold dining room; for his wife was prepossessed that he was not dead, which caused her to keep him so long. Notwithstanding she had frequent visits from the doctor, who said, 'O now you may venture to bury him.'

On the 14th day the maid was doing something in the dining room, and all at once heard her master groan! On this she ran down and said to her mistress, 'My master is come to life!' On which she ran up with the maid and found him come to himself. They then put him into bed, and had proper things administered to him; and in a few days he went about as usual.

An acquaintance of mine was asking him one day how he did? He answered, 'Since that affair, I am well in health, thank God! But my head is so that when I look you in the face I see two faces instead of one, and see two things of every sort.'

P. Maber

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 11 (1788): 539–40.

From Adam Clarke¹

Mont Plaisir
October 29, 1787

Reverend and Very Dear Sir,

About twelve days ago I returned from Alderney, in which island I have the satisfaction to inform you there is a prospect of *much good*. The word which has been already preached there has taken deep root in several, who I trust in God will bring forth more abundant fruit with increasing patience. My soul was much refreshed, not only in my preaching, but also in seeing the word seconded with the divine blessing. Several of the justices and most respectable inhabitants of the town duly attended, and do acknowledge from their hearts that *this* is the way of life. Were there a *proper* French preacher for that island, I believe the congregation would not be inferior to that in St. Peter's, or St. Helier's.

Your visit to *this* island has been in the hand of God a mean of much good. The congregations have been ever since considerably enlarged, and several of the *better sort* who attended your preaching have continued to come ever since. I have no doubt but even here much fruit will abound to your account. If the kind Lord should favour his church with a prolongation of your necessary existence, I hope the success which has now crowned your labours here will plead strongly in our behalf, and induce you to pay us a visit in the coming year.

We have got some persecution in the country. On the 21st, Mr. [Jean] De Quêteville went to a new place to preach, the parish is called La Vale. But a number of persons, who had banded themselves together for the purpose, not only prevented but used him ill. They pinched his flesh, tore his hair, and strove by repeated solicitations and threats to extort a promise from him that he would come there no more. But he refusing, they laid violent hands on him, and without hat or coat carried him in triumph out of the limits of the parish. It is worthy of remark that the man who first seized Mr. De Quêteville, two days afterwards fell from a house and had his arm broken to pieces.²

Yesterday I went to the same place, and a rough job I had of it. About two hundred persons were gathered together to keep the bridge or entrance into the parish (as at floodwater the tide surrounds it). They intended to have prevented my landing. But as there was some ebb, and I on horseback, I took an upper way, rode through the water, and made good my landing before they could possibly prevent it. However, they were determined to prevent my having a congregation. Therefore a party kept possession of the bridge, and would not suffer the people to pass. Those who attempted it were either pushed into the water or had their clothes torn. After some time they gathered about the house where I was. We were obliged at first to lock ourselves in. But after I had sung a hymn and prayed, I went out among them; Mr. Stevens and Mr. [George] Walker being with me.³ When we came out they asked, '*Quel est le ministre?*' I told them I was he, and asked them what they wanted with me, and for what end they were gathered together. They told me they would not suffer me to preach in that parish; I might go to any other in the island I chose, but I should not come there. I told them I would come, and they should not binder me. By-and-by they seized on Mr. Stevens and me, to drag us away. But a constable who was present rescued Mr. Stevens, upon which those who had seized me quitted their hold. At last, after a great deal of hurry and

¹In addition to the holograph, a draft of this letter that Clarke began four days earlier survives at Duke, Rubenstein, Adam Clarke papers, Box 1. We will annotate some comments in this draft.

²Earlier draft adds: 'If this is not an immediate judgment from the hand of God, who can deny that it has not a very strong appearance of it?'

³William Stevens [also spelled 'Stephens'] (1762–1813), a native of Plymouth Dock, was admitted 'on trial' as an itinerant at the 1786 Conference (see *Works*, 10:596), and assigned to the Guernsey and Alderney circuit in 1787 (10:627). He served a circuit for 16 years until asthma required him to desist in 1802, at which point he served 4 years as English master at Kingswood School, then ran his own classical academy. See *Minutes* (post-Wesley, 1814), 4:5.

confusion, we mounted our horses, having received no material damage besides some rough handling—a little dirt, and my bridle broken to pieces. This day we have made our deposition to the royal court, which I believe will favour us; and next Sunday I purpose, through God's strength, to try to preach to them again.

I find it is exceedingly common in the present day to deny all particular interpositions of divine providence. And what things happen out of the common way, they are (attempted) to be accounted for on what are called rational and philosophical principles; for God must have no hand in them.⁴ Yet still I think there are several particulars which would puzzle the brightest genius among the minutest philosophers to account for, unless they had immediate recourse to the finger of God.⁵ Among which I think the following strange affair may be justly ranked.

Margaret Horne, an inhabitant of St. Peter's, a woman of unblemished character, upwards of seventy years of age, came to Les Terres [in] June 1787 to be electrified, hoping it would cure her of a settled deafness by which she had been long afflicted.⁶ I gave her a few gentle shocks through the head, which were immediately followed with such a severe headache as deterred her from making a second trial. This continued till the beginning of July, when in a very strange manner she got rid of it, together with a severe pain in her stomach and bowels by which she had been brought very low. One Saturday evening, having as usual combed out her grey hair, and tied it on the top of her head (for the convenience of putting on her cap, which it would barely admit of, being very short) she went to bed. On Sunday morning, when she took off her cap, she was astonished to find that her hair had grown nine or ten inches in the course of the night. She immediately called Mrs. Johnson,⁷ in whose house she lodges, and showed her what had happened, who was equally surprised, being perfectly acquainted with its former shortness. She now found that she could not with convenience put on her cap, and therefore cut off about eight inches of the miraculous lock. That same day she was seized with a severe sickness, which brought her to her bed, and forced her to exclaim to Mrs. Johnson and some of her neighbours, 'The Lord wrought a miracle for me in causing my hair to grow so suddenly. I have cut it off, and regarded not the operation of his hands; and now has he visited and in judgment afflicted me. O Lord, if thou wilt once more cause it to grow, I will keep it as a token of thy mercy as long as I live!' This was on Sunday evening. Monday morning she found the pain in her head gone, and that in her stomach and bowels removed. On examining

⁴Draft begins this section: 'I have lately been induced to believe that the opinion taught by Aristotle upward of 2000 years ago is more commonly received in the present age than I had before imagined—viz., that though there is a God, yet he concerns not himself with the affairs of mortals, but sits in heaven supremely happy in the contemplation of himself. In consequence of this, every interposition of the divine being is denied, and the word "providence" is so little used that it is almost become *obsolete*. A number of things which daily take place, and which either puzzle the common people or lead them at once to acknowledge the finger of God, are by men of discernment (so-called) termed phenomena, and a multiplicity of secondary causes diligently investigated in order to show their origin and account for them. And though they are many times hard put to it (for God must not have a hand in it at any rate) to give even what themselves call a rational definition of these phenomena, yet they will do something. Therefore from their own *data* they twist their own conclusions; and Ptolemy-like, what cycles cannot, they will bring in epicycles to effect and then darken council with words destitute of the true knowledge of the matter. Yet after all I think ...'.

⁵The term 'minute philosophers' to designate persons who focus on trivial matters or raise trivial objections, was popularized by George Berkeley, *Alciphron; or, The Minute Philosopher*. ... *Containing an apology for the Christian religion, against those who are called free-thinkers* (London: J. Tonson, 1732).

⁶Using one of JW's electrifying machines.

⁷The draft identifies her as the daughter of Mrs. Horne.

her hair, she found it had again grown eight or ten inches in a single night. And with this her bodily strength has been so amazingly increased that she has solemnly assured me she found her health and vigour nearly as great as when in the prime of life. This miraculous lock, for so I must call it, is of a different colour from the rest of her hair. The other part is entirely white, but this is of a very fine brown, only a little mottled with grey.⁸

This is the naked fact. A fact which, if required, can have every attestation of which the nature of the thing will admit. I have had a particular knowledge of the whole, together with Mr. De Quêteville, Mr. Arrivé, and several others.⁹ The circumstances as above I have taken from the conjoint testimony of her and Mrs. Johnson, both members of our society, and who walk in the light and liberty of the gospel of Christ.

Earnestly begging an interest in your prayers, and praying that the choicest blessing of heaven may be abundantly multiplied unto you, I remain, reverend and very dear sir,

Your deeply indebted and affectionately obedient son in the gospel,

Adam Clarke

Mr. Stevens sends his dutiful respects to you. His labours are much respected and blessed among the people.

P.S. Dear sir, if you desire to have any of the translation of the book called *Conference de la Fable avec l'Histoire Sainte*, for January [*Arminian*] Magazine, be so kind as to let me know, and I will send you a part, as I cannot send you the whole.¹⁰ A few lines from my reverend father will be esteemed a peculiar favour.

Miss Lempriere has married Mr. Walker.¹¹ A strong piece of business it was indeed. The means made use of on Mr. Walker's family's side will neither bear the light of the sun nor the moon. I know not what to do with this family. It has long been a burden to me.

Had we a preaching-house in the town, I really think there would be a very great work, as numbers would then hear who cannot come to Les Terres. Mr. De Jersey has offered to give the ground or £100 toward building one.¹² Does a building of this kind here meet with your approbation? And suppose we undertook it, would you, reverend sir, permit me to seek help from our brethren in England? There are many respectable persons here who are disposed to assist us in the matter.

Address: 'The Revd Mr. Wesley / London'.

Postmark: 'NO/6/87' [when arrived in London].

Endorsement: by JW, 'A Clarke / Oct. 29. 1787 / a[nswere]d. Nov. 9 / of S[ister] Horne'.

Source: holograph; MARC, WCB, D6/1/90.

⁸This account was published in *AM* 14 (1791): 584–86, with signatures attached as JW suggested. The signatures give Mrs. Johnson's first name as Charlotte.

⁹Pierre Arrivé (d. 1788), of St. Peter Port, Guernsey. See Lelièvre, *Méthodisme*, 215; *WMM* 16 (1870): 145, 237; and Clarke to JW, June 2, 1788.

¹⁰Clarke's translation of extracts from Guillaume de Lavour, *Conference de la fable avec l'histoire sainte* (Paris: Cailleau, 1730) was serialized in *AM* 14 (1791): 26ff.

¹¹Apparently George Richard Walker, the son of Capt. George Walker. See Lelièvre, *Méthodisme*, 215; and *WMM* 16 (1870), 237.

¹²Henri De Jersey (b. c. 1735) was a member of the French class of the Methodist society in Guernsey. See Lelièvre, *Méthodisme*, 215; and *WMM* 16 (1870), 237.

From Benjamin Rhodes

Bath
November 26, 1787

Joseph Symes had been a member of our society at Paulton about thirteen years, and in that time had adorned the gospel in all things.

The last eight years of his life was one scene of heavy and sore afflictions. His last illness came by a violent cold he caught in a coal pit, which threw him into a consumption.

About a fortnight before he died, I visited him and found him very uncomfortable in soul and body, and exceeding low in his circumstances—and to increase his poverty, his wife was just brought to bed of her fifth child.

For a short time he had half a crown a week allowed him from the parish, and about as much more from a club to which he belonged. The miserable hut he lived in cost him half a guinea per year, for which he was something in debt to his landlord; who threatened to take away the bed on which he was dying, which was his only bit of furniture of any value!

The day after I visited him, I mentioned his case at Bath, and got him some pounds, which was as seasonable a relief as ever came to a poor family.

Soon after this God set his soul at perfect liberty! On which his happiness became exceeding great; for his soul was all love, all joy, all ecstasy! Death, formerly so dreadful, now lost all its terrors. While heaven was continually in his view, he had large foretastes of the glory to which he was going, and expressed himself in very strong and moving language.

As to those about him, he exhorted them to taste of that heaven which he enjoyed, and also to assist him in praising God for all his goodness to him. And thus he went on for some time, and at last died in full triumph, November 17, 1787, and in the thirty-ninth year of his age.

Benjamin Rhodes

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 11 (1788): 297–98.

From Mary Cooke

Duke Street, Trowbridge
December 11, 1787

What, my dear sir, shall I say for my excellent God? Methinks I would praise him, but my tongue finds not expression for the language of my soul. Was I to attempt to recount all his goodness, I should never end. For new mercies rise with every fresh given moment. 'O to grace how great a debtor'¹ is your unworthy correspondent! A monument of its power, and an happy subject of its saving influence! For a month past, my soul has often triumphed in a blessedness which I cannot in any measure speak adequately of. Previous hereto, sore temptation was my lot. My spirit was grievously afflicted, buffeted, tormented. It groaned for deliverance, bowed beneath the oppressor's yoke, and sought death rather than *thus* to live. But though this night of sorrow was tedious, it was not suffered always to last. My God began to manifest himself as *willing* to bless. But oh how unfit to myself did my heart look for the reception of his mercy! I saw its extent. I felt its readiness to be communicated. And under the weight thereof, cried out, 'O Lord, prepare me for, and then impart it unto me!' Some days afterward I felt as though the *offered* grace was *given*, much as my heart could hold. Yea more, it was overpowered, and in astonishment said, 'Enlarge, O Lord! Enlarge, and make within me room enough for thyself to dwell in!' Now my meditations were sweet. My spirit, abstracted from earth, held divine communion, and herein possessed heavenly enjoyment. I was led particularly to seek for further knowledge of the Saviour. I thirsted for 'more of Christ, more of Christ!' I saw that *herein*, even from the first until the present, I had been greatly deficient. I had not sufficiently adverted to him as the procurer of my mercies; as him by whom all was pure love, and for whose sake all is given. I believed that all came through him. But what I mean is that, for want of deep consideration of, and frequent meditation upon, what he has done, what he is now doing; the atonement he made, the sacrifice he offered, the mediatorial character he sustains, the intercessory office he bears—for want, I say, of continued advertence to these things, I had missed much of that blessedness which is to be found in *feeling* Jesus to be *infinitely* precious. In looking for the accomplishment of what he has promised by his Spirit to do *in me*, I had not enough recollected his great love manifested in that he hath done *for me*. But now more attentively considering this, and remembering both, his love constrained me to seek to know him more. And when I thus sought, he graciously condescended by repeated manifestations to reveal himself more fully unto me. Blessed, and for ever praised be his holy name! I do now know more of Jesus than ever I did before. He often breaks in upon my soul as I have never till now seen him. Faith views him. His Spirit whispers, 'This is Jesus of Nazareth!' My own spirit is powerfully constrained to coincide herewith. My heart embraces him, and feels indeed, 'This is the *very* Christ!'

O who can tell the preciousness of such moments? Who can describe the happiness of a soul in converse with its redeemer; walking with him day by day, and talking with him even as a man talketh with his friend? Every heaven-born spirit knows what it means, though the world receiveth not the saying. Nay, they received not the testimony of our master; how then shall they receive ours? While I thus reflected, my peace and love increased. I would have proclaimed what God had done for me. But those with whom I was, though Christians, are *protesters* against perfection. For which reason I deemed it best to enjoy in silence the blessing I had obtained, be it what it would.

Late as it was, I wanted no dinner. But I wanted to be at home, that I might run to my chamber and pour out my full soul at a throne of grace. I wished not for the society of mortals: my God was my all! Methought then I should *never* cease continuing instant in prayer. But this did not always remain. I did afterwards feel wanderings in prayer, and began to doubt that I had thought too highly of what I had received. Thinking of these things the other morning (if I may so speak) my soul was reinstamped. Yet even since then wanderings have been felt. However, dropping all terms, this I know assuredly—that the

¹Robert Robinson, 'Come thou fount of every blessing', st. 3.

Lord hath wrought great work, which I believe is only an earnest of the greater things he is willing to do for me.

O my dear and reverend father, praise him for me, and teach me also to praise him as I ought! Surely he is pouring out of the fulness of his Spirit upon the children of men! My spirit rejoices in the salvation he is displaying in the earth in calling in the nations that have not known him, and accompanying the word of his messengers in the dark parts of the world, with the energetic power of his own Spirit. Is not the time hastening on, when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the whole earth and the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ! Lord, we long for thy glorious appearing. Come quickly! Come quickly, and subdue all hearts unto thyself!

The blessed tidings which Dr Coke's *Journals* contain, caused my spirit to triumph and my soul to sing. But we have good news nearer home. Have you, my dear sir, heard of the remarkable revival at Shepton Mallet? Doubtless you have. How *fully* herein is that saying verified, 'Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise.'² At Trowbridge too, I trust we are getting forward; though as it has been here from the beginning—as one expresses it, like the deep river, in a more still and silent manner.

I think I may say that it is with heart-felt gratitude I have lately heard your health is much better than when I saw you last. *This* is not the least mercy which yields room for praise. When you appeared so poorly, my faith began to fail. Instead of believing for a prolonged life, I feared a sudden departure. If prayers called you back, the same seek a long continuance of you below. Self pleads, and the apparent good of thousands asks it. That you may long, *long* be spared to the militant church, to see, and be made the honoured instrument of a large increase of the adorable Redeemer's kingdom on earth; and at last be gathered with those who having turned many to righteousness, shine as the stars for ever and ever, to his church triumphant, to his kingdom of glory, is the fervent prayer of

Your most obliged and affectionate

M. Cooke

Address: 'The Revd J. Wesley New-Chapel City-Road London'.

Endorsement: by Cooke, 'Copy of a letter to Mr Wesley'.

Source: manuscript copy for records; Bridwell Library (SMU), Mary Cooke Letter-book, pp. 17–18.

²Matt. 21:16.

From Mrs. A. B.

c. 1788

I was born of popish parents in an island of Lough E—. God began very early to work upon my mind by his Spirit; for when I was about six years old I enquired of my mother how we should get to heaven?

When I was near eight years old, there came an old Protestant woman to lodge at my father's house, who was sick and infirm. Mr. S. a clergyman, came to visit her, and told her, except she was converted and born again, she could not go to heaven. Her conviction then began, and at length terminated in a sound conversion. Partly from hearing what the clergyman said, and partly from conversing with and asking the old woman questions, I began to feel my lost estate; and would pray no other prayers but such as I heard her use. Among other things she warned me of the danger of trusting in purgatory, and praying to saints and angels; and affirmed that she knew all her sins were forgiven. This made such a deep impression on my mind that I resolved not to rest until I knew mine were forgiven also; which I experienced, glory be to God! about half a year after the old woman's death. A little before she died, she lost her daughter, who attended her; and when my mother asked her what she would do now, seeing her daughter was gone, she answered, 'Before this day fortnight I shall be in my Saviour's arms!' Accordingly nine days after, she departed.

My distresses was now so very great, that I wandered in the woods. I did not communicate my feelings to any person, nor had I indeed any one to whom I could open my mind, or who could be of use to me. At length, one day as I was wrestling in prayer in a wood, I found a measure of that rest which I sought. I found love and joy in my heart, and retained a degree of it till I was fifteen years of age.

When I was fifteen, my mother said it was time for me to go under the care of the priest. I had the greatest aversion to this. But as she insisted on it, to obey her I went to mass, contrary to my conscience. The very moment I bowed before the altar, I lost my confidence, my joy, and my peace; and imagined I saw hell moved from beneath to meet me. I then fell into despair, thinking I had sinned against the Holy Ghost, having sinned against light and knowledge. I ran back immediately from the mass, and threw my beads to my mother, saying I would never carry them again. She replied I was mad. And many others besides her told me I never could go to heaven, except I got absolution from the priest, and went through the fire of purgatory.

My state now was horrible. I often attempted to put an end to my life. And one day as I went forward to leap into a deep pool in my father's ground, I saw many living things creeping on the bottom; at which I started back, with this reflection, 'Now if there be a God, he will punish me, and the devils will be, in this manner, crawling on my soul to all eternity!' Shortly after this my friends carried me to the priest, and afterwards to the bishop. To these I told my distress. The priest said that when these melancholy notions were out of my head, all would be well. He desired me to take pleasure in the world, to keep jovial company, and to be sure to dance a great deal! And added, 'A shilling to the priest, and a few days in purgatory would do away all!' The bishop spoke much to the same purport, and anointed me with his oil. And having done so he threw the tow, which he used in anointing me, into the fire saying, 'The witchcraft is all over!' But I never found myself worse. For I soon lost all my religion, and fell into great wickedness, and sinned with a high hand. I was often brought by reasoning to doubt of the existence of a God. At other times I wished there was none.

After this manner I went on till I was twenty-one years of age; at which time I heard Mr. J. P. a Methodist preacher. I now believed there was a God. And a gleam of hope sprung up that it was possible I might be saved, on which I found power to pray. My distress was deepened; and on my return to my friends, they were about to send again for the priest. I told them it was too late, and that he need not come to me, except it was that I might tell him of his lost and undone estate. I continued near a year in conviction, and in deep distress, when God broke in once more upon me and set my soul at liberty, giving me an assurance of his having healed my backslidings and loving me freely for the sake of his Son.

For two years or upwards I continued to enjoy the constant light of his countenance. And my soul was without a cloud, though I met with the severest persecution and trials of every kind. I now resolved to read my recantation of the Church of Rome. The priest, hearing this, sent me word that he would make hawk's meat of me, and that he would even tear me out of the church. I returned for answer that God was above him; that the laws of England were very strong—and that through divine grace I would settle him, and not only him, but his grand vizier, the pope. I then applied to the rector of the parish to receive me; who, after examining me concerning my purpose, and my telling him that I was born of God, and that I knew my sins were pardoned, cried out 'Alas! Alas! The poor widow's daughter is gone mad. Go home, my girl, to your mother.' I told him I would apply to another clergyman, which I did soon after, who received me kindly, approved of my resolution, and, after giving me proper directions, and promising me his protection in case of persecution, wrote to my own parish minister to admit me.

After my conversion to God, my friends took many methods to turn me aside from the right way. They had agreed to marry me by force, and did not even acquaint me with it. They had fixed the wedding-day, and determined to carry me away forcibly from the house where I lodged. This their intention was made known to me by my sister on that very day. I fled that day and the next seventeen miles, and the day following caught a fever. When the people at whose house I was knew it, they would not suffer me to stay. So I was obliged to return immediately back to my mother, who, with my other friends, insisted upon my complying with their desires, or they would not keep me. I chose to leave them again, and was permitted by a poor man to lie in his cabin during my illness; where, with scarce any attendance, or the necessary sustenance, I recovered.

Among those who attacked me on my return to my mother's house was my old parish priest, who said all the heretics were going to hell, and that none could be saved out of their church (meaning the Church of Rome). I asked him if he would receive me again? And when he answered he would, I replied, 'So would your father the devil. But neither of you shall get me.' After this I wandered from place to place, endeavouring to get a livelihood by working, or knitting. But my health began to decline much by the persecution and various kinds of hardship I went through. At length that shining ornament of the church, Mrs. [Dorothea] Johnson of Lisleen, hearing of me sent for me and treated me as a sister indeed, with whom I lived for the most part of three years in the closest union.

After this I went through various trials. One day when my heart was in deep distress, I fell fast asleep, reclined on a chair, and dreamed I saw an angel of God with a drawn sword in his hand standing as a sentinel by my side. Some years before this I thought I was closely pursued by the devil, who followed me to a river and said he would have me. I told him he should not, until he could do what he saw me doing—viz., wade up the river in the name of the Lord, which I did, and so made my escape.

I continued some years thus a poor lonely pilgrim. Proposals of marriage were made to me by one which I rejected. At length, in answer to many earnest prayers, my God favoured me with the man that I loved above any other. We were married just ten years after my departure from my relations, and had only one halfpenny the first journey we took after our union. Soon after, my husband, when alone on the road, believed that the ever blessed Spirit of God said or whispered to his heart, 'You have taken a poor child of mine, and I will pay her fortune.' The truth of this we have proved from time to time ever since.

I have gone through honour and dishonour, poverty and plenty, sickness and health; sin, sorrow, the strife of tongues, etc., etc. Yet in all I have a faithful, loving, patient, powerful, compassionate friend, who is with me always. And if I do not wickedly depart from him, he will not forsake me.

When in W— we had divisions, strife, and warm contentions. But some of the people loved me well. May the good Lord freely forgive all who injured me. And may he give us as much love to our mistaken brethren, as Jesus manifested for us on Calvary!

At B— I found such friendship from Mr. M's family and others (whose names are in the book of life) that none, except the followers of Jesus can manifest. And surely I have cause, above many others, to glorify our all-loving Saviour.

Some years ago Dr. C. cut a cancer out of my breast. Last summer I had a return of it under my left arm. Some weeks before Conference my husband mentioned my severe distress to W. G. with whom he slept, who willingly joined him in prayer for my recovery. And one night when they were in Dublin, I

lay down as peaceful as usual; sleep sealed my frail eyelids, and in the morning my pain was gone.

The heat of my natural temper, and my burning zeal for the glory of God, have constrained me to speak to sinners in a manner not altogether so full of meekness as I could desire. Yet I hope I do not often hurt either myself or weak brethren by plain dealing. However I hope through grace to hold fast the faith delivered unto the saints, and continue doing and suffering the 'good and acceptable will of God',³ until the last enemy is overcome: and until we, who have so many joyful meetings, and sorrowful partings on earth, shall overtake our Father's children amongst the 'spirits of just men made perfect'.⁴

A. B.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 12 (1789): 414–17, 463–66.

³Cf. Rom. 12:2.

⁴Heb. 12:23.

From Mrs. A. Brown

[c. 1788?]

At your request I give you the following account which you may rely upon as a matter of fact.

Some time ago as I slept with my little infant at Mr. G—'s, near Lisburn, I was suddenly awoke by a noise in the lobby, which seemed as if several women were scolding loud, and tearing each other in pieces. Looking up I saw a flash of light. On hearing th sender thrown on the fire with great violence, I was not a little shocked. I soon after heard a noise as if one was walking into the room, in loose slippers. But supposing it to be Mrs. G—'s son coming to try my faith, I got up and groped till I found the poker. As I walked through the room it seemed as if one was walking by my side, yet I could find no body. I then fell down on my knees and prayed a little; yet it seemed as if a heavy man in loose slippers walking by me. At last I took up the child, and as I went to the door, my head hit against the wall: but whether this was owing to weakness, or to an invisible power I cannot tell. When I got into the next room, I found that Miss S. had heard the same noise, but how to account for it, I leave you and others. In the mean time I remain, reverend sir,

Your much obliged, and most obedient friend and servant,

A. B.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 12 (1789): 436.

From [Duncan Wright]¹

c. January 1, 1788

In the Methodist Sunday school at Bolton le Moors there are about eight hundred scholars, forty masters, and nearly as many assistants of one kind or other. All that are employed in this school (whatever their offices are) offer their services willingly, without any pecuniary fee or reward. Every man stands close to his station, and enters into the spirit of his work with an intention to do all the good in his power to the children under his care. The masters love the children, and delight to instruct them. The children love their masters, and cheerfully receive instruction. It is about two years since they first began the school in our large convenient chapel, and the great good attending the undertaking appears more and more daily—not only in Bolton, but in the adjacent places from whence children come constantly to the school, and others who live in the country several miles off.

Many of the poor children about Bolton have been greatly neglected in their education, and were almost a proverb for wickedness, especially Sabbath-breaking: which crime is often the forerunner of the worst of evils.

But we see at present the prospect of a glorious reformation. Among many who attend at our place there is already a great change in their manners, morals, and learning. They are taught to read and write by persons who are very well qualified for the work. Many of the children can read well in the Bible, and write a tolerable hand, so that they are qualified for any common business. Their natural rusticity is also greatly worn off, and their behaviour is modest and decent. About one hundred are taught to sing the praises of God; in which they have made great proficiency, to the admiration of those who hear them.

But what is better than all the rest, the principles of religion are instilled into their minds. The masters endeavour to impress them with the fear of God; and by that to make all vice and wickedness hateful to them, and urge them to obedience by the precepts and motives of the gospel. Each class is spoken to separately every Sunday on the nature of religion, and are taught their duty to God, their neighbour, and themselves, when the instructions are enforced by serious counsels and solemn prayers.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 11 (1788): 489–90.

¹This account is almost certainly from Duncan Wright; see JW to Wright, Jan. 9, 1788, *Works*, 30:635.

From Hester Ann (Roe) Rogers

Cork
January 24, 1788

My Dear and Honoured Sir,

Never had one so every way undeserving, so much reason to praise a God of love. Day after day—nay, every hour I breathe, he loadeth me with his multiplied mercies. Yea, they are more in number than the hairs of my head. If I did not love him with all my consecrated powers, and momentarily offer up my *little all*; if I were not resolved to embrace every opportunity to spend and be spent in service so divine; I should of all mortals be the most inexcusable. For O his love to me is boundless! I prove it an ocean without a bottom or a shore! The sweet communion I have with Father, Son, and Spirit is unspeakable! And whatsoever I ask of God in faith, it is done. In God I live, in him I move, by him I act and speak, and it is in him alone I enjoy all my mercies.

Since I wrote last, we have fresh cause for praise. The Lord is doing wonders amongst us here. It seems very likely at present we shall see as great a work here as at Dublin. At the visitation of the classes this Christmas, we found the society increased from 397 members (the number it contained last Conference) to 504; and the number of classes are increased from 24 to 30; and 56 souls have found peace with God since September last. The Christmas festival was a most blessed season. On Christmas morning at four o'clock, the preaching house was well filled, and God was truly present to bless. Many were awakened, and some converted. Many more were awakened, and four justified at the watchnight on New Year's Eve. Several also found pardon at the love-feast, and many witnessed a good confession. But the time of renewing our covenant exceeded all: fourteen souls were that day born of God; some at their classes, and the rest at that sweet, solemn season of the covenant. The house was truly shaken (I mean, every soul therein) by the power of God. I believe none present, preachers or people, will ever forget it. I trust *I* never shall. It was none other than the antechamber of glory to my soul! The house of God; the gate of heaven. O how was I filled with his presence! How did I bask in the beams of his love! How was I made to feel his immeasurable fulness all my own, through *covenant blood divine*! Several were perfected in love, and several backsliders restored. Since this, between thirty and forty have joined the society; several of whom date their deep awakenings from the covenant night. Mr. [James] Rogers saw it expedient on that occasion to give notes of admission to some who were halting between two opinions, and most of them were then, and are now, determined to be the Lord's.

My classes being now divided, I meet twenty on a Tuesday, and eighteen on a Friday. My heart is knit to these precious souls; and, blessed be God, we never meet in vain. The Lord is pleased to bless me in all my weak labours, and he knows I ascribe to him all the good done, and all the glory. I do lie at his feet, and am astonished at his condescending love to such a worm. Last Sunday evening thanksgiving notes were sent by four, for a sense of pardon received last week. And we hear of two more, who received the same blessing that day. Several of our dear friends who know and love the Lord have entered into a solemn covenant with him, and with each other, never to rest till they experience *perfect love*. One of these has since received the blessing, and seems in all things a *new creature indeed*.

We have got another new place for preaching, in a very convenient and populous part of this city. Mr. Rogers preached there the first time a fortnight ago, and told the congregation he would meet in a class as many as were determined to forsake their sins and seek the kingdom of God with all their hearts. Fourteen offered themselves, and were admitted on trial. And since then, five more. So that there is a new class meets there, of nineteen members. Great good is likely to be done, as most of the hearers that attend are strangers, who perhaps would never have heard elsewhere. We have now five preaching houses, at different parts and proper distances. And I believe we shall see a glorious harvest of precious souls. In all, since we came, seventy-seven are enabled to rejoice in a reconciled God, and many more seem just ready to step into the pool of redeeming mercy.

We hear good news respecting the work of God in Dublin, and in other parts of the kingdom. O may the Lord ride on in the glorious and triumphant chariot of gospel grace and salvation, till all be

subdued!

My dear Mr. Rogers begs me to send his duty and love to you, and joins me in daily intercession at a throne of grace, that you may be filled with the fulness of every new covenant blessing. I am, my very dear sir,

Your ever obliged and truly affectionate, though unworthy friend and servant,

H. A. Rogers

Source: published transcription; Hester Ann Rogers, *Spiritual Letters* (Bristol: R. Edwards, [1796]), 48–50.

Richard Garrettson¹

Petersburg
February 1788

For many years religion in these parts seemed to be at a stand. Sinners had heard the gospel till they had become gospel-wise, and only appeared to hear for form sake; till they could sit under the most pathetic subjects, and remain unaffected. Last spring we introduced prayer-meetings once, and in some places twice a week wherever we had a class; and I think this was the means God blessed in commencing the present revival of religion. In Petersburg (where I reside) last spring we agreed to meet twice in the week to join in prayer for the prosperity of our own souls, and the cause of God. Our class consisted then of eleven in number. We soon got more closely united in love, and religion revived in the class. We were full of life and zeal. Hence it was that conviction seized the ungodly, and they were constrained to cry for mercy and to forsake vice.

One day in time of preaching I saw a girl of about fourteen years of age seem to swell as if she would burst; and after the people were dismissed, she ran into a back room and fell on her knees and cried aloud for mercy. The sisters followed her, and laid hold of her, and brought her into the preaching room (the people all present). We fell down to pray for her, and God set her soul at liberty, and the power of God come down on all the people, old and young. Many of the children, as well as adults, cried aloud for mercy, under a sense of the wrath of God. Sinners all around were astonished, and we continued wrestling with God in prayer for four or five hours, till the Lord blessed another girl of ten years of age.

Thus the work began in our town, and continues to spread with rapidity to this day. Our little class of eleven in number has increased to forty-five converted zealous souls. I believe the revival generally began in the classes, and then broke out among the wicked as fire among dry stubble. The people by their prayer-meetings got their souls glowing with love to God, and when the sermon was over, one and another would break out and pray in the congregation. Some times the preachers desired two or three to pray in the congregation, when the divine presence generally filled the place. And when the class withdrew, we admitted the mourners to stay; and then a divine power came down—some praising God aloud, and others crying for mercy. The people without were so eager to get in that they were ready to burst the door open.

When this power came down, we could not speak to the class. So we opened the door and let all in. The whole company were affected, and numbers so wrought upon that they fell down on their knees. And others dropped down on their faces, having the use of their limbs entirely suspended. Commonly, in these meetings, from one to ten were converted in a day. Saints were praising God aloud, and mourners crying for mercy as from the depth of hell; so that the noise of the people could be heard afar off. This induced numbers of people to come, so that in places where we used to have but twenty or thirty on a weekday, now there will be a thousand, and sometimes more. Many, who came out persecuting and swearing bitter things, went home praising God, from a knowledge of their sins forgiven.

One day I preached at Goshen from 'Who is a God like unto thee; that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by transgressions?'² In my application, a divine power came down, so that I could not be heard at four feet distance, for the noise of the people crying for mercy. There were about three hundred people in the house, and as many out of doors. Numbers in the house and out of doors were struck down with a supernatural power. I stood by a window and looked out, when one man aimed to beat my brains out with a stone. But as he drew back his hand to throw it at me, the wickedest man in the place caught his hand,

¹Titled: 'An Account of the Revival of the Work of God at Petersburg, in Virginia; by Mr. R. Garrettson'. Richard Garrettson (b. 1755) was the brother of Freeborn Garrettson. He entered itinerant ministry in 1779 and desisted from travelling in 1784, continuing thereafter as a local preacher.

²Cf. Mic. 7:18.

and saved my life. Another man came up, and, as the poor Negroes were crying for mercy, struck one of them, and was going to drive them all away. But he was prevented by the people. The same man (blessed be God) at the next meeting got such a blow himself as caused him to roar aloud, and to go home as a saint and as innocent as a lamb. I now have access to the hearts of almost every person in this neighbourhood. The Lord grant that they may all have access to him by faith!

Last spring brother G. came into this circuit (being weak as to his gifts and knowledge). But oh how wonderfully was the power of God manifested in that man! He was a common blessing to the society all round the circuit. I believe his labours were blessed more in six months, than all the rest of the travelling preachers we have had in this circuit for twelve months. But after six months he went to Brunswick, and by his labourious preaching he is broken down and unable to preach. Does God require of his servants more than they can perform? The Lord direct in this matter!

The society is all alive to God. Prayer-meetings are now used in every place. Five, eight, and ten are often converted at one meeting, where there are no preachers. The meetings often hold six or seven hours together. Last July we had a quarterly meeting at Mabry's chapel, where the power of God was among the people of a truth—many hundreds being cut to the heart and crying for mercy as from the depth of hell. By what I could learn, there were about one hundred and fifty converted at that meeting. Perhaps there were four thousand people present.

The next quarterly meeting was held at Jones's chapel. This meeting was astonishing to all that were present beyond description, and what had never entered into my mind to conceive. At this meeting the sight of the mourners penetrated my heart with the greatest view of hell that I ever had. Likewise the saints struck my mind with the deepest views of heaven, and the love of God to man. At this meeting the power came down on the people before one preacher got there. When the people met (sometimes before they spoke), the sight of each other caused their eyes to melt in tears, and their cups ran over, so that they broke out in loud praises to God. Others, when they met, would hang on each other, and weep aloud, and praise God. Others, when they began to talk of what God was doing, were melted down, and the flame ran through the whole company.

The preachers all came up together. And by the time we got within half a mile of the chapel, we heard the people praising God. When we came up, numbers being out of doors weeping, some down crying for mercy, others in ecstasies; we rushed in and tried to silence them. But though we spoke as loud as we could, we could not be heard above five feet distant. Then we sent some to go through the people, to try to stop them, to have preaching. But we found it was all in vain. I then got into the pulpit, and looked round, and such a sight I never had before: numbers of saints in ecstasies, others crying for mercy, scores lying with their eyes set in their heads, the use of their powers suspended, and the whole congregation in agitation.

All the preachers could do was to go among the distressed and encourage them. This likewise the old members did. Some lying as in the pangs of death, numbers as cold as clay, and as still as if dead. So that among six or seven thousand people, there were not many that had the proper use of their bodily powers, so as to take care of the rest and to encourage the mourners. Hundreds of saints were so overcome with the power of God that they fell down as in a swoon, and lay for twenty or thirty minutes, and some for an hour. During this time they were happy beyond description. And when they came to themselves, it was with loud praises to God, and with tears, and speeches enough to break a rock or melt the hardest heart. When we looked round, the righteous appeared to be in heaven, and the wicked in hell. The preachers then went off into the woods, and preached to those that could, or desired to attend.

The next day we met at nine o'clock to administer the sacrament. And whilst this was doing in the house, we went into the woods to preach to those that did not communicate. I suppose we had about one thousand five hundred. I preached from 'The Spirit and the bride say come ...'³ And when I got to the application, the power of God fell down on the people, and such bitter lamentations were heard that I was obliged to desist. Many scores of black as well as white people fell to the earth, and lay in agonies till

³Rev. 22:17.

evening. And some, especially the blacks, lay struggling till they beat the earth with their hands, head, and feet, while others kicked holes in the ground.

In the evening we got as many of the mourners together as we could, and put them under an arbour. I went into the pulpit, and looked down through a window (they being under it). This sight, I think, was a dreadful resemblance of hell, numbers of poor creatures being in every posture that distressed souls could get into, and doleful lamentations heard justly comparable to the lamentations of the damned. They commonly obtained peace in one moment, rose up out of this distress when their burden fell off, and clapped their hands and praised God aloud. Many of these people came out persecuting and railing against this stir (as they called it) and were cut down as St. Paul was.

That evening I rode to brother Bonner's on my way home, and after dinner sister Bonner went upstairs to pray, and got so happy that she sunk down in a swoon. We heard her after some time, and went up; and several blacks and whites went up with us, when prayers and praises ascended from all present. One young woman seeing sister Bonner so happy, was tempted to think she had lost her religion; and was two hours in despair, and fell to the floor, screamed and cried in a horrid manner, till at length we raised her on her feet. I encouraged her by reminding her of what God had done for her. Then she got a gleam of hope, and prayed, and said, 'I will believe in spite of all the devils in hell.' That moment her unbelief was gone, and she praised God with rapture, as when first converted.

By this time three unconverted women, and two men (who were all the unconverted people that were present) were lying on the floor, crying for mercy. I fell on my knees to pray for them, and when I rose up from prayer, one lusty man was in an agony, and ready to beat himself to pieces against the floor. I took him round the middle and raised him up, when he struggled in such a manner that I thought his backbone was coming asunder. Then in a moment his guilt was removed, and his soul was at rest. He clapped his hands and praised God, felt a calm in his heart and joy unspeakable. Next morning I and my wife rode home with a heaven in our breasts. I think I never felt so happy, and such sweet union with God in all my life. O! my soul, why art thou not always in this heavenly frame?

After this I preached at Jones Hole church to a crowded congregation, whilst some crowded about the doors. The people all devoured the word as fast as it was delivered. Half of them, I suppose, were converted, and their hearts glowing with love to God. I begged of them to be still for the sake of the rest that wanted to hear preaching. Many of them were ready to break out in praises to God. Some were so full that the rest held them down fast on their seats, knowing that if they looked up and saw others in like heavenly frames, they must inevitably cry out aloud, so that the people could not hear preaching. But in the application of my sermon, one of them irresistibly broke out in praises. In one minute this ran through the congregation, and I suppose five hundred at once broke out in loud praises, whilst sinners were struck with a divine power. Many of them cried for mercy, some on their knees, others stretched on the ground. In the height of this stir eleven rafters of the house broke down at once, with a dreadful noise. And what was amazing, not one person seemed to hear it; so mighty was the power of God among the people! Many were converted, but how many I cannot tell.

Two weeks after, I preached at the same place. And whilst about twenty-five saints came up to the church in a body, praising God and speaking of his wonderful works, they appeared to the wicked as terrible as an army with banners. It was a time of pouring out of the Spirit of God indeed, for several were converted, and sinners generally struck with a divine power. Generally (after preaching is over) if any seemed to be distressed, the preachers talked to them, and joined in prayer for them before the people dispersed, and sometimes desired the mourners to stop to be prayed for. This was a blessed means of reviving the work and converting souls, for God blessed and owned it of a truth.

It was amazing to see how great the stir was, and yet what little persecution we had. But the reason was, the wicked were struck with such a supernatural power that they were constrained to say, 'The work is of God.' The young converts have stood fast beyond expectation. In Sussex circuit, in the course of the summer, there have been about sixteen hundred people converted; and in Brunswick, perhaps eighteen hundred; and I suppose eight hundred in Amelia.

My soul is happy, not only in seeing and hearing of the work of God going on, but in the enjoyment of his love in my own soul. I am not without trials common to one of my function. Yet I am

determined to promulgate the word of God as long as I am able. O that God may so direct my ways, that after my labourious years are ended, I may meet those among whom I have laboured, and enter into the joy of our Lord! O that the thoughts of this may so raise my affections, and those of all who labour in the gospel,; that we may have fresh resolution and fortitude to discharge the important duty that we owe to God and our own souls!

R. G.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 300–07.

From [William Collins]¹

Bradford
February 1788

Our dear brother [Jeremiah] Robertshaw finished his course in the Lord yesterday morning about four o'clock. He was in general disordered in his body, but steady and regular in attending to his work of faith and labour of love when in the least degree able; nay some times he exceeded the bounds. He was very much troubled with the gravel and stone, and the general consequences which attend such a *violent thorn* in the *flesh*. But in and through all, appeared the Christian and the man of God, growing brighter in the *fire*.

As there have been many trying scenes amongst us to pass through, he did not go without his part, which I some times have feared hastened his end. But he is now where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are forever at rest.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 11 (1788): 574.

¹This account was most likely from William Collins, the current Assistant for the Bradford circuit.

From Adam Clarke¹

[Isle of Guernsey]
c. February 1, 1788

Margaret Horne, an inhabitant of St. Peter du Port, in the Isle of Guernsey (a woman of unblemished character, about seventy years of age) came to me at Les Terres, in June 1787, to be electrified, hoping it would cure her of a settled deafness by which she had been long afflicted. I gave her a few gentle shocks through the head, which were immediately followed by such a severe headache as deterred her from making a second trial. This continued till the latter end of the same month, when in a very singular manner she was cured of *that*, together with a severe pain in her stomach and bowels by which she had been long much distressed.

One Saturday evening about the end of June, having combed out her grey hair, and according to her custom tied it on the top of her head (which it would barely do, being very short) she went to bed, and on the next morning was astonished to find, on taking off her cap, that her hair had in the night increased nine or ten inches in length. She immediately called Mrs. Johnson,² in whose house she lodges, who viewing it was equally astonished, being perfectly acquainted with its former shortness. She now found that she could not conveniently put on her cap, her hair being so much increased beyond its former bulk. This induced her on Monday morning to cut off six or eight inches of the miraculous lock.

The same day she was seized with a severe sickness, which constrained her to take to her bed, and induced her to exclaim to Mrs. Johnson and some of her neighbours, 'The Lord wrought a miracle for me in causing my hair to grow so suddenly. But I have cut it off and regarded not the operation of his hands, and now has he visited, and in judgment afflicted me. O Lord, if thou wilt once more cause it to grow, I will keep it as a token of thy mercy as long as I live!' This was on Monday evening. On Tuesday morning she found the pain in her head gone, together with that in her stomach and bowels before mentioned. On examining her hair, she found it had once more grown eight or ten inches! Since that time her bodily strength has been so amazingly increased that she has solemnly assured me 'She found her health and vigour nearly equal to what she possessed in the prime of life.' Indeed, I have been surprised to see her strength and activity evidenced in walking sometimes before me up the hill from Les Terres, being before well acquainted with the poor state of her health.

This miraculous lock (for so I must term it) is of a colour different from the rest of her hair. The other part is entirely white, but this is of a very fine brown, only a little mottled with grey. This is the real fact, of which there may be every attestation which the nature of the thing is capable of. The circumstances as above I have taken from the conjoint testimony of Mrs. Horne and Mrs. Johnson, who are both members of our society in St. Peter's, and who walk in the light, love, and liberty of the gospel.

There are some who, not being able to deny the fact, nevertheless say they cannot see what end God can have in an affair so trivial as this. But by the same mode of reasoning they may deny the divinity of the Mosaic law, because they cannot immediately see the design of the fringes, loops, hooks, etc, which are mentioned therein—and which nevertheless were typical of particular links in that important chain let down from heaven to draw a world to glory. Or, they may accuse the great Sir Isaac Newton of folly when, like a child, he was employed in blowing concave globules of soap and water out of a tobacco pipe, for these wise men could not have foreseen that this would lead him to the much-admired discovery of the doctrine of lights and colours.

¹Clarke first mentioned this incident in his letter to JW of Oct. 29, 1787. In his letter to Clarke of Jan. 8, 1788 (*Works*, 30:633–34), JW asked for a 'more plain, full, distinct account'. This is Clarke's reply, which JW alluded to as having come some weeks before in his letter of Mar. 17, 1788 to Clarke (*Works*, 30:658).

²Johnson was the daughter of Mrs. Horne.

We whose names are underwritten, having had a particular acquaintance with the person and fact as related in the above by Mr. Clarke, scruple not to add our testimony in vindication of its truth.

Charlotte Johnson

Rachel Dowtey

Peter Arrivé

Elizabeth Arrivé

John Ferguson

W. Stevens

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 584–86.

From [John Crook]¹

Douglas
February 4, 1788

William Quayle was born in Douglas in the Isle of Man, October 21, 1778. He seemed to have the fear of God from his infancy, which produced in him a holy zeal for the glory of God. This he manifested in his frequently reproving sinners, especially his mother: telling her that she ought not to say such bad words as she frequently did; which, since she has been deprived of him, has caused her much sorrow of heart on account of her not paying greater attention to his holy and gentle reproofs. He used also to tell her often that God would be angry with her if she did not amend, and also reproved the wicked children that were playing in the streets.

As soon as he was about three years old, he began to pray every night before he went to bed; which he would never do but on his bare knees.

He was also very tender hearted. For if his mother chastised any of his little brothers, he would frequently weep over them on account of their folly and suffering. In short, he spent a life (short as it was) to the glory of God: always serious, and never heard to speak a bad word. But if through any accident or inattention he had done amiss, he would fall down on his knees and ask pardon immediately.

He hated the practice of his neighbour's children, because they would not walk in the fear of the Lord. And although he was as a sparrow upon the housetop, yet he kept up a steady determination to please God, which was evinced in all his conversation.

On September 1787, he was seized with his last sickness, which continued about a fortnight. While he was ill, he possessed his soul in patience. He never expressed the least desire for life, but rather wished to be removed to his heavenly Father's house. For he said, 'I would rather die than live.'

When his father used to express his hope that he would recover, he always replied, 'I would rather die than stay here.' Though a child, he never complained of pain or sickness, but was patient and always resigned to the will of God.

A few minutes before he died he cried out, 'Father! Father! Mother! Mother! O my heaven! My heaven!' He then sung a hymn, and desired his mother to turn him in bed, and instantly fell asleep in the arms of his dear Redeemer, September 24, and in the ninth year of his age.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 11 (1788): 410–12.

¹This account was likely from John Crook, currently Assistant for the Isle of Man circuit.

From James Currie¹

[Northampton]
February 13, 1788

Reverend and Very Dear Sir,

I have lately more than ever been led to consider these words of St. James, 'The prayer of faith shall save the sick.'² While I have been praying for one and another, their pain or sickness hath been suspended, sometimes removed. Particularly when I visited sister Kenning a few weeks ago. When I went into the room she was in very great pain. I spoke a few words to her, then kneeled down and prayed for her. I found free access to the throne of grace. He inspired, and I was agreeably surprised to hear when I had done that he also had accepted, had answered the prayer. Her great pain was gone. He mind was composed thankfully to praise God. And we comforted and encouraged one another, not only at the remembrance of past mercies but also because of the sensation we had of present favours.

Another instance, the husband of the above sister Kenning (now I trust with God).³ When he was taken ill of his last illness I found a desire to go and see him, having had some acquaintance with him formerly. I went and spoke as mild and tenderly to him as I was able concerning his state and danger. But I did not then tell him the worst I feared, lest he should not be able to bear it. This I put off to another opportunity, which I hoped through grace soon to have. In two days I called on him again, when he plainly told me I was not welcome. He did not wish to see me. He wished I would mind my own business and not trouble him. I was grieved for him, having this proof added to all I had formerly that he was in the gall of bitterness. My spirit was stirred within me. I thought, Now is *my* time. If I miss this opportunity of warning him to flee from wrath, I may never have another. He may die in his sin, and his blood be required at my hand. I therefore began immediately to preach the terrors of the Lord unto him, as plain and pointed as I could, and it pleased my gracious Lord to give me strong words. As far as I knew, I fully delivered my own soul, prayed for him, and left him, hardly expecting he would admit of another visit. But in this I was disappointed. For the Lord had wrought upon his mind while I was speaking to him, and he afterwards related to me from his own: 'At first when you began to speak', said he, 'I felt such a hatred to you as I cannot express. Presently [I felt] a conviction that it was wrong to hate such a good man, attended with a grief for so doing, followed by such a love for you as I have seldom felt to any person.' And [he] hoped I would not be affronted at his behaving so ill, begged I would come and see him as often as I could. Thus a way was made for me to visit him to the day of his death; and I hope not without some fruit, for in the latter part of his life he was very patient and gave evident proofs of a change of disposition. He frequently expressed what a sinner he had been, and that he had frequent longings after God. A few days before his death he told his wife how he would have her dispose of his clothes and some other things among his children, that his mind might be free from every outward burden. Having thus settled them, he took no further notice of them. On Christmas day one said to him. 'This is a poor Christmas to you.' 'No', said he, 'It is the best Christmas I ever had.' On the morning that he died he told his daughter with much composure of mind that he was dying and bid her call her mother. Soon after he turned his head and quietly breathed his last, January 1787.

I know, dear sir, you are acquainted with the Greens Norton affair, and I should suppose that the following paragraph also, published in our newspaper, and transcribed into some of the London papers. But lest you should not have seen the paragraph, I insert it.

¹James Currie (fl. 1780s) was a schoolmaster in Cotton End, a neighbourhood in Northampton. He was also apparently a lay preacher in the Methodist society there; see JW to Currie, Jan. 24, 1789, *Works*, 31:5.

²James 5:15.

³William Kenning was buried in Northampton on Jan. 11, 1787.

Northampton Mercury, January 12, 1788

Last Sunday was distributed to the poor of Greens Norton, in this county, the sum of £6.19.8, being the third parts of several penalties levied on a number of people called Methodists under the statute of the 22, Charles the Second, for unlawfully assembling in the streets of said parish. But these convictions it is now clearly ascertained that all assemblies and conventicles held in the streets, or any place not properly licensed, are unlawful; and the parties present, if amounting to the number of five (as well the hearers as the preachers) are liable to the several penalties imposed by the said act of Charles the Second.

The above hath been the subject of much conversation in this neighbourhood, and many have inferred that field-preaching was at an end. And indeed, was we to act as we have formerly done, the laws to continue in force as they now seem to be, and were malicious person to enforce them, who could preach two or three times a day as has frequently been done? Who could pay 20 pounds for the first sermon, and 40 pounds for every subsequent one?

But is there not a way out? I think there is, and I humbly submit it to your superior judgment. Cannot the field, the marketplace, the street, etc., where we preach be licensed, as well as the chapel, the dwelling-house, the room, etc.? The Act of Toleration nowhere requires dissenting congregations to meet in either of the above named places, or any other that I can observe, but positively restrains them from meeting (last clause of said Act) 'until the *place* of such meeting shall be certified to the bishop of the diocese, or the archdeacon, etc. The registrar or clerk of the peace is hereby required to register the same, and to give certificate thereof, for the sum of six pence.' And is not a field, etc., a *place* as well as a dwelling-house, etc.? If so, would it not be well to licence most of the places we preach in out of doors, seeing we could do it at so small an expense? And if we can license a field as well as a house, may we not praise God for the consolation, seeing our outdoor congregations may be protected by law as well as those within? For the last clause but one of the above-mentioned Act says 'That if any person or persons at any time or times do and shall willfully and of purpose maliciously or contemptuously come into any cathedral, or other congregation permitted by this act, and disquiet or disturb the same, or misuse any preacher or teacher, such person or persons, upon proof and conviction of the said offence, shall suffer the pain and penalty of twenty pounds.

A few days ago Mr. [William] Horner and I was looking at a building in a better situation than our present preaching house, which we thought might answer a good end, were we able to purchase and repair it. £300 or £400 might make it a commodious chapel. But I only mention it that we may have your advice and prayers. I know you do pray for us, but we want them particularly in this case, building being an arduous task. I expect Mr. Horner will be more particular on the subject.

There are several considerable villages between Northampton and Wellingborough, and around Wellingborough, where the Methodists have never preached. I went last year and preached in some of them and the Lord blest his own word. In one place a few have been stirred up and are joined together in society to seek the Lord. In another, last time I preached to them I desired those who were determined to save their own souls to stop after preaching. I think upwards of thirty stopped. I then explained a little of a Christian society, read our Rules, and distributed a few amongst them, that they might consider them at their leisure. And if they approved it, I would join them together (that they may help each other to work out their salvation) the next time I came. There is one fruit amongst this last mentioned people, they kindly entertain us at their houses.

The Lord has opened the mouths of two of my young brethren [names illegible in crease], who follow after me in these places and speak the word as of the ability that God giveth) and have voluntarily offered to bear all expenses attending of preaching among them.

I did intend preaching in most villages within my reach if God spared my life. But the ways seems blocked up at present by what was discovered in our newspaper of January 19. But why did I say I 'did' intend. I sometimes am, as it were, a terror to myself, being so full of inward pollutions.

I know, dear sir, your time is precious. I therefore expect no long answer. However, a line or two

of reproof or instructions will be thankfully received by, dear sir,
Yours, etc.

Address: 'To the Revd J. Wesley'.

Source: holograph; MARC MA 1977/503, Box 4, item 4.

From James Wood

Newcastle upon Tyne
February 19, 1788

Reverend Sir,

Matthew Errington was born in Houghton-le-Spring, 1711, where he was brought up with his parents.

From his childhood he was restrained from open profaneness, and had something of the form of godliness, which he mistook for the power thereof.¹

When he was young he removed to London on account of his business, which was graciously overruled for the good of his soul. For on the 4th of March 1740 (a national fast-day),² being asked to go to the Foundry at five o'clock in the morning, he consented. He had not been there long before he saw the evil of his heart in a manner he had never done before. At ten o'clock he went to another place of worship, but found nothing there suited to his case. At one o'clock he returned to the Foundry, where you, sir, had appointed a meeting for prayer. But when you saw the house filled with people, you altered your plan, and preached on the barren fig-tree.³

Under that sermon, he was stripped of all his supposed righteousness, and deeply convinced that he had cumbered the ground—not only for three, but for near thirty years. On this his mouth being stopped, and finding himself a guilty, helpless sinner, he cried out for mercy. And so earnest was he in the pursuit of it, that when it was published for you to preach at Deptford in the evening, he set off for that place, without breaking his fast, praying all the way as he went along. While he sat under the word that evening all his guilt was removed, and he was filled with peace and joy, and went home rejoicing in God his Saviour. And so great was his joy on this occasion, that he scarcely felt any want of food for his body, although he had fasted all that day.

From that time forward he walked in the fear of the Lord, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost; evidencing to all around the sincerity of his heart, and the reality of the great change which God had wrought in him.

Having joined the society, he constantly attended the preaching, and all the other means of grace; by which means he found his confidence in a pardoning God continually strengthened.

As he was a single man and had good wages, he was quite easy as to temporal things. And being of a soft, easy, natural temper, which was assisted and refined by grace, his way in spiritual things was much more even than what many pious persons experience.

And thus he continued till (at your request) he gave up his place, where his wages and perquisites were very considerable, and removed to the Foundry, to rise at 4:00 in the morning, ring the bell, call the preachers, clean their shoes, and mend their clothes, for a little plain food and raiment. And as he thought this an honourable office, he performed it with great pleasure; and gave you and others an opportunity of seeing the manner of his conversation, and also what spirit he was of.

When your brother Charles came first to Newcastle, Matthew came with him, and rejoiced in the success of the truth in these parts; as many were awakened to a sense of their condition and danger, and turned from the error of their ways—some of whom are still living, and ripening apace for glory.

From this place he set off on foot with Mr. Thomas Meyrick for Cornwall, in which journey he suffered much; partly from weariness, and partly from hunger and thirst. Sometimes he was in imminent danger of his life, from violent mobs. One time in particular, some of the mob were for killing him at once; but as others would not consent, after wading through water breast high, he just escaped with his life.

¹See 2 Tim. 3:5.

²Actually Feb. 4, 1740/41.

³See Luke 13:6–9.

After some time, having spent all his money, worn out his clothes, and suffered much in his body, he returned to London. And having got work, he clothed himself again and got a little money, with which he returned to this place in the year 1749; and from that time lived in the Orphan House, till the day of his death.

For a few years after his coming to Newcastle, there was some opposition to the Methodists—in which he had his share, but bore it all with invincible patience. Indeed several persons here, who have been well acquainted with him for the whole space of thirty-nine years, declare they never saw him out of temper in all that time!

As a true lover of peace he always acted as a peacemaker, labouring to heal every breach, and to promote brotherly love to the utmost of his power. And yet he could not be silent when others sinned in his sight, but would faithfully reprove them without respect of persons.

One day as he was walking on the Sandhill, a few gentlemen were walking together, one of whom was swearing very freely. Matthew went up to him, and mildly reproved him for swearing. The gentleman turned short upon him and said, 'You should have called me aside, and not have spoken to me thus before company.' 'Sir', said Matthew, 'you did not step aside to swear.'

About five months before his death, going to visit the sick after taking physic, he caught a cold, and was taken ill. This complaint brought on the jaundice to a very great degree. From the nature of the disorder, his spirits were at times a little depressed, and his body inactive. But he never felt any fear of death. And when the physician told him, he was sorry he could not help him, Matthew replied, 'I am not sorry, but rather glad.' And [he] often talked of his departure with as much cheerfulness as a weary man would of going to rest. Indeed at times he was almost impatient to be gone, that he might be with Christ, which he knew was much better.

For two or three days before his death, though his pain was exquisite, he never complained. On the day of his death, he was much drawn out in prayer; and while a friend was praying with him he added many a hearty 'Amen!' A little after this he was heard to say, 'Finish! Finish! Finish! Lord Jesus, finish thy work!' He then raised his voice, and said, 'He is precious! He is precious! Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly! Glory be to God! Glory be to the Lamb of God!' and said no more.

A little before his death he made his will, in which he left twenty pounds for the poor of the society, and twenty pounds to the stewards thereof, towards defraying any extraordinary expenses in carrying on the work of God. And the rest of his little substance he left to be distributed among any others who were in distress.

Thus lived and died Matthew Errington, who was one of the original Methodists (being near forty years a member of this society), and was well known, and much esteemed, both by preachers and people, in the north of England.

James Wood

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 12 (1789): 22–25.

From Thomas Dobson¹

Oxford Road [London]
February 20, 1788

Mr. Nathaniel Morgan, No. 48 Holborn, having occasion to pay one hundred pounds into a public office, lost the same (being in a bag) as he was going. He did not miss it till it was too late to recover it. Calling on a friend to consult about advertising it, his friend ridiculed the idea; but the other being determined, put it into the *Daily Advertiser*, and offered ten guineas reward.

Mr. Wilson, shoemaker in Church Lane, St. Martin's in the Fields, coming by, picked up the bag; and by the weight judged it to be money. When he got home, finding it to be a bag of gold, he carefully put it by; and on examining the paper, found it described, and who it was that had lost it. On this he immediately restored the money, and received the reward—which the honest man declared he would not have taken, but his distress was such, that he accepted of it as a providential relief!

I need not add any encomiums, as the plain tale of virtue is its highest panegyric.²

T. Dobson

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 11 (1788): 540–41.

¹Thomas Dobson (fl. 1780s) was a pipe and bucket maker, who lived at 427 Oxford Street, near Seven Dials. He served as the steward for the charity school run at West Street Chapel; see JW to Thomas Dobson, Feb. 21, 1786, *Works*, 30:430–31.

²Note in original: 'Will a generous public find no way of rewarding such integrity?'

From [Mary (Franklin) Parker]¹

[Fakenham]
February 23, 1788

Reverend Sir,

I often bless God that I ever knew you, and with joy look beyond this vale of tears to that celestial hill, where I hope to meet you. What a prospect faith opens to the believing mind, both here and forever! O my dear father and friend, what can I say for my long neglect in writing to you! I am ashamed, but though so far distant, and long silent, yet I am frequently present with you in spirit, telling you what God hath done for me, and also blessing and praising him for you. The reason of my long delay in writing has chiefly been this, the oft-times hearing of and expecting your coming into this circuit. But now that I find our Lynn friends have given up hope of your coming, I can delay no longer to tell you how it stands between God and my soul.

Now Lord, my eye is unto thee, to teach thy dust what I shall say to thy servant. Lord, what hast thou done for me! Thou hast saved me from hell, from wrath, and from sin; and hast, I trust, sealed my soul to the day of redemption. About three years ago the Lord removed my prejudice, which I had for many years retained against Christian Perfection; and likewise showed me the need of it before I could go to heaven. I wept, prayed much, and conversed with Christian friends, before I learnt the way to come to Christ, to work this great change in me. I was looking for the fruit before the work was wrought in me. Till one evening, when I was upon a visit at Lynn, after passing through more than I can express, the Lord brought me into the liberty of his dear children.

O what a mighty change did I then feel! I saw with new eyes. I heard with new ears. I was ready to publish to all that doctrine which I had before opposed. How then did I bless the day I ever knew you; that ever I heard you preach; and was gathered, with the flocks of your companions, to the great and good Shepherd! To him be the praise given. And I hope he will reward you for your labour of love. In this thrice happy state I walked for some time, triumphing over the world, the flesh, and the devil. Till a great trial rose in our church, wherein my brethren treated me with cruelty—and I began to reason, which was always my weak part. Here I lost my confidence, and sin and darkness entered my soul. O what did I feel! I feared I should never recover my shield again.

After much suffering, and sorrow, the Lord has lately delivered my soul again. And then I thought I would guard against those things that I trembled at before. I was taught to feel more of my own weakness, and learned to be more dependant upon Christ. But yet I was not thoroughly satisfied, for I found the Lord had more to do for me. I longed for the seal of the Spirit, that firm persuasion that I should continue in this state while I lived, and never leave him more. I cried to him to teach me to live that life of faith which I do at this time; and, though storms and tempests are all around me, yet secure I am while I can call him mine. I truly feel what a weak thing I am, and can say,

Every moment, Lord, I need
The merit of thy death.²

Thus I live happy. Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. O what pleasure would it be to me, to be permitted once more to converse with you in this world. But if not, I must bear it as my cross, and look forward to that blessed day when, without interruption, we shall stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion and love and praise our adorable Saviour, who hath loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood.

¹While only the initials are given, Parker lived near King's Lynn and this letter reflects the questions she held about Christian perfection earlier; see JW to Mary (Franklin) Parker, Jan. 21, 1784, 30:207–08.

²Cf. CW, Hymn on Isaiah 32:2, st. 5, *HSP* (1742), 146.

Lord hasten the day!

Dear sir, do not withhold your fatherly instructions from me; but teach and advise me, though most unworthy of your notice or regard. Our society here are in harmony, and increasing both in life and number. I bless the Lord for our preachers, especially Mr. —,³ to whom I am indebted under God for the liberty I now enjoy. His talent seems to be that of building up believers in their most holy faith. I think all his preaching leads to the perfection of the soul. I have nothing more to add, only my prayers that God may preserve your useful life, and crown your labours with abundant success. I am, dear sir,

Your dutiful daughter in Christ,

M. P.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 15 (1792): 552–54.

³Likely Jeremiah Brettell, current Assistant for the King's Lynn circuit.

From an Unidentified Correspondent

February 23, 1788

It seems very long since I received a letter from my most honoured and beloved friend. But I believe the time would have appeared much longer, but that there is not a day passes without my feeling unspeakable union with your spirit before the throne of grace. For it is become quite as natural for me to pray for you as for my own soul. I feel you as near, and as dear.

Notwithstanding my long silence, I need not say how high a gratification it is to receive a letter from you. If love merits your confidence, I have a peculiar claim upon you. But on any other account I do not say that I have any right to expect it. My father, I never think of you but my heart overflows with filial regard. I am sure that it was divine love which first united, and still unites my soul to you.

You have asked me some important questions which I hope I can answer, and for which I sincerely thank you. I am a good deal employed in the service of my blessed God, which is perfect liberty to my soul. O to love him more, and to serve him more faithfully! But my best services are such that I am ashamed to look up for his acceptance of them. Yet to my astonishment, he accepts. Yea, he rewards, far, far above anything I could either ask or think. So that I am left without power to praise him, but often sink under the weight of divine mercy. He is God! And God only knows the love of God!

I meet three classes and two bands. Do that with visiting the sick, attending to relative and other duties, I have not one hour that I can call my own, except that which I steal at night or in the morning.

But you ask, 'Does nothing interrupt or lessen my communion with God?' I well remember when I could experimentally say,

Prone to wander, Lord I feel it!
Prone to leave the God I love.¹

But I dare not, I cannot say so now, without lying to the Holy Ghost. For I am upheld by the divine power. His light enlightens my soul. His love hath crucified me to the world. Nothing hinders my communion with him. Sleeping and waking, I feel the communications of his love. And my soul continually breathes,

My life, my portion thou!
Thou all-sufficient art.²

But I am not at all times equally penetrated with a sense of his glorious presence. This, in a great measure, I make no doubt, is owing to my unfaithfulness to the leadings of his Holy Spirit. But various and inexplicable are the operations of his Spirit on my heart. At times mine eyes become as fountains of tears, and I feel desirous to pour out my life before him. At other times I have such clear views of the love which has pursued me from my infancy, delivered me from various dangers, snares, and deaths, and in a thousand different ways called for my worthless heart; such awful, yet joyful apprehensions of the love, power, and presence, of the Great THREE ONE, as fills my soul with struggles for immortality, with infinite desire to love, worship, and obey him, with the strength of those redeemed, and released spirits who continually behold him with open face. Blessed thought! This mortal shall put on immortality, and I shall join these worshippers! Glory to him, whose light makes the darkness manifest, so that I have a continual view of my ignorance, impotency, poverty, and shame.

¹Robert Robinson, 'Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing', st. 3.

²CW, 'The Resignation', st. 10, *HSP* (1740), 79.

But at times, these views are inexpressibly deep and enlarged. I feel as if there were not such another creature in the universe as myself—so little, so vile! But while I lay low before him, I sink into self-abasement, and am often constrained to cry, ‘Hide me earth: the sinner hide!’³ I am filled with prostrate love, with joy unspeakable. A thousandth part of his love to me, I cannot find words to explain. But my spirit rests in joyful hope. Satan frequently strives to hurt me in the night season, but I am saved by faith in the power of Jesus. I am often much blest in dreams, and frequently awake talking to him as a man with his friend.

O I cannot tell what I felt some time ago in a dream. I thought my brother came into the room where I was. I knew it to be his spirit, and I knew him to be happy. Yet I was filled with awe. And was much distressed because I saw that he instantly perceived it, and stood at some distance from me; though I did not meet his eyes, lest he should see it. However by looking at him it quite wore off, and I rose from my seat, and walked up to him, He then stretched out his hand, and I took hold of it. We conversed some time, and I asked him several questions, which I cannot recollect. But what he said filled my soul with adoration. We then, in the same instant, began that chorus out of the Messiah and sang it through, ‘Hallelujah! For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Hallelujah. The kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ. And he shall reign for ever and ever. Hallelujah!’ Such strength and power to praise the Lord I never felt before. I believe it was something like that which I shall feel in eternity. My soul thirsts for conformity to him. Help me by your prayers. I cannot tell you how full my heart is of strong desire, of ardent prayer for your happiness. I long to hear from you. I am

Your’s, etc.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 20 (1797): 405–07.

³CW, ‘After a Recovery, #4’, st. 5, *HSP* (1749), 1:161.

From an Unidentified Correspondent

c. April 1788

Mrs. Mary Beaumont was born at Cinderhills, near Holmfirth, in Yorkshire, May 22, 1761, and was early taught to read the Scriptures, and instructed in the Church catechism; particularly the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments.¹

In her youth she had many calls from God, and was by that means often convinced that all was not right between him and her. But as she grew up, she was drawn away to seek happiness where it could not be found.

While she was in this state she often wondered at some of her acquaintances for belonging to the Methodists, seeing they were a people spoken against by everybody. Yet many times when she came to our house, and heard us converse about the things of God, something that spoke within told her 'They are right, and thou art wrong.'

At those seasons she had many desires to become serious. But the enemy persuaded her she was yet too young. At the same time she loved the pleasures of this life so well that as yet she could not give them up.

After some time, my wife being sick, we desired Mary to wait on her a few weeks. And as we were all striving to walk in the narrow way, and conversed chiefly about spiritual things, she told me that for some weeks she did not like us at all, as there was so much praying and so little of the pleasures of the world. Therefore she thought it a perfect misery to be among us.

The first time anything took hold of her mind was one evening when I and a Christian friend were conversing about eternal things. On one of us saying, 'How shall anyone endure the flames of hell forever?', the words fastened on her mind in such a manner that they never left her till she was truly converted to God.

From the time that this impression was first made, she diligently sought the Lord in all his appointed ways, and could not rest till she knew his pardoning love; which after some time he made known unto her at a prayer meeting. On receiving this, she was tempted not to declare it; but afterwards, on making it known, we rejoiced with her, and praised God on her account.

From the time she was fully satisfied that she was in the favour of God she was meek and lowly of heart, and adorned the doctrine of God her Saviour in all things.

Such was her hatred of sin that I have often heard her declare, 'I would rather die, than sin against God.' And as she had often great need of patience, it pleased God to give it her.

With regard to the spirit of prayer, though she had a large measure thereof, she did not excel in what we call the gift of prayer—as in this respect, she was rather slow of speech. But the few words she uttered were weighty, solemn, and savoury, and often attended with many tears.

As to her dress, it was always plain and neat. This she took great delight in; not because she could not get what was more costly and elegant, but because she saw she could not follow the fashions of the world and at the same time keep a good conscience towards God.

After living thus in a single state almost seven years, with the consent of her parents and friends, she was married to Mr. John Beaumont; and according to his own account she proved a very affectionate and dutiful wife. The consequence was that while they lived together they were always happy in each other.

At last she was taken ill of a fever, which we expected would end in death. But it pleased the Lord to spare her a little longer, though she never recovered her former strength.

¹Mary Cattle married John Beaumont in Mar. 1785; she was buried Mar. 18, 1788 in Holmfirth, Yorkshire.

She took her last illness on the birth of her child.² For some time she seemed rather desirous of recovering. And the Lord seemed to deal so gently with her, that she hardly perceived how her strength decayed.

On the Wednesday before she died, I inquired concerning the state of her soul, when she said, 'In some measure I have strength and patience according to my day.'

Thursday morning I saw her again. But the fever was so high that she could hardly speak two sensible words together. Yet we could easily perceive that she was happy in her soul, and had no fear of death.

Her husband asking her what would become of the child if she died, she answered, 'No danger of the child.' I then prayed with her, and never had more freedom in all my life. That night I saw her again, when she said, 'I am still resigned. Yet if it was the will of God, I should be thankful to be raised again, for the sake of my child; but if not, his will be done.'

Saturday night I saw her again, and found her quite happy in her soul. But the Lord dealing so gently with her body, she could hardly think herself so near her end as she really was. After this she continued happy till Monday morning, and then about eleven o'clock fell asleep in the Lord, without either sigh or groan.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 12 (1789): 72–74.

²Alice Beaumont, the daughter of John and Mary, was baptized Dec. 27, 1787 in Holmfirth.

From an Unidentified Correspondent¹

c. April 1, 1788

Ann Ritson was serious from her childhood; having early experienced the divine drawings, which were a means of preserving her from outward evil. Indeed her whole conduct was remarkable for a person of her years, in her dutifulness to her parents and not following the vain customs of the world. In her dress she always desired a plain neatness, though at that time a stranger to a real work of grace. About the latter end of November she fell into a consumption, which was the means of bringing her to her end.

In the beginning of this illness, when a friend was conversing with her about dying, she said, 'You may believe me, I have no desire of getting better.' About this time, being with her father and mother, she sung the 276th hymn throughout;

Come, Saviour, Jesus from above;
Assist me with thy heavenly grace!
Withdraw my heart from world love,
And for thyself prepare the place.²

She sung it with such earnestness that her father and mother were greatly affected.

In the beginning of her illness she seemed to express a desire of getting better, which her parents observing, they spoke to the preachers to call and see her, which they accordingly did. They had not conversed with her long before she was convinced that her strict outward morality was not sufficient to recommend her to the divine favour. By those means she was made sensible of her state by nature, and of the necessity of being born again.

About which time, labouring under great pains and weakness of body, she cried out, 'O mother, I am heavily afflicted, and not ready to die! What must I do!' Her mother answered, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' As her pains increased, so also did her good desires. On the 12th of February the Lord was pleased to set her soul at liberty. On this she broke out into an ecstasy of joy saying, 'I am happy! O praise the Lord with me! I am happy! I am happy in the love of God!'

On the morning following, she desired her father to read the 103rd Psalm, and said, 'Bless the Lord O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name!'³ From this time she was very comfortable, and frequently expressed her strong confidence in God.

Besides labouring under heavy afflictions of body, she was at times exercised with sore temptations. But the Lord always came to her help.

One night after prayer, she cried out, 'O pray for me. The enemy tells me that I am not ready.' But upon their wrestling with God in prayer, she was delivered. After which time, the enemy was not permitted to make many attempts upon her.

On Monday, the 10th instant, when under a degree of heaviness, she cried out, 'If it be thy blessed will take thy exile home!' In about ten minutes after, turning herself in bed, and clapping her hands, she cried, 'Praise God for me! Now I am upon the wing, just upon the wing for heaven!' When her mother said, "O thy weak body!" she answered, 'My affliction is nothing! My pain is gone! My soul is happy in God! Why! O why are thy chariot wheels so long in coming! Come sweet Jesus come quickly!' She then said, in the words of the hymn,

Pain my old companion pain,
Seldom parted from my side,

¹Titled: 'A Short Account of the Death of Miss Ann Ritson, who died March 23, 1788'.

²'Renouncing All For Christ', *HSP* (1739), 123–24 (#276 in 1780 *Collection*).

³Ps. 103:1.

Welcome to thy seat again;
Here, if God permits, abide.⁴

Adding,

Come and let us sweetly join,
Christ to praise in hymns divine.⁵

She was all that week happy in the love of God. And though labouring under great pains, she desired that none might sit up with her in the night, saying, 'I have sweet company! My Jesus will let me have a good night.' And in the morning she would say, 'O what a good night I have had! I have had my Saviour with me.'

On the Wednesday morning she was again in an ecstasy of joy, and cried out,

To wait for thy coming is sweet,
To weep for thy longer delay;
But thou whom we hasten to meet,
Shalt chase all our sorrows away.⁶

In the afternoon she cried out, 'I am full of the love of God! I can hold no more! Pray that God may enlarge my vessel.' Then bursting into tears, she said, 'Surely I do not offend God in this! I would wait his time. I have not a pain too much.'

A friend asking her if she could part with her father and mother, she said, 'Yes, willingly to go to him I love better. I should be glad if I could take one of them in either hand.' On Sunday the 16th, a few friends being with her at prayer, she was exceedingly happy. One when departing said, 'Farewell Nancy, the Lord bless you!' To whom she cheerfully replied, 'Farewell! The Lord does bless me; and he will bless me!'

One of her cousins calling to see her as she was going to preaching, she said, 'Hear as if it was your last time! Hear for eternity!' And when one of her uncles called to see her the day following, she desired him to make ready to meet her in heaven, saying, 'I shall soon be there! And it will be an awful thing if at last some of the same family be found in heaven and some in hell!'

On the Friday following, being Good Friday, a friend offering her her medicine, she said, 'No need of physic now! I shall soon be with Jesus in glory!' At night as her father and mother were sitting up with her, she said, 'I should be glad if it was Sunday, that I might rise with Christ.' When she was in great pain, she said, 'They are not like the drops of blood which my Saviour shed for me in the garden!' adding, 'For me a lost sinner'. On the Saturday night she cried, 'Come Lord Jesus, come quickly!' On the Sunday morning, she said to her father and mother, who were weeping by her, 'Do not weep! Do not do so!' And soon after, without a sigh or a groan, fell asleep in Jesus.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 11 (1788): 632–35.⁷

⁴CW, 'For One in Pain', st. 1, *HSP* (1749), 1:263.

⁵CW, 'The Love Feast', Pt. I, st. 1, *HSP* (1740), 181.

⁶Cf. CW, Hymn VII, st. 1, *Funeral Hymns* (1746), 10.

⁷Editorial note: 'The writer of this account has not favoured us with her age; but all the circumstances thereof show, she was very young: considerably short of twenty. Blessed, and forever blessed are they, who *thus* remember their Creator in the days of their youth! Who employ the morning of life, the vigour of youth, and the prime of their strength, in seeking happiness in God. Such may be despised on earth; but they are the delight of God, the joy of angels, and the wonder of all heaven! You who are now in the prime of life, see that you labour to be of the number!'

From Sarah Wesley Jr.

Chesterfield-Street [London]
April 4, 1788

Dear and Honoured Uncle,

We were all present when my dear respected father departed this life.¹ His end was what he particularly desired it might be—peace!

For some months past he seemed totally detached from earth. He spoke very little, nor wished to hear anything read but the Scriptures.

He took a solemn leave of all his friends. I once asked if he had any presages that he should die. He said, 'No.' But his weakness was such that he thought it impossible he should 'live through March'. He kindly bid me remember him, and seemed to have no doubt but I should meet him in heaven.

All his prayer was, 'Patience and an easy death!' He bid everyone who visited him to supplicate for these, often repeating 'an easy death'.

He told my mother, the week before he departed, that no fiend was permitted to approach him; and said to us all, 'I have a *good hope*!'

When we asked if he wanted anything, he frequently answered, 'Nothing but Christ!'

Some person observed that the valley of the shadow of death was hard to be passed, 'Not with Christ', replied he.

On March the 27th (after a most uneasy night) he prayed, as in an agony, that he might not have many such nights. 'O my God', said he 'not *many*!'

It was with great difficulty he seemed to speak. About ten days before, on my brother Samuel's entering the room, he took hold on his hand and pronounced, with a voice of faith, 'I shall bless God to all eternity, that ever *you* were born. I am persuaded I shall!'

My brother Charles also seemed much upon his mind. 'That dear boy', said he, 'God bless him!'

He spoke less to me than to the rest, which has since given me some pain. However, he bade me trust in God, and never forsake him, and then be assured he never would forsake me!

The 28th, my mother asked if he had anything to say to us. Raising his eyes, he said, 'Only Thanks! Love! Blessing!'

Tuesday and Wednesday he was not entirely sensible. He slept much, without refreshment, and had the restlessness of death for I think the whole week.

He was eager to depart, and if we moved him or spoke to him, he answered, 'Let me die! Let me die!'

A fortnight before, he prayed with many tears for all his enemies, naming Miss F.² 'I beseech thee O Lord, by thine agony and bloody sweat, said he, that she may never feel the pangs of eternal death!'

When your kind letter to my brother [Charles] came (in which you affectionately tell him that you will be a father to him and my brother Samuel),³ I read it to our father. 'He *will be kind* to you', said he, 'when I am gone. I am certain your uncle *will be kind* to all of you.'

The last morning (which was the 29th of March), being unable to speak, my mother entreated him to press her hand if he knew her, which he feebly did.

His last words which I could hear were, 'Lord – my heart – my God!' He then drew his breath short, and the last so gently, that we knew not exactly the moment in which his happy spirit fled.

His dear hand was in mine for five minutes before, and at the awful period of his dissolution.

It often had been his desire that we should attend him to the grave, and though he did not mention

¹CW died on Mar. 29, 1788.

²I.e., Mary Freeman Shepherd.

³See JW to Charles Wesley Jr., Mar. 16, 1788, *Works*, 30:657.

it again (which he did the place of his burial⁴) during this illness, we all mean to fulfill his wish; trusting we shall be supported, as we have been hitherto, in our afflicting situations.

My dear, honoured uncle, my mother presents you her respectful love, and my brothers join with me in duty, begging your prayers for the widow and the fatherless! I am,

Your afflicted and dutiful niece,

S. Wesley

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 11 (1788): 407–09.

⁴In the graveyard of St. Marylebone, the parish church near their home, as a symbol of his loyalty to the Church of England. Cf. JW to Peard Dickinson, Apr. 8, 1788, *Works*, 30:667–68.

[Dublin]
c. April 20, 1788

* * *

T. B.

¹Titled: 'Astronomical Observations, By a Gentleman in Dublin'. Possibly Thomas Bethell or Thomas Bond.

Unidentified Correspondent to the *Leeds Intelligencer*

May 20, 1788

A correspondent says that he takes a pleasure in informing the public that Mr. John Wesley preached in the parish church of Bradford [Yorkshire], on Sunday the 4th instant, to the most numerous and respectable congregation that ever appeared in that place.¹ His text was, 'The end of all things is at hand: be sober and watch unto prayer.'² He enforced this awful doctrine with uncommon energy, assuring his audience, that it appeared from the book of Revelation that the world would be at an end in the year 1836. So it seems in the short space of *forty-eight* years we must part with our mother earth, and all the various blessings with which a good being has furnished it for our accommodation and comfort. *Sic transit gloria mundi!*³ — But he endeavoured to console us for our loss by intimating that a new world would succeed the old one, far better and infinitely more enlightened; in which there would be no false teachers, no hypocrites, but universal holiness and angelic purity, because all the inhabitants would be Methodists. In his conversation with the *elect*, he expressed much satisfaction at the late rapid increase of Methodism in these parts, which he observed was no longer confined to tabernacles and meeting houses but, by the blessing of God and their own honest endeavours, had got possession of a large proportion of the *churches* in the West Riding. He exhorted the brethren to assist one another, with unceasing diligence, in procuring curacies, establishments, etc.; and above all, to multiply as much as possible the *Sunday schools*, as the most certain and expeditious method of improving the next generation, and making Methodism overspread the land, as the waters cover the sea.⁴ Our correspondent adds that he means no reflection on the Sunday schools, which he is convinced are of great national utility, but wishes the rational part of the clergy to consider how eager the Methodists are to get them into *their* hands, and what fruits under their cultivation they are likely to produce.

Source: published transcription; *Leeds Intelligencer* (May 20, 1788), p. 3. Reprinted in *St. James's Chronicle* (May 29, 1788), p. 4. Abridged notices appeared in *Sheffield Register* (May 24, 1788), p. 3; *Manchester Mercury* (May 27, 1788), p. 4; and *Morning Chronicle* (May 30, 1788), p. 2; *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal* (May 31, 1788), p. 1; *Morning Post* (June 2, 1788), p. 6; and *Gentleman's Magazine* 58 (1788), 557.

¹See JW, *Journal*, May 4, 1788, *Works*, 24:80–81. JW was preaching on a Sunday, at the invitation of his friend Rev. John Crosse, the vicar. He preached on the epistle reading assigned in the lectionary, 1 Pet. 4:7.

²Cf. 1 Pet. 4:7.

³'Thus passes away the glory of this world'.

⁴See Hab. 2:14.

From Elizabeth Ritchie

Park Gate
May 21, 1788

Reverend Sir,

How am I indebted to the Lord for the kind concern you show for my welfare! Your last letter caused much thankfulness.¹ If I may judge of my future by my present feelings, no situation in life will have any tendency to obliterate from my memory a due sense of the many unmerited favours which, for many years, I have been receiving from you. Except I fall from grace, the gratitude my heart feels will prove eternal, and I am ready to think in the eternal world my spirit will feel a particular union with those to whom the love of Jesus united me in sacred bonds while sojourning here below. Glory be to our God for such a friendship as eternity itself shall ripen! My soul can never sufficiently adore the riches of that grace which hath so brought the powers of my mind into the obedience of Christ—that other attachments I do not feel.

I great praise the Lord for all that has happened to me of late, and now feel the sweetness of living in the will of my heavenly Father. I am wholly the Lord's, and to him my spirit ever bows. That path wherein I shall most glorify God is my deliberate choice, and whether this is by doing or suffering his righteous will, my soul leaves it entirely in his dear hands. He keeps me in perfect peace, and my spirit drinks of the water of life. I daily walk in the light of his countenance, and feel my God a satisfying portion. The language of my heart is, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth I desire besides thee.'² Jesus is indeed to me altogether lovely, and the fairest among ten thousand. My soul sits beneath his shadow with delight and his fruit is sweet unto my taste. He saves beyond all I could once ask or think, and will continue to save to the very uttermost a soul that comes to him. All his dispensations are faithfulness and love. Many outward trials he has permitted me lately to meet with—but all are sanctified, so that my daily crosses only drive me nearer to my God. This earth I know is not my home. I am a stranger and a sojourner here, as all my fathers were. But glory be to God! I seek a country out of sight, a city in the skies, whose maker and builder is God. And sometimes my soul so steadfastly beholds the glory that shall be revealed that I am ready to say, 'Come Lord Jesus, come quickly!'³ But still I rest resigned and wait my Father's will, feeling it is even good to be here.

Help me all you can, dear sir, to improve the flying moments as they pass. For it is for this alone I intend to live. O that my Lord may endue me with power from on high, and make me wise to redeem each present moment.

I am truly thankful that God inclined you to publish the *[Arminian] Magazines*. Your dear mother's letters are excellent indeed;⁴ and it would have been a pity if the public had not been favoured with them. I trust this work will be a blessing to thousands and tens of thousands.

May the Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, abundantly bless you in your body, soul, and spirit, and reward you for all your unmerited favours bestowed on, reverend and dear sir,

Your affectionate though unworthy servant in the gospel,

E. R.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 11 (1788): 443–44.

¹JW's last surviving letter to Ritchie was Apr. 21, 1788, see *Works*, 30:674.

²Ps. 73:25.

³Rev. 22:20.

⁴See *AM* 1 (1778), 31–39, 78–85.

From Sarah Wesley Jr.

Chesterfield Street [London]
May 24, 1788

My Dearest Uncle,

I sooner should have written, but whenever I have leisure from necessary employments to sit down and think, my thoughts take so melancholy a train, and my heart feels so dejected and forlorn that it cannot express itself without paining you.

The same reason indeed would prevent me still. But as I know not what length of time may elapse before my mind is in a state which I could wish, to you I will lay it open—as it is.

Though I believe and acknowledge ‘the Lord ordereth all things well’,¹ though I see a gracious hand in a heavy affliction, my spirit sinks within me on retrospect of the past and prospect of my future life. Instead of rejoicing that my dear father died in the faith, and is now receiving his reward, I lament in being left to bear all the burden and heat of the day. Instead of taking comfort in what is still left me, your councils and example, I only think how soon I may be deprived of them; of all that endears and gladdens existence!

Sometimes the fear of *temporals* harasses me, as I am not *quite equally* provided for. But this fear occurs not often or remains long, and in this respect I have particular trust in my heavenly Father.

We are all, except myself, tolerably well; and my spirits apparently are so, though my health suffers more for their exertion.

I commend myself to your prayers. Oh dear sir, whilst I grieve at the order, God may hide from me the *goodness* of his dispensations—from me whom he has given such reason to repeat ‘His mercy endureth forever.’²

Please to direct your next to the care of Mr. [Peard] Dickinson, who will convey it safely. Your consolation will imply my complaint, which is made only to you, and therefore I do not wish to show your reply.

I am, my dearest uncle, with respectful gratitude, devotedly
Your affectionate niece,

S. Wesley

I shall take it kind of you to burn this letter.

Source: holograph; Pitts Library (Emory), John Wesley Papers (MSS 153), 4/40.³

¹Sarah is likely quoting a letter from JW after CW's death that is not known to survive. JW used this phrase often.

²Ps. 136:1.

³A transcription was published previously in *WMM* 74 (1851): 855–56.

From the Rev. William Turner⁴

Newcastle upon Tyne
May 25, 1788

Sir,

Though I am sensible you have no need of any other person to direct you in the employment of your time, and doubt not that you have so arranged your plans as to spend that portion of it which you have allotted to Newcastle to the best advantage; yet as the multiplicity of your engagements must necessarily prevent you from becoming acquainted with a variety of excellent designs which you would, in that case, deem worthy of your encouragement, I trust you will not think me too officious in submitting to your perusal the enclosed papers,⁵ and in venturing to suggest to you how many lives you might be the means of preserving, if you should choose to take advantage of your great influence over the minds of the people by removing, in a few words, the chief objections (which are the *religious ones*) to the salutary practice of inoculation. You will observe, with concern, that the numbers which have been offered upon each occasion have gradually dwindled, and will thence be sensible of the necessity there is for the united exertions of the enlightened and liberal of all denominations to overcome the prejudices which oppose its establishment.

With the best wishes for the continuance of your health and abilities, I am, sir,

Your very humble servant,

Will. Turner, Jun.

Source: holograph; Topeka, Kansas, Kansas Historical Society, Menninger Historic Psychiatry Collection, Misc. Box 1-4.

⁴Rev. William Turner (1761–1859) was pastor of the Independent (Unitarian) Chapel on Hanover Square in Newcastle. He was active in the anti-slave trade movement and other causes. On learning that JW had just arrived in Newcastle, he wrote him this letter.

⁵Turner enclosed: Newcastle upon Tyne, Committee for General Inoculation, *Report of the Committee* (s.n., 1786); and William Turner (1761–1859), *An Attempt to Alleviate the Principal Objections to Inoculation; in a Sermon Preached to the Parents and Friends of the Children who Attend the Charity and Sunday Schools in Hanover Square, Newcastle* (Newcastle: T. Saint, 1787).

Unidentified Correspondent to the *Leeds Intelligencer*

c. May 25, 1788

A correspondent observes that the account of Mr. Wesley's sermon at Bradford, as stated in this paper of last week, was far from being accurate, neither did it do justice to that gentleman. Mr. Wesley did not prophecy *himself*, but informed his audience that a pious and learned German had foretold, from the book of Revelation, that the world would end in 1836; but that, previous to its dissolution, a very important event would take place in the Christian church, tending much to the improvement of mankind in piety and true holiness.¹ Mr. Wesley appealed to the candour and impartiality of every man who heard him, whether this great event was not *the propagation of Methodism*, which, for the last fifty years (by the joint labours of himself and brother) had made a progress in the world as astonishing as it was beneficial to mankind. And he intimated that, as the latter part of the prophecy had been so completely fulfilled, no doubt could be reasonably entertained that the accomplishment of the former was drawing near. Our correspondent says he is at a loss which to admire most—the ingenuity or the modesty of Mr. Wesley in his interpretation of this singular prophecy.

The same correspondent observes that, on the Sunday following, a gentleman who had long been suspected to be a disciple of Mr. Wesley, but had hitherto denied him before men, honestly came forth and avowed his attachment to this great missionary in terms the most clear and unequivocal.² He took notice of the great *antiquity* of the man, the important opinions he had C, and the wonderful manner he *disserted* upon every subject which he handled. And he reprov'd with much severity the behaviour of *some* persons, whose indecent levity during Mr. Wesley's preaching, he observed, was as much a proof of the weakness of their understanding as of their unpolished manners. Mr. Wesley, it seems, in his discourse had said that upon a certain time he went into his garden to *pray*, but could not do it; that he next attempted to *groan*, but could not; that he then sat down, patiently waiting till the time should arrive when he should be capable of doing *something*. Upon this, some respectable characters, who were probably unacquainted with the late improvements made in the art of prayer by this ingenious sect, and had expected to hear very different things in the church of Bradford, inadvertently *smiled*. But our correspondent scruples not to affirm that the persons alluded to are as much superior to Mr. Wesley's disciple in understanding and polished manners, as they are in every other accomplishment that constitutes either the gentleman or the scholar. Our correspondent takes the liberty to inform this eminent divine that the age of no living man can, with propriety, be styled *antiquity*; and that the words to *seminate* and *dissert upon* are not English. What a pity it is that persons who assume the character of teachers, do not endeavour to acquire a competent knowledge of their *mother tongue*. And what a much greater pity that they, who indulge *themselves* in every folly and frolic which warm passions and a tender heart incline them to, cannot be prevailed on, for their own sakes, to overlook even an innocent smile in *other men*!

Source: published transcription; *Leeds Intelligencer* (May 27, 1788), p. 3.

¹What Johan Bengel taught, and JW repeated, was that in 1836 the beast (i.e., the papacy) would come to an end and the earth would enter a millennium of peace and justice. See JW's notes (drawn from Bengel) on Rev. 20:1–2 in *NT Notes*.

²Clearly Rev. John Crosse, the vicar of the church in which JW had preached.

‘Nestor’ to *St. James’s Chronicle*

c. May 27, 1788

Sir,

I have a very interesting piece of intelligence to communicate to you. ‘*Interesting* indeed!’ you will exclaim when you have read it, ‘if it be true.’

As to the matter of fact, I can only mention my authority. A correspondent of mine who lives near Bradford, in Yorkshire, writes thus:

Mr. John Wesley told us, in the Church of Bradford, on Sunday the 4th day of this month, that the world will certainly *end* in the year 1836. So that in the short space of forty-eight years there will be an end of all our disputes, both religious and political. And it will signify nothing whether the Priestleyans or Horsleyans get the better;¹ nor how the new States of America may settle their place of federal union and government.

The above news, Mr. Baldwin,² will appear to you to be of a very serious import, if you have any faith in the prophetic powers or prescience of our venerable patriarch, Mr. Wesley. But we live in an age of such extreme levity that I rather question whether the generality of your readers will be much alarmed at it. Why now, here is my daughter, just returned from seeing the grand show in Westminster Hall—for the ladies, you know, *will* see everything. On my reading aloud this same letter from my Yorkshire friend, what do you think was the impressions it made on the young gypsy? ‘La! Mama I shall like to see it of all things! Must we apply to Mr. Wesley for tickets?’

You may perhaps, Mr. Baldwin, be rather scrupulous of inserting this intelligence, lest it should too much affect the stocks, etc. For your grave people in the city may view the matter in a light somewhat different from that in which my daughter sees (or rather *wishes* to see) it. But as to our funds and securities and all those things, of what importance are they if it is to be *all over* with them ‘in the short space of forty-eight years’?

I am, sir,

Your very humble servant,

Nestor

Source: published transcription; *St. James’s Chronicle* (May 29, 1788), p. 4.

¹Referring to a current religious debate. Cf. Joseph Priestley, *Letters to Dr. Horsley* (London: J. Johnson, 1783); and Samuel Horsley, *Letters from the Archdeacon of St. Albans, in reply to Dr. Priestley* (London: James Robson, 1784).

²Henry Baldwin (d. 1813) was the publisher of *St. James’s Chronicle*.

From 'A Constant Reader'

c. June 1788

Sir,

Among other useful things inserted in your entertaining magazine, I am glad to find you do not overlook decency and decorum. Certainly slovenliness is far from being any ornament to religion; so far from it that it generally disgusts, and is anxious of rendering religion itself contemptible.

As the poor have the gospel preached to them, so they are the persons in general who receive the gospel, and consequently have had but little help from education. Now as love (or the persons indeed which love) doth not behave unseemly, it is presumed that such are of a teachable spirit, and will attend to every hint which is given by way of caution.

I am glad therefore to see those extracts from *The Refined Courtier*,¹ and sincerely wish that those indecencies mentioned therein may be well attended to, and shunned among the Methodists; as their conduct is generally more narrowly watched than that of others.

I would beg leave to remark a few other indelicate things which *The Refined Courtier* does not take notice of. Nor indeed should I, if I had not seen them frequently done. Such is that very offensive custom of some men stopping their hands into their b—s, which must be intolerable in company; especially when women are present. Such is that of men performing a certain office not far from the entrance of a place of worship, while numbers have been passing by them. Such is that of men who take tobacco spitting, either in a dwelling house or the house of God, which is enough to sicken one at the sight. Another most odious practice which I have been an eyewitness of, even while persons have sat at meat, is that of blowing their nose in their fingers and throwing the contents on the ground, which is most abominable filthiness. Nor is that a decent thing to take up a bottle to fill a glass of liquor, and put their nose to the bottle to smell, or to put the bottle to their mouth to taste what the liquor is, which they might easily know another way. This I have seen done very often, and have been much disgusted at it.

Now human pride is such that there is no speaking to an offending individual without giving offence. But I hope, sir, that by reading the magazine they will find it out themselves, and correct the evils without being offended.

I fear there is a fault in parents—especially among the poor—in using a variety of imprudent, indecent freedoms before their children, by which they learn very improper things without thinking of their impropriety. Therefore all heads of families should avoid every indecent practice at home, partly for the sake of those who are under their care, and partly that they may acquire habits which will be offensive abroad.

I remain, sir, your obedient servant,

A Constant Reader

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 11 (1788): 655–56.

¹JW began publishing a series of twenty-four monthly extracts from Giovanni Della Casa, *The Refined Courtier; or, A Correction of Several Indecencies crept into Civil Conversation* (London: Royston, 1663) in *AM* 11 (1788): 27–28.

From Rev. William Black Jr. (autobiography)

Shelburne
June 1, 1788

I was born at Huddersfield in Yorkshire, in the year 1760. When I was about six years old, I had serious impressions on my mind, and the thoughts of my state so distressed me that I frequently said within myself, 'O that I were a toad, a serpent, or anything but what I am! Oh that I had never been born! Or else, had been greater than God, and then he could not have punished me for my daring sins.' I found enmity in my heart, rising against the blessed Author of my being; particularly against his sovereignty, holiness and justice. So that before I was ten years old, had it been in my power, I would have overturned God's throne, and put down the judge of all the earth.

At this time I lived at Otley, near Leeds, with my uncle. Here I went to school. But [I] was inattentive to my learning, and assiduous in wickedness; particularly fighting, quarrelling, lying, stealing, and disobedience to my uncle. When I was about twelve or thirteen years old, I ran away to my father's, who lived about twenty miles distant. He gave me a severe correction. But as he had thoughts of going to North America, he did not send me back to my uncle. O how I desire at this day to be humbled, at the remembrance of these my youthful iniquities, and praise the God of grace who had mercy on my worthless soul!

In the year 1774 my father left England and went to Nova Scotia. After going through several parts of the province, he purchased an estate at Amherst, near Cumberland, and in the fall of the year returned. While he was in America, my dear mother paid particular attention to the concerns of my soul. She frequently took me aside into her closet to pray with and talk to me, after relating God's gracious dealings with herself, and affectionately pressing the necessity of the new birth on my conscience. Her godly admonitions were not altogether in vain. Many times they deeply affected me, and sent me in my closet to my knees. Where, with tears I besought the Lord for mercy, which I surely should have found, had I not believed the subtle fiend, who whispered, 'It is too soon for you to be religious. I will destroy your happiness, cut off all your pleasures, and make you a laughing stock for every boy in the school.' With this, and such like temptations, he prevailed. I quenched the Spirit of God, and drove away my concern, so that I could sin on nearly as I did before.

In April 1775 we sailed from Hull, on board the *Jenny*, [with] Captain [William] Foster, and had a good passage, until we came within sight of Halifax, where we struck upon the rocks with great violence and were afraid the ship would have been lost. But it being low water when she struck, through mercy she was got off again without much damage.

Captain Foster was a pattern to mariners, especially to masters of vessels, both with respect to his private walk as a Christian and his government as a master. I never heard him speak a rash word. Nor did I hear a rash oath from the time we left England, until we arrived in Halifax harbour, either by mariner or passenger, although we had about ninety on board. There was religious worship in the cabin, constantly morning and evening, to which the captain invited all to come that could be spared from the management of the vessel. He used to sing and pray with the people, and affectionately to advise and exhort them to make sure of the one thing needful. What pity it is that so few imitate him!

After staying about a fortnight at Halifax, we sailed for Cumberland, and arrived in June. Here I grew in wickedness as I advanced in age, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness—spending whole nights together in the ridiculous practice of shuffling spotted pieces of pasteboard, with painted kings and queens on them; and dancing for four or five nights in the week. Until the spring of 1779, when the Lord again began to work upon my mind in a most powerful manner.

A few old Methodists, who emigrated from England some years before and had retained something of the work of grace in their souls, began to keep meetings amongst themselves, for prayer and exhortation. God blessed these means, some being awakened and several set at liberty. And when this was rumoured abroad, the people began to think and inquire whether these things were so or not?

One day my brother John had been over at Fort Lawrence, and on his return told me that two of our acquaintances were converted and knew their sins forgiven; and that he thought it was high time for him to set out, and seek the same blessing. I replied, 'Brother, whether they are converted or not, it is certain we must alter our course of life, or we cannot be saved.' He said he intended to do it. But said I, 'Let us determine to set out now, and lest we should be drawn back, let us covenant together.' We did so and shook hands, as a confirmation of the same. Yet as our conviction was not deep, this covenant chiefly respected outward things; as the leaving off card-playing, dancing, Sabbath-breaking, etc., and resolving to attend the meetings, to read and to pray, etc.

About this time I went over to Mr. Oxley's (whose family were under concern for their souls), who exhorted me to set out with all speed to seek God; and not to rest until my peace was made with heaven.¹ This was a great blessing to me, as it strengthened me in my determinations.

One night, at our request, John Newton of Fort Lawrence came over to Amherst to pray with us. While he was giving out the hymn, the tears began to gush out of my eyes and my heart to throb within me, so that in a little time most of the company did so too. One young man at first began to laugh at us, and thought within himself, 'These never committed murder or did any dreadful thing, that they need to make such fools of themselves, and roar out that way like mad people.' But God soon turned his laughter into sorrow, and sent an arrow of conviction to his heart. And then he roared out the loudest of all, 'God be merciful to me, a poor miserable sinner.' Ten or eleven continued crying thus for some time, when God graciously set Mrs. Oxley at liberty. Her soul was brought out of dismal darkness, into marvellous light. O how did her soul exult in the Lord her Redeemer, and magnify his holy name! Our meeting continued that night for several hours; after which I went home with my three brothers and a sister, weary and heavy-laden with the burden of our sins.

From this time we met almost every night at Mr. Oxley's, to sing and pray, for some months together. We generally met a little after sunset, and continued our meetings until midnight. Indeed frequently I and the young man before-mentioned continued until daylight. I now wept, fasted, and prayed. And my constant cry was, 'Give me Christ! Give me Christ, or else I die!' I could bear to hear of nothing beside Jesus and him crucified; and was amazed to see men, endowed with reason and capable of enjoying God's love in time and eternity, spending their precious moments in the most trifling and unprofitable conversation.

One night, coming from a religious meeting with two or three young men, whilst the northern lights began to wave backwards and forwards in the air, I thought, 'What if the day of judgment be coming, I am ill prepared to die!' Then throwing myself on the ground, I cried to the Lord to have mercy on my poor, wretched, sinful soul. While lying on the ground, this thought was impressed upon my mind, 'The curse of God hangs over prayerless families. God is not worshipped in a public manner in your family. This is your sin.' This had for some time lain heavy on my mind, and that of my brother John. He had several times been requested to pray with us, but always put it off, saying, 'By and by I will, when I get more strength.' But still he could not break through. I rose from the ground and went immediately home, resolving in myself that if neither my father nor elder brother would pray with the family, I would. Just as I entered the door, my brother began to pray, which was the first time we had family prayer since my mother [Elizabeth] died, in 1776.

Soon after this, Mr. Wells came over to Amherst, and gave an exhortation, in which were these words, 'Sin and repent, sin and repent, until you repent in the bottomless pit.' They went like a dagger to my heart. 'Lord', thought I, 'I am the very man. I sin and grieve, and then I sin again. Alas! What will such repentance avail? I must be holy or I cannot be happy.' Now my sins were set in array before me. I saw and felt myself guilty, helpless, wretched, and undone. I went about from day to day, hanging down my head like a bulrush, whilst streams of tears rolled down my cheeks. Yet still I found no deliverance. However I was determined never to rest, until I found rest in Christ. None of the externals of religion

¹George Oxley (1736–90), who lived with his wife Mary (Bowden) Oxley (1740–1824) in River Philip, near Amherst.

would now satisfy my awakened conscience. I saw that if ever I was saved, it must be by grace, through faith; and that this faith was the gift of God. But alas, I had it not! Nor was I yet brought wholly to trust in the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world.

Soon after this I went to hear an exhortation at a neighbour's house. But alas, I felt hard and stupid! All my softening frames were gone (perhaps I trusted too much in them). I could not shed a tear if it would have saved my soul from hell. I thought, 'Surely I am one of the vilest wretches on the face of the earth. I know that I am a child of the devil, of wrath and hell; and dying here, I am forever undone. Yet I cannot shed a tear. Alas! Alas! I am worse and worse! More wretched than ever!' In this miserable state I laid me down, concluding I was farther from deliverance than ever. I mourned because I could not mourn; and grieved because I could not grieve.

The day following we had our monthly meeting at Mr. Foster's of Fort Lawrence. Such a day as this I never saw before or since. Mr. Wells's prayer seemed just suited to my case. Every word came home with keen conviction, and sunk deeper into my heart than ever. I formerly used to long that I might feel my sins a greater burden, and that my distress might be increased. I mourned because I had so little sense of my state. I was greedy of sorrow. To mourn was pleasing, and to shed tears was some relief. But now the scene was changed, and my sins were an intolerable burden. I was weary of life, and strangely said within myself, 'I wish I was dead. If God pleases to save me, it is infinite mercy. If he damns my soul, be it so. He is righteous and just. I cannot help myself.' Everything augmented my sorrows. A cock, just then crowing, brought strongly to my mind Peter's denial of his master, so that I cried within myself, 'Oh, I am wretchedly denying the Lord a place in my heart! I, like Peter, have denied the Lord.' The enemy then softly whispered, 'Go and hang thyself.'² But God of his infinite goodness (though he did not yet deliver me) preserved my soul from self-destruction, blessed be his name forever!

Meeting being over, John Newton came to me and said, 'Surely, Willy, there must be something that thou art not willing to give up, or the Lord would have delivered thy soul before now!' I replied, 'I am in Francis Spira's condition.'³ 'No, no!' said he, 'Only give up all thy soul to Jesus, and he will soon deliver thee. Sorrow may continue for a night, but joy shall come in the morning.' Thus he endeavoured to encourage me to look for relief, while he pressed me to surrender up all my soul to Jesus Christ, assuring me I should find deliverance the moment I cast all my soul on Jesus. My distress was so great, I thought if I was in hell I could not be much worse. 'A wounded spirit who can bear?'⁴ Soon after, the extremity of my distress went off, and I remained for two days melancholy, under an abiding sense of my lost condition, except the Lord should, in infinite mercy, send me help from his holy place. On the evening of the latter day, I went to Mr. Oxley's, where a woman who knew my distress asked me, 'Can you believe?' I answered, 'No!' She said, 'You are reasoning with the enemy. Come, I have got a sweet promise for you.' And then showed me a passage in the Bible, which she supposed suitable to my case. I said, 'I have seen many such sweet promises as that today. But alas, they are not for me!'

Mr. Frieze then came to me, asked the state of my mind, and went to prayer. He took an affectionate leave of me, saying, 'I believe God will deliver you before morning.' We tarried still at Mr. Oxley's, singing and praying for about two hours, when it pleased the Lord to reveal his free grace, his fullness and suitableness as a Saviour, his ability and willingness to save *me*. So that I was enabled to venture on the sure mercies of David,⁵ and claim my interest in his blood with, 'I am thine, and thou art mine', while our friends were singing,

²Cf. Matt. 27:5.

³Referring to Nathaniel Bacon, *A Relation of the Fearfull Estate of Francis Spira* (London: I. Legat, 1638); an account of one fallen from grace who died in despair.

⁴Prov. 18:14.

⁵See Acts 13:34.

My pardon I claim,
For a sinner I am,
A sinner believing in Jesus's name.⁶

Now I could lay hold of him, as the hope set before me, 'the Lord my righteousness'.⁷ My burden dropped off. My guilt was removed. Condemnation gave place to mercy, and a sweet peace and gladness were diffused through my soul. My mourning was turned into joy. And my countenance, like Hannah's, was no more heavy. After tarrying some time, and returning public thanks, I went home with my heart full of love and my mouth full of praise. The next morning my brother John came to inquire how I felt my mind. I said, 'O, blessed be God, I am happy. He hath graciously delivered my soul, and makes my heart to rejoice in his name.' He went and told my brother Richard, who soon after came to inquire as he had done. But I did not feel so clear an evidence as before, and began to question whether I had indeed found the Lord? Whether the peace and comfort I had felt might not be from the devil? I soon after took up Mr. Hervey's *Meditations*, and while reading a little in them, God smiled again on my soul, and cheered my heart as with the new wine of his kingdom.⁸ My scruples now were all removed, and I could again cry, with joy, 'My Lord and my God!'⁹

That night, when a few friends met at my father's for prayers, I was much comforted in singing those words,

But this I can tell,
He hath lov'd me so well,
As to lay down his life to redeem me from hell.¹⁰

Now I concluded my mountain was so strong that it could not be moved. But what are we, if God for a moment hide his face! In the evening we went to Mr. Oxley's; where seeing many in tears and great distress, I said, 'O that ye would all come to Christ! Surely ye may all *now* believe, if ye will. It is easy to believe.' But it was instantly suggested, with great violence into my mind, 'You are deceived. You are puffed up with pride.' This came with such force that it blasted all my evidences and comforts in a moment, so that I cried out in the presence of them all, 'O what a wretch am I! I said a few minutes ago, ye may all believe if ye will, and now I myself cannot believe.' I left the house, went into the field, and throwing myself on the ground, cried to the Lord for help. He heard my prayer. He saw my distress, filled my soul with love, and bade me go in peace. Lord, what a wavering inconstant soul am I! Sometimes I feel thy love! I behold thy fullness! I see thee altogether lovely and cry, 'Now I will never doubt again!' But alas! No sooner does the storm come on, the winds blow, the waves run high, than I begin to doubt. And the more I doubt, the more I sink. And I should perish altogether, if thou didst not reach to me thine arm, as thou didst once to sinking Peter. However, these temptations served to confirm me the more. For always proportionable comforts followed them. If my distresses were great, my deliverance was the greater. This, I find, hath been the case with me unto the present day.

For some time after this I was peculiarly blessed. I went on my way rejoicing, carried as in the bosom of my Redeemer,

⁶CW, 'On the Crucifixion', st. 6, *Festival Hymns* (1746), 10.

⁷Cf. Jer. 23:6.

⁸Either James Hervey, *Meditations Among the Tombs* (London: J. & J. Rivington, 1746); or *Meditations and Contemplations*, 2 vols. (London: J. & J. Rivington, 1748).

⁹John 20:28.

¹⁰Cf. CW, Hymn for Believers, #22, st. 8, *HSP* (1749), 1:227.

Jesus all the day long,
Was my joy and my song,
O, that all his salvation might see!
He hath lov'd me, I cried,
He hath suffered and died,
To redeem such a rebel as me.

On the wings of his love,
I was carried above
All sin and temptation and pain;
I could not believe
That I ever should grieve,
That I ever should suffer again.¹¹

Everything conspired to make me happy. If I looked upon the heavens above, or the earth beneath; both sparkled with their Creator's glory. And all creation seemed to smile on my soul, and speak its Maker's praise. My heart glowed within me, while the fields broke forth into singing, and the trees clapped their hands. The glory of Lebanon was given unto them, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, because of the glory of the Lord and the excellency of our God. Whether I looked on man or beast, I saw the wisdom, power, and goodness of God shine conspicuously. I was filled with wonder, and felt the greatest tenderness and love for every creature God had made. With glowing admiration my soul beheld, and with grateful praise I confessed, the inimitable skill of his all-creating hand in the formation of a fly, or the paintings of a flower! More especially when I considered, this is not barely the work of a God, but of *my* God! My Father and my Friend! When I thought of death, judgment, heaven, or even hell, it filled my heart with comfort. But above all, at the name of Jesus my heart took fire, kindled into love, and ardently longed to be with him. In this happy frame, I continued for some time.

When walking out one day, I began to reason with the enemy, or accuser of the brethren, who suggested, 'Your joy is not the joy of the Holy Ghost. You deceive yourself. It is self-made, for you can rejoice when you please. If Jesus, heaven, or hell is but mentioned or thought of, you instantly rejoice. Ah! It is only your own passions are a little moved. you are no Christian still.' This temptation appeared so plausible that it threw me into many doubts and fears. Nor could I then command my former joys, as my tempter insinuated. But I cried to the Lord, and he helped me, so that again I could rejoice with confidence in Jesus, as the Lord my Saviour, the Lord my righteousness.

At another time the tempter suggested that question, 'Is there any God?' with such power that I do not wonder St. Paul should exhort us above all things to take the shield of faith, that therewith we may be able to quench the fiery darts of the devil.¹² However, I rejected the thought with abhorrence. But then it soon followed, 'You are no Christian, or such a thought could never have entered your mind. You surely are not born again.' With such suggestions, I was led sometimes to reason to my hurt. I did not always consider, it is no sin to be tempted, unless we make the temptation our own, by giving place to it.

Some days after, a blasphemous suggestion against the being of God struck me as if it had been lightning from heaven. But I cried aloud, 'Lord help me', and it vanished in a moment. One day beginning to reason whether a child of God could ever meet with such suggestions and temptations as I did, until my mind was perplexed and clouded, I was sweetly relieved by these lines,

¹¹CW, Hymn for One Fallen from Grace, #15, sts. 4–5, *HSP* (1749), 1:124.

¹²See Eph. 6:16.

My Saviour doth not yet appear,
He hides the brightness of his face;
But shall I therefore let him go,
And basely to the tempter yield?
No, in the strength of Jesus, no,
I never will give up my shield.¹³

At another time the accuser struck at my sincerity thus, 'After all your profession, you are only a hypocrite still. You pray much; so do they. You are very exact in all you do: are not they, touching the law, blameless?' But I have faith. 'You think so—and do not they?' But I have power over sin. 'They suppose they have, but deceive themselves as you do.' But I have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins. 'So you conclude, but there is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, who are not cleansed from their filthiness.' But the love of God, and the joy of the Holy Ghost are shed abroad in my heart. 'Many have thought so, and yet were deceived. Herod heard John gladly and did many things: the stony-ground hearers received the word with joy,' etc. Thus all my evidences were disputed, as fast as I could produce them. I went into an adjacent field and, throwing myself on the ground, cried, 'O Lord God Almighty! Thou that searchest the heart, and triest the reins of the children of men, search and prove me. See if there be any wicked way, in which I go. Lord, thou knowest all things. Thou knowest that I would love thee with *all my heart*. If I am deceived, if I do not love thee, oh my Lord show it unto me.' My appeal was scarce gone from my lips—yea, while I was yet speaking—he lifted up the light of his countenance, and answered to the joy of my soul. In his light I saw light, and could not doubt either God's love to me, or my love to God. O what a blessing it is to have a throne of grace so free of access!

When I first set out in the ways of God, I thought if I was once converted I should never feel the least evil desire, wandering of thought from God, or aversion to duty. I concluded sin will be all destroyed, and I shall know war no more. But how mistaken! I found my conflicts were just beginning; or myself but newly entered the field of battle. Oh what depths of wickedness I found still in my heart! What a den of thieves! A cage of unclean birds! A nest of corruption, pride, self, unbelief, love of the world, aversion to duty. All loathsome to behold, and contrary to the will of that God, whom in my soul I loved. Yet, blessed be God, they had not the dominion over me! The moment they were discovered, my soul rose in indignation against them, fled to the atoning blood, and looked to heaven for deliverance. I hated, I abhorred them as the spawn of hell. So that they did not break my peace. I still held fast the beginning of my confidence, and felt the Spirit of the Lord bearing witness with my spirit, that I was a child of God. But a view of these things greatly humbled me, and showed me the continual need I had of Jesus Christ. It sent me often to Calvary with this cry,

Every moment, Lord, I need
The merit of thy death.'¹⁴

I never had a greater sense of my vileness, or so great a love to Jesus. Never did sin appear so odious, or grace in so lovely a view before. Jesus, in his various names, characters, and offices, appeared lovely, yea altogether lovely. His presence sweetened everything, so that now I could sing,

With me no melancholy void,
No moment lingers unemployed,
Or unimproved below:
Our weariness of life is gone,

¹³CW, Hymn on Habakkuk, 3:17–19, st. 1, *HSP* (1742), 138.

¹⁴Cf. CW, Hymn on Isaiah 32:2, st. 5, *HSP* (1742), 146.

Who live to serve our God alone,
And only him to know.¹⁵

My days did sweetly glide away. I could see, or feel, or taste God in everything. The eating a little bread, or the drinking a little water from a brook, hath many times filled my soul with wonder at his goodness, in feeding such a worthless, hell-deserving creature as me. God's ordinances now became delightful to me. I went up to his house with joy, and entered his courts with praise. His people now were my dearest and only companions. They were the excellent of the earth, in my view, though perhaps clothed in rags. I was glad when they said unto me, let us go up to the house of God. Sabbath-days (formerly the most burdensome) became the most delightful days in all the year. I fed on marrow and fat things. I was sorry when the Sabbath was over, or longed for the return of the next. I saw time was exceeding precious—I longed that it should be all filled up for God, and was determined to have opportunity for prayer, though I should take it out of mealtimes.

While I thus happily went on, I was assaulted with many temptations, out of which the Lord delivered me. One of which I will relate. One day, while I was at work, a sudden thought was darted into my mind, 'Is there any God? I wish there was no God!' This horrid injection surprised me! I scarce knew my own voice from that of the fiend. However, when the enemy comes in with a flood, the Spirit lifts up a standard against him. I cried, 'Lord, thou knowest all things. Thou knowest that I not only believe in thee, but love thee, and rejoice that thou art mine.' By the grace of God I was preserved, so that Satan gained no advantage hereby. His temptations were rather a blessing to me, as they made me seek after the continual presence of God. I could not rest one moment without feeling his love, which he in mercy graciously bestowed upon me from day to day. I set the Lord always before me, and almost continually adverted to his presence, both in speaking and acting.

In the evenings I frequently walked out to meditate on God's goodness, and the works of his hands. O how often hath my soul been filled with wonder and admiration! I felt a peculiar love to souls, and seldom passed a man, woman, or child without lifting up my heart to God on their account; or passed a house without praying for all in it that God would open their eyes, give them to see the miseries of a natural state, and make them partakers of his love. It grieved me from day to day, to see them so ignorant of themselves, of happiness, and of God. So that sometimes I was constrained to speak to them, though I met with rough treatment in return.

Most of our family were soon after converted to God. And oh what a blessed change did religion now make among us! Before its blessed influences were known in our family, nothing but discord, jealousy, and ill will were there. Peace had for some time left our dwelling and we, hurried on by devilish passions, were urging fast to ruin. But when religion once spread her benign influences over us, our jars ceased, peace returned, and harmony and love reigned in the whole family. So that my father, once speaking to a person very much prejudiced against religion, said, 'Madam you may say what you please against religion. But I would not for three hundred pounds it should have missed coming into my house, even on a temporal account. And sure I am, whatever others may think, that these are the happiest people under heaven; who love God and bear the Redeemer's cross.'

I now longed vehemently that all should know the sweetness and preciousness of Christ. I had a feeling sense of their unhappy condition, as strangers to the grace of God, and could scarce refrain from weeping over them. I loved them so that I thought I could willingly have sacrificed my life on a gibbet, if that would have been a means of bringing them to the knowledge of themselves and of Jesus Christ. One evening when we met at St. Lawrence, I gave vent to the fullness of my heart, and entreated them by the mercies of God, and the preciousness of their own souls, not to quench the Spirit and destroy themselves eternally. Soon after this we had meetings at Amherst. Here also the love of Christ, and the love of souls, constrained me to beseech them in Christ's stead to be reconciled unto God. My heart seemed to melt down while I spoke, and tears flowed from my eyes.

¹⁵Cf. CW, Hymns for the Watchnight, #13, st. 2, *HSP* (1749), 2:136.

I now began to pray or exhort almost at every meeting, and God was with us of a truth, both to convince and to comfort. We seldom met together but the shout of a king was heard in our camp. I found the Lord graciously stood by my weakness, and his Spirit helped my infirmities. So that many times, though my body trembled and my knees smote one against another, yet God delivered me from these fears, so that I could speak with confidence, freedom, and tender affection.

In the winter following, being invited to go over to Tantramar and give a word of exhortation, I did so. And God sent the word with power to the hearers' hearts. From that time an awakening began. Many, both young and old, inquired the way to Zion, and afterwards believed in Jesus. Three other young men and I agreed to visit in our turns, every Sabbath-day, Prospect, St. Lawrence, and Amherst. The word did not fall to the ground in vain. For in every place, God gave us to see the fruit of our labours. We met with little opposition, except by hard names (which were plentifully bestowed upon us, both by the Pharisees and Sadducees), and being once taken prisoners to the garrison, where after we had been detained two hours, they set us at liberty. The work still went on with greater swiftness during the winter, and many found the word to be the power of God unto salvation.

In the spring following we were visited by a young man from Falmouth, who was very zealous in the cause. He laboured fervently, and at his first coming was made a great blessing to many. After staying about seven or eight weeks, he returned. But before he left us, [he] proposed that we should give up the Methodist discipline, and form ourselves into a congregational church.¹⁶ This the people could not consent to do. He soon sent another, who preached amongst us for some time. But alas, he sowed dissension. And poured out a flood of the rankest antinomianism, which afterwards produced dismal fruits. At the time he came, we had about two hundred in the society, which met regularly in the classes, and about one hundred and thirty of them professed faith in Jesus. He tarried about a month with us. Several of the friends, besides myself, reasoned with him on the evil tendency of his doctrines; but all in vain. At last, ten of the principal friends wrote him a letter; in which they informed him that if he continued to preach such doctrines, they could not in conscience hear him. The letter did not reach his hand. But he never returned to Cumberland since. Yet though he was gone, his doctrines took root and spread, and soon after tore the society into pieces.

I took a tour up the river Petitcodiac, and spoke to the people of the goodness of God and the way of salvation through faith. But they remained, in general, hard and stupid. However the word did not wholly fall to the ground—one being then awakened, and the next time I visited the river, set at liberty. It was up this river where I first ventured to take a text, to prevent a sameness in my discourses. After my return, I continued as usual, working at my father's in the daytime, and in the evenings and on the Sabbath-days exhorting and preaching at different places, according as it suited the people best. One night, having called at a friend's house where a number of those that were awakened had got together, a hymn-book being put into my hand, I gave out a verse and began to expound it. One of those that had been under great distress began to praise God, and to tell what he had done for her soul. Soon after another and another, till four that night professed redemption in the blood of Jesus Christ. I continued to labour at home until November the thirteenth, when I set off again to visit the poor, hardened people of Petitcodiac river, and laboured amongst them until the twentieth. I preached to them sixteen or seventeen times, and perceived the word reached their hearts, as appeared from their heaving breasts and weeping eyes. At Hillsborough, and also at the village, many were pricked to the heart, and began to inquire the way to Zion, in a manner they had never done before. One cried vehemently for mercy, who had just before been mocking. The word fastened on his mind, so that he was ready to cry out, but left the house to avoid it. Soon after he returned and found it to have the same effect. He attempted to leave the room as at the first, but before he reached the door, was constrained to cry out for mercy.

On the twenty-first I returned to Tantramar, and preached in the evening with very great freedom. Jesus was in the midst of us, both to wound and to comfort. And many of the friends were remarkably happy. One little girl about seven or eight years old got upon a form and told, in a wonderful manner,

¹⁶Either this or the second preacher sent was apparently Henry Alline.

what God had done for her soul. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings he can and does perfect praise. After preaching several times at Tantramar, on the 26th I rode over the marshes, and on the 28th by God's blessing, arrived safe at home, having found this a blessed journey to my soul.

I laboured about home as usual, and for about six weeks was sorely grieved to see the enemy likely to gain so great an advantage. Antinomianism now began to rear its dreadful head. The commandments of God, more precious than gold, yea than much fine gold, were dressed up as scarecrows. God's law was, by many, rather vilified than 'magnified and made honourable'.¹⁷ To press it on the consciences of our audience was looked upon as a mark of our ignorance, if not of our being total strangers to the grace of God. All this they did under pretence of honouring free grace. And taught publicly that no believer could make shipwreck of his faith—that his soul never sinned, though he should lie, or get drunk; that David himself or his soul never sinned, while in Uriah's bed, it was his body only. Thus were the floodgates of iniquity set open. And many sucked in the poison, as if it had been the marrow of the gospel. So that some of my own children rose up against me, even those that once loved me as the apple of their eye. Yea, even two of our leaders and many of our principal members were drawn away by these corrupt notions. Hence dissensions arose. Their zeal was spent upon notions and opinions, and the life of God gradually died away.

January 9, 1782. I set off for Petitcodiac river, and stopped the first night at a place where I found one whom I had left in great distress, now rejoicing in the Lord. The next morning I set forwards on snowshoes for the French settlement on the north side of the river, in company with one or two of our friends. We lay at a French house that night on a little straw, and had only about two yards of a thin linen wrapper to cover us, though it was one of the coldest nights in all that winter. But,

Labour is rest, and pain is sweet,
If thou, my God, art here!¹⁸

The next day we went forward and walked about nineteen miles. I was much fatigued with the snowshoes; yet I preached in the evening, but felt little life in my own soul. O Lord, what are we without thy love.

Sunday, 12. I preached at the village, where many were deeply affected and, with floods of tears, declared they sought the Lamb that taketh away the sins of the world. After preaching, I walked about nine miles to the head of the river, where we met a small company in the evening. The next day I preached twice, and the day following returned to the village again, where I found some fruit of my labours.

Wednesday, 16. We walked as far as Ricars point,¹⁹ where I preached in the evening. But the people appeared quite unmoved. On Thursday we reached Hillsborough, where we were received with joy. Many appeared to be in sore distress, and one found comfort.

Monday, 21. I walked about twenty miles on snowshoes, and preached at night. Many were deeply affected, and one in particular cried, 'Oh! Mr. Black! What shall I do? My heart is ready to burst.' I pointed him to Jesus, and exhorted him to believe. Others declared what God had done for their souls. And many hung around, ready to catch every word. And some with tears crying, 'O that I might receive my sight! O that my eyes were opened! What shall I do? My heart is almost broken,' etc., etc.

Wednesday, 23. I preached at the village and, having left the people weeping, went on my journey. At night I preached at a friend's house, where a young man trembled greatly, and cried, 'O Lord, if thou dost not save, I am undone.' About bedtime, I went out of the house to the barn, where I found him kneeling on the snow, crying and praying in the bitterness of his soul. The next morning we

¹⁷Cf. Isa. 42:21.

¹⁸CW, 'On a Journey', st. 3, *HSP* (1740), 127.

¹⁹I.e., Pointe de Richard, New Brunswick.

commended him to the grace of God, and set off for Memramcook, where we tarried all night amongst the French again, and the next day reached Mr. Weldon's.

Saturday, 26. About one o'clock I arrived at Sackville; but found a proud, barren heart, many times wandering from God. O my God! I hate this self, and will not give up my claim to thee.

Sunday, 27. I preached twice, but felt great cause to mourn my barrenness, my distance from, and unlikeness to Jesus.

I next visited the societies around Cumberland as usual, for about six weeks; and then returned to the river again, where I found all were walking steadily according to their profession. On the third of April I got safe to Memramcook after a dangerous passage across the bay. Had my Master been pleased to have called me then away, I was well reconciled to a watery grave. For I knew that I had a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens. On the 9th I arrived at Cumberland, and continued in my old circuit until the 22nd of May; when I set off for Windsor, and on the 25th got safe to Cornwallis. On the Lord's day I preached three times; and whilst some wept, and others greatly rejoiced, I had such a sense of my unworthiness, that I appeared to myself as the chief of sinners. If conscience did not prevent, I believe I should yet give up preaching. Lord, let me not fall by the hand of Saul!

Wednesday, 29. I visited a sick woman who thought she had a great stock of *good deeds* to build upon. I endeavoured to convince her of the necessity of the new birth, but all in vain. I offered to pray with her, but she refused. I then exhorted her to consider the dreadful state of her soul, and left her. O Lord pity her benighted soul!

June 4. I rode on to Falmouth, and preached in the evening. Many of Mr. [Henry] Alline's friends were there.²⁰ They felt the power of the word, and rejoiced greatly, declaring it was the power of God unto salvation. But though they frequently spoke thus during my first visit, yet after Mr. Alline had returned from Cumberland the second time and told them that I had opposed his doctrines and design to set aside the Methodist discipline there, the case was changed. And on my second coming they said I was no minister of Jesus Christ; soon after, I was no Christian; and in a little while, a downright minister of Antichrist. Yet I continued to act, live, and preach the very same doctrines as before. Lord, what is man! I doubt not but many of these are good, though mistaken people, and enjoy the life of religion. Yet they do not know their brethren.

June 10. I set off for Halifax, where there was scarce the shadow of religion to be seen. I preached four times amongst them, but the word met with little reception. In general they are Gallio-like, and care for *none of those things*.²¹ I then went and preached at two or three other places, and on the 20th returned to Halifax again, where I tarried five days, and preached six times. Some were now affected, and two backsliders much stirred up. But we had considerable disturbance from the sons of Belial. Some of whom threw handfuls of flour about the room, upon the people's clothes. Others threw gunpowder crackers into the fire, which flew about amongst the people. And others cursed and swore that I should not preach long, for the press-gang was coming. I pitied them much, but did not fear them. Father, forgive them! They know not what they do.

July 1. At the request of some who had come about seventy miles to hear the word, I agreed to visit Annapolis. We set off early in the morning, and got to Granville that night; where I tarried about seven days, and had some comfortable meetings. I then rode to Horton and preached in Magee's barn, where the word was sharp as a two-edged sword. Many trembled exceedingly, and amongst the rest, one who had formerly been a valiant servant of the devil, and confessedly as proud as Lucifer. But now he trembled every limb, and floods of tears gushed from his eyes. Many saw the necessity of inward religion, and with strong cries and tears besought the Lord for mercy. In the evening we held our first watch-night at Nathaniel Smith's, in Cornwallis. Such a meeting as this I never saw before, except one at Amherst. O what a noise, and a shaking amongst the dry bones! The cries of the wounded were so great that my voice

²⁰Orig., here and throughout 'Alleine'.

²¹See Acts 18:12–16.

could scarce be heard. When the first meeting was over, I found my strength almost exhausted, and feared I should not be able to preach again. But I found the promise literally fulfilled. 'They that wait on the Lord, shall renew their strength.'²²

On the 12th I returned to Horton, and the next morning setting off about four o'clock, I reached my father's house the same evening, travelling that day about seventy miles. Blessed be God, this was a comfortable journey to me, seeing seven or eight profess to have found the pearl of great price.

Sunday, 14. I preached at Amherst. Whilst I was absent, Mr. [Henry] Alline paid the people here a second visit, completed a separation, and drew near seventy of our members away from us. All was in confusion. The classes were broken up, and a flood of contention threatened dreadful consequences. O Satan, a wicked man could not have answered thy purpose so well. But may the Lord overrule it for good, and prevent the mischief I dread. O Lord, suffer us not to lose the spirit of religion, in the spirit of controversy!

On the 25th, a number of the principal friends met together at Mr. D—'s, to consult what was best to be done in our present situation. Several leaders were appointed, and three or four classes formed again. O that the Lord would heal the breaches of Zion!

August 1. I set off again to visit the dear people at Petitcodiac. I arrived at Memramcook that night, where we had a comfortable meeting. Here I found one, whom I left on the fourth of March in sore distress, now rejoicing in God her Saviour. This was a day of sweet refreshments to my soul. So does the Lord regard the unworthiest of all that ever knew his grace, or spoke in his name. Alas, what a body of death! What a heap of corruption and deformity am I! Yet Lord, I trust I can say grace (not sin) reigns in me. O what need have I to live by faith!

Oh! to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrain'd to be!²³

Friday, 3.²⁴ I preached at Hillsborough in the forenoon, and in the evening at the village. The day following I preached at the head of the river, and joined a few in society. On the Sabbath we had a comfortable time, when many seemed fully determined to seek God for their portion; but especially on Monday the sixth, while I discoursed on, 'Ye ask, and have not, because ye ask amiss.'²⁵ Many were deeply affected, and some very happy. When the tide served, we went down the river in a canoe, leaving many in tears. And in the evening we arrived safe at Hillsborough, where my heart was made glad by hearing one of the Dutch women tell what God had done for her soul.

Tuesday, 7. I preached in the morning, and then set off for Shepody. We had a tedious and dangerous passage. The tide was for us, the wind high, and right ahead, which meeting the tide, made it both rough and dangerous. The night was very dark, and the men almost spent with rowing. With difficulty we reached Cape Mosel. Yet, blessed be God, in the midst of breaking waves and foaming surges, I could with confidence sing,

I fear no denial, no danger I fear,
Nor start from the trial, while Jesus is near.²⁶

²²Cf. Isa. 40:31.

²³Robert Robinson (altered by Martin Madan), 'Come, thou fount of every blessing'.

²⁴There is a discrepancy between the day of the week and the date for the following months.

²⁵Cf. James 4:2–3.

²⁶CW, 'The Good Fight', st. 2, *HSP* (1742), 137.

After we got ashore, we groped our way about a mile across marshes, until we got into the edge of the woods, where we tarried all night under the shade of the trees, and about daybreak set off again, by land for Shepody, and arrived about eight o'clock. Here I tarried until the 11th. Several appeared affected under the word, but I fear it is not deep. Then I set off for Memramcook, and arrived safe at Tantramar that night, where I stayed until the 14th. Then I crossed the marshes, and preached at Mount Whatley in the evening, and at St. Lawrence the next day.

Sunday, 19. I received a very pressing letter from Petitcodiac, requesting me to return there if possible immediately, and informing me that my last visit had been made a great blessing, that now the prejudices of the people began to vanish, and several were under deep concern. I laid the matter before our friends, who thought I ought immediately to return. The next morning I set off, and rode to the English settlement at Memramcook that night, and about ten o'clock the next, reached Hillsborough.

Tuesday, 22. I preached twice, when deep attention sat on every face, and some wept most of the time. God appears deeply at work. O that they may never quench his Spirit! The day following I went in a boat with about twenty other persons to the village, and preached twice to an affected congregation, where two professed redemption in the blood of Jesus.

Friday, 24. We went by water to the head of the river, where also I preached twice, and about one o'clock in the morning set off again in our boat. We had not got above a mile or two down the river before we met a small canoe, with a man, his wife and a little child in it, who had rowed about twenty miles, to hear the word but was too late. O gracious Father, let not his labours be in vain! About 9:00 in the morning I preached again at the village, and met the society afterwards. Truly this was a powerful and affecting time. God set old Mrs. Stieves at liberty, and her mourning was turned into glorious joy. O how affectingly did she speak of the goodness of God, until all in the room were melted into tears. She was always of a moral character, and had strictly adhered to some of the externals of religion; but saw not the necessity of inward religion. When two of her sons were awakened and joined the society, she opposed; supposing they were deceived. And when Mr. B—, justice of the peace, went up the river, she wrung her hands in great distress, and cried, 'O that Black! That Black! He has ruined my two sons! Oh! he has ruined my two sons!' But some time ago God opened her understanding, and gave her to feel a need of a deeper work. She was then convinced that she was but a poor deluded Pharisee herself, a whited wall, a painted sepulchre; and that she was in a miserable situation, unless her soul was converted. Sore distress and anguish filled her soul, until God in mercy revealed his Son in her heart. Then she willingly joined those, whom formerly she looked upon as enthusiasts and fanatics.

About one o'clock, leaving many in tears, we set off with the tide, and arrived at Hillsborough in time for preaching, where one fell to the ground, and some wept bitterly.

Sunday, 26. Having to cross the river at high water, which was about twelve o'clock, I preached early in the morning, and again about eleven o'clock, when there was weeping and rejoicing on every side. F. Stieves, who had been under concern for some time, was powerfully delivered in the last prayer. Oh what a blessed time! Gladly would I have stayed longer here. But Tuesday was the quarterly meeting at Fort Lawrence, therefore we took an affectionate leave of each other. They accompanied me across the river to the French settlement, where I had left my horse, and I rode that night to Tantramar.

Tuesday, 28. In the love-feast at Fort Lawrence about fifty declared their desire to continue in the Methodist connexion. About nine or ten of these had joined Mr. Alline, but now saw cause to return and walk in the way in which they were first called; who, together with those at Petitcodiac, amounted to about eighty. Many stood aloof, and would not join either society. O what a blow did the work in general receive from these unhappy divisions! Satan's maxim is 'divide and destroy'. However our way is, with *meekness* and *love*, to instruct those that oppose.

September 3. I set off again to visit the lower towns, and on the 5th I arrived at Windsor. I then visited Halifax, Horton, Cornwallis, Granville, and Annapolis. We had good seasons at each of these places, except Halifax. And even here two since my last visit professed faith, so that I hope the word did not fall to the ground. These with a few more I joined together in society. But in general the people here are hardened. Lord pity them! Having visited the friends from Halifax to Annapolis, I returned to the Cumberland circuit again, where I arrived after a dangerous passage, on the 14th of November.

Wednesday, 20. I rode over to Tantramar, where I was sorely grieved to find mysticism and the foulest antinomianism spreading like fire, and its deadly fruits already growing up on every side. The people were informed publicly 'that they had nothing to do with God's law; that David was still a man after God's own heart when wallowing in adultery and murder; that his soul never sinned all that time, but only his body'. Mr. Alline himself told several persons one day that 'a believer is like a nut, thrown into the mud, which may dirty the shell but not the kernel.' That is, we may get drunk, or commit adultery, without the smallest defilement, etc., etc. O Lord, suffer not the enemy of souls to deceive them thus!

Thursday, 21. I rode on to Memramcook, and in the evening went in a canoe to Hillsborough. I tarried near the river about seven days, and had several affecting meetings. Two more professed an acquaintance with Jesus. The society were pretty lively—some were under deep concern, and trembled exceedingly under the word.

December 1. In speaking on Galatians 5:1, I endeavoured to point out to the people of Tantramar the true Christian liberty: that it did not consist in a liberty to sin with impunity; but a happy liberty to serve God both with our body and with our spirit which are his.

February 18 [1783]. While I was at Mr. Donkin's, a young man began to talk unscripturally of being led by the Spirit. A woman that was present kindly cautioned him, but it was to no purpose. Like other enthusiasts, he was above being taught by man and said he spoke by the Spirit of the eternal God. She replied, 'Some are led by another spirit, and not by the Spirit of God. The word of God is the only rule by which we are to try the spirits.' After they had talked together for some time, I related the case of George Bell in England, as related in Mr. Wesley's *Journal*; and also of another person of whom I had heard. It struck him. He threw himself down on the floor, and cried aloud, 'I am undone, undone, undone!' I said, 'Only seek the Lord, and abide by the testimony of his word. He is still able and willing to save.' He then rose from the floor and sat down on a bench, grinning and grinding his teeth, and appeared evidently to be under the influence of an evil spirit. I fell on my knees by his side and began to pray; when immediately, as if possessed by a thousand furies, he leaped from his seat, raised up his hands, and scratched me down the back as if he would have torn off my coat. But when his hand came to the bottom of my back, he could touch me no more. Mrs. Donkin caught up her child in her arms and ran screaming out of the house, leaving him and me alone.

I know not how to describe his various gestures and hideous noises. Sometimes he barked like a dog. Then again he would fly around the room, jumping, stamping, and making the most dreadful noises; imitating the Indian powwows, when they invoke the infernal powers. He then roared and screamed in my ears, and shouted in order to drown my voice; mingling with his shouts, terms of the most bitter disdain and execrable blasphemy against Jesus Christ. I found his design was, if possible, to stop me from praying; thinking he should then have power to seize me. But I was peculiarly helped to wrestle with the Lord, that he would either bind or cast out the evil one. I continued praying until he became quiet as a lamb, kneeled down by me and began to pray. He told me afterwards that he was so strongly possessed by the devil that he wished to tear out my eyes, or kill me. But that after his hands came to the bottom of my back, he could touch me no more. Hence we may learn the devil's malice, the prevalence of prayer, and the worth and necessity of our Bibles.

March 29. I left Partridge Island, and crossed in a small boat to Cape Blow-Me-Down.²⁷ After a fatiguing journey through mud and water, and having for several hours lost my way, not knowing where to go in the dark, and fully expecting to stay in the woods, I at last found a house; where I tarried all night, and the next day preached at Cornwallis, where many were much comforted.

From this until the twenty-second of May, I laboured at Horton, Annapolis, Granville, Falmouth, Windsor, and Halifax. I then set sail in a small schooner for LaHave, where we arrived the day following and I preached in the evening. I tarried here about five days, preached eighteen times, and then left some deeply affected.

Wednesday, 28. On taking my leave, some friends came with me down to the shore, entreating

²⁷Just north of York Harbour.

me to return as soon as possible; and some seemed fully determined to seek God as the portion of their souls. That evening I arrived at Liverpool. The news of my arrival soon spread, so that at half after 7:00 I had about three hundred to hear me. I came here only to get a passage to Halifax. But little did I think what blessed times I was about to see.

June 1. The Rev. Mr. Frazier preached twice in the meeting house, and I preached once. At noon I went to Mr. Smith's, where the people followed me, not willing to lose a word. The house was presently filled, and the Lord was in the midst of us. Many were deeply engaged in seeking salvation. Weeping and rejoicing were on every side. Many were exceeding happy, praising God. Blessed be God for all his kindness to me! O Lord, how do I love thee and thy dear people!

June 2. I preached on the east side of the river, and great was the power of God in the midst of us. Verily God is known in Salem; his name is great in Israel. Great indeed was the noise and shaking of the dry bones. I think there were about fourteen crying out in great distress and anguish of spirit, while others were shouting for joy. Indeed I never heard more heart-piercing cries and groans than those of one little girl. O, how did she cry out, for the space of two hours! 'What shall I do to be saved? O, my Jesus, my dear Jesus! What shall I do! O what shall I do to be saved?' These, and such like expressions, were enough to melt a heart of stone as they dropped from her almost infant lips. Our meeting continued between two and three hours, while shouts of praise and groans of distress might be heard from every part of the room. We had such a time in the evening again at Mr. Dean's, which continued until midnight. Lord, what a day was this! Glory be to thy name forever!

June 3. I expected to have gone to Shelburne this morning, but the vessel did not sail. Therefore I crossed the river to Mr. Smith's, where presently a number of people were gathered. Here also great was the shaking amongst the dry bones, and there was scarce a dry cheek in the room. In the evening I preached at the falls above the town, and God sent the word home to their hearts. It was sharp as a two-edged sword! I have seldom seen such a meeting as this. Numbers were in great distress, groaning, crying, and earnestly pleading for mercy. One gentleman in particular, lately from Stratford in Connecticut, in New England, was very grievously wounded. O how vehemently did he plead for mercy, for several hours! Others again were filled with consolation. The meeting continued until one o'clock in the morning. Blessed be God, these were reviving days to me, and I could say,

With me no melancholy void,
No moment lingers unemployed,
Or unimproved below:
Our weariness of life is gone,
Who live to serve our God alone,
And only him to know.²⁸

June 4. I received the following note: 'Edmund Darrow, a stranger to a saving interest in Jesus Christ, begs your prayers to Almighty God for the deliverance of his soul. And should Mr. Black come to New England, he would be glad to wait upon him at his own house, in the western part of Connecticut.' He soon after found peace with God, and with great zeal exhorted others to seek after the same blessing; and the next year God called him, I trust, to a mansion in heaven.

June 5. I set sail for Shelburne, with brother Dean; where we safely arrived on Friday evening, and our hearts were made glad by the sight of some of our friends from New York. These had just sat down in the midst of barren woods. And as there was not one house in all the place, they lived in tents. It rained hard most of the night. Brother Barry, in whose tent brother Dean and I stayed, insisted upon our

²⁸Cf. CW, Hymns for the Watchnight, #13, st. 2, *HSP* (1749), 2:136.

going to bed, and he sat up.²⁹ The rain beat in upon us, during the greater part of the night. The next day I preached to a few of the people. And on Sunday I preached three times. They heard attentively. But on Monday the 9th, while I was at prayer, one came up in the habit of a gentleman, cursing and swearing that if I did not come down, he would knock me down. He asked, 'By what authority do you preach?' And then turning to the audience, added, 'He is nothing but an impostor, and has no authority to preach.' I said, 'Sir, I have as much authority to preach as you have to swear, and sport with the tremendous name of the great Judge, who will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.' 'Well, but who sent you?' 'Sir, I AM hath sent me unto you.' 'What! Are you God's mouth to this people?' 'I am, for it is written, "He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that heareth me, heareth him that sent me."' ³⁰ He went away uttering dreadful menaces, but presently returned with two of his companions, sturdy servants of the same master. They came on like mad bulls of Bashan,³¹ with mouths full of blasphemy, oaths, and dreadful imprecations, declaring they would tear me down. But the people suffered them not. One of them swore, 'I can preach as well as he!' He then leaped on the stump of a tree (one put a pocketbook into his hand), and after uttering horrid blasphemy, came down. As he came towards me, I addressed him thus, 'Friend, I wish you well. My soul pities you. You know that you are fighting against God. Your own conscience condemns you. Remember, you and I must soon stand at the bar of God; and how, oh how will you meet me there?' He seemed to be struck for a time, but soon hardened his heart against God, and belched out a few more oaths, and then left me to finish my discourse without further trouble. During the preaching a man from the skirts of the congregation threw a stone with great violence. But as I saw it come, I saved my head, and it just passed by my temples. Blessed be God for his mercy! This disturbance brought many more to hear. Several appeared to be concerned; particularly in the evening, while I gave a few words of advice in one of the tents.

Tuesday, 10. I preached at Roseway,³² when most in the room were in tears, and some cried out, 'What shall I do to be saved?'³³

Wednesday, 11. We sailed for Liverpool, but did not arrive there until the 19th, by reason of the fog. On my going ashore, I found there was a vessel sailing for Halifax. I proposed going in her, but our friends would not consent, insisting in the strongest manner that it was not my duty to go and leave them *now*. I knew not what to do, as I had already stayed double the time I intended. After praying for direction, I said, 'I will see what God says', and opened my Bible on these words, 'If any man compel thee to go with him a mile, go with him twain.'³⁴ I could not say another word, but readily consented, and that night we had a comfortable time whilst I was preaching.

Saturday, 21. I preached twice with great power. In the evening several came to Mr. Smith's, some of whom were deeply affected, wept and cried for a considerable time. One young woman was very happy, who prayed and praised God in a very wonderful manner, and exhorted all around to seek an interest in Jesus Christ. Some part of this day I had a sense of God's goodness, and longed to live entirely to his glory. Yet I could not find those sweet sensations and lively views of his goodness and love that I

²⁹Robert Barry (c. 1759–1843) was born in Scotland, raised in Portsmouth, Hampshire, and came to North America as an impressed sailor who escaped his ship in New York around 1774. He was a participant in Methodist services at the John Street Chapel. In 1783 Barry was part of a large group of Loyalists who left New York and ended up in Nova Scotia. Barry settled in Shelburne, where he taught school for a while, then became involved with his brother in a very successful trading practice between Britain and Canada. Barry remained an active Methodist and was a close friend of William Black.

³⁰Cf. Luke 10:16.

³¹Cf. Ps. 22:12.

³²Orig., 'Rosa-way'.

³³Cf. Acts 16:30.

³⁴Cf. Matt. 5:41.

had formerly felt. O my Lord, give me to love thee alone! Take away every rival. Destroy all sin, and let me spend my latest breath in proclaiming thy love to the fallen sons of Adam. Gladly would I die as soon as my last message is delivered. Death is no terror to me; rather it appears infinitely desirable when I feel thy presence.

Sunday, 22. I preached three times. Three, I trust, found peace with God. Whilst others were in deep distress, and many were filled with abundance of consolations. O what a blessed day! Glory, glory to God, that ever I was born!

Monday, 23. I preached at the meeting house, and on my return I met the Rev. Mr. Cheevers, who said abruptly, 'I suppose you think you have been doing good.'³⁵ 'Sir', said I, 'I hope we have been doing no harm.' 'Yes, you have been poisoning the minds of the people with doctrines as bad as ratsbane. You are leading them all to hell.' 'Sir, I pity you, and will pray for you.' 'I suppose', replied he, 'you do not desire that I should pray for *you*.' I said, 'If you can pray in faith, I do. Otherwise I do not.' Then I bade him a good day and left him.

Thursday, 26. In the forenoon I preached at the falls; and endeavoured to point out the creature's emptiness and Christ's fullness. One at this time professed redemption through his blood. And in the evening we had a good time at the town, when another broke out in praise, saying, 'Jesus is precious! O he is precious! O that all would come, and taste his love!' Another little boy spoke to the same effect. Indeed many rejoiced, and others wept. After preaching, many went down with me to Mr. Bradford's, and it was midnight before we could part. As I expected to sail for Halifax next morning, I took my leave of this dear people, and bless God that I ever saw Liverpool.

Friday, 27. I set sail for Halifax, and arrived there the next day. After preaching two or three sermons here, I set off for Windsor on the first of July, and arrived the same night. Here I tarried until the 10th, and had some comfortable times. But a difference between two of our friends has done much hurt. On the 11th, I arrived at Cumberland again, where I laboured until the 20th, and then visited my dear children at Petitcodiac river. These are a simple, loving people indeed, happy in God. I preached ten or eleven times amongst them, and found many divine consolations and great refreshments of soul; and then returned to Cumberland. Having rode two or three times round the circuit, I returned to Windsor, Horton, etc., etc., where I tarried until the 23d of September.

On the 28th, I arrived at Cumberland in a small schooner, and visited all the places round. We had some comfortable times, but found a general declension—at Tantramar in particular. Once it was filled with peace and love, praise and prayer; but alas, the glory is departed. Our meetings were now flat and dull, and many who began well are like to end in the flesh. Speculative or practical antinomianism hath bewitched them. O Lord, lay to thine hand, for men have made void thy law!

October 20. I set off for the island of St. John's, at the invitation of Mr. Benjamin Chappell, where I arrived on the 22nd, and tarried about a fortnight. I preached several times at Charlottetown, and at St. Peter's. But alas! The people in general appeared stupid, and senseless as stones, altogether ignorant of the nature of true religion, and of that faith which worketh by love. On my return from the island, I was exceeding ill, but through grace not afraid to die. It was my earnest prayer to God that if my usefulness was done, I might then finish my course and go to him whom my soul loved. Blessed be God, death hath long since lost his sting and terror. Many times the very thoughts of dying filled my heart with joy. Particularly once, when a party of Indians had rose at Miramichi³⁶ and taken many of the inhabitants prisoners; and it was reported they were on their way to destroy *all* the friends of government at Cumberland. At the news of this my heart leaped, yea danced within me for joy—to think that I had a mansion in heaven, a house above their reach, even the bosom of my Redeemer,

³⁵Rev. Israel Cheevers (1722–1811), became the pastor of the Congregationalist Church in Liverpool in 1760.

³⁶Orig., 'Merimashee'.

That palace of angels and God.³⁷

I did not fear those who could only kill the body. After being three days on our passage, and most of the time with little to eat, we arrived at the Baie Verte.³⁸ The next day I rode on to Cumberland, and took my circuit for the winter.

For some time before this, I had had thoughts of marriage. At first I rejected it as a temptation. I had not the least scruple but it was lawful for a minister to marry, but I feared lest I should do my own will, not the will of God. I prayed again and again that the Lord would show me his will, and would rather die than offend him. And having advised with my friends, and they approving of my design, I was on the 17th of February 1784, married to Mary Gay of Cumberland.³⁹ We both devoted ourselves to the Lord and his service; and blessed be God, I have no reason to repent of it to this day.

As soon as the spring opened, I set off for the lower towns. And after preaching several times at Windsor, etc., I went to Halifax. Having stayed here some time, and met the classes, one of blacks and the other of whites, I then went with eight of our friends in a boat to Birchtown, where I preached to about two hundred black people. It is truly wonderful, to see what a work God hath been carrying on amongst these poor Negroes. Upwards of sixty profess to have found the pearl of great price within seven or eight months. And what is farther remarkable, the chief instrument whom God hath employed in this work is a poor Negro who can neither see, walk, nor stand. He is usually carried to the place of worship, where he sits and speaks, or kneels and prays with the people.

April 23. I met nine of the black classes (five more remained unmet, for want of time), and many of them are deeply experienced in the ways of God. There are about one hundred and eight blacks and whites in society at Shelburne and Birchtown.

April 26. I set sail for Liverpool, and arrived the next evening. On hearing that I was come, the friends flocked to see me. We had a comfortable evening, and could heartily praise God, that he had brought us together again. On the following days, whilst I preached, many were bathed in tears and some were so filled with a sense of the glory of God that they said their mortal bodies could hardly stand under it. O my God, what kindness is this to mortals! O how did they rejoice and tell of his goodness! Blessed be God that ever I was made a partaker of these immortal hopes! O what an infinite fullness is laid up in Jesus! My God, only give me to enjoy thy sacred smile, a constant sense of thine approbation and love, and I desire no more,

Honours, wealth, or pleasures mean,
I neither have, nor want.⁴⁰

May 2. I preached twice, and we had several meetings for prayer and exhortation. The people were much engaged, so that we had scarce time or inclination to eat. O what a blessed day was this! Many trembled, wept, and cried for mercy. O that none may ever turn again as a dog to the vomit!⁴¹

Monday, 3. We had another wonderful meeting. One woman, whose harp had been on the willows for some time, and her soul in captivity, was filled with unspeakable joy. O how did she praise the Lord for her happy deliverance! This was a glorious time to me! Blessed Lord, let me only taste thy love, and be employed in thy service, and it sufficeth me! Once indeed I wished that I had never been born, and thought it my greatest misery to have a soul. Now I bless thee for my being, and glory that I am

³⁷CW, Hymn 8, st. 1, *Funeral Hymns* (1746), 11.

³⁸Orig., 'Bay-vert'.

³⁹Mary Gay (1755–1827).

⁴⁰Cf. CW, 'The Pilgrim', st. 3, *Redemption Hymns* (1747), 67.

⁴¹See Prov. 26:11.

capable of loving thee.

Wednesday, 5. I set sail for Halifax, where having arrived early on Saturday, I set off for Windsor on foot, and travelled forty miles that day. But the skin was so blistered under my feet that with difficulty I reached Carles's. The next morning I reached Windsor, and preached twice. And after visiting Annapolis, Cornwallis, and Horton, I returned to Cumberland on the 26th of May. I laboured here until September 15, when, after an affecting parting, I set off to visit the States—intending to get some help from our brethren there, as I alone could not take care of all the societies. On my way to Baltimore I called at Boston, where I preached twice. From thence I went by the way of Rhode Island to New York, where I arrived October 20, and preached a few times.

I was much exercised here about my temporal circumstances. Satan painted in lively colours my distance from home, my money almost gone, my being amongst entire strangers, etc. I could not fully resist this. It followed me even to the pulpit. But there God delivered me, and removed the heaviness from my mind. The first words I opened upon in my Bible were these, 'O ye of little faith, why will ye doubt? Look at the lilies'⁴² My heart was filled with joy, and I walked in the strength of this promise, not doubting but God would provide.

From New York, I went to Long Island, and on the 29th, preached at Black Stump; the day following at Newtown, and on Tuesday attended the execution of two men that were hung at Jamaica. At the sheriff's desire, I prayed with and recommended their souls to God. After travelling two or three days with brother [Philip] Cox, and preaching at Searingtown, Cow Harbor, and Huntington, I crossed the sound into Connecticut. I preached in the evening at Norwalk, and the next morning rode on to Stratfield. I preached six or seven times amongst the people here, and then returned to New York. During my absence from New York Dr. [Thomas] Coke had arrived there, and two other preachers from England,⁴³ and were gone on towards Baltimore. Therefore on November 17 I set off for Philadelphia, and thence forward on my way to meet them. December 14, I met Dr. Coke and Mr. [Francis] Asbury. On the 15th, the doctor preached and administered the sacrament at the Gunpowder meeting house. It was a blessed time to me. O my God, I am thine by a thousand ties. *Necessary, voluntary, and sacred* houses of worship, woods, fields, and trees have been witness to the sacred vows, and engagements that I am under to thee. And these, when I willfully and presumptuously sin against thee, will bring in their evidences against me. O my Lord, keep me by thy powerful grace! O preserve me thine forever!

Friday, 17. I rode with Dr. Coke and four other preachers to Perry Hall, the most spacious and elegant building I have seen in America. And on Saturday, 18, I left it and rode on to Hunt's chapel, to relieve brother [Richard] Whatcoat. This was a day of trials, and blessed be God, of peculiar comforts too. After preaching at Rioter's Town, and several other places, on Thursday, 23, I arrived at Baltimore. Friday, 24, our Conference began and ended on January 1, 1785.⁴⁴ Perhaps such a number of holy, zealous, godly men never met together in Maryland before. Two preachers, Messrs. [Freeborn] Garrettson and [James Oliver] Cromwell, were appointed for Nova Scotia. They set off by way of New York, and I went by water to Hyannis,⁴⁵ near Barnstable. Here I tarried a few days, and preached six or seven times. The word was attended with power. Many were stirred up, and two, a few days after, found peace with God. From hence I went to Hingham, where I found my wife well.

February 1. I went to Boston, and tarried there mostly until May, and then sailed for Cumberland. When I first arrived here, I preached in private houses, none of the ministers being willing to lend me their pulpits. First I preached in a chamber at the north end of the town, but the people crowded in so that

⁴²Cf. Matt. 6:28–30; Luke 12:27–29.

⁴³Thomas Vasey and Richard Whatcoat.

⁴⁴This was the 'Christmas Conference' of 1784, which founded The Methodist Episcopal Church in North America.

⁴⁵Orig., 'Hienah'.

the floor sunk an inch or two. I then preached in a large room at the south end of the town, where in time of prayer one of the beams of the floor broke, and the people screamed as if going to be swallowed up by an earthquake. After this I preached in Mr. Skillman's meeting house two or three times.⁴⁶ But this was like to cause a quarrel between him and the committee who had offered the use of the house, so I declined preaching there any more. We then procured from the selectmen the use of the North Latin schoolhouse. But neither would this contain half the people; and one of the beams here also giving way, the people were terribly afraid, and screamed as if about to be crushed to death. I preached most of the time in the Sandemans' meeting house,⁴⁷ as most of that society are now scattered. But it would not contain half the people. The last Sabbath I preached in Dr. Elliot's meeting house to, I suppose, upwards of two thousand people. This was the only meeting house that would hold the people; nor would this have held them, if they had had timely notice. I trust my labour here was not in vain. The word reached the hearts of many, who soon after found peace with God. And as there was no Methodist preacher there, when I left them, they joined Mr. Skillman's church, who is a lively, useful Baptist minister.

In the end of May I arrived at Cumberland, where I tarried about a month, and then set off for Windsor, etc., to meet Mr. Garrettson. During my absence, I found, the classes had met but badly, and some not at all. Since that time I have endeavoured to labour in my Lord's vineyard, and find he is a precious Master. I have always found him faithful to his promise. I feel his love better than life, and I trust I shall spend and end my days in his service. Only I am ashamed that I have made no greater progress in the divine life.

W. B.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791) 12–16, 68–73, 121–25, 177–82, 233–35, 294–98, 349–56, 407–13.⁴⁸

⁴⁶Rev. Isaac Skillman (1740–99), pastor of 2nd Baptist Church in Boston.

⁴⁷Orig., 'Sandiman's'. Because of their pacifism, Sandemanians were labelled 'Loyalists' during the revolutionary war, and many fled to Nova Scotia.

⁴⁸This account is reproduced in Jackson, *EMP*, 5:242–95; along with a description of his later ministry, death, and character.

[Christopher Hopper] to *Manchester Mercury*¹

[Bolton]
c. June 1, 1788

A correspondent observes that on reading this paper of Tuesday last,² he was not a little astonished to find a paragraph inserted in which it was made to appear that the Rev. Mr. [John] Wesley had foretold the end of the world to be in the year 1836. Whether the author of it did not pay proper attention to the sermon preached at Bradford, or his intention was only to depreciate the reverend gentleman's character by wishing people to believe his faculties were impaired, our correspondent cannot say. But as a friend of his, and one not altogether unacquainted with his sentiments respecting the great change that must undoubtedly take place, he ventures to affirm Mr. Wesley never would assert that, as a positive fact, which he himself allows to be but mere conjecture with regard to the precise time.

Source: published transcription; *Manchester Mercury* (June 3, 1788), p. 4.³

¹This initial note was almost certainly by Christopher Hopper, stationed near Manchester, who had written JW after seeing the report and would send another letter, including JW's reply, c. June 10, 1788 (see below).

²An abridged version of the report on JW's sermon at Bradford published in the *Leeds Inquirer* on May 20, 1788, was printed in the *Manchester Mercury*, May 27, 1788, p. 4.

³This was reprinted from *Manchester Mercury* in *Derby Mercury* (June 5, 1788), p. 4.

From Adam Clarke

Mont Plaisir
June 2 [1788]

Reverend and Very Dear Sir,

I do verily believe that God never suffers you to speak or write in vain. This I think is peculiarly evident in your last *very kind* epistle.¹ I had purposed, as I had informed you, to take a piece of ground within a few yards of the chapel-of-ease to build our house on.² And in consequence of this purpose I had settled everything relative to it, the *act of taking* excepted. Ere I could take this last step your providential epistle came to hand, from which I read even *more* difficulties than those you started. Mr. [Henri] De Jersey was just then on the point of taking the ground. I mentioned to him what you had said, and he thought your cautions were very serious, and highly necessary to be observed.

I then turned my eye to a spot of ground belonging to the bailiff, situated in the very middle of the town, in which place *four, five, or six* ways concentre.³ This on several accounts I wished to have. I sent the same day to the bailiff, to know, would he let us have it for the above purpose? He answered he would. The next day I waited on him, with Mr. De Jersey and Mr. [George] Walker. He indeed treated me with vast civility and respect. He shook my hand very affectionately, pointed me to the 'chief seat', and invited me to a glass of wine. After a few words speaking, we fell to our business, and went and measured out the ground, which is 50 by 40 feet. I thought it best to have a tolerable large platform, as I knew not whether we should at present be able to build any gallery. Among a number of other things equally pleasing, the bailiff said, 'I will take a seat in it for myself and family—viz., a seat that will hold six persons. And to help [put] up the building, and to encourage others to contribute thereto, I will myself give £50 sterling.' Are you not, my dear sir, agreeably astonished? A little [time] ago we were threatened with imprisonment, and a number of other dreadfuls; and now, behold the blessed reverse! O God, how worthy art thou to be eternally praised!

Mr. [William] Stevens had drawn a plan of the house, which we showed to the bailiff. He was very well pleased with it. *I* alone found fault with it; I mean in respect to the number of windows (Mr. Stevens had drawn it while I was in Jersey). I argued for the necessity of *five* windows in the upper part of the front, in place of three marked on the plan; and two in the lower part *on each side* the door, in place of only one intended on the plan. (N.B. I intend to have it built for a gallery, if such a thing should in future be found necessary.) Mr. Walker argued against the great expense so many additional windows would be, and wished me to be contented with the plan. I then offered several reasons why we should have as much light as possible, and showed the advantage it would be in saving of candles, etc. When I had done, the bailiff said, 'Mr. Clarke, I am just of your opinion. All the windows you mention are necessary. And before you should have your chapel in the least injured for lack of light, I will give, beside what I have already promised, ten guineas towards the additional windows'!! I mention, my dear sir, these punctilia, to give you to see how our gracious God has thus far wrought in this matter. Glory be to his holy name forever! Amen. The ground could not be taken on the Conference plan. The mode of the court would not admit it, and in the court all purchases are registered. I got Mr. De Jersey and Mr. Walker to purchase the ground, and have their promise that they will transfer it according to the Conference plan, when I can procure a sufficient number of trustees. N.B. We must pay a yearly rent for the ground, until we are able to pay the purchase money, which cannot be now, as we shall need all we can get to build with. But you need not fear its being properly settled, as I am determined this shall be effected, God willing, ere the

¹JW to Clarke, Apr. 17, 1788, *Works*, 30:672–73.

²Construction on La Chapelle de la Trinite was nearing completion; it opened July 5, 1788. It was a chapel-of-ease for French-speaking persons in St. Peter Port, near what is now Trinity Square.

³William Le Marchant (1721–1809) was the current bailiff of Guernsey. The land being purchased was near Le Marchant Street and the Royal Court of Guernsey, at city center.

walls are built. And then I hope, if God spares me, to give you a satisfactory account of everything. In *money, work, materials*, etc., we have already upwards of £300 promised. I have now got men clearing out the foundation. And who do you think is sometimes overseer? Why, the bailiff, and his wife also, who is quite elated at the prospect of a Methodist chapel, where she can have the opportunity of being a constant attendant. The other day the bailiff gave of quantity of beer to the workmen, to encourage them to diligence. Now my dear sir, will you not grant with me, from a consideration of the above, that the Lord did not permit you to write your last kind epistle to me in vain? It was it that induced me to relinquish my former purpose of taking the ground near the chapel-of-ease, and taking this in its place, which has so far succeeded so well. What directions are farther necessary, give them me, and he will bless and reward you, who sees that when you are employed in this you will not be only instructing me but helping the cause of God for which you live and labor. We shall strive to get everything carried on with every degree of dispatch we are capable of. Help us, my dear sir, much by your prayers.

Our congregations are now uncommonly large. Numbers are affected and convinced, but keep aloof from joining. What should I do to encourage them to it? Mr. [Pierre] Arrivé is clear gain; scarcely a fortnight ago, an anasarca and hydrocele, in which his asthmatical disorder terminated, swept him to Abraham's bosom. He died well, blessed be God!

In April I went to England, and had my affair completed in Trowbridge church, without the smallest privacy, or the least opposition from any quarter; and after a stay of only eleven days returned in safety here with your *daughter* and my *wife*.⁴ Mrs. [Mary] Cooke said not a single sentence on the one side or other; and Miss Betsey received us both with the most cordial affection, and accompanied us in the chaise to Bath, from whence we took the stage for Southampton.⁵ This happy closure of my affair, under God, I owe to your kind interposition. He who disposed you and prospered you in the benevolent act, give you a present and eternal recompense for Jesus' sake! Amen.

We are all in great expectation that the Lord will spare you to favour us with a visit after Conference. From my very heart I believe you can go to *no part* where your labours would be more blessed, or your presence more acceptable. Your last visit was the means of abundant good. Much prejudice was thereby removed, and since that we never had a small congregation. Many of the quality wish to see you again, and some desire to have you at their houses.

Mr. Stevens has now taken my place in Jersey. Mr. [Jean] De Quêteville and his wife are there also.⁶ Mr. Dieuaide is in Alderney, and I as usual left to do the twofold work in this island.⁷ The Lord has lately raised up a young man in the country, who helps me a little on Sundays. His language is as gross as most you have ever heard, but such a quantity of blunt, new, and striking thoughts, and so fertile an imagination, I have seldom or ever found. Notwithstanding his very gross language, his preaching is attended by high and low with the deepest attention. He is neither visionary nor mystic.

May the Lord Jesus prolong your days! I fear not their usefulness. I remain, reverend and very dear sir,

Your affectionate son in the gospel,

A. Clarke

Address: 'The Revd Mr. Wesley / City Road / London'.

Postmark: 'JU/10/88'. *Charge:* '5'.

Source: holograph; MARC, WCB, D6/1/100; Dunn, *Clarke*, 60–63.

⁴Clarke married Mary Cooke of Trowbridge on Apr. 17, 1788.

⁵His wife's mother, Mary (Pitney) Cooke, and eldest of wife's sisters, Elizabeth Cooke (b. 1761).

⁶Jean De Quêteville married Susanne De Jersey (1768–1843) on Apr. 30, 1788 in Castel, Isle of Guernsey. Susanne was the daughter of Henry and Susanne (Le Quesne) De Jersey.

⁷Guillaume ('William') Dieuaide, who married Jeanne Arrivé (d. 1810) in 1777, was a local preacher. He was admitted as an itinerant in 1792, serving in the Channel Islands, then removed in 1797.

'Hocus Pocus' to *St. James's Chronicle*

c. June 8, 1788

Sir,

In order to remove the *consternation* the public may be under from Mr. John Wesley's *Yorkshire Prediction*, I shall give you a proof that he possesses as small a share of second sight as his neighbours. For I have lately perused some unpublished sheets which contain a few anecdotes of the Wesleys, and which are too well authenticated to doubt of their being facts. One of these I hope the author will excuse my mentioning, for the reason above recited.

Everybody knows that Mr. Wesley, in his early days, went over to Georgia with a view of converting the Indians, or rather of making them acquainted with the Christian Religion. He was succeeded by Mr. [George] Whit[e]field, and the Christian religion is as little known among them at this day as it was a thousand years ago. Mr. Wesley therefore turned his attention to the inhabitants of the new colony, among whom was a young woman who, it was said, lived a very irregular and immoral life. Mr. Wesley often exhorted her to repentance, but with no better success than he had exhorted Tomo Chaci, the Indian king, and his court. But one day the young woman sent in a great hurry to desire Mr. Wesley's attendance upon her. He obeyed the summons instantly, flattering himself that his former arguments had operated to her amendment. But the instant he entered her apartment she threw him upon the bed and threatened him with a loss which *most other men* would value as much as life. But at last she let him go, upon the easy terms of cropping his auburn flowing ringlets close up to his right ear. And in that partial head-dress Mr. Wesley appeared the Sunday following in his place at Savannah church.

Now it is clear to me that, if he did not know what he was to lose by his visit to the young woman, he may be out in his reckoning as to the year 1836.

Hocus Pocus

Source: published transcription; *St. James's Chronicle* (June 10, 1788), p. 2.

Christopher Hopper to Printer of *Manchester Mercury*, etc.

Bolton
c. June 10, 1788

Sir,

In your paper of the 27th ultimate [i.e., May 27],¹ I read a paragraph respecting Mr. [John] Wesley having preached in the parish church of Bradford, from the text, 'The end of all things is at hand. Be sober and watch unto prayer.'² And that he assured his audience that the world would end in the year 1836; but that a new world would succeed the old one, far better and infinitely more enlightened—in which there would be no false teachers, no hypocrites, but universal holiness and angelic purity. I knew Mr. Wesley so well that I did not believe he said any such thing. I therefore wrote to him, to know the truth of what he did say. The following is his own answer, which I hope you'll be so obliging as to insert in your next. And by so doing you'll oblige

Your sincere reader and servant, for Christ's sake,

Ch. Hopper

[then appears JW's letter to Hopper of June 3, 1788, *Works*, 30:691–92.]

Source: published transcriptions: *Manchester Mercury* (June 17, 1788), p. 4; *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal* (June 21, 1788), p. 1; and the *Leeds Intelligencer* (June 24, 1788), p. 3.

¹Hopper's letter to the *Leeds Intelligencer* reads 'of the 20th ultimate'; that to *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal* reads 'of the 31st ultimate'.

²1 Pet. 4:7.

‘A Methodist’ to Printer of the *Sheffield Register*

c. June 19, 1788

Sir,

Having read in your paper of the 24th ult^{mo} a paragraph respecting a discourse delivered by the Rev. Mr. [John] Wesley at Bradford, in this county,¹ which I conceive to be offered to the public in a very inaccurate and exceptionable form, I beg leave to avail myself of its generous and impartial character by endeavouring, through the same channel, to explain what he might advert to in a more probable, rational, and qualified sense; as it must, in its present dress, appear to every person of piety and understanding highly chimerical, romantic, and absurd—and very much to the disparagement of Mr. Wesley's reputation as an eminent, sound, and consistent theologian, as well as totally incompatible with the whole tenor of his writings and to the experience, sagacity, and soberness of mind which has hitherto characterised his professional labours.

His text upon the occasion (if the account be true) appears to have been taken from those solemn words of St. Peter, ‘The end of all things is at hand; be ye therefore sober and watch unto prayer.’² The author of the paragraph asserts ‘that he assured his audience the world would be at an end in the year 1836; but he intimated a new world would succeed the old, far better, infinitely more enlightened,’ From my knowledge of Mr. Wesley's character, I am persuaded no one knows better how to manage this deep passage for the advantage and edification of his hearers. He would naturally consider what has to be understood by the words ‘All things are at hand’, which in their primary and original sense were as true 1700 years ago, or when St. Peter wrote them, as they are now. And as he is conversant with some of the deep parts of the [book of] Revelation, he might (while dwelling on such a subject) call attention to some events which had and were still receiving a gradual accomplishment. Many distinguished eras have already passed the annals of time, and the period which he is said to refer to is regarded by the most learned and judicious commentators as a remarkable epoch, which will usher in some of its grand events, and which the present signs of the times seem strikingly to countenance. Mr. Wesley on such an occasion might, with a view of exciting the curiosity and attention of his audience, recite in his pleasing and able manner the curious and ingenious opinions of men whose erudition and abilities had given some authority to their speculations. We are indeed justified on many accounts in supposing these to be the last times, but will anyone from thence conclude the world to be at an end, in any sense, to so exact a period—seeing that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day? There is little doubt therefore but Mr. Wesley, from prejudice or inattention, has been much misunderstood, as his *Notes* on the 19th and 20th [chapter] of the Revelation evidently speak a contrary doctrine. The comprehensions of those who are the most forward to communicate information is not always the most clear, or capable of making the most accurate discriminations. And on this principle the candid and serious part of the world will account for the leading features of his sermon becoming liable to misrepresentation, and of making its public appearance in so exaggerated a form.

I may now be thought to have said enough. But if it is thought consistent with the plan and limits of your paper, I beg leave to continue my animadversions on the latter clause of the paragraph in question. It is an odd sort of ‘end of this world’ if a new and renovated scene of things is to succeed its dissolution. No general judgment, I presume, is understood to precede this new face of affairs; so that the inhabitants who may be so fortunate as to live forty-eight years need not tremble at so happy a change as Mr. Wesley is said to describe: ‘A new world to succeed the present old one, far better, and infinitely more enlightened, in which there would be no more hypocrites, but universal holiness and angelic purity.’

Many eminent and pious divines are fond of the millennium hypothesis, which supposes Christ will reign on earth a thousand years in an extraordinary manner, either in a personal presence or by such

¹*Sheffield Register*, May 24, 1788, p. 3.

²1 Pet. 4:7.

copious communications of his presence, as to draw in an unlimited degree the whole universe to his sway, and every individual inhabitant of the globe will be converted to a state of beatific excellence, and that the whole face of the world will exhibit a scene of the most perfect order, harmony, peace, and love. After this is to be a falling away to its former dissoluteness and corruption, which is to be considered as the infallible tokens of a speedy and final dissolution of the world by a general resurrection and judgment. This scheme is founded upon some very deep and obscure passages in the Revelation. But in what manner they are to receive their accomplishments, perhaps the most enlightened are totally ignorant. I am not clear that Mr. Wesley has any determinate ideas on this subject. It is certainly a consummation devoutly to be wished, nor must we presume to circumscribe the power of Omnipotence. Yet it hardly appears reasonable to imagine that an unadulterated, unmixed, and universal reception of the pure and undefiled religion of Jesus is, agreeable with the plans of providence, possible with the natural state of the world, or consistent with the Redeemer's militant kingdom. Such a notion must imply a constraining providence, irresistible grace, the loss of our depravity, and a freedom from temptation—which supposes we are no longer moral agents, nor accountable creatures—a scheme which strikes at the root of Christianity according to its present scriptural character. Little doubt need be admitted but our probational state will be accompanied with its inseparable vicissitudes and danger, springing from an evil heart, a depraved nature, a tempting devil, and a deceitful world. Much, to be sure, may be collected from the language on inspiration in favour of a more happy and peaceable state of the church than it has ever yet known. But if we make due allowances for the figurative and hyperbolic language of the Scriptures, there is little ground for giving them so exalted and acceptance. The times have long been gradually emerging from darkness, and many events are perhaps maturing to facilitate their improvement. The time will arrive when the name of 'pope' will become extinct. The independent exertions of the emperor of Germany has nipped, in some degree, the wings of papal influence, which perhaps is the prelude to a more limited authority. Popery will certain fall in France this or the next century, and probably the present commotions may end in a dissolution of the religion and government of that country. The present or some future war between the Russians and Turks may bring about the destruction of the Ottoman empire. And the present enquiries into mal-administration may contribute to extend the scale of justice and the banners of mercy and peace over the long desolated plains of Indostan. The dismemberment of the colonies from Great Britain may not be without its use in the mysteries of providence. The general spirit of philanthropy which is exerting itself in behalf of the distressed Africans may be attended with a salutary influence, and altogether concur to the healing of the nations which have been so long in high disorder. By working a blessed preparative for a general diffusion of civil and religious liberty, the paths may be made strait for the triumphs of the Redeemer, and the reception of his holy religion in its genuine purity.

Many scriptural predictions remain to be fulfilled. With God all things are possible. He pulleth down one and setteth up another. And nations may yet be born in a day. The restoration of Judah, and the fulness of the Gentiles are to be brought in, and such will be the meritorious effects of our Saviour's intercession that he shall have the heathen for his inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. Yea, Ethiopia shall stretch out her hand unto God, and by a concurrence of happy circumstances the religion of the Bible may be received, tolerated, and embraced—till the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea. Perhaps a millennium already dawns! The present century has been remarkable for the revival of pure and scriptural Christianity, under the reproachful name of 'Methodism'. By causes apparently weak, and seemingly mean instruments, Jehovah has accomplished a glorious work, which may be intended to gladden the nations. It has for its characteristics what is agreeable to the genius and nature of genuine Christianity: purity of doctrine, simplicity of discipline, and the power of God. Its success under much opposition has been considerable and extensive in less than half a century. And its flourishing reception in the three kingdoms, as well as Holland and America, seems to promise a diffusion of its influence, till even kings shall come to its light, and princes to the brightness of its rising.

But let us return to the text, which may with propriety be accommodated to the present state of the world, and to all its inhabitants. For however near or remote the end of this world to the day of judgment may be, the day of death is certain, and with many it may with truth be said, 'The end of all

things' (of a temporal nature) 'is at hand.' Let us then wisely follow the advice of the apostle, 'Be sober and watch unto prayer.' Let us awake from our guilty sleep, arise from spiritual death, that we may be converted, born again, and renewed in the spirit of our minds after the image of him who created us. And let our life be hid with Christ in God, that when he who is our life shall appear, we may also appear with him in glory.

A Methodist

Source: published transcription; *Sheffield Register* (June 21, 1788), p. 4.

From John Moon¹

[St. Austell, Cornwall]
c. July 1788

Jane Nancarrow was born at Grampound, in the county of Cornwall, on the 27th of July 1752.² Her parents, though mean, endeavoured to bring her up in the fear of God. At nine years of age she was bound apprentice to a clothier at Penryn. From this time the Lord followed her with convictions; so that at times under the word, she would cry with the jailer, 'What must I do to be saved?'³ But being naturally of a light spirit, these impressions were as the morning cloud, or early dew.

About the age of fourteen she was taken ill with a rheumatic fever, which brought her very near death. During this illness, under which she languished six months, she was frequently alarmed with the fear of death and resolved, if God would spare her, to lay down the weapons of her rebellion and to be a servant of sin and Satan no longer. Yet no sooner was she restored than her resolutions were all broken, and she became a willing captive as before.

At the expiration of her time she went to reside at St. Austell, where she continued labouring at her business.

In February 1777 her sister Ann began to seek the Lord; and in the following month God spoke peace to her soul. Jenny however, frequently mocked her, although at other times she would join her in singing, and be grieved that she had not an inward feeling of the words she sung. Sometimes also she would join with her sister in prayer, and appear much affected. But at other times she pressed her to it against her will, and often poured out her soul to the Lord for her, while she carelessly fell asleep by her side. Nancy often entreated her to come and partake of the happiness she felt—at which she sometimes melted into tears, wished to drink of the same fountain, and earnestly cried for mercy. But at other seasons Satan got the advantage of her weakness, and extinguished every good desire in her soul.

From this time she was frequently and greatly afflicted, which rendered her incapable of labour; and having no other support, involved her in difficulties of a temporal nature, out of which she saw no way of extricating herself. In the depth of these distresses the Lord many times appeared to her deliverance, raised her up, and restored her again to health.

At one time when her sister reproved her for singing foolish songs, and desired she would either cease or leave her, she did cease; but pleaded for its innocence. And when Jenny saw she could no longer prevail on her to spend the Sabbath in worldly pleasure, she would fly from her in anger. On which she has sometimes been seized with such a trembling that she was scarce able to stand. Frequently under the preaching she has been struck with such terror as forced her to hide herself from the sight of the preacher, concluding his discourse was directed to her alone. But when the congregation joined in singing, she has been obliged, from the impressions of her mind, to rise with them all, trembling and confounded as she was.

She appeared now to be more thoroughly awakened to a sense of her danger. One night when in bed these words were spoken as with a voice to her: 'They all with one consent began to make excuse.'⁴

¹John Moon (1752–1801) was converted in his mid-teens and admitted 'on trial' as an itinerant at the 1774 Conference (see *Works*, 10:427). He served for 27 years, until his death in Bristol in Feb. 1801; see *Minutes* (post-Wesley, 1801), 2:83–84. Moon was currently the Assistant for the St. Austell circuit in Cornwall.

²Jane Nancarrow was baptized Aug. 23, 1752, in Creed, Cornwall; the daughter of Digory and Catherine Nancarrow.

³Acts 16:30.

⁴Luke 14:18.

The words sunk deep into her soul, being conscious she was one who answered the description. A few days after this these words were spoken to her, 'Thou shalt be sick and die; but not soon.' From this time her convictions greatly increased, and fastened on her soul. She ardently cried for mercy, but it seemed at a great distance. And the enemy was always suggesting that the day of grace was past, and that there was no mercy for her. But one night as her soul panted after God, and wrestled with him in mighty prayer, it was as though a voice spoke to her a third time, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.'⁵ But unbelief still kept her from him.

At this time she was not able to read, and therefore was in a great measure ignorant of God's word, and of Satan's devices. Her continual cry was for all the people of God to come and pray for her. And her desire herein was particularly granted by the attendance of our friends in that place. Her sister having been absent from her for some time, she now particularly desired she would come and pray for her and forgive her past conduct towards her. When her sister came, she was almost gone through faintness; but cried out, 'Eternity's at hand and I know not God.' In this distress and anguish of soul she laboured from July to the February following.

About this time she was visited by Mr. A[dam] C[larke],⁶ who perceiving her very ill, said, 'There is no hope for thy body here. Is there any hope for thy soul in the world to come?' As soon as she was able to speak, she said, 'I have no hope of a joyful eternity.' He told her she must believe and be saved, or otherwise perish. The agonies she then felt are not easily described, while she cried aloud for mercy. He then prayed with her, and left her with a glimmering hope. But it soon vanished, and despair as a torrent overwhelmed her soul.

Her disorder, which was now settled in an asthmatic consumption, greatly increased; which, together with the distress of her mind, occasioned a daily decay of strength. At the end of three weeks Mr. C[larke] visited her again and inquired particularly respecting the state of her soul. To which she made little or no reply. Upon her silence he told her she was a *lazy lukewarm soul*, or else she would have found peace before then. On this, she began to examine wherein she was lukewarm, and from this time rested not day or night for a fortnight, till on the 15th of February 1785, she became speechless; and having lost the use of her legs, was put to bed, from which she rose no more.

When her speech returned, she requested someone to come and pray with her, adding 'I am going into eternity without peace, without God.' Her mother [Catherine] exhorted her to believe and come to Christ, assuring her of his readiness to receive her and that he never turned away a true penitent. She replied, 'Unbelief, if there were nothing else, is sufficient to damn me.' Just then a friend came in and prayed with her. When the Lord answered for himself, for in a moment her burden was removed and her sorrow turned into joy. O what a change! Her face glowed with gratitude, and her soul triumphed in a crucified Redeemer. She did, indeed, ride on the sky, and for a month was filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory. In this ecstasy of joy she could scarce bear the mention of her continuing long in this vale of tears. And her cry was, 'Come Lord Jesus and take me to thyself.' But her work was not all done. For the Lord showed her that it was not only given her to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake. This she experienced not only in body but in mind, occasioned by trials from such quarters as she least expected. Nor was she at this time unobserved by the enemy of souls, whom she still found to be going about seeking whom he might devour. But the Lord was pleased,

In all her temptation to keep her to prove
His utmost salvation, his fulness of love.⁷

⁵Acts 16:31.

⁶Clarke was assigned to the east Cornwall circuit July 1784–July 1785.

⁷Cf. CW, Hymns for Christian Friends, #48, st. 2, *HSP* (1749), 2:324.

Many times she enjoyed such raptures when the people came in to see her that she cried out with a peculiar degree of divine ardour, 'O who would not love the Lord! O his goodness to me is more than I can tell! Praise the Lord, O praise the Lord with me! What hath Jesus done and suffered for so unworthy a creature! O Jesus, thou hast suffered and died on the cross for me! Where shall I begin to praise him!' She was truly lost in wonder, love, and adoration. Frequently when her friends thought she was just expiring, she suddenly desired to be raised up in bed, and sung and praised her Redeemer in such a manner, as to fill all around with wonder and astonishment. She often said, 'My work is not yet done. There are some persons to whom I have not spoken.' She then sung and spoke of the goodness of God alternately, saying 'Jesus is sweet! Is love! Yea, is sweeter than honey and more to be desired than gold. For what would all the world be to me if I had not Christ? It would signify nothing. But now that I have him, I have all I desire.'

She entreated all who knew not God to come to the Lord just as they were—poor, guilty, helpless sinners; for such he came to save. If she saw any weeping on account of their sins, she would rejoice over them and say, 'The Lord hath promised to comfort the mourner.' When any appeared unconcerned for their souls, she asked them what they thought of themselves, and then set the threatenings of God before them and told them, 'No unholy thing could enter the kingdom of heaven.' Then with a peculiar energy she prayed that none of those who came to visit her in her affliction might be shut out. If she found any careless who had known the Lord, she would mourn in secret for them. But at the same time, with the utmost tenderness would exhort the doubting and fearful to continue in his ways, assuring them he would bring them through all, and pointed them to the promises.

She made a point of examining all who came to see her respecting the state of their souls. And such was her spiritual boldness that she did not fear the countenance of any, but told them, 'The Lord hath left me here to speak for him. If therefore you have but one good desire, put it in practice and you will soon receive more. You kindly came hither to see my feeble dying body. But look not to me, behold the Lamb of God that was slain for you.' If anyone spoke of her situation being a melancholy one, and condoled her misfortune, she replied, 'I find no melancholy. My pains are all sweetened with the love of Jesus. O my heart doth rejoice at the sound of his name!' And then broke out in the following words,

My God I am thine!
What a comfort divine!
What a blessing to know that my Jesus is mine!⁸

In all her affliction singing hymns was her chief employ; which, having a clear, strong voice, and her soul being full of life and love, she performed to the no small amazement of all who saw and heard her; calling at the same time on all around to join with her in praising the Lord. She was constantly pressing all to the performance of their duty to God. Not willing that any who visited her should go away without prayer, saying, 'How do we know that we shall ever have another meeting in time? But I trust we shall praise him to all eternity.'

As she was cut off from the privilege of the public means, a weekly prayer meeting was held in her room. These meetings, while such a remarkable instance of God's goodness and power was present, proved not a little useful to those who attended them. Several have been convinced, and some found peace with God through the prayers and praises offered up at these times. Herself hath been frequently so filled with joy that she has been constrained to cry out aloud, while tears of grateful love ran down her face. But what she then felt, she has declared no tongue could tell. Her cup ran over, while she exclaimed,

⁸CW, Hymns for Believers, #16, st. 1, *HSP* (1749), 1:219.

If all the world my Jesus knew,
Sure all the world would love him too!⁹

The preachers frequently visited her, and a few times at her ardent desire preached or expounded in her chamber. Those seasons the Lord particularly blessed, by making them divine banquets of love to her soul. She entreated those who bore a public character still to speak for God, and spare not, but to lift up their voice like a trumpet. There were few that were not blessed, more or less, in going to see her; whom she reproved or exhorted, according to their characters and circumstances. And having from the time of her conversion made a tolerable progress in learning to read, she was now able to plead the promises or threatenings as most suitable to the persons she addressed.

Her poor body was now worn by an inveterate cough nearly to a skeleton. Yet, strange as it may seem, in this condition she remained almost two years. For a considerable time she was not able, from the nature of her disorder, to lie, but obliged to remain in a sitting posture in the bed day and night.

Her pains were sometimes excruciating, occasioned by ulcers that constantly rose and broke within her, so that she feared her patience would not hold out. But she cried to the Lord for strength, and he helped her according to her need. She never discovered the least symptom of impatience, or anything contrary to an entire resignation and acquiescence in the divine pleasure. Nay, she even gloried in her affliction. And when in extreme pain, she would break out in the greatest rapture, 'O what are all my sufferings to those of my dear Redeemer; who for me sweat great drops of blood!' Thus did she rejoice in and triumph over all her affliction and pain, through the contemplation of her Saviour's sufferings. Indeed, I never saw such an instance of Christian patience and triumph in the ruins of nature before.

When her sister, who had heretofore encouraged her while under her convictions, complained of her doubts and fears, she said, 'My dear,

[...] Don't fear to win the day,
Though death and hell obstruct the way.¹⁰

Jesus your head is above. He will keep you, only believe. Cast all your care upon him, for he careth for you.'

About two months before she died, Satan was permitted strongly to assault her. He tempted her even to curse God, suggesting that he dealt hardly with her. And so powerful was the temptation that she was just on the point of giving up her confidence. Just then a friend coming in, to whom she opened her case, told her the temptation was permitted for the trial of her faith. She soon discovered from whence her desponding thoughts proceeded. Which led her to cry mightily to him who sitteth above the water floods, and remaineth a King forever, that he would not suffer the enemy to overwhelm her; and she enjoyed a calm.

Soon after this, having long desired and thirsted to be wholly the Lord's, she had a dream in which she cried out to a friend, 'The lion is become a lamb.' From this time she expressed a farther work of grace, and her whole desire was 'Father thy will be done.'¹¹ She charged her sister not to mourn when she was taken away, but to sing; adding, 'And while you are singing below, I shall be singing triumphant above.' She wished her sister might be with her at her last hour, for which they offered their united prayers to God and he granted their request.

⁹Cf. Isaac Watts, 'The Description of Christ the Beloved', st. 10, *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, 2nd edn. (London: John Lawrence, 1709), 60.

¹⁰Cf. Isaac Watts, 'The Offices of Christ', st. 9, in JW, *CPH* (1738), 32.

¹¹Cf. Luke 11:2.

One day as her mother sat weeping by her, she desired her to forbear, saying, 'My *dear dear* mother! I am going home to my Father's house, where my soul longs to be, and where perhaps in a little time we shall meet to part no more forever. You must give me up to Christ.' She then began singing 'Hallelujah', and said to her mother, 'What do I feel in singing hallelujah? My soul is so filled with love to my God that I long to be gone to dwell forever with him. Yet not my will, but the will of the Lord be done. O my God, I am willing to suffer whatever thou art pleased to lay upon me, only give me patience!' Thus did she spend her days and nights, while her poor languishing body was always kept in the same position up in the bed; still calling on all around to join with her in praising the Lord.

When her sister came in to see her, she cried, 'My dear sister, I am going home to Jesus! Now our prayers are answered. Let us therefore be thankful and praise the Lord together.' She was very comfortable and happy all that evening. And having desired her sister to tarry during that night, began to relate the Lord's dealings with her during her absence. When the family joined in prayer, she cried, 'My body is weak, but my soul is strong in the Lord. O that all did but feel what I feel! I long to be dissolved and to be with Christ.' They then freely conversed together of spiritual things, which was rendered a blessing to each of their souls.

After this, being spent, she remained silent for some time as if asleep. But about one o'clock in the morning she cried out, 'Hark Nanny! Do you hear nothing?' On her answering 'No', she said, 'I hear music.' On this, the cough coming violently on her and rending her sorely, she cried, 'Now my Jesus stand by me.' And when it was abated, she said, 'Thanks be to him, that I am one struggle nearer home.' Before the clock struck 2:00 she cried out again, 'Hark Nanny! Don't you hear it now.' Being answered in the negative, she clapped her hands together exulting, and said, 'It is the sweetest music I ever heard!' She was then still till about 4:00 in the morning; when, a friend coming in and praying with her, she was greatly blessed. Her mother coming into the room in the morning, she told her of the heavenly music she had heard in the night. A little after this she desired her sister to come and read the promises to her, saying, 'They are all *mine*.' Yet soon after, she seemed rather dissatisfied with herself that she was not more lively, and asked how it was. And being informed that it probably was owing to the weakness of her body, she began singing, 'O for a heart to praise my God! ...'¹² and desired her sister to join with her.

When they had concluded, a woman coming in, she asked her how she went on in the ways of the Lord? Whether she had conquered more of her evil passions, or remained just the same as she was? She replied, she hoped she had more power. 'Ah!' she said, 'hoping will not do. You must know with a certainty that you have. If therefore you find not more peace, rest not without it.' The woman wept much, and she continued speaking a considerable time, telling her that the Lord was able to destroy *every evil*, and that the blood of Christ cleanseth from *all sin*. When the woman said she was very weak, she replied, 'O, but the Lord is strong! It may be the last time that I may speak to you here, but remember they are the words of one that is dying. The Lord grant that I may meet you again with joy in the great day. If I do not, it will be your *own fault*, not God's.'

Soon after a young woman came in whom she did not remember to have seen before. She held out her hand to her and asked if she knew anything of the goodness of God? When she answered 'Yes, glory be to God.' She clapped her hands together and cried out, 'Glory to my God for one traveller more!' Yea, she was almost overcome with joy on this occasion. A little after, she desired her sister and the persons present to join in praising God. They sang a hymn together, herself singing with them at times as her strength would permit. Nor would she suffer the person to depart till they had joined in prayer. She then bade her farewell, saying she hoped to meet her in heaven.

After this, seeing her mother weeping again, she said; 'What! Cannot you give me up yet? A little time and we shall meet again. I know we shall.' And then,

Not a cloud shall arise,
To darken your skies,

¹²CW, Hymn on Psalm 51:10, *HSP* (1742), 30–31.

Or hide for a moment your God from your eyes.¹³

She now expressed a desire of seeing her sister that was absent, saying, 'Who knows what the words of a dying sister may do? But in this also, thy will, O my God be done! I give them up into thy hands.' Then she prayed for them, and for the prosperity of the church of Christ at large. After which she remained still for some time, being very low. Then, her sister observing her lips to move, and putting her ear near them, heard her saying, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Take me to thyself. Send thine angels to conduct me to Abraham's bosom. O bring me where I shall sing hallelujahs to God and the Lamb for evermore.'

On Friday evening several friends came in to see her. And as one of them prayed, she was seized with a spasm in her cheeks, so that her teeth struck against each other. When it was a little abated, she inquired for me. Being informed hereof I immediately went to her. And when I asked her if Jesus was still precious, she said, 'Yes. I am full. I cannot tell you what I feel. It is not death, but the love of God.' I replied, 'Well, a little longer Jenny, and you will drink your fill from the ocean above.' She said she longed to be gone. I then proposed our spending some time in prayer. But as she desired we would sing first, I gave out that hymn, 'Come on, my partners in distress.'¹⁴ She then desired me to pray that she might soon be released; even that night, if it were the will of God. While engaged in prayer, the Lord made it a time of refreshing to her soul, and to the souls of those present. I then bade her farewell, not expecting to see her again in time—as I did not suppose she could survive two hours longer. She was much composed all that night. The next morning I visited her again, together with one of our brethren. As I found she could now speak but little, I proposed our joining in prayer. But as she wished us to sing a few verses previous to that exercise, I gave out, 'Away with our sorrow and fear ...'¹⁵ Whilst we were singing, her soul seemed on the wing for that celestial bliss which the words set before her. Afterward we spent some time in prayer. I then asked her if she felt anything within her contrary to love. She answered, 'No.' I then took my leave of her, and saw her no more.

Just then a person came into the room whom she had long desired to see. When she was informed of it, she cried out, 'Now, I know my God loves me, because he hath answered my prayers.' She desired a sermon to be preached on the occasion of her death on 2 Timothy 4:7–8. After praying and taking his leave of her, she remained still, saying little till the afternoon; when a person present speaking of her sufferings, she replied, she 'had none to spare.' Adding, 'What are my sufferings to my dear Saviour's?' She then began singing,

Come, Lord, the drooping sinner cheer,
Nor let thy chariot-wheels delay.¹⁶

Several friends being present in the evening, she was a third time permitted to hear the heavenly music spoken of before; but found on inquiry that none of the persons present could hear it but herself. She then cried, 'Welcome death!' Her hands becoming cold, she hereby perceived that death had seized her extremities, and cried out, 'Now I shall soon be at home. I shall soon behold my God without a dimming veil between.' She then remained low during the night. In the morning her mother said, 'My dear, your hands are cold.' She replied, 'They will be colder soon.' A little after she desired her sister to put up her cap, saying 'The people will be in soon, and it is the last Sabbath with me here.' Her sister suggested her being glad to be

¹³Cf. CW, Hymns for Believers, #18, st. 5, *HSP* (1749), 1:221.

¹⁴CW, Hymn #22, *HSP* (1749), 2:29–31.

¹⁵CW, Hymn 8, *Funeral Hymns* (1746), 11–12.

¹⁶CW, Hymn on Matthew 11:28, st. 9, *HSP* (1742), 92.

Where congregations ne'er break up,
And Sabbaths never end.¹⁷

She replied, 'My heart doth rejoice.' On her mother's saying 'Is Jesus still precious?' She replied, 'The Lord has my heart. I cannot tell you what I feel.' She then desired that all who should be present when she was gone might sing, 'Happy soul, thy days are ended ...'¹⁸ About eleven o'clock a friend coming in gave out and sung that hymn,

Come let us join our friends above
Who have obtained the prize.¹⁹

After which they joined in prayer. She now ripened for the harvest apace. And, as her desire all along had been much for singing, her father-in-law gave out

Whilst the angel choirs are crying
Glory to the great I AM;
I with them will still be vying,
Glory, glory, to the Lamb:
O how precious
Is the sound of Jesu's name!²⁰

Her voice was now gone for singing. But she looked round, with peculiar sweetness, on those about her, saying in a whispering way, 'I with them shall still be vying', moving her hands up and down as she repeated the words. Her voice being gone, but her lips still moving, her sister put her ear close to her, and found her repeating these words, 'O how precious is the sound of Jesu's name!' She then broke out with renewed strength, 'Come, Lord Jesus! come *now*! Yet not my will but thine be done.' Her pains still increasing she cried for patience. Her sister bade her hold out a little longer and the struggle would be over, and her soul would have a sweet release. She replied, 'My dear, I am happy *now* amidst all my sufferings; and the Lord will keep me so. I only want to praise him more.'

About 12:00 her brother-in-law coming in and asking how she was, she said, 'I am just going home to Jesus. But let me entreat you once more (it is the last time), to turn and seek the Lord. Call upon him, and he will abundantly bless you. For his blessings are free for all. Prepare to meet thy God. The Lord grant that you and I may meet him with joy. Then shall we sing his praises in the courts of endless bliss.'

On her friends taking their leave of her, giving them her hand, she exhorted them to keep close to God. Crying out 'O my heart doth rejoice at leaving you! Farewell here.' Then, turning to her sister, she said, 'How joyfully can I give up them and *you*, my dear sister, into the hands of him who is able to keep you in the right way!'

Her speech now altering, she could no longer be understood. However when some friends afterwards came in, she would shake hands with them. And when she failed to do this, she still beheld them with apparent satisfaction, having in this her desire granted—viz., that they might be around her at her last hour. About four o'clock, as some present were conversing of the things of God, she looked at them with particular attention, lifting at the same time her hands and eyes to heaven. Some of those

¹⁷Augustine of Hippo, 'Jerusalem, my happy home', st. 5.

¹⁸CW, 'For One Departing', *HSP* (1749), 2:75.

¹⁹Cf. *Funeral Hymns* (1759), 1–2.

²⁰Cf. Thomas Olivers, 'O thou God of my salvation', st. 3.

present desiring her mother to speak to her, she did so, asking if Jesus were still precious and if she found it so, to lift up her hands as a token thereof. She lifted them up in a moment. A little after, her sister desired she would speak to her. But she could not answer. She then asked if she wanted to take her flight above? She immediately lifted up her hands as high as she could. And about eight o'clock, after a struggle with the cough, resigned her soul to him who gave it on the 29th of June 1788.

John Moon

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 185–93, 240–46.

From P. T.

Worcester
July 7, 1788

Dear Sir,

About five years ago, I received a sense of the pardoning love of God, and for a while had peace and joy in believing.

Before this I was unconnected with any body of people, although I constantly attended the preaching of God's word at the Cherry Street chapel, in Birmingham. At this time my feelings were dreadful beyond description. But as I was a sinner, I was determined to seek a Saviour. And the blessed Jesus, finding me faithful to the grace of conviction, shortly blessed me with a sense of his pardoning love.

Sometime after this I removed from Birmingham to Monmouth. And as the Countess of Huntingdon had a chapel there, a neighbour invited me to join their connexion. I consented. But I had not been with them long before they began to inculcate notions which led me into unprofitable reasonings. But I have great reason to be thankful that the Lord was a God at hand, and not afar off. I simply spread the matter before him in prayer, and read his holy word. At last it pleased him to convince me that the doctrine of predestination was very dangerous and destructive.

Sometime after I was induced to go into company with carnal men, in order to promote my business; when the enemy strove hard to draw me into sin. At last he prevailed, for at times I drank more than I ought to do—though God knows it was in a great measure against my will. As by this means I found I had grieved the Spirit of God, I was determined to give all up. Therefore I went on using the outward means, in hopes that I should again be restored.

At last I gave up my business and came to Worcester to work as a journeyman, thinking I should not be so much exposed to the temptations before mentioned. But the more I endeavoured to overcome, the more did the enemy prevail against me. At last seeing the necessity of having my nature thoroughly changed, I earnestly prayed to God for it. But the conflicts I endured, and the discouragements I met with cannot easily be declared. However the Lord gave me resolution to go on, to seek him in earnest. And glory be to his name, I have not sought in vain!

After some time it pleased God to send you to Worcester. The last time I heard you was on the 20th day of March last, when you preached on, 'Comfort ye, comfort ye my people saith your God.'¹ It pleased him at that time to work in me that change which I wanted. And since that time I have not been overcome by the enemy, but have been enabled to trample him under my feet! It is true, he disputes every inch of ground with me. But when he comes in like a flood, the Spirit lifts up a standard against him. So that I come off more than conqueror through him that has loved me.

But I see the absolute necessity of watching unto prayer continually. For I am as fully convinced of the possibility of falling, even from the greatest attainments, as I am of my own existence. And I am led to see the necessity of watchfulness on another account—namely, in order to an attainment of still greater degrees of grace. For although freedom from sin is one great part of what I want, yet it is but a part. I want more of the mind that was in Christ. I want to be filled with all the fulness of God! I want every affection set fully on things above. Then shall the whole of my conversation be in heaven, and I shall do the will of God on earth as it is done above; and thereby glorify him with my body and spirit which are his.

P— T—

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 12 (1789): 76–78.

¹Isa. 40:1.

From Francis Wrigley

Chorley
July 11, 1788

Reverend Sir,

I hope you intend to continue the Conference this year for nine or ten days. Our manner of settling houses for the present and future ought to be examined. Many of our friends are much prejudiced against the Conference deed.¹ I am afraid that some of our preachers are so too, and have helped the people onwards in their prejudice. I think one form is much best, and if the present wants any alteration or addition, I think it will be best to settle it at the ensuing Conference.

For my part, I confess myself perfectly satisfied with the present deed. But I know it has got a bad name! Some have said we must give more power to the trustees. What for? Some houses have been suffered to be built, and remain the property of one or two men, because they are richer than their neighbours, or because they give ten, twenty, or thirty pounds. Then this one man, or two men, won't settle the house but as he (or they) please. I think there are more of these new clauses in the circuits where some of our oldest preachers have been (and continue to go) than in any part of England. I see no good in letting a man have a house settled his own way because he gives a little more than his neighbours. Better be without house, for a time at least.

Are we not making rich men needful to us, by building so many houses, multiplying Sunday places, and sending so many preachers into circuits that one of them must be seven or fourteen days in one place together, and be three or four nights in a week without preaching? This does not promise much for a continuance of the itinerant plan! Some have been industrious in dividing of circuits till they have made them as small as parishes, and glad to preach where they have a class meets, to put in time and get a little from the principal place. I think no great deal of good has come of this to Birstall, Dewsbury, or Huddersfield circuits, which were very prosperous before.

At present I think something is needful to be done respecting settling houses, and no preacher ought to presume to deviate from the general rule in the least. If he does, he ought to be excluded [from] the connexion. You mentioned at Mr. Segar's² the Quakers vesting all their houses in the Yearly Meeting. I could like to know where to see their form of settling them.

The gentleman whom Dr. [Thomas] Coke mentioned at Bristol Conference [in 1786], of settling his house upon the Conference, without trustees—if it would only put a stop to building, would it not do well? As our friends are so jealous of you, as well as of the preachers, if they would not settle them upon the Conference, they would not build.

My mind has been much grieved this year on account of hearing trustees and stewards talk of the Conference. I have, agreeable to your request, changed some of the stewards in this circuit. It has given satisfaction to some of the people who have spoke to me, and if any are dissatisfied they keep it [to themselves]. All is quiet. I expect you will hear I am very masterly. I am persuaded some of our leading men have thought so. But I have told them what was a rule of Conference, when they have none otherwise. I want us all to continue what we have been, and endeavour to preserve the future union of ourselves and the people.

I am, reverend sir,

Your son in the gospel,

F. Wrigley

Endorsement: by Wrigley, 'July 8th 1788 / To Mr Wesley'.

Source: Wrigley's copy for his records; MARC, MA 1977/610/138.³

¹See 'Large' *Minutes* (1763), §67, *Works*, 10:868–70.

²If this was at the home of Stephen Seager, he was now a grocer living in Birmingham.

³The document is in Wrigley's hand.

Unidentified Correspondent to *Kentish Gazette*¹

c. July 12, 1788

A correspondent who is an inhabitant of Bradford in Yorkshire says that he has read with astonishment and concern Mr. Wesley's declaration in the public prints that the prophesy of Bengelius, which he alluded to in Bradford Church, related to the millennial reign of Christ upon earth and not to the dissolution of the world. Our correspondent affirms that he heard Mr. Wesley's discourse, and he never alluded in the most distant degree to the millennium. But to enforce the subject of his discourse ('The end of all things is at hand.'²) he mentioned Bengelius's prophesy that the world would end in 1836. And he added that this learned man once intended to have fixed on the year 1736 for this interesting event, but for important reasons afterwards changed his opinion; which Mr. Wesley observed was wisely done, as the former period at present seemed much more probable. Our correspondent is sorry to add that it is the common practice of the Methodists, whenever they are exposed for saying a foolish thing, or censured for doing a bad one (two infirmities which this sect are more subject to than any other upon earth) to have recourse for their defense to subterfuge and falsehood. That in so doing the disciples only follow the example of their mast is apparent from the above account, for the truth of which our correspondent appeals to the vicar of Bradford, who is no less distinguished by his love of truth than his integrity, disinterestedness, and every other virtue which adorns either the Christian or the gentleman.³

Source: published transcription; *Kentish Gazette* (July 15, 1788), p. 2.

¹Titled: 'Wesley's Prediction'.

²1 Pet. 4:7.

³Rev. John Crosse was the vicar.

Methodists of Newport

Newport
July 17, 1788

Reverend Sir,

We whose names are under-mentioned (being such as esteem Methodism to be the work of God) are a few of the many in the island who feel themselves to be under an obligation to thank you for sending us Mr. [Thomas] Warrick, under whose faithful preaching we have often experienced the power of God, and whose indefatigable labours in both town and country, especially the latter, has merited our highest respect. Having a tender regard for his character, we feel ourselves obliged to endeavour to erase from it the vile misrepresentations with which it has been branded, principally through Mr. Hayter.¹ It is evident that through Mr. Warrick's activity and strict attention to his duty in the country, Mr. Hayter's jealousy was raised; and fearing that he should lose some of his influence and authority amongst the people, wished to find a flaw in his character, in order to distress him, and if possible get rid of one that was so often on his ground, and dealt so faithfully with his people.

The general conduct of Mr. Hayter for a year or two past makes the truth of the above appear clearly to us who have often lamented to see in him, though an old professor, the inordinate love of praise.

We are, yours affectionately, ...

Source: published transcription; Dyson, *Isle of Wight*, 158–59.

¹George Hayter had been serving as a local preacher since the early 1780s; see Dyson, *Isle of Wight*, 114, 123–25. He was appointed to serve as a travelling preacher, under Thomas Warrick, by the 1787 Conference, but his name was later struck out and he never reappears (see *Works*, 10:625 fn. 261).

Methodists of Newport

Newport
July 30, 1788

Reverend Sir,

We should be exceedingly happy to have two itinerant preachers constantly in the island, particularly so when we consider the great want of one at Cowes on a Sunday evening.¹ But it is the unanimous opinion of those whose names are undersigned that they cannot be supported by the island alone. We have great reason to fear that Mr. Hayterr has prejudiced the minds of the people in the country against the travelling preachers, so that it is likely many will withhold their subscriptions. This, together with the probability of losing one or two eminent friends to the cause, are the principal reasons which incline us to the disagreeable necessity of objecting to the proposal to disunite the island from Portsmouth.²

We are, yours affectionately, ...

Source: published transcription; Dyson, *Isle of Wight*, 159–60.

¹Jasper Winscom and Henry Saunders were assigned to the Isle of Wight at the 1788 Conference.

²The Isle of Wight was made a separate circuit from Sarum/Portsmouth by the 1787 Conference, but they were reunited in 1789.

Rev. Dr. Thomas Coke to the Trustees of the Dewsbury Preaching-House

London
August 6, 1788

My Dear Brethren,

I am desired by the Conference to inform you that they are unanimously determined to be judged only by their peers in respect to their appointments and ministerial labours.

Mr. Wesley also desire me to inform you that he cannot act against the unanimous determination of the Conference, and therefore the proposal made in you in Mr. [John] Atlay's letter must drop.¹

The method we now propose for an accommodation is as follows:

1. We appoint Messrs. [Alexander] Mather, [John] Pawson, and [William] Thompson as our delegates, to meet the trustees once more.
2. The trustees are to inform our delegates whether any deed has been executed or not; and if any deed has been executed, the trustees are to show the deed to our delegates.
3. If a deed has been already executed and *enrolled in Chancery* (without which enrollment the deed is null and void by virtue of the Mortmain Act) the let a supplemental deed be drawn up on a ten-shilling stamp, which supplemental deed must also be enrolled within six months after its execution, and let the following clauses be inserted in the said supplemental deed: viz.

1) That the Rev. John Wesley during his life; and after his decease, the Conference of the People called Methodists and no others; shall have authority to send, year after year forever, preachers to Dewsbury, to preach the Word of God in the said preaching-house.

2) Provided nevertheless, that if the said preachers or any [one of] them so sent by the said Conference be disapproved by the said trustees, the said trustees shall summon three of the neighbouring Assistant-preachers who are in connection with the said Conference, which Assistant-preachers shall attend accordingly and shall hear the complaints of the said trustees. And if the said Assistant-preachers shall judge the complaint of the said trustees to be sufficient, then they the said Assistant-preachers shall remove the said preacher or preachers so complained against, and supply the said preaching-house with a preacher or preachers instead of the preacher or preachers so removed. And the said Assistant-preachers shall also apply immediately to the said John Wesley during his life, or to the President of the said Conference after the decease of the said John Wesley, who shall as soon as possible supply the said preaching-house with a proper preacher or preachers instead of the preacher or preachers so removed as aforesaid, until the meeting of the said Conference.

N.B. If there be no deed drawn up and enrolled, then the above clause may be inserted in a new deed.

3. If you consent to the above clause, and execute the proper instrument accordingly, then our delegates shall immediately afterwards appoint Mr. John Shaw and Mr. William Percival as your preachers for the ensuing year. But if you will not consent to this [clause] we must withdraw ourselves from you, pray for you [in] secret, and leave you to God. I am,

Your affectionate brother,

Thomas Coke

P.S. Messrs. Mather, Pawson, and Thompson will meet you, God willing, at Dewsbury on Thursday in the next week, the 14th of this month, at 2:00 in the afternoon.

Address: 'Mr. Heald / at Dewsbury / near Wakefield / Yorkshire'.

Source: holograph; Drew, Methodist Archives.

¹JW to John Heald (via John Atlay), July 30, 1788, *Works*, 30:713.

From John Atlay

London
August 19, 1788

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I was in hopes matters at Dewsbury would have been made up. But by a letter yesterday, [I] am informed it is quite otherwise, that their preachers are removed from them, and their place declared vacant; in consequence of which, they (the trustees) have most solemnly called me to come amongst them. They plead my promise, and I cannot go back from it. With me a promise is sacred, though it should be ever so much to my hurt, and as to temporals it must hurt me much. But I do not regard that, if I am but more useful in life. And there is a prospect that I shall be much more useful there than I ever have been, or can be in London. But it gives me more pain than I can express when I tell you that (in order to go there) I must quit the book room. The longest that I can stay in it will be till the twenty-fifth of the next month, and by that time you will be able to get one for my place. And I think the fittest man in the world for it is brother [Joseph] Bradford. If he should be appointed, he may come directly and stay with us till we go, and by that time I could teach him more than he can learn in three months without me. But these things I leave to your superior judgment.

I have only now to request a few things of you, and have done. Do not be angry with me for leaving you, after having spent fifteen of the best years of my life in serving you with more care, fear, labour, and pain than all the years of my life have produced, and put them altogether. Do not blame me for going to a people you have left—they are the Lord's redeemed ones, and some of them living members of his body. Do not disown me, nor forbid my preaching in any of your places; but give me leave where and when it is agreeable to the preachers, to preach in your houses. But if this request cannot be complied with, then drop me silently, and let me be of too little consequence to say anything about me from the pulpit or press. I beg you will write to me by return of post, and do not write unkindly to

Your faithful servant and friend,

John Atlay

Source: published transcription; Atlay, *Letters*, 10–11.

From [John Broadbent?]¹

Frome
August 23, 1788

This day I attended the funeral of Nathaniel Norwall, and preached to a crowded audience.

In his younger days he gave himself up to all the follies of the age, and lived without God in the world. But hearing the gospel preached by the Methodists, he was convinced that the way he was in led to eternal death. In a short time he became sober, attended the preaching of the word, joined the society, met constantly with the people of God, and adorned the doctrine of God his Saviour in all things. The last year of his life, in particular, he behaved as one that was determined to save his soul.

Taking a journey to Bath, in his return home it rained all the way. From that time he sunk into a deep decline. Yet he met his class, and heard the word preached as long as he was able.

When he was unable to attend the public ordinances, he was visited by his Christian friends, when he appeared cheerful and resigned to the will of God. When anyone spoke to him concerning death, his answer was, 'The will of the Lord be done.'

The night he died, he said, about nine o'clock, 'Satan, thou canst not hurt me. Thou knowest I cannot stand against thee of myself. But Christ will make thee fall before me, as Dagon fell before the ark!²—God is love, I know! I feel! I know that God is love!' And then [he] added,

Not a doubt can arise,
To darken the skies,
Or hide for one moment my Lord from my eyes.³

When a friend came into the room he said, 'Jesus is my support. I had a cloud over my soul for six or seven weeks; but when Jesus came, it was done away.'

As speaking caused him to pant for breath, he said, 'A few more pants, and I shall be where Jesus will embrace me, and where my eye shall see the King in his beauty. O what a mercy has God shown to such a worthless worm as me! I have not a doubt of my acceptance, nor of my title to eternal life. Come Lord Jesus, come quickly, if it be thy will!' He then added,

O that my Jesu's heavenly charms,
Might every bosom move!
Fly sinners, fly into those arms
Of everlasting love!⁴

His last words were, 'To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at my word.'⁵

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 12 (1789): 75–76.

¹This letter was surely from one of the itinerants on the Bristol circuit; John Broadbent was the current Assistant for the circuit.

²See 1 Sam. 5:3–4.

³CW, Hymns for Believers, #18, st. 5, *HSP* (1749), 1:221.

⁴CW, 'After Preaching', st. 14, *HSP* (1749), 1:307.

⁵See Isa. 66:2.

From John Atlay

London
August 28, 1788

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I thank you for your kind letter, and will preserve it as long as the paper will hang together, or as long as I live.¹

Last night I had two hours' conversation with brother [George] Whitfield. He is fully determined not to come into the book room, and therefore some other must be applied to, to fill up that place. I still think brother [Joseph] Bradford the person for it.

I told Mr. Whitefield last night that if you would send two preachers to Dewsbury, as usual, and let everything drop into its old channel, I would stay with you to the day of your death or mine. But I have received a long letter today from Mr. [John] Pawson, which has more fully than ever convinced me that I ought to go to Dewsbury; and therefore now can only say, if you will send them two preachers with whom they will be fully satisfied, and who will be thoroughly satisfied to go to them as the healers of all breaches; then, and only then, can I consider myself as free from my promise to them.

I shall wait your kind and welcome answer by return of post, and am now determined that you under God shall determine for me. Appoint who you will for the book room, and I will go to Dewsbury; or appoint who you will for Dewsbury (if they are only men of peace), and I will stay with you, and endeavour till death to convince you that I am

Your dutiful son and servant,

John Atlay

N. B. Mr. Pawson's letter informed me that the people of Dewsbury were all of one heart and mind, beyond anything he had ever seen in all his life, and were determined to stand by each other, and never give up their house.

Source: published transcription; Atlay, *Letters*, 13–14.

¹JW to Atlay, Aug. 23, 1788, *Works*, 30:726.

From S[ophia?] B[radburn]¹

c. September 1788

Miss Cadman's life, conversation, and experience are so well known to those who had the pleasure of her friendship that they need no recital. But as they may wish to hear something of her in her last moment, the following account may be very acceptable.

On Saturday the 16th of August, going to visit a person who was ill of a dangerous fever, she caught the disorder and returned home quite indisposed.

On Sunday the 17th, she attended the [City Road] chapel as usual. But in the evening her disorder increased. Yet for several days we had no apprehension, nor had she herself, that this sickness would be unto death.

On the 10th day of her illness, being asked if she thought she should die, she answered, 'I think not.' But afterwards, when the doctor prescribed for her, she said, 'You are aiming at impossibilities. Indeed you are.' And from this time she was much in prayer.

Though she was always remarkable for patience and humility, yet now these, and her resignation to the will of God, shone brighter than ever. For she never complained, except it was on account of the trouble (as she called it) which she gave her friends!

Four days before she died the Lord manifested himself to her more abundantly, giving her a clear prospect of the felicity she was soon to enjoy. On this she cried out to those about her, 'O my friends, what has Jesus done for me! Now I know he is able to save to the uttermost, for he is faithful to his word and saves even *me*! Trust in him my friends! Trust in him for all you want! Lay hold on his Spirit, and never grieve him more. Believe and be happy! It is not I that speak, but the Spirit of God which speaketh in me. I *have* worked; but it is God that works now!'

Having ended speaking, she called me to her, and desired me to read a few lines of that hymn,

Now I have found the ground wherein
Sure my soul's anchor may remain,²

At another time she desired me to sing, 'Praise the Lord for it is good. O praise him! for it is sweet!'

As she was speaking to those around her, I said, 'My dear, have you not a word to say to me!' 'O yes', said she, 'a thousand! A thousand! I love you! And Jesus loves you! And he will come and fetch you soon! O my friends, what has Jesus done for me! Is this dying! Can this be dying! Happy day! Sweet day! Let my mother and sister, and all my friends come and see a Christian die!' While we were praying for her release, her spirit took its flight, about two o'clock on Saturday morning, August 30, 1788, and in the fortieth year of her age.³

S. B.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 12 (1789): 187–89.

¹Titled: 'A Short Account of the Death of Sarah Cadman. Written by a particular Friend'. The friend was almost certainly either Sophia (Cooke) Bradburn, or her husband Samuel, who was currently stationed at City Road in London.

²Johann Andreas Rothe, 'Redemption Found' (trans. JW), *HSP* (1740), 91–92.

³Sarah Cadman was buried at City Road Chapel on Sept. 8, 1788.

From John Atlay¹

London
September 2, 1788

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I never did hinder George Whitfield from serving you, let him testify if I did. I am

Your affectionate,

John Atlay

Source: published transcription; Atlay, *Letters*, 15.

¹Atlay was replying to JW's letter of Aug. 31, 1788, *Works*, 30:727.

From John Atlay¹

London
September 6, 1788

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I am ready to give all the assistance that will be wanted, or rather that is in my power, in taking the stock. I have had many a long day and week's work at it before, but this will be the last. I am exceeding poorly at present. I believe it is all owing to my fretting about Dewsbury. And my fears lest I should take a wrong step have greatly tormented me. But last Monday when I read your letter, bidding me go and serve them,² there was a something broke in on my soul of light and liberty, such as I never felt in my life. I thought, I will serve them for the Lord's sake with every power I possess.

The beginning of the week we shall get most of our furniture on board the ship. It sails on the 11th of this month, goes to Selby, and from thence the boats will take them to Dewsbury. I am glad you are satisfied respecting my not dissuading George Whitfield. No sir, I have never deceived you with lying vanities, nor ever will.

Today I preached in the Morning Chapel for the last time.³ Dr. [Thomas] Coke, and Mr. [Henry] Moore have forbid my preaching in the great Chapel, and at West Street. I should have done no harm, but they have often served me so, and therefore I need not wonder. I shall soon be out of their reach, and then they will be at rest. I shall always be glad to hear of you, or from you, and am

Your affectionate,

John Atlay

Source: published transcription; Atlay, *Letters*, 16–17.

¹Atlay was replying to JW's letter of Sept. 4, 1788, *Works*, 30:728–29.

²See JW to Atlay, Aug. 31, 1788, *Works*, 30:727.

³The Morning Chapel was a smaller and plainer room connected to the main City Road Chapel; it was used for preaching services, but not sacramental worship.

From John Gillis¹

c. September 15, 1788

Hugh Pue had, from his infancy, a sweetness in his natural disposition, which greatly recommended him; so that he was beloved both by saints and sinners. He was affectionate and free in his behaviour, and from his childhood was remarkably free from outward vice. He spent mostly every Sabbath in retirement, reading, and meditation. And in these he experienced a sweetness, which far excelled

The joy that is sadness,
The mirth that is vain;
The laughter that's madness,
The pleasure that's pain.²

Before he heard the gospel preached by the Methodists, he thought very few were in so safe a condition as himself. But when he had heard the truth as it is in Jesus, he received it in the love thereof, and cast his self-righteousness away. He had a particular friendship and affection for the preachers, and constantly attended their preaching. And though he did not immediately join the society, it was not from any objection to the way but from a sense of his unfitness.

When he joined the society, conviction sunk deeper, and deeper in his heart. And the Lord shortly after spoke peace to his soul. He now rejoiced abundantly in the God of his salvation, and never lost his first love; but held on his way, loving and praising the redeeming Friend of sinners. The Lord still made clearer and clearer discoveries of his love to his soul. So that his advancements in the divine life were more swift than ordinary. He soon began to pity and pray for his fellow sinners. And being encouraged both by God and man, he, notwithstanding his natural timidity, began to exhort his neighbours, both in private and public, to fly from the wrath to come. And the Lord owned his feeble, loving endeavours in many places. Almost in every place where he proclaimed publicly war with hell, more or less deserted the devil's cause and flew to the Redeemer, and enlisted under the banner of his love.

His mind was not vainly puffed up on this account. But his zeal and courage was abundantly increased. So that in preaching he often forgot himself, and exhausted all his strength in speaking for God. Having a strong, healthy, youthful constitution, he continued labouring on, insensible of the danger into which he was running by his loud and long speaking. And all cautions to him respecting this seemed in vain.

At the Conference in 1787, he was taken upon trial as a travelling preacher, and appointed for the Clones circuit.³ Here his labours were still more abundantly blessed unto all; especially the truly simple. The Lord gave him many seals to his ministry. But soon,

The full blown rose began to fade.

When he discovered his disorder, it was too late to expect a recovery by human means. His strength and beauty wasted by swift degrees. And being judged by the physicians irrecoverable, he came home to his mother's [in Lisburn], where every means was used. But all in vain, for a few months brought him to the grave.

¹John Gillis was admitted 'on trial' as an itinerant in Ireland in 1786; see *Works* 10, 597. He disappears from *Minutes* after 1797.

²Cf. CW, Hymn 23, st. 4, *Redemption Hymns* (1747), 32.

³See *Works*, 10:623, 628; and his obituary in *Works*, 10:676.

During the time of his sickness, he never showed the least sign of murmuring or discontent; but a calm patience, and sweet resignation to the will of God was constantly expressed in all his words and actions. A few days before he died, I called to see him, when he told me he felt no desire to be anything, or in any condition but just as his loving God pleased; and added, 'I am distressed because I feel so little love, and am often ready to call in question all my past experience.'

I endeavoured to encourage him by observing that the enemy was taking advantage of this his heaviness through affliction, in order to bring him into doubts and fears. After we had conversed a while, we went to prayer, and the Lord refreshed this his suffering child. When I called soon again to see him, he appeared no worse in body; and his mind was in a measure stayed upon God, but often exercised with the former temptation. I endeavoured to comfort him in the best manner I could, and we went to prayer. He then entered into a wrestling agony, and glory be to God, he got power to believe with the heart unto full salvation. All those who were present were melted down, and uncommonly refreshed. For it was a time of refreshing indeed from the presence of the Lord. When we got up from prayer, he seemed fully satisfied, and said, 'Glory be to God, I now feel that he is all love. All my complaints are now removed. Praise the Lord, oh my soul, and all that is within me praise his holy name. But', added he, 'continue to pray for me'.

He grew worse in the evening, and had a very severe night. About midnight he began to spit blood, and to bring up clotted lumps thereof; so that sometimes he had difficulty in getting it up. The family now gathered into the room. And his mother asked him, when he could speak, if he now experienced the salvation which he had preached to others? He answered in a sweet, satisfying manner, 'Glory be to God I do! Jesus is all and in all!'

On Saturday, September 7, 1788, during most of the forenoon, he continued to cough and vomit great lumps of thick blood; but lay sweetly resigned in the arms of redeeming love until the evening, when he grew worse. The family then all gathered into the room—when the scene was very distressing, but it was soon over. A large lump of blood came into his throat, which he was not able to get up; and then his weary spirit took its happy flight!

Away from a world of distress!
Away to the mansions above!
The heaven of seeing his face!
The heaven of feeling his love!⁴

J. G.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 12 (1789): 635–38.

⁴Cf. CW, Hymn 46, st. 3, *Redemption Hymns* (1747), 59.

From Hester Ann (Roe) Rogers

Cork
September 17, 1788

My Very Dear and Honoured Sir,

Since I wrote to my dear Miss [Elizabeth] Ritchie I have had a return of the influenza, and been but very indifferent in health. Mr. Roberts too, our single preacher, was very ill of it near a fortnight, and for some days not out of danger.¹ Since this, brother Ward,² who lives under the roof with us, has been dangerously ill also, and no proper person but ourselves to attend him. These things, with my infant charge,³ classes, etc., will I trust plead an excuse for my long silence. Blessed be God, my dear husband [James] has been kept in tolerable health, which I esteem a particular mercy, as I never knew to my remembrance any complaint so general as this influenza—and to some in Cork, and many in Dublin, I hear it has proved fatal.

No doubt you remember old Margaret Trimmal(?), one of the first Methodists in this city, who stood some of the hottest persecution here, and bore in her body some marks that she followed her suffering Lord. A few weeks ago, being I believe a hundred years of age, she fled to glory in the triumph of faith, having had no doubt for many months before her death that the blood of Jesus Christ had cleansed her from all sin.

Another is also, I have no doubt, escaped safe—though not so triumphantly—to the bosom of her Lord, being Ann Neal, a daughter of sister [Christiana] Malenoir. She was enabled to trust God with five small children, and testified that she was not afraid to die.

Old John Trembath has been about eight months in Cork—attends preaching and visits most of the sick in our society, and some others, prays with them, exhorts them, and is made a great blessing to many souls, as well as in prescribing for the body. As to his moral conduct, I hear it is unprovable for some time past. And he yet *loves* the truth and the people of God. We have been several times in his company. But though he will converse with freedom and a degree of spirituality, he silently declines a closer connection with us. Yet I trust his latter days *will*, with respect to his soul, be peace. But oh what a pity that such talents should not be *wholly* employed for God.

We have had a great rumour here about a flaming Calvinist being to come here very soon. But through a wonderful interposition of Divine providence we have reason to believe the scheme is entirely frustrated—while we have stood still, and beheld the salvation of God. A Mr. Heazle⁴ of Bandon went over to England for a stock of goods and there spoke to Lady Huntingdon, who promised if they would raise money, etc., she would send one of her ablest preachers to Cork and Bandon. Three or four persons formerly Methodist in this city joined in the plan, and a subscription was set on foot. But when the goods came for Mr. Hazel, a discovery was made by the Custom House officers of a piece of muslin secreted in the inside of every piece of corduroy; and other things also, to the amount of three or four hundred pounds. As soon as these were secured, the officers set off to Bandon and there seized goods to a great value. And though many things were rescued from them, they will sue for damages. So that it is imagined

¹Thomas Roberts (1765–1832), a native of Bodmin, Cornwall, was converted in early life and began to preach soon after. He was admitted to the itinerant ministry in 1786 (see *Works*, 10:596) and served his first five years in Ireland. The remainder of his active itinerancy was in England and Wales, until ill health required him to retire in Bristol about 1811. See *Minutes* (post-Wesley, 1832), 7:111; and his memoir in *WMM* 16 (1837): 1–15, 81–95, 161–76.

²This is likely Richard Ward, the son of Martha Ward, who had left Kingswood school.

³Hester now had two children of her own to care for, since her marriage to James Rogers: James Roe Rogers (b. 1786) and Hester Ann Rogers (b. Mar. 1788).

⁴Orig., 'Hazel'; an uncommon spelling for Irish names.

the whole loss will be 900 pounds at least. The noise of this affair has spread round the country, and so confounded the Calvinist party that we have reason to hope all the scheme is at an end. However, if one of those preachers should come, every leader has promised to stand fast and exert every power to preserve those under his or her care from even once going to hear such a one. And we have at present such a universal spirit of love and harmony subsisting through the whole society that I believe we have nothing to fear.

Blessed be God, there is a gracious deepening work going on amongst us. Some who for *many years* have been joined with us and never yet knew the forgiveness of sins are now convinced deeply they *must* be converted, or perish. About 20 since Conference are enabled to rejoice in a pardoning God, several backsliders restored to a clear sense of favour divine, and seven fully renewed in love. Mr. Roberts joins my dear partner hand and heart and is made a blessing to the people. I think we could not have a more suitable person with us. We three have covenanted afresh lately, with God and with each other, to put forth all our powers to promote the good of precious souls—in secret wrestling prayer *for* them, as well as public labours—and already we see blessed fruit. Our own souls also are abundantly watered.

God, my indulgent, faithful God, is bringing me into a much deeper union with himself. For some months past I have been *all* desire for a greater fullness of *love*, a more constant testimony respecting *every* thought, word, and action that I pleased God, as well as a *general* sense of acceptance and a deeper spirituality in all things. I do feel a blessed increase of all these, and can constantly rejoice in a triune God, and feel him *all* my own. In secret communion with him I prove what cannot be expressed. So does he unfold his blessed fulness, his treasures of grace, his riches of glory. An oh I long to be

Plunged in the Godhead's deepest sea
And lost in his immensity.⁵

Give me leave to say, my dear sir, I *cannot* regard the prophecy of that young woman, or child, or any other that foretells *you* will soon be taken away from us.⁶ It may be *permitted* of God, and for this very reason—that his people may wrestle and pray more abundantly for your continued life. And they never did this, I believe, so much as now. Indeed, I believe the church never needed you so much. And I feel an assurance that God *will* not tear you from his praying children. Whenever he does call you away, I believe it will be without any notice at all, for he cannot resist the supplications of thousands. And though to rest from your labours and toil would be infinite gain to *you* at any time; yet I hope, dear sir, you will reflect that *more* labours will be *more* glory, and lifetime is the only time you can do anything for your beloved Master and thereby manifest your love to him in his members. Neither do we need to drop the body to enjoy God, for in a blessed measure we may prove 'Heaven already is begun'.⁷

Whenever I pray that you may be filled with a seven-fold portion of the graces and gifts of the Holy Spirit,⁸ I feel I pray for thousands. Because *you* live not for yourself,

But freely what you receive to *give*,
And pillar of his church you live.

⁵Cf. CW, 'Hymn to the Holy Ghost', st. 3, *HSP* (1739), 184.

⁶See JW's account of this prophecy by Margaret Barlow in his *Journal*, June 10, 1788, *Works*, 24:91.

⁷CW, 'The Love Feast', Pt. III, st. 4, *HSP* (1740), 184.

⁸See Isa. 11:1–2.

Therefore upon you, for his church's sake, will he open the windows of heaven and fill you with all his *plentitude* of love. And when you are *most* ripe for glory, *then* will you shed forth the blessed influences of it most abundantly on all around. *Thus* will a God of love make your remaining years most glorious. And when you have indeed finished *all* the good pleasure of his will here, you *shall* be translated from his presence here to his more glorious and beatific presence above.

He fills *my* soul with love divine while thus I write. He *is my God*, and I shall meet you, dear sir, on the plains of glorious light when time and mortality is no more. I shall see *you nearer* the eternal throne; but *I* shall be forever where Jesus is. My full heart would prompt me to say much more, but I have already written much and your time is precious. I break off therefore, entreating you ever to love and pray for, my very dear and honoured sir,

Your truly affectionate,

Hester Ann Rogers

P.S. We are a little pained at hearing nothing from Mr. [Thomas] McGeary since Joseph went.⁹ The child indeed wrote a line to tell us of his safe arrival. But that is all and Mr. McGeary was then gone to Conference. If you have been at Kingswood, we shall esteem it a favour to know if you saw the dear children and if they are well. Mr. Rogers begs I will give his kindest love and duty to you. He was surprised a few days ago by a printed letter from Mr. [John] Atlay to find he has given up the bookroom and is going into Yorkshire. We hope he has not quitted the Connexion. Our joint love to dear Miss Ritchie. I hope to have a long letter from her soon. I hope you will bring her with you to Cork in the spring. We please ourselves much with the prospect of seeing you and her at that time.

Address: 'To / The Revd John Wesley / New Chapel City Road / London'.

Postmark: 'Cork' and 'SE/24/88'.

Endorsement: by JW, 'S[iste]r Rogers / Sept 22. 1788 / a[nswere]d 29'.¹⁰

Source: holograph; Wesley's Chapel (London), LDWMM 1994/1935.

⁹Joseph Rogers (b. 1779) was the eldest son of James Rogers, with his first wife, Martha (Knowlden) Rogers.

¹⁰JW's reply to Rogers is not known to survive.

From John Atlay

London
September 20, 1788

Reverend and Dear Sir,

We have almost this moment finished our job of taking the stock, and as near as we can tell, your stock is this day worth thirteen thousand, seven hundred and fifty-one pounds, eighteen shillings and fivepence, according to the prices fixed in the catalogue. However, you may be sure it is not less than that. Most of these are saleable things, you will be sure to find sale for them if you live; and if not, they will be of equal value to those to whom you leave them.

I intend to leave London on Wednesday the 24th. I should have stayed till Thursday, but a report is more or less spreading here, that you are telling the people in Bristol that 'Atlay will not leave the book room in order to make way for Mr. [George] Whitfield, and that you must come up to London in order to get him out.' I do not believe you capable of saying so. Nay, I am almost confident you *could not*, because you *knew* the direct contrary was the case. But as this is reported, I shall go one day before the time I had fixed, to let everyone see I need not be driven out. I have given brother Whitfield every instruction that I can, and shall continue so to do, and hope he will do very well. I trust he is a good man—and will be attentive to his business I have no doubt. I know not that he will have occasion for any of my instructions after I am gone; but if he have, he needs only write to me. I shall always be glad to serve you or him.

I am, reverend and dear sir, your truly affectionate,

John Atlay

Source: published transcription; Atlay, *Letters*, 17–18.

From Sarah Wesley Jr.

Ramsgate
Tuesday, September 23 [1788]

My dearest uncle directed his last kind letter to Margate instead of Ramsgate.¹ It was however brought to me after some delay, and having been opened.

It does give me pleasure to hear the life of my respected father will be written by you. I have been endeavouring to recollect the events which have fallen within my knowledge, and am astonished to find them so few and inconsiderable. Much as I was with him, and many as are the precious *words* which I have treasured up, he spoke so little of himself, and so reluctantly, that I have frequently had recourse to others for the most common information respecting his life.

Nor has he kept any journal (that we yet have been able to find) of his latter years.² Some remarkable circumstances he has put down in writing, which I can procure on my return, but I doubt whether they are of an admissible nature in such a work as yours. One of the longest is respecting a Mr. [Edward] Davies, who defrauded him of an horse, and only important as it testifies his meekness and forbearance under ill-treatment and injustice. Most of the papers are of this kind.³

His conduct indeed under various trials was most exemplary. Whenever he lost a friend by death (and noone regarded a friend more tenderly); whenever he met with any of those dispensations of providence which we call evils, whether contempt of his ministry, ingratitude towards himself, bodily pain, or disappointment—it seemed to add to his faith, *patience*.⁴ He received all from the hands and in the name of the Lord, resignedly.

Even his constitutional warmth of temper was the means of producing such acts of humility as I never yet saw equalled. He would apologise even to *his children* for a hasty word, and indeed on every domestic occasion displayed sweet condescension and kindness.

His self-denial was remarkable. He always preferred the coarsest fare, the meanest things, in little and in great; and in such a manner that it might appear a matter of indifference of choice rather than a virtue.

He was in everything unostentatious. He once owned to me that the reason he did not give money to beggars was lest anyone should see him.

He *strove* to be little and unknown, to *conceal* his graces. Acting under the divine eye, he shunned all others. And whenever he spoke of himself, it was in such humble words as I am sure he would not have applied to any other servant of God.

But whenever he was called to bear his testimony, whether publicly or privately in the line of duty, he had no respect of persons. All the zeal of his soul would be poured out; earnestly and valiantly he would contend for the truth.

With holy indignation filled
When by the prince of hell withstood.
Firm to resist, and grasp the shield
And quench his fiery darts with blood.⁵

¹See JW to Sarah Wesley Jr., Sept. 8, 1788, *Works*, 30:730.

²The MS Journal that CW collected for possible publication, but was not published until after his death, starts in 1736 and ends in 1756.

³These various accounts of CW that survive can be found in CW, *Journal Letters*, 416ff.

⁴Cf. 2 Pet. 1:5–8.

⁵CW, 'Fight the Good Fight', st. 13, *HSP* (1742), 256.

It was the man he wished to hide from view, not the minister from shame; nor soften the message for favour. And he who often would take for his favourite motto, in one capacity, '*Nec vixit male qui natus moriensque fefellit*';⁶ in the other, would speak, rebuke, [and] exhort, with all long-suffering and with all authority, witnessing a good confession before men and angels.⁷

I think of being in town [i.e., London] about the middle of October. You used, dearest honoured sir, to come into this part of the world before Christmas. I should rejoice to return with you, if it were so ordered.

I have found one poor afflicted object here, if she can be called such with no affliction but poverty. She seems to have that love in her heart which supplieth all things, and relies with unbounded confidence on her heavenly Father for daily though scanty bread.

I have just room to add I am my dearest respect uncle,

Yours devotedly,

S. Wesley

Address: 'For / The Revd: Mr Wesley / Bristol / To be forwarded if not there'.

Postmark: 'SE/24'.

Endorsement: by JW, 'of CW / Sept. 23, 1788 / a[nswere]d 26'.

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/610/134.

⁶Horace, *Epistles*, I.xvii.10; 'neither has he lived ill whose birth and death has passed unnoticed by the world'.

⁷See Titus 2:15 and 1 Tim. 6:13.

From J. R.¹

c. October 1788

John Harv[e]y, was a member of the Methodist society at Sevenoaks, in Kent, about twenty-six years. When he was first convinced of sin, he was sensible that he was by nature a child of wrath and an heir of hell. But he was not long in the society before he experienced the pardoning love of God. But his sense of this lasted not long, for he was again perplexed with doubts and fears. At this juncture Mr. [John] Wesley conversing with him about the state of his soul, he found his distress removed, and ever after that he retained a clear sense of the favour of God.

From that time he was an ornament to his profession in his whole behaviour, and endeavoured to keep a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man.

The first time I conversed with him, he gave me great satisfaction. And although he was grievously afflicted in body, yet he expressed himself with clearness and energy. Among other things he said, 'I consider myself as not my own, but bought with a price, and therefore see it my duty to glorify God in my body and in my spirit which are his. And as to my neighbour, I see it my duty to love him as myself, and in all things to do as I would be done by.'

In his last sickness his words were few, yet he professed to retain a clear evidence of his acceptance with God. The same faith which supported him amidst the trials of life, supported him in the hour of death. And although he did not profess to have an overflowing joy, yet he enjoyed a solid peace; and frequently exhorted his wife to live unto the Lord, as he was apprehensive he was soon going to leave her.

On her asking him, 'Do you now retain your evidence clear?' he said, 'Yes I do.' And then fell asleep in the arms of his Beloved.

J. R.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 12 (1789): 239–40.

¹The printer may have gotten the last initial wrong; John Pritchard was the current Assistant for the Kent circuit, and James Byron was also assigned to the circuit.

From an Unidentified Correspondent

[Leeds?]
c. October 1788

When I first visited her she had but little desire for spiritual converse or prayer, as she did not believe her sickness was unto death. Yet she patiently submitted to hear of the blessedness of real religion, which enables its possessors to be in constant readiness to meet death.

A day or two after, being assured she was not likely to recover, she began to think of her latter end in good earnest. And sending for a friend, she said, 'I was very much distressed the last night, and feared I should be lost!' Being then told of our Lord's readiness to save returning sinners, she earnestly prayed for power to believe—being greatly affected at the remembrance of what a vain, trifling life she had lived. But being told the everlasting arms were beneath her, she prayed earnestly for faith; often repeating those words, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.'¹ And added, 'I do believe, and hope I shall be saved.' But by this time the distress of her mind had so much affected her weak body that it seemed as if death sweats had seized her. But feeling her soul at liberty, she was sweetly resigned to die. Yet in a while she was sorely tempted, and said, 'I thought I was dying, and had not a shadow of a doubt but I was going to heaven. But now all is gone! O what must I do! Lord have mercy on me!' On this we called on the Lord, and soon after her fear was quite removed, and her heart and mouth were filled with praise.

She continued to pray much, though silently, on account of her great weakness, and spoke much to the glory of God between whiles; at which times her face was covered with heavenly smiles.

The Sunday morning before she died our Lord was very present, while a few friends united in singing and prayer. While they were singing she raised her feeble voice as loud as theirs, and was very happy all the day.

In the afternoon one said, 'Suppose our Lord should spare you?' She replied, 'I have not one desire to live.' But it was farther said, 'Suppose it was God's will to raise you, and make you a blessing to others? You ought to be resigned.' She said, 'The will of the Lord be done.'

Her strength being quite spent that day with much company, Satan again assaulted her with fear. But Mr. [John] Pawson called to see her next morning,² and while he conversed and prayed with her, her happiness not only returned, but abounded all that day.

In the evening she joined in singing several hymns, and very often said, 'O what a Saviour have I!' And [che] wished much that she had breath to talk to all her young friends, saying, 'They may look on me, and see what they must all come to.' On Tuesday afternoon she was much fatigued, having had much company all day—though the company of God's people was very pleasing to her, particularly one whom her spirit clave to.

At her desire we drank tea by her, while she sung part of a funeral hymn alone, and in a loud voice. The words were,

The languishing head is at rest,
Its thinking and aching are o'er,
The quiet immovable breast,
Is heav'd by affliction no more;
The heart is no longer the seat
Of trouble or torturing pain,
It ceases to flutter and beat,

¹Acts 16:31.

²Pawson was currently the Assistant of the Leeds circuit.

It never shall flutter again.³

We then gave out most of that hymn and sung it with her, till she smiled and said, 'I can do no more', and soon went to bed, unable to sit up any longer. She slept with difficulty and pain, to our thinking. But she said she was refreshed with it till about one o'clock.

On Friday she was dying all day; but particularly from one o'clock. She had said before, she should not live above a day or two, and when told she would soon be freed from these sufferings, she smiled and said, 'But if I should live another day, I may have more love you know.'

A friend observing how she laboured for breath, said, 'Jesus is with you in all your sufferings.' She replied, 'He is, and I am not in the least afraid to die.' I said, 'No; you can rejoice.' Her answer was, 'I can, and I do.' She frequently slept a few minutes, then awoke, smiling and praising God! A friend said to her, 'My dear, you are enough to make one in love with dying; for though you walk through the dark valley of the shadow of death, you fear no evil.' she said, 'Say it again', and repeated every word after me. And though with much difficulty she uttered her words, yet she seemed filled with holy delight. Thus she continued till about seven o'clock in the evening, when we saw her die very fast. On this we joined in prayer, then asked her if she found the Lord with her? She made no reply, but seemed almost gone, and we thought her insensible, or speechless. A little after a friend said, 'My dear, if you now find Jesus precious, if you cannot speak lift up your hand.' Directly she lifted up her trembling hand above her head; and presently with both wide extended, she answered with a loud, shrill voice, 'Yes! He is precious! He is precious! He is precious!' Then she called her father and mother, her brother and sister, and every friend present by name; and clasping our hands to her heart she said, 'Jesus will save you all, if you will come to him! I know he will. He will save all this house, yea all the world through believing!' At this time her heavenly smiles showed the raptures of the place to which she was hastening. She was then silent a little while, till another friend came in and shook her hand, at which she smiled. And while he prayed, her happy spirit took its everlasting flight, September 26, 1788.

Thus died Miss Mary Cockle, in the twentieth year of her age.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 12 (1789): 184–87.

³CW, 'On the Sight of a Corpse', st. 4, *Funeral Hymns* (1746), 7–8.

‘Thomas Attentive’ on Thomas Coke¹

Observation Point
October 10, 1788

As the concerns of the soul infinitely outweigh those of the body, so the revolutions which take place in the religious world are of infinitely more importance than those of states or empires, considered merely as such. If we reflect a little on the revival of pure and undefiled religion for half a century past in some parts of Europe, particularly Great Britain and Ireland, and also in America—at the same time that we feel our hearts glow with love and gratitude to God for his goodness and loving kindness to the children of men, we shall have reason to admire his wisdom in using *chiefly* weak instruments in carrying on this great work.

The writer of this begs leave to recapitulate briefly a few particulars, with which perhaps many of those to whom these pages are addressed are not fully acquainted; earnestly entreating them, as far as in their power, to oppose anything which may have a tendency to check, or seem to stop the above mentioned work.

Upwards of forty years ago God was pleased to pour out his Spirit in America in a very remarkable manner. And as he at *that* time was pleased to make use of the learned or regular clergy in this work, so they refused to let him send by any other, and crushed or opposed such lay-exhorters as offered their assistance. This brought on strife and divisions, which grieved the Spirit of God and put a stop, for a time, to the glorious work of conversion. However, he has since been pleased to show them, if they have eyes to see, that *his* thoughts are not as *their* thoughts; and to confound their worldly wisdom, hath revived his work through the instrumentality of men who have had very little advantages of education.

In like manner nearly forty years ago he began to work powerfully in some parts of Holland; and when prayer-meetings, or fellowship-meetings, were set up by some pious persons, the wise Synod enacted a decree, and had it ratified by the states, whereby a stop was put to those meetings. Thus the wisdom of man again opposed the wisdom of God.

The work in Great Britain and Ireland has been very great, and very conspicuous. And I need not say by what instruments, or in what manner, it has been carried on. But I would have you to be always jealous, with a godly jealousy, lest this blessed work should be in any wise checked by worldly wisdom, or by the ‘political conduct’ of any Diotrephes, who seeks pre-eminence by planning new revolutions in your happy commonwealth.²

The depravity of human nature is not more manifest in robbery and murder than in ambition, which often leads to both. It is a pregnant argument of a bad mind to love prerogative, exclusive privileges, and preference above others. But is there not started up among you one (whose name I need not mention [i.e., Thomas Coke]) who confesses that ambition is his besetting evil? Who, not being honoured by his maker with a particular share in this extraordinary revival, seems determined to honour himself, and to ‘feel his consequence’.³ Who, finding himself still low of stature on account of his gifts, schemed for himself the superintendency of the western world, and made an usurped power of ordination a kind of step-ladder to climb by.

¹This public letter provides larger background about the controversy that was sparked in Dublin in the spring of 1788 when Thomas Coke insisted on holding worship at the Whitefriar Street preaching-house during church hours.

²See 3 John 1:9–10.

³Note in original: ‘See his Ordination Sermon’. I.e., 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).

It is truly surprising indeed that he could have cajoled Mr. [John] Wesley into a compliance with this—who, on reading Lord King's *Enquiry*, declared his conviction that no such office ever existed in the primitive church.⁴ And who had also pointed clearly out in his *Ecclesiastical History* the source and evil of taking away that voice from the people which they had in the election of their bishops and other officers.⁵ And who could suppose that the American churches, just freed from monarchical tyranny, would think themselves bound to obey one who had neither directly nor indirectly been the instrument of their conversion to God—whom they never called to that office, and whose apparent design was to lord it over them; especially as they had among them one whom God had made a father to them, and who naturally cared for their souls?⁶

The effect of this pompous, ambitious scheme was just what might reasonably be expected. It divided the preachers among themselves; some being for, and some against the good old way. It also alienated both the preachers and the people from their mother Church, who were united before to their English brethren. Thus *he* it was who made the schism, which he has the effrontery to palm upon others.

Whilst the prosperous gale was wafting him back to Europe, his mind teemed with new prospects. And then he laid a plan of extending his dominion to Scotland; in order to which he, with much plausibility gained Mr. Wesley's consent to give him a plenary power, which he took care to exercise. What good has arisen from this scheme let the candid and unprejudiced say, except it be (what he chiefly aimed at) that he has rendered as many as he could of the veterans in some degree dependent on him—or by the stalking-horse of ordination, duped them to be a kind of life-guards to him.

He conceived a like plan to be brought forth in our sister isle. But it was crushed in the womb and proved an abortion. But as this opposition came chiefly from the people, he gained at least one point from the Irish Conference (which he cajoled as Cromwell did the Rump Parliament); namely, a wonderful panegyric (which he himself had first privately dictated) addressed from *that* body to Mr. Wesley, setting forth their 'entire approbation of his political conduct, both at home and abroad, being free from *all* motives of pride, interest, and party'. This address, to be sure, he made a show of refusing—like Cromwell, when he refused the title of king, but retained the power under the name of 'Protector'! What need of this address to Mr. Wesley (who knew him better than any man in Ireland), if he had not intended it as a pedestal whereon to raise a pillar of fame on the other side of the Atlantic? But he could not brook the opposition from the honest people. And therefore, while at St. Eustatius the year following, he wrote to Mr. Wesley to remove from their office some of those who were obnoxious to him. A still more glaring instance he gave this year of his insolence and superciliousness, by throwing contempt upon the humble remonstrance of the most respectable members in Dublin, when they requested him to lay aside the design of having prayers and service at the church hours, because it was not *necessary*, and especially because it was contrary to the repeated declarations of Mr. Wesley and the wisest of the preachers for upwards of forty years. He spurns the old maxim '*vox populi, vox Dei*' ('The voice of the people is the voice of God'), and indeed in his whole features has come the nearest to the image of the Romish papacy of any that have appeared among Protestants in this kingdom during the present century. Yea, he had declared before that one hundred members should be cut off, or his point should be gained. O rare *Nero*! O costly sacrifice! What may you not expect from such a meek lamb?

Another scheme he projected, which should certainly perpetuate his name to the latest posterity, which was in an underhand manner to betray into the hands of the smooth-tongued antinomians (the Moravian sheep-stealers) those children whom God had given you as the reward of your painful labours. To show how detrimental to the Methodist cause such a coalition of persons and things so heterogeneous would have been needs no other proof than barely to mention it. Indeed, it seems exactly similar to the scheme of Ammonius Saccas, who in the second century attempted a coalition of all sects, whether

⁴See JW, Letter to 'Our Brethren in America', Sept. 10, 1784, *Works*, 30:268–70.

⁵Cf., JW, *A Concise Ecclesiastical History* (London: Paramore, 1781), 1:166–70; 2:16–21.

⁶I.e., Francis Asbury.

philosophical or religious, and even attempted to reconcile the Gentile and Christian religion together. Hence arose that unhappy contest between faith and reason, religion and philosophy, which increased in the succeeding ages and is prolonged even to our times. If the above scheme of this enterprising genius had succeeded, perhaps he would have become a second Count Zinzendorf, to reign over you and to dictate new plans both of law and gospel without number, when your present hoary father, and some other respected veterans, have ceased from their labours. He gave a little specimen of what kind of laws might be expected from him, in case he came to be perpetual dictator, when he held a court of inquisition in Dublin, and obliged his brethren to acquit or condemn themselves—just as Archbishop [John] Whitgift did with respect to the puritans, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, by the oath *ex officio*. And what shall we say of the law which he got passed this year to make extra collections every quarter, to raise supplies for his *Don Quixote* schemes, where the people are not able to supply their own ministers with food and raiment? Is not this grinding the face of the poor, with a witness; yea, sucking the very blood out of their veins? But missionaries must be sent from hence, at any rate, or at any expense, to the Wesley Indies, to secure the government thereof to himself; lest Archbishop [Francis] Asbury should have any share in it, and that those sent thither at his beck might style him ‘honoured father’, and subscribe themselves ‘his sons in the gospel’. Alas! Does not the most High see these things? And will he not one day visit for them?

The brain indeed of this political genius is fertile in producing new plans. For after having planted, or attempted to plant, the gospel among the Negroes in the West Indies, and drained this country pretty well of cash to pay such as should submit to go thither at his command; he intends to take a trip to visit the Hindus and other heathens in the East. And perhaps like another Alexander, [he] will weep at the mouth of the Indus [river], or the Ganges, when he has no more worlds to subdue! Who doth not see that his ambition has made him drunk? It knows no bounds; seeing nothing else will satisfy it but to be Hierarch from sea to sea, and from the river to the world’s end.

Would to God that Archbishop Leighton’s words were written in letters of gold over every pulpit, and in the study of every minister in the world! ‘There is’, says he, ‘many a hot furious march under the semblance of zeal for God, that loves to be seen, as Jehu. Such persons may flatter themselves into that conceit, in the heat of action, to think it is for God, while he sees through it and judges it as it is: zeal for self and their own interest. An he gives them, accordingly, some hireling journeyman’s wages, and then turns them off.’⁷

Men and brethren, let me entreat you to reflect seriously, and prevent, as far as in you lies, everything that looks like pomp, or worldly prudence, from creeping in among you. Beware lest that come upon you which is written [in] Judges 5:23. Open your eyes in time, and withstand the ambitious views of this or any other person, which may bring in discord, intrigue, and contention among you, and thereby prove so prejudicial to the cause of God in which you are engaged; lest the children yet unborn, when they come to tread this stage, may have cause to deplore your pusillanimity and to curse the fatal era!

I am

Your friend,

Thomas Attentive

Source: published transcription; *A Friendly Address to the Preachers and Principal Members of the Methodists* (s.l.: s.n., 1788).

⁷Philip Doddridge (ed.), *The Expository Works and other Remains of Archbishop [Robert] Leighton* (Edinburgh: David Wilson, 1748), 2:516.

From John Francis Valton

Bristol
October 14, 1788

Reverend Sir,

Your magazine being intended both to profit and please your readers, I believe the following account will answer your design.

Some time ago it pleased God to awaken a young man at Ditcheat, near Castle Cary. He, as well as two more, were in great distress under a sermon which I preached. We continued in prayer for some time after preaching was over, but they refused to be comforted.

I was not a little surprised to find that one of them, William Kingston, was born without hands or arms.¹ The next morning he spent some time with me, and gave me an account of God's goodness to him in supplying this deficiency, with an extraordinary dexterity in his teeth and toes. Mentioning it to some friends, I was desired to communicate the account to your readers, through the channel of the *Arminian Magazine*.

In order to afford the public a satisfactory account, I went to Ditcheat last Monday, and the next morning got him to breakfast with me at Mr. Goodfellow's, and had ocular proofs of his dexterity. He highly entertained us at breakfast, by putting his half-naked foot upon the table as he sat, and carrying his tea and toast between his great and second toe to his mouth, with as much facility as if his foot had been a hand, and his toes fingers. I put half a sheet of paper upon the floor, with a pen and ink-horn. He threw off his shoes as he sat, took the ink-horn in the toes of his left foot, and held the pen in those of his right. He then wrote three lines as well as most ordinary writers, and as swiftly. He writes out all his own bills and other accounts. He then showed me how he shaves himself with the razor in his toes. And he can comb his own hair. He can dress and undress himself except buttoning his clothes. He feeds himself, and can bring his meat or broth to his mouth by holding the spoon or fork in his toes. He cleans his own shoes; can clean the knives, light the fire, and do almost any other domestic business as well as another man. He can make hen coops. He is a farmer by occupation. He can milk his cows with his toes, and cuts his own hay, binds it up in bundles, and carries it about the field for his cattle. Last winter he had eight heifers constantly to fodder. This last summer he made all his own hayricks. He can do all the business of the hayfield (except mowing) as fast and as well with only his feet as others can with rakes and forks. He goes to the field and catches his horse. He saddles and bridles him with his teeth and toes. If he has a sheep among his flock that ails anything, he can separate it from the rest, drive it into a corner, and catch it when nobody else can. He then examines it, and applies a remedy to it. He is so strong in his teeth that he can lift ten pecks of beans with them.

Last Whitsuntide he suffered loss in his soul, by being drawn in to throw bowls with several others.² He played, and won the game, but has never enjoyed peace with God since. He can throw a great sledge-hammer as far with his foot as other men with their hands. In a word, he can nearly do as much without, as others can with their arms.

He began the world with a hen and chicken. With the profit on these he purchased an ewe. The sale of this procured him a ragged colt (as he expressed it) and then a better. After this he raised a heifer and a few sheep, and now occupies a small farm.

God blesses him in his basket and in his store, in the city and in the field, in the fruit of his ground and the increase of his kine³ and sheep! He sees and owns the good hand of his God, and I trust

¹William Kingston was baptized in Ditcheat, Somerset, on Jan. 19, 1765; he married in 1790, and died in 1810.

²A game in which players throw bowls at a target, with the winner being the one whose bowl lands closest.

³OED: 'Archaic plural of cow'.

will henceforth devote his soul and body to his glory.

Thus have I given you, sir, a faithful narrative of this extraordinary man, and shall leave it to you to discant upon this remarkable phenomenon, subscribing myself, honoured sir,

Your affectionate friend,

John Valton

[Added by JW]

We can only say, what is too hard for God!

J. W.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 12 (1789): 189–91.

From Mrs. Ann Joyce¹

Caribb[ean] boundaries [St. Vincent]
October 31, 1788

Reverend and Very Dear Sir,

Your valuable favour dated July 17th I received,² for which I give you my hearty thanks. Blessed be God, who put it into your heart to be mindful of unworthy me in a foreign country. Your letter was truly a word in season. My soul was in great need of encouragement, and the Lord made it as a refreshing draught indeed. I was enabled to lay hold on the promises you mentioned. And blessed be God, I have not since let them go.

It requires an abler pen than mine, rightly to inform you of matters in this island, I mean as to expenses, situation, and produce thereof. Therefore I will let these things rest, and in my simple manner tell you all I can of myself. By the grace of God I am what I am. But how unlike him I feel, when I consider how much I cleave to earth, and how little I glorify God.

I came to this valley October 2nd. When I first came, the Caribbs³ were very shy; particularly the women, who would not come near me if they could help it. But some that could speak broken English cursed me, for asking them how they did. But now most that I see will speak to me, and several have come into our house and sat down. There is but one who seems to have any desire to learn to read, or to hear of spiritual and eternal things. Yet I have no doubt but, when the house is finished and we live there, if we are resolved, by the assistance of him to whom belongeth all power, to give ourselves up unreservedly unto God, this little one will become a thousand.

Blessed by God, he hath exercised our faith and patience, and now we feel 'The good that is done on the earth, the Lord doth it himself.'⁴ Mr. Joyce said to me this evening, 'I think I never felt more of my own unworthiness, more of my uselessness, nor my inability of doing good than at present.' I was glad to hear it, for these considerations humble us and enable us to give the glory to whom it is due. While the language of the heart is 'Not unto me – not unto me, but to thee, O God, be the praise.'⁵

I have not been favoured with those ravishing views of eternal things since I have been here as I have had in England. Nor have I had those ecstasies of joy as then. Yet blessed be God, I have been enabled to walk by faith, for I do know in whom I have believed. Abraham's God is mine! Perhaps had I been favoured as in days past, I might not have been brought thus to see, and feel, my own inability. Not that I would be understood to say that those happy desirable frames and feelings are dangerous. No, even Dr. Watts could say,

The more thy glory strikes mine eyes,
The humbler I shall lie.⁶

Yes, verily, for when the soul is thus made capable of receiving so much of the divine presence, this glorious light makes manifest, that all is a free gift, and the language of the heart is, 'Oh! to grace how

¹Titled: 'From Mrs. Ann Joyce to the Rev. J. Wesley'. Ann and her husband had been hired as teachers for a school in St. Vincent. See Thomas Coke, *To the Benevolent Subscribers For the Support of the Missions ... in the West-Indies* (London: s.n., 1789), 20.

²This letter is not known to survive.

³The natives of the Caribbean islands.

⁴Cf. Ps. 74:13 (BCP).

⁵Cf. Ps. 115:1.

⁶Isaac Watts, 'The Humble Worship of Heaven', st. 7, *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* (1709), 192.

great a debtor.’⁷ And having a clear sight of what Christ Jesus hath done and suffered, how it lays us low at his feet, and feeling we are thus loved, it causes us to love again, and

Love makes our willing feet,
With swift obedience move.⁸

I remember when I was often grieved at believers for living below their privileges, when I saw them cast down on account of outward trials or inward temptations. If I could not persuade them to leave all in the hand of God, and keep their eye fixed on Jesus every moment, I blamed them much. Perhaps I had not then such a sense that this also is a gift from God.

Though I am conscious I deserve not the least of God’s favours, yet he hath been pleased to give me such a glorious hope, such a clear manifestation of his love, that I dare not doubt. No, I will not let him go. I have often, and do now again, make a full and free surrender of my soul, and body, all I have and all I am, unto my God; who hath been pleased to accept the sacrifice and give me the witness of his Holy Spirit, which kills and makes alive. Oh that he may thoroughly purge the floor, and I become a lump of holiness devoted to his honourable service!

Since I have been here, I have not found that desire to depart as in former times. Then, when under your preaching, as well as others, and when in private, and often when my hands have been employed, I have found such a desire to depart and be with Christ, that I would gladly have left all below, to be for ever with him whom my soul loved. But of late, when any disorder hath caused me to feel my mortality, and I have seriously considered that I could not call any moment my own but the present, I found my mind has roved to the other side the Atlantic, and I have felt a desire to see those in the body with whom I often took sweet counsel. But then the reviving thought of that blest abode where saints and angels meet makes me forget this, and I am enabled in a measure to rejoice at the approach; yet not as in times past.

Some of the coloured people seem in earnest, and often are able to say they know they have peace with God. Our present business is to cultivate a friendship with the Caribbs, and on Sabbath days to instruct as many poor Negroes as will come. May the Lord accompany his own word with a blessing, that what is sown in great weakness may be raised in power! I find I love and revere you more and more, and am, dear sir,

Your unworthy, but highly favoured, daughter in Christ,

A. J.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 15 (1792): 217–20.

⁷Robert Robinson, ‘Come thou fount of every blessing’, st. 3.

⁸Cf. Isaac Watts, ‘Love to God’, st. 3, *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* (1709), 163.

From Edward Coates and William Smith¹

[North Shields]
c. November 5, 1788

‘Then Mr. [William] Smith² was so kind as to write Mr. [John] Wesley a proper account of our singing, and the manner in which our service was conducted in Millbourn Place. Edward Coates also wrote to Mr. Wesley to the same purpose, and upon this he [JW] gave orders for the preachers to return.’

Source: published summary; Coates, *New Portrait*, 38.

¹The two letters described here are part of the continuing divergence between JW and the trustees of the preaching-house at Millbourn Place in North Shields. In early Oct. 1788 Peter Mill, the newly appointed Assistant for the Newcastle circuit, had conveyed to the society which worshipped there JW's request that they cease 'chanting' in worship (wrongly assuming that they had adopted the high-church practice of chanting the Psalms in worship). Mill's presentation was abrupt and included a warning that if they did not cease, JW would discontinue sending them preachers. The society was puzzled by the request and refused to accede to Mill's demand. Mill then wrote JW, who replied in a letter dated Oct. 18, 1788, that the Methodist itinerants and local preachers should no longer serve Millbourn Place. See Coates, *New Portrait*, 36–38; and *Works*, 30:747.

²This is William Smith of Newcastle, the second husband of JW's step-daughter Jane. While he was a member of the Methodist society at the Orphan House in Newcastle, he also served as a local preacher in various surrounding societies. He sided strongly with the society at Millbourn Place in the debate between the two rival 'Methodist' preaching houses in North Shields.

Peter Mill to Edward Coates

Newcastle
November [1]4, 1788

Sir,

It does appear, from a letter to Mr. [William] Smith from Mr. [John] Wesley,¹ that Mr. Wesley has been misinformed about the chanting—he thinking that you chanted the Psalms at large, as they do in the large churches in England. But being fully persuaded that your chanting is far more decent than theirs; and secondly, that it is but a small part of the prose you chant; I shall preach at Millbourn Place on Sabbath evening as usual. But I know not I can be there at 10:00.²

Lord, send us peace and assurance of rest forever.

Peter Mill

Source: published transcription; Coates, *New Portrait*, 39.

¹JW had replied, c. Nov. 10, to Smith's letter of c. Nov. 5; this reply is not known to survive.

²JW had asked his preachers not to hold a Sunday service during the hours (10:00–12:00) when Church of England parishes usually did so.

From Peter Mill¹

[Newcastle upon Tyne]
c. November 22, 1788²

[Some person had sent JW a fresh list of charges against us:]

First charge: They say they never will come into the Conference plan.

Second [charge]: That Mr. Wesley and his preachers should not have any rule over them; nay, not so much as to be suffered to appoint stewards or leaders. If they choose to give them a sermon, it is well; but nothing more.

Third [charge]: Edward Coates made free with Mr. Wesley's reputation at a meeting of the society, looking upon him as an old superannuated old man, and a juggler.

Fourth [charge]: They refuse to omit service in the forenoon, when the sacrament is administered in the parish church.

Source: published summary; Coates, *New Portrait*, 40–41.

¹On its first appearance, the letter containing these charges is assigned to 'some person or persons'. Later in the account it is specified that Peter Mill was the instigator in sending the charges, though he involved Patrick Watson as scribe, and recruited Joseph Fothergale and Ralph Watts as witnesses and vouchers for the truth of the contents See Coates, *New Portrait*, 43, 49–51, 61–63.

²The letter, which is not known to survive, was sent in time for JW to reply before the end of the month, ordering for a second time that all of his preachers, itinerant and local, cease serving Millbourn Place.

From the Rev. Dr. Thomas Coke

Bridge-Town, Barbados
December 9, 1788

Honoured and Most Dear Sir,

I have the pleasure of informing you of our safe arrival in this island, after a voyage of five weeks and four days.

Our voyage, all things considered, was perhaps as pleasant a one as ever was sailed. In the turbulent Bay of Biscay my brethren were very sick. From Cape Finisterre to this island, the wind was favourable all the way.

And here I must not omit to bear the most unfeigned testimony of gratitude in behalf of the captain of our ship. Our accommodations in every respect were very excellent. And he left nothing unprovided which he thought might be necessary, or in any wise commodious for us. And his whole treatment of us from the beginning to the end was affectionate and generous to the last degree.

Captain Sundius being a man who sincerely fears God,¹ we had full liberty to sing and pray as often as we pleased, and he never neglected to join us. In all my voyages till this, I do not recollect that we were serviceable to any sailor except one. But the first time I preached in the *Hankey* (on those words of our Lord, 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God'²) the whole crew seemed deeply affected, and the consequent labours of my brethren and myself, deepened the impressions they had received. They were eager to read any books we gave them. Instead of the loose songs they sung among themselves at the beginning of the voyage, they delighted in meeting together to read our books. When we parted, the tears trickled down many of their cheeks. They showed the greatest earnestness to squeeze us by the hand. And when our boat dropped astern, they gave us three as hearty cheers (which is one of their ways of expressing affection) as, I believe, ever were given by a company of sailors.

On Thursday, the 4th of December we landed in Bridgetown, in Barbados. As we knew no one in the island, and the expenses in this country at the inns are enormous, I embraced the opportunity, as soon as we landed, of sending Messrs. Lumb³ and Gamble⁴ to our friends on the island of St. Vincent, by a merchant-ship which sailed that very evening. As Mr. Pearce⁵ (who remained with me) informed me that a company of soldiers who resided some time ago at Kinsale, in Ireland, and among whom there were

¹Capt. Christian Johansson Sundius (1754–1835) had been a Swedish army officer, then served in the British navy. He later joined the City Road society in London, and in 1798, after the death of his first wife, married Jane Vazeille Smith (1770–1849), a daughter of JW's step-daughter Jeanne Vazeille.

²John 3:3.

³Matthew Lumb (1761–1847) first appears in the *Minutes*, under appointment in the Dales in 1783 (see *Works*, 10:534). He served five more years in Scotland, then was one of five preachers ordained by JW in 1788, to serve in the West Indies (10:668). Lumb returned to England after being imprisoned from preaching to slaves in 1793 and continued itinerating until his retirement in 1826. See *Minutes* (post-Wesley, 1847), 10:455; and his letter to JW, July 15, 1790.

⁴Robert Gamble (d. 1791) was admitted 'on trial' as an itinerant at the 1785 Conference (see *Works*, 10:568). Three years later he was one of five preachers ordained by JW to serve in the West Indies (10:668). He died on the island of St. Vincent in early 1791 after being beaten by a gang of ruffians (10:746).

⁵Benjamin Pearce (d. 1795) was admitted 'on trial' as an itinerant at the 1784 Conference (see *Works*, 10:553). He served appointments in England, Ireland, and Wales, before being ordained by JW in 1788 to serve in the West Indies (10:668). He served there seven years, before dying of a fever during a voyage from Grenada to Barbados. See *Minutes* (post-Wesley, 1795), 1:317.

several pious persons, were now, he believed, in Barbados, I desired him to go in search of them. In two hours he brought back with him one of the soldiers. And soon afterwards we were joined by a serjeant, who on seeing Mr. Pearce, and recollecting him, seized him in his arms in the most kind and affectionate manner.

Our friends the soldiers soon informed us that the love of Christ had constrained them to bear a public testimony for God; and that a Mr. Button, a merchant of the town, had provided for them a large room which he formerly used as a warehouse, in which they exhorted. We immediately determined to make a visit to this kind merchant the next morning. But he prevented⁶ us by an invitation to breakfast with him, being previously informed by the soldiers of our arrival.

To my great surprise I found that Mr. Button knew me well; and though I had no personal acquaintance with him, he had frequently heard me preach at Baltimore, in Maryland. Four of his black servants had been baptized by me at that time, and one of them (a woman) is truly alive to God. His lady is a native of this island. His house, his heart, his *all* seemed to be at our service. We discharged our bill at the inn, and found an asylum indeed with this our benevolent friend. After breakfast, Mr. Pearce and I paid our respects to the governor of the island,⁷ who received us with great politeness. In the evening I preached at Mr. Button's house to about three hundred persons, about twice as many being obliged to go away for want of room. The next evening I had as large a congregation as on the former. Many heard with deep attention, whilst I endeavoured to shew them how the Comforter convinces of sin, righteousness, and judgment.⁸ That morning I rode into the country to visit a gentleman (Henry Trotman, Esq.) for whom my kind friend Mr. [Josiah] Dornford of London had procured for me a letter of recommendation, in order to open a way for Mr. Pearce into the country. But very providentially there were two gentlemen of the same Christian and surname in the island, and I was led to the house of the gentleman of that name for whom my letter was not intended. He received me with the utmost politeness, and after I had breakfasted and dined with him, and laid before him our plan of operations, he informed me that his house should be always open to my friend Mr. Pearce, and his slaves at his command at all proper hours. He has about two hundred.

On Sunday morning, after Mr. Pearce had preached at seven o'clock, we breakfasted according to invitation with the curate of the parish, who received us with great civility.⁹ After dinner a note was sent me by the master of a free-school, offering me his great school-room for my evening's duty; where I had a very large and attentive congregation, many of the principal gentry of the town attending. In the evening Mr. Errington, one of the magistrates and postmaster general of the island, made us a visit and supped with us.¹⁰ Between thirty and forty years ago he had frequently heard Mr. Wesley and his brother preach in our chapel in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. He expressed the greatest satisfaction and approbation of our designs, warmly invited Mr. Pearce to visit him frequently, and told us he should be happy on all occasions to yield us any service in his power.

On Monday morning, I visited the Mr. Trotman whom I had in vain sought on Saturday. He is a plain country gentleman, has about two hundred and fifty Negroes on his plantations, and after dinner informed me that he would himself take the first opportunity of waiting on Mr. Pearce, and should be happy in having any of his slaves instructed by him.

Having thus finished the business which lay before me in this island, I took a place in a vessel bound for St. Vincent's; and expecting to sail in the evening, desired Mr. Pearce to preach—as the violent

⁶I.e., made the first move.

⁷David Parry (d. 1793) was the current governor of Barbados.

⁸See John 16:8.

⁹The curate was Rev. Samuel Dent (d.1805); see Coke to JW, Dec. 27, 1790.

¹⁰George Errington was appointed Postmaster General of Barbados in 1782. Several persons of that name lived around Newcastle in the 1740s. George was likely related to Matthew Errington.

heat into which preaching throws us in this climate would have rendered it very hazardous to have gone on the water. And I had the pleasure to find that he gave universal satisfaction to a large congregation.

At Mr. Button's there were three ladies on a visit who have a plantation and many Negroes, who have, I trust, in some degree received divine impressions by our means. Their house will be opened to Mr. Pearce whenever he pleases. And our soldiers have engaged to hold prayer-meetings in different parts of the town three or four times a week.

Thus by a series of remarkable providences a wide door seems to be opened for us in Barbados. This island is most favourably circumstanced for the increase of the work of God. It is twenty-two miles long, and fifteen broad. It is said to contain about seventy thousand Blacks, and from twenty-five to thirty thousand Whites. The island is also in general divided into very small farms or plantations, so that even among the Whites there are thousands whose incomes are very small, and many who are very poor, and who cannot therefore indulge themselves in all the extremes of sensuality in the manner too many do in this luxuriant country.

I am, dear sir,

Your most obedient and affectionate son,

Thomas Coke

Source: published transcription; Some Account of the Late Missionaries to the West Indies, in two letters from the Rev. Dr. Coke to the Rev. J. Wesley (London: s.n., 1789), 3–8.

From Edward Coates

[North Shields]
December 16, 1788

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Do you still wish to do us all the good you can? If so, wherefore do you withdraw the preachers from us?

Is it because some person or persons that lurk in the dark, whose actions will not bear the light, have sent you a list of charges against us; which charges we deny, and beg that we may have the privilege of Englishmen granted us, to look our adversaries in the face—and that this may be done before any person or persons you may please to appoint to hear and judge the case? It has been a great misfortune to us all along, that we have not been allowed to know our accusers, Nor any proper opportunity given us, to clear ourselves of the many slanderous accusations brought against us. And while such wicked persons are screened, what prospect can there be of peace to this unhappy society, which has been labouring in the fire for these three years? And can we give a greater proof of our firm attachment to the Methodist connexion than we have given for these three years past, in our standing firm to you and the cause, notwithstanding all the opposition and base treatment that we have met with?

But what is meant by the breaking up this society (as it is termed)? Is it not to serve and strengthen the opposition? It is now clearly seen that opposition cannot long maintain its ground, if we abide in the connexion; and therefore we are to be *sacrificed* to support that vile cause! And will you assist in this vile and wicked business? Will you cast off old tried friends to serve new ones? Is it right to do evil that good may come? Which good may never come, but the evil is certain.

You say, but we will not give up the house? I answer, you know we have proposed to give up the house, on condition of the opposition house being given up. But without that we cannot, consistently with prudence and common sense, give it up.

But have you not the sole use of the premises? And that without any or the least interruption? You know you have! And what would you have more? Is the assigning the premises to you and your successors forever, necessary to our being saved? Is it necessary to the success of the gospel? Is this really the final condition on which you will preach the gospel to us?

Dear sir, we pray you to consider these premises, and may God give you a right judgment in all things.

Source: published transcription; Coates, *New Portrait*, 43–44.

From Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley

[London]
c. December 18, 1788

Ever Dear and Honoured Brother,

I wish to give you as little trouble on mine and my family's account as I can avoid, but must entreat your friendship for your good brother's memory, to clear up and prevent frequent unjust opinions which some of the society have imbibed concerning the hundred [pounds a] year allowed him. As I find they look on it [as] their allowance; whereas it may easily be proved that the labours of both your pens have bestowed on them many hundreds a year from your writings, in which the hymns have a better share than he ever received. It has not been our small income that has provided hitherto to bring up his family. I was thankful that my own fortune, which has been sixteen hundred pounds, enabled us to avoid burdening others on their account. Though I have but half left. You brother, you remember, refused a living which is now £600 per annum at least, because he would be their servant for Christ's sake and sought not temporal advantages.¹

It is well if every other labourer is found as disinterested. But as I fear it will not be so,² I entreat your generous protection, as far as human help can reach, to secure us from any power that may circumvent and deprive us of what you readily agreed³ we should have for the books. Which at the most will only allow necessities, but afford no superfluities if we desired them, which we really do not, either in food or clothing. My earnest wish is to provide things honest and to owe no man anything⁴—a time I long for, and hope with your kind assistance to accomplish shortly. But I find that Mr. Wesley's two volumes [i.e., *HSP* (1749)] are to be valued at little more than half of the *Scripture Hymns*.⁵ Mr. [John] Atlay told Mr. [Charles] Wesley a few days before he died [they] would sell for the full price.

I leave myself, your niece, and nephews under God to your care, hoping Wolffe and your judicious friends would do the best they can for us by their advice.⁶

Source: manuscript draft, kept for records; MARC, DDWes 7/24.⁷

¹See Moore, *Life*, 2:219; and Sarah Wesley Jr to Joseph Benson, July 18, 1814, MARC, DDWes 7/103.

²SGW first wrote: 'But as I fear, and not without reason, that it may prove otherwise'; then struck out and revised as shown above.

³SGW first wrote: 'what you know is right'; then replaced with 'what you rightly agreed'.

⁴See Rom. 13:8.

⁵In a 1789 list of books published, the 2 vol. *HSP* (1749) sold for 3 shillings; the *Scripture Hymns* for 6 shillings.

⁶Likely, George Wolff (1736–1828), the last surviving executor of JW's will and a liberal subscriber to Methodist causes.

⁷The manuscript is in SGW's hand, but the lack of closing and address suggest it was an initial draft, retained for her records.

From the Rev. Dr. Thomas Coke

Dominica
December 19, 1788

Honoured and Dear Sir,

On the 11th instant, I landed at St. Vincent's, and in a few hours after set off with Mr. [John] Baxter for the Carib country, preaching in the evening to a lovely company of Negroes in a little town called Caliaqua. The next day we were joined by Messrs. [Robert] Gamble and [John] Clarke, and reached the house of our hospitable friend, Dr. Davidson;¹ who set off with us in the morning to visit the Caribs.² The roads (or rather narrow paths) over the mountains which form the boundaries between the English and the Caribs are the worst and the most tremendous I ever rode. Some time ago Mr. Baxter nearly lost his life in crossing them. His horse fell down a precipice of thirty feet perpendicular, and the hind legs of the horse were just over the precipice before he was alarmed, when he immediately threw himself off. In one place we could not even lead our horses, till a company of Caribs who were passing by, lent us their cutlasses, with which we at last cut open a way. When we had descended the great mountain, we came into one of the most beautiful plains I ever saw in my life. It is but seven miles long, and three broad, but I think it is as beautiful as uncultivated nature can make it. It forms a bow, the string of which is washed by the Atlantic ocean, and the bow itself surrounded by lofty mountains. Here the Caribs chiefly dwell.

As we passed by their villages, they stood at their doors in ranks, crying out, 'Bou jou, Bou jou.' (a corruption of *bon jour*, a good day). Others cried out, 'How dee, How dee.' And many of them, on being asked, delivered their cutlasses into our hands, which is the highest proof of confidence they can give. We had with us at this time one of the sons of the grand chief of the Caribs (Chateaway³). He has been under the tuition of Mr. and Mrs. Baxter for some time, and speaks a good deal of English. His name is John Dimmey, a fine young man, and of a princely carriage. His father the grand chief was gone from home. If I could have seen the father, I believe I should have obtained his consent to take his son with me to England. His sentiments are highly refined for a savage. 'Teach me your language, Dimmey', said Mr. Baxter to him one day, 'and I will give you my watch.' 'I will teach you my language', replied the young chief, 'but I will not have your watch.'

When we entered into the house of one of the chiefs whose name is De Valley, Mr. Dimmey whispered to Mr. Baxter that the family would not be satisfied if we did not take some refreshment, to which we consented. And they soon brought a large dishful of eggs and a bowl of punch. Mr. Dimmey alone could be with difficulty persuaded to sit down with us at table; the rest would serve. A little son of the chief also (a very beautiful boy for his colour, who had been under the instruction of Mr. Baxter, and had been already taught to spell) gave us high entertainment by the convincing proof he afforded us of an infant genius.

But in the midst of all this kindness there was some degree of jealousy. For I perceived that Mr. Baxter several times informed them that I received no pay from the king. Mr. Baxter seemed to live in their affections; and he has already made a considerable progress in their language, I could not help entreating him to spend two years among them and give them a full trial. Great as the cross was to that good man, who expected to return to his beloved Antigua, he immediately consented.

¹George Davidson was a physician who lived near the land settled by the Caribs. He sent an account of the Caribs to Coke in July 1787, that the latter published as *The Case of the Caribbs in St. Vincent's* ([London], 1788).

²The Kalinago, formerly known as Island Caribs or simply Caribs, are an indigenous people of the Lesser Antilles in the Caribbean. In the original it is consistently spelled 'Carribs'.

³I.e., Joseph Chatoyer (d. 1795).

On our return from the Carib country I visited our new school-house, and found it much larger than I expected—and far too large for one family. I therefore ordered the workmen to divide it; one half of which I appropriated to the use of Mr. and Mrs. Baxter, and the other half to that of Mr. and Mrs. Joyce.⁴ As Mrs. Baxter intends to educate some of the Carib girls, we shall now have three teachers among them. The conduct of Mrs. Baxter in this instance is not to be overlooked. Though born of a considerable family in Antigua, and brought up in all the softness and luxury of the country, she readily consented some years ago that her husband should sacrifice a place of four hundred a year currency, which he held under government, that he might devote his whole time and strength to the work of God; and now was perfectly willing to go with him among savages, and spend her time in forming their totally uncultivated minds.

I was very uneasy when I found that little had yet been done by Mr. Joyce in the education of the children. But when all the difficulties were laid open,—in the proper settlement of the land on which the house was built, in bringing the materials for building to the proper spot, the illness of Mrs. Joyce, and some other particulars—my mind was satisfied, and I trust everything will soon have the most favourable appearance through the blessing of God.

I feel myself much attached to these poor savages. The sweet simplicity and cheerfulness they manifested on every side soon wore off every unfavourable impression my mind had imbibed from the accounts I had received of their cruelties (cruelties originating probably with ourselves rather than with them). They are a handsomer people than the Negroes, but have undoubtedly a warlike appearance, as their very women frequently carry cutlasses in their hands, and always knives by their naked sides.

We now returned to Kingston, preaching by the way, and received by the planters with every mark of kindness and respect. Indeed the whole body of the people seemed to wish us success. Many were the proofs of affection shown us at our departure, especially by one whose delicacy will not admit of my mentioning his name.

Having appointed Messrs. Gamble and Clark to labour in the English division of the island (Mr. Baxter now and then making them a visit), I hired a vessel for Dominica; and with Mr. and Mrs. Baxter (who were desirous of making one visit to their old friends in Antigua before they settled among the Caribs) and Mr. [Matthew] Lumb, set sail on Tuesday the 16th for Dominica.

I am, dear sir,

Your most dutiful, most affectionate, and most obliged son,

Thomas Coke

Source: published transcription; Some Account of the Late Missionaries to the West Indies, in two letters from the Rev. Dr. Coke to the Rev. J. Wesley (London: s.n., 1789), 8–12.

⁴The wife's name was Ann; see her letter to JW, Oct. 31, 1788. The couple was recruited by Coke as teachers in St. Vincent.

Mrs. Phebe Blood

c. 1789

When I was in the eighteenth year of my age, it pleased God to send one of the Methodists to live under the same roof with me. He was a lively, pious, godly man; happy in the experience of a Saviour's grace. But though his manner of living and acting were all agreeable to his profession, yet my proud heart, unacquainted with genuine religion, rose in prejudice against him. Nor could I believe he was so good as he pretended to be. However, God sometimes overrules the most trivial circumstances for his own glory, and our good.

One night, whilst a young woman and I were foolishly disputing about spirits, I said if we were (while on earth) to promise that after death we should come again, we should surely fulfil it. She said that could not be, for evil spirits would be confined, and good spirits at rest; so that one could not if they would, and the other would not desire it if they could. At last we concluded to leave our dispute to Mr. Lawson (for that was the good man's name), and accordingly went into his room and asked which of us he thought was in the right. He smiled and said, 'If either of you are right, it is the young woman. But we will leave that to God. Search your Bibles, and pray that the Lord may give you to understand his word, which will make you wise unto salvation. Seek to know your sins forgiven, and your peace made with God, and that will be the most profitable for you.' I said, 'I both read and pray. But I do not believe anyone can know their sins forgiven here on earth.' He asked, 'Did you never read the great and precious promises which the Lord hath made to his people in all ages?' I replied, 'Yes; but the promises to which you refer were made not to us, but to the ancient prophets and primitive Christians.' 'Yes', said he, 'and to us in them, and as many as the Lord our God shall call. For to us is the word of this salvation sent. And if we are not converted and born of God, we can never enter into his kingdom.'

He then took the Bible and read part of our Lord's dialogue with Nicodemus, John 3, particularly the third verse. He reasoned with me some time, and at last concluded with telling me if I for myself did not experience this change, I could never see the face of the Lord with joy. Horror now seized upon me! Every joint in my body trembled! I could scarce get back again into my room, for the hand of the Lord was heavy upon me. Mr. Lawson perceived that his words had much affected me. All that night I could take no rest. Sleep departed from me, and the remembrance of my sins became intolerable.

The next day Mr. Lawson came and talked with me again. I was more and more convinced of the miserable and unhappy condition of my soul; and sometimes ready to conclude the Lord will be no more entreated.

One Sabbath I went to meeting, where Mr. S. read the tenth chapter of St. John's gospel, and gave an exhortation after it. I did in some measure see there was no other way to be saved but by faith in the Lord Jesus; that there was no other foundation on which we might safely build our hopes of heaven; yet I could not cast my soul upon him alone. I trusted too much in the means, and therefore though I sought him, yet I found him not. Nor could I find rest to my weary soul. I believed God was good, and it was a mercy that I was out of hell. But alas, I was vile, my heart deceitful, hard, and desperately wicked!

However, I still continued to use the means, for six months. Sometimes I thought my state was wretched. At other times I strove to quiet my fears with a hope that my sins might be forgiven, and I not know it. I reasoned with some of the people, and endeavoured to make it appear that we might have faith and not know it. O how proud was I! I would fain have thought myself a Christian, and have had them think so too! However, one day I went again to hear Mr. S., who described the state of those who build on the sand. And when he began to apply those words, 'The rains descended, and the floods came, ...',¹ the word pierced me through, and was sharp as a two-edged sword. I trembled every limb, and my knees smote one upon another.

¹Cf. Matt. 7:27.

As I went home, I told Mr. Lawson what a wretched state I was in, and that I was growing worse and worse. He said he was glad of it. He should be sorry to see me rest short of Christ; and hoped I should never rest until I found Christ by a living faith. He lent me Mr. Romaine's *Life of Faith*,² which I read, begging earnestly that the Lord would give me faith. But oh, it is utterly impossible for me to describe the hardness of my heart, and the miserable condition I was in! I remained thus for near a fortnight, and often lay sleepless all night upon my bed.

The night before that in which my deliverance came, I fell asleep; but, was suddenly awakened, as if some person had spoke to me in the following words, 'Why will you sleep in such imminent danger?' I immediately rose from bed to pray. After some time spent in prayer, I lay down on the bed again; but slept no more that night. All next day I spent in praying for mercy, but got no deliverance. And when night came on, I retired, restless, weary, and heavy laden to bed. After laying thus some time, I thought there was no mercy for me, and that God would not be gracious. However, about two o'clock in the morning I rose to pray, being strongly drawn by an inward impression thereto. I threw myself down by the side of the bed, and cried, with all the strength of soul and body, 'Lord, if it be thy will that I should perish, let me perish at thy feet. If not, grant me thy mercy, that I may know that I am thy child.'

My heart instantly began to melt, and tears to flow. I saw myself viler than the dust under my feet. Thus I remained for a few minutes, when with strong cries and tears I added, 'Lord I am vile. Give me to know thee.' In a moment it appeared as if my eyes were opened, and I beheld my Saviour dying for me. I felt his love spring up in my soul, and my eyes overflowed with tears of joy. I knew my sins were forgiven. Unbelief was done away. I had not a single doubt. I felt my soul was united to Christ, and could not help crying aloud, 'O what hath Jesus done for me! How shall I glorify my Saviour! O the dearness, the sweetness, of Jesus to my soul! He hath taken me from the fearful pit! Out of the mire and clay, and hath set my feet on a rock, and established my goings!'

After I rose from prayer, I read the sixth chapter of John. In reading it, I had an affecting view of the singular love of my Redeemer to poor sinners! O adorable Redeemer! How shall my feeble tongue speak forth thy praise! O may I always lie humble at thy feet till I am perfectly restored to thine image!

Inward I blush with sacred shame,
And weep and love and bless his name;
Who knew not guilt nor grief his own,
But bore it all for me!³

Astonishing grace!

I hear the glorious sufferer tell,
How on the cross he vanquished hell,
And all the powers beneath:⁴

O Saviour! why so lavish of thy blood! why so profuse in thy favours!

'Twas thine own love that made thee bleed!
That nail'd thee to the cursed tree:
'Twas thine own love this feast prepared

²William Romaine, *A Treatise upon the Life of Faith* (London: J. Worrall, 1764).

³Cf. Isaac Watts, 'Converse with Christ', st. 3, *Horae Lyricae* (1709), 137.

⁴*Ibid.*, st. 5, p. 137.

For such unworthy worms as me.⁵

O how happily did I move along the road! I found my heart loosed from every creature-good, and wholly fixed on God. Lord, whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none on all the earth that I desire besides thee. Thou art the health of my countenance, and my God.

About this time I joined the society at Cumberland, and had many a blessed meeting amongst the people there. How empty now did all things appear to me that did not tend to the glory of God and the good of my soul! I loathed, I abhorred them! At this time I knew little, very little, about temptations. And it often surprised me to hear the Christians tell of being tempted and tried so, for I was a stranger to all these things. I felt nothing but desire, peace, love, and joy. It seemed as if I was to know war no more. The word of God and all the ordinances were indeed delightful to me. Mr. S. was very helpful to me, and I sat under his word with much profit.

The first time I heard Mr. [John] Wesley my soul was exceeding joyful in the Lord. That day he spoke on the birth of our Saviour in Bethlehem. My soul was ravished with inexpressible joy, to think that he should come into the world to redeem a lost worm like me. But it was not long after this before the enemy of souls sought to wrest the shield from my hand, by infusing horrid and blasphemous thoughts into my mind. One night going to class meeting, it was violently suggested, 'There is no God.' On which I began to reason. I thought I ought not to go to these meetings. I am too vile, too wicked, when I have such thoughts as these. I was astonished, and durst not proceed any further. I turned round and was going home again. But just before I got home, these words were applied to my mind as powerfully as if somebody had spoken them to my outward ears, 'Believe not the enemy of thy soul.' I turned about and made what haste I could to the meeting, which was almost done before I got there.

I felt humbled, and much ashamed, that I should let the enemy of my soul get so much advantage over me as to make me miss so much of one of those precious ordinances. However, the Lord gave me free access at the throne of grace. As we came home, I related to brother Lawson what had passed in my mind. He said it was nothing but the temptation of the devil, who was seeking to destroy. But blessed be the Lord, who hath delivered me! O how ought I to praise and adore him! To him then be ascribed the kingdom, for he is Lord of all! The power who orders, manages, and disposes all, and for whose sake and pleasure all things are and were created.

Soon after this, my husband left me (in very low circumstances) and went to Halifax, in a very disagreeable time of the year. It was a great trial to me. The enemy made use of it often, to draw away my mind at the time of prayer, insinuating that he would surely be lost in the woods. However, the Lord supported me in temporals, by inclining the hearts of the people to help me; and in spirituals, by supplying my soul with uncommon comforts. Just before I left Cumberland to go to Halifax, I had a very wonderful manifestation of the goodness of God to me. O how my soul rejoiced in the Lord! I then concluded, my mount is so strong it can never be moved. I shall never doubt his love again. God gave me this to support me in the trials that were to follow on my coming to Halifax.

P. B.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 640–46.

⁵Cf. Isaac Watts, 'Preparatory Thought for the Lord's Supper', st. 5, *Horae Lyricae* (1709), 136.

From J. F.

c. 1789

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Being on a visit at Cowbridge in Glamorganshire, I received the following account of the death of a backslider which you may, perhaps, think worth recording as a memento for those who trifle with the grace of God.

M. W. made sometime a profession of religion, but was looked upon as a dubious character and was suspected of making too free with liquor. However, no particular charge was brought against her till the year 1785, when a report prevailed that she had an improper intimacy with a married man.

A gentlewoman who resided in a house adjoining to where she had an apartment, having one day seen behaviour which testified the truth of the above suspicion, immediately sent for Mr. S. and related what had passed. He took the first opportunity of speaking the unhappy woman, and charged her with the crime above-mentioned; which she positively denied, and expressed great surprise at his believing such a report. The person from whom he received the information would not, in his judgment, assert a falsity. Therefore he was very plain with this woman, and brought to her remembrance those instances of God's displeasure against lying: Ananias and Sapphira.¹

After he had spoken a few words more, she burst into tears, fell on her knees, and confessed the fact. He gave her necessary advice, and then left her, exhorting her to pray to God for mercy. As she had brought a public reproach upon the gospel, it was thought necessary to make her a public example, by reading her out of society—which was done when the preacher came to town. After this she gave a loose to her inclinations, and fully confirmed the suspicions of the world respecting her.

About twelve months after her separation from the people, she engaged in a transaction which proved her ruin. A room in the upper part of the house where she resided was used by a tradesman of the town as a ware room, in which he deposited grocery goods, liquors, etc. M. W., with another woman, found means to open the door, from whence they took a small cask (supposing it to be liquor) and brought it into her apartment on the first floor. In opening the cask, by the assistance of a lighted candle, the contents, which was gunpowder, caught fire, and the house blew up.

Mr. S. before mentioned, walking in a field not far distant, and hearing the explosion, looked round and saw the shattered building spread far and wide. The whole town was alarmed with the shock, and many of the inhabitants proceeded to search the ruins. Where they found the poor unhappy victim M. W. torn to pieces, and the woman who assisted her an object too miserable to describe—in which state she continued a few hours, and then expired. An old woman who was ignorant of their conduct, being in bed in a room over them, was miraculously preserved (when the roof fell in) by some rafters forming, as it were, a screen over her. But the fright was supposed to be the occasion of her death, for she lived only a fortnight after this melancholy scene.

Surely the hand of the Lord may be seen in thus punishing drunkenness, lying, and adultery; but above all, in an abuse of his grace and mercy, which no doubt M. W. had received. With respect to her associate, that scripture was literally fulfilled, 'Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not go unpunished.'²

J. F.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 80–82.

¹See Acts 5:1–11.

²Prov. 11:21.

From Samuel Paynter¹

[Antigua]
c. 1789

About the year 1770 I assembled among several persons who went to hear the Rev. Nathaniel Gilbert preach; more through curiosity than anything else (for I was at that time a constant churchman, and did not conceive that anything more than a few good works, with what I already professed, was necessary to constitute me righteous before God). He preached from the 11th chapter of St. Matthew's gospel and 28th verse, 'Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest!'

From the earnest manner of giving out the text, it struck me that there was something more implied in the words than I was aware of. And through the prosecution of the whole sermon, the exhortation being frequently introduced, and the necessity of coming to Christ seriously recommended, I found I had need to come to Christ.

I continued from time to time to be a constant hearer of Mr. Gilbert's preaching. And I well remember a sermon of his on these words, 'Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.'² This sermon convinced me of sin, and I determined to endeavour to escape for my life. I then applied to Mr. Gilbert, and joined the society. And by the grace of God having enlisted, I have been fighting under Christ's banner ever since; and find his grace is still sufficient to bear me conqueror through the oppositions I daily meet with.

The many severe conflicts I have had with the world are well known to the brethren. For being at that time a slave, and my owner holding the Methodists in the light of a deceitful sect just started up in the island, and their ringleader Mr. Gilbert as a fanatic because he sacrificed his honours and profits in the community (for he stood high in the legislature, and as a lawyer was a president) to preach to a set of ignorant low people; he therefore laid every stumbling-block he could find in the way betwixt me and the means, and sometimes proceeded to open violence against me. But the 28th verse of the 10th chapter of St. Matthew's gospel, being uppermost in my mind,³ carried me through the whole of this trying scene with very great fortitude. Though at the same time I behaved with all humility, from St. Paul's exhortation to that effect,⁴ till it pleased God to soften the rigour of the treatment, so that by degrees it abated and at last subsided.

Through many shifting scenes of life during the period of the nineteen years that I was in the society, I at last obtained my freedom, by purchasing it for a sum of money which, by industry in my profession as a wheelwright and frugality, with the blessing of God upon my labours, I obtained. But my wife and children continuing slaves to this day, and subject to the vicissitudes of the state I escaped from, I still suffer on their account; and find the necessity there is for my cleaving close to God, and to receive out of his fullness. I have this consolation in my journeying, that my master Jesus Christ, both by his example and precept, taught that it is through tribulation we must enter into his kingdom. And I look forward with joy to the inheritance divine, which they that overcome shall be made partakers of. Through all my journey I have never once ceased to declare what the Lord hath done for my soul.

In respect to the commands of God made known in his holy word, they are holy, just and good; fitted to the happiness and well-being of his creatures, even without the annexed reward of a future state. This frequently causes my heart to exult, according to the psalmist, in the 1st verse of the 97th Psalm,

¹Titled: 'The Experience of Samuel Paynter, a Negro of Antigua'.

²Luke 13:3, 5.

³'And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.'

⁴See Phil. 2:3–4.

‘The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice, let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof, ...’ And I do find that religion’s ways are ways of safety and happiness. And although the world, the flesh, and the devil, like the mighty waves of the sea, lift up themselves; yet there is, according to the psalmist, ‘a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God.’⁵ That crimson fountain, that flowed from Jesu’s side, in which I wash and am clean.

S. P.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 307–09.

⁵Ps. 46:4.

From Sarah Wesley Jr.

c. January 1789

My Dearest Uncle and Friend,

I know not how to thank you for your distinguished kindness to me. Your favours, great as they are, carry none of the weight of obligation, nor weaken that confidence which ought—but rarely is—to be found between the benefactor and the benefited.

In confidence I now address you on a subject of import. Of the money to be raised instead of the £100 annually allowed from the books, I understand you generously intend £500 for me.¹ At first I supposed it was the reversion, in case I should survive my mother; but now find that one hundred pounds is already placed by your command in the bank in my name. My mother will not receive from me the interest of this, which I shall think myself in justice bound to pay to her during her life. So that she will be a considerable loser by the principal being raised, which I am certain is far from your intention.²

Will you indulge me so much as to signify by a line (*without taking any notice of it being my request*) that it is your *desire* all the interest of the £500 may regularly be paid by me to my mother?

None of this family know of my writing, and I am certain my mother would be the first to disapprove of my making this proposal. Which however I submit to you, ardently trusting you will not refuse me.

Source: Sarah's copy for her records; Pitts Library (Emory), John Wesley Papers (MSS 153), 4/41.

¹For a detailed account of how JW and the Methodist Conference dealt with monies related to Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley and her children after CW's death, see Clive Norris, 'Untying the Knot: The Afterlife of Charles and Sally Wesley's Marriage Settlement, 1749–1800', *Proceedings of the Charles Wesley Society* 17 (2013): 49–63.

²Sarah has added in the blank space between the end of this paragraph and the first line of the next paragraph: 'That on this (unclear word) it could require as much patience to bear as in mine exertion to send letters.'

From Hester Ann (Roe) Rogers¹

[Cork]
c. January 25, 1789

About ten days ago we had here a prodigious fall of snow and a very severe frost. This was succeeded by heavy and constant rains which, melting the snow, brought it down in sudden and mighty torrents from the adjacent hills, which overflowed the city in a tremendous manner! Much cattle were swept away and drowned, several houses broke down, the pavement torn up in the streets, and holes left in many places wherein oxen might have been buried.

Some lives also were lost, though the number is uncertain. But hundreds, escaping out of the windows and the roofs of houses, were saved by boats. Others let down by ropes were drawn out of the flood into the higher windows of large houses. Some bridges were thrown down, but the two main bridges were mercifully spared. The large new bridge, about half finished, is almost all destroyed by a vessel dashing against it. The streets were like the main river at full tide. In some houses the water was above nine feet. At the corner of the marsh near us it was about seven feet, and in our chapel about six feet.

It began to overflow about 9:00 in the morning (happy for Cork it was not in the night) and continued increasing till near 8:00 in the evening. And as many large families were unprepared, and the suddenness and depth of the flood preventing their getting in necessities, some were ready to faint with hunger. As many have sustained the loss of all their property, the whole damage in the city is by a moderate calculation computed to be fifty thousand pounds, though some say two hundred thousand.

Our chapel doors were burst open, and one of our large gates was carried away, which was all our damage. Though Mr. [James] Rogers had some difficulty, and was employed the whole day, in preventing the forms from swimming away. An earthenware shop next door to Mrs. M—'s² sustained great loss, the pots, dishes, pans, etc., being dashed against each other. But Mrs. M. had only one fourpenny crock broken, though many others were floating on the water. Indeed few of the Methodists sustained any material loss.

Persons of judgment believe that if this flood had happened when there was a spring tide, or if there had been an easterly wind, all Cork must have been destroyed. John Montjoy's brother was carried by the stream over the wall on Bachelors Quay, into the river, dashed against the North Bridge, carried forward by the torrent to Leitrim, where he was taken up alive and is now recovered! To mention all particulars would be endless, but the above may give some idea of the melancholy scene.

H. R.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 12 (1789): 383–84.

¹Titled: 'A Brief Account of a great Flood at Cork, which happened in January 1789'. The flood was on Jan. 17, 1789. This is surely an excerpt from a longer letter, given JW's reply of Feb. 9, 1789.

²Likely Christiana Malenoir.

From William Horner¹

c. February 1, 1789

Samuel Newman was born at Whittlebury in 1761. The former part of his life was spent in ignorance of God, and an entire neglect of the concerns of his soul. In his youth he had been taught the alphabet, but through want of opportunity and inclination he made very little improvement in learning. Consequently, not being able to read the Scriptures, he could form no proper notions of the evil of sin, the worth of his soul, or the way of salvation revealed therein. And having a settled enmity in his mind to the things of God, and the people of God, he stopped his ears and steeled his heart against the repeated reproofs and instructions which some of his pious relations endeavoured to enforce upon him.

Though he was resolved to have nothing to do with religion, yet at seasons some slight convictions fastened upon his mind. But being of a trifling spirit, and addicted to a kind of jocose lies, which he often confirmed with an oath to divert his companions in sin and to gain applause, soon stifled all his convictions. For some years past he frequently attended at our preaching house, with some more of his giddy companions, to spend an hour; but not with an intention of reducing to practice what he there heard and felt. The devil and his own heart prevailed on him to believe that it was time enough for years to come to become serious. Thus he continued, till about twelve months ago it pleased the Lord to visit him with affliction of body, under which he felt some awful apprehensions of death and judgment, that forced him to form a resolution of future amendment, if it should please the Lord to restore him to health and prolong his days.

The Lord gave him the desire of his heart in raising him up. And being recovered, he paid some small regard to his promise for a few days. Being out on business, and coming home late at night, upon finding the door locked, and it not being opened immediately, he fell into a passion and uttered some horrid oaths. Immediately he felt such an inward shock as made him tremble, and he thought he should have fallen under it. But instead of humbling himself on account of his wickedness, and breach of promise, he hearkened to the voice of Satan, who whispered to his mind, 'Your promises are all in vain! you have now broken them. Therefore you may go on and sin.' He gave way to the enemy, and suffered himself to be led as an ox to the slaughter, and as a fool to the correction of the stocks, without paying any regard to his promises, or to the voice of conscience.

Sin was again pursued with greater eagerness than before; yet with less pleasure. His misery increased, but he was unwilling to acknowledge that his misconduct was the procuring cause, and not the Almighty, whom he blamed for crossing his desires of being happy in a course of sin. At these seasons he felt (as he hath since acknowledged) such an enmity in his heart to the Almighty as could not be expressed. He has frequently stood when in the field at his work and, looking upward, would as it were quarrel with him respecting the dispensations of his providence.

Sometime in November 1788, as he was lifting a piece of wood, the Lord permitted it to fall upon him, which broke three of his ribs. This caused his thoughts of death and judgment to return; with which, his convictions were again renewed, and purposes to reform and to seek the salvation of his soul. But in all his resolutions of amendment he depended on his own strength. Therefore they all proved ineffectual. While his sickness continued, and death seemed near, he was much in earnest. But when he grew better, and there appeared a prospect of his life being prolonged, he grew careless. Yet, the effects of the hurt he received never wore off. It brought on such a decline of his natural strength, and such frequent pain, as made the approaches of death, and the shortness of life, more certain than ever.

A dreadful eternity opened, in a more convincing manner, upon his mind than before, and that he must shortly appear before the judgment seat of Christ. But feeling himself unprepared, he knew not what to do. Now he became willing to receive instruction, and to know how he might be put into a state of readiness. Nevertheless, he had but very imperfect views of the nature of sin, and the evil of his own

¹Titled: 'An Account of the Death of Samuel Newman'. 'By Mr. William Horner'.

heart. But the Lord did not let him remain long in that state. One Sabbath-day having gone to church, hearing the minister read the exhortation preparatory to receiving the sacrament, and that the unworthy receivers are guilty of the body and blood of Christ, he then reasoned with himself thus: 'I have not been a partaker of this sacrament. Yet I am guilty of the body and blood of Christ. I have sinned, and am under condemnation. The law of God condemneth me, and my own heart also.'

Soon after he opened his mind to one of our society, who advised him to cry to the Lord for mercy, and not to rest till he received a sense of his pardoning love. It was then the Lord gave him to see more perfectly what he was by nature and practice. Then sorrow for sin filled his heart, and increased daily. He was drawn out in earnest desires after God and happiness, beyond what he ever felt before. Satan then perceiving he was likely to lose his prey, suggested to his mind, that his day of grace was past, and that there was no mercy for such a sinner as he was—that his sins were too great to be forgiven. The sense he then had of his own sinfulness, and views of God's purity and justice, tended to confirm the suggestion and to deepen his distress. He then began to express himself thus: 'Is thy mercy clean gone forever? And wilt thou no more be gracious? O what shall I do to be saved?' After a little conversation with a friend he felt a degree of hope, but soon lost it and sunk again into distress. Others of the society, hearing of his convictions and distress, visited him and prayed with him. His hope of mercy again returned, but it was not of long continuance. His distress soon became greater than before. Sin appeared more sinful. He then said, 'It is well that I am out of hell.'

Sunday morning the 18th of January a member of the society visited him, and found him full of doubts that God would not accept of such a sinner as he was, even though he should seek. She informed him that Jesus Christ came to save the chief of sinners. He endeavoured to lift up his heart and voice in prayer, and exclaimed, 'Surely none but madmen and fools would put off this work to a deathbed, as I have done!'

Other friends visited and administered some suitable instructions to him. He then began to feel such an affection for the society, and desire to be united to them if he should recover, as made him to charge his wife not in the least to oppose him in his purpose, declaring, 'I shall be undone, if you do not consent that I should join that people.'

The two following days he seemed to be a little composed and comfortable; but not having a clear evidence of his acceptance, he was still in doubt.

Wednesday 21, S— R— had been with him, till about the middle of the night (when he was calm) she returned to rest. About an hour afterward he felt a change in his disorder for the worse. (I believe at that time a mortification began, which caused inexpressible pain the few days he survived.) He then said to his wife, 'O Sukey pray for me, I am dying. I cannot pray for myself.' Our sister was sent for who had been with him last. When she came he said,

I slumbered a little, and awoke with these words, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death.'² All my sins are brought to my remembrance, 'and are a burden too heavy for me to bear'.³ My hope is all lost! I am cut off from all parts! O what shall I do! O that body and soul could be dissolved into nothing! But this cannot be. I have an immortal spirit, and this must be cast into the pit, where hope never will come! O let me look wherever I will, I see nothing but hell and judgment! O this flaming fire, which cannot be quenched! I must be banished from God! There is not a promise for me, nor for a deathbed repentance. My loins are filled with a sore disease! I am feeble, surely I am dying!

He then roared by reason of his distress of soul, crying out, 'O what shall I do to be saved?'

²Matt. 26:38.

³Cf. Ps. 38:4.

Our sister repeated to him the following promises, 'Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'⁴ And, 'him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.'⁵ These promises are applicable to you. And if you come to him he will not reject you; yea he cannot cast you out. Moreover God hath said, 'To this man will I look, that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word.'⁶ O call upon the Lord, 'for he is near to all that call upon him.'⁷ Call upon him now with your whole heart. 'He will be found of them that seek him.'⁸ He then began to cry aloud, 'O Lord I come to thee, cast me not out! I am the chief of sinners, for whom thou hast died. O Lord have mercy upon me! O Lord hear my prayer, and cast me not from thy presence forever! Lord save, or I perish!' At that time he was in such distress of soul, and such earnestness, that the bed shook under him. His attitude, his looks, his tears, as well as his words, all spoke the language of a sincere heart.

Now the day began to dawn upon his soul, and the shades of darkness to disappear. The Lord, by the power of his Spirit, applied these words to his soul, 'Thy sins which are many are all forgiven thee [...] go in peace.'⁹ He was then enabled to believe that God was reconciled to his soul for Christ's sake. All his condemnation and tormenting fears were removed. Heaven opened upon his soul in such a manner that he rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory. His countenance discovered his inward feelings. There was a visible change. Never did a criminal at the place of execution, upon receiving the royal pardon, give such a proof of his joy and gratitude. He cried out, "'My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour.'¹⁰ Come, let us praise the Lord together.'

Our sister and his wife kneeled down to return God thanks for his happy deliverance; but his voice prevailed over theirs. As he had the greatest mercy to speak of, so he had most to say in his own behalf. However each sensibly felt that God was present in an inexpressible manner. He then expressed himself as follows, "'Lord what is man that thou art mindful of him, or the sons of men that thou dost visit them!'¹¹ God is love! And he is altogether lovely! O that all the ends of the earth would praise him!' After a little silence he said, 'It seemeth to me as if I were well. My bodily pain is abated with the pain of my mind. I feel as if I were another man to what I was before. Now the fear of death is gone! "O death, where is thy sting! O grave where is thy victory!"¹² The sting of death is gone! Jesus Christ hath taken it away!'

Soon after, perceiving his wife much affected at the thoughts of parting with him, he earnestly exhorted her not to weep for him, but for herself and her sins; informing her farther that she had abundant cause to rejoice on his account, as he was a brand plucked out of the fire. He most earnestly exhorted her to be much in earnest in the improvement of time and opportunities, that she might be ready to follow him to the mansions of bliss.

Thursday 22, he said, 'O Lord! I hunger and thirst after righteousness, fill my soul with the riches of thy grace. My soul thirsteth after God, the living God! I long to behold him in his glory.' Feeling death in its effects advancing swiftly in his frame, he cried out,

⁴Matt. 11:28.

⁵John 6:37.

⁶Isa. 66:2.

⁷Isa. 55:6.

⁸Cf. Isa. 55:6.

⁹Luke 7:47–50.

¹⁰Cf. Luke 1:46–47.

¹¹Cf. Heb. 2:6.

¹²1 Cor. 15:55.

Come, Lord Jesus, when thou wilt. But I desire to wait as long as thou pleasest. I thank the Lord for these pains, for 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted.'¹³ The Lord has taken away the use of my limbs; but he has filled my heart with his precious love, which is sweeter than life. What are the riches, honours, and pleasures of this vain world to me? Were they all offered to me, and could I enjoy them, I would not part with what I possess on this deathbed for them all! O my friends, it is worth ten thousand worlds! God is love! O! that I could worthily show forth his praise, for he hath dealt bountifully with me. O that my bed were in the street, that I might tell everyone that passeth by what God hath done for my soul. Come unto me, all the ends of the earth, and you in particular that fear God, and I will tell you what God hath done for my soul.

As the love of God was shed abroad in his heart, so it burned in him like a mighty flame, carrying him out beyond himself in earnest desires for the salvation of others. And though tortured with inexpressible pain, he cried out, 'I should be willing to endure these pains for twenty years, could I be in any wise serviceable to the conversion of mankind. O that I could make my tongue to speak that all the world might hear me. Then I would tell what God had done for my soul. God is love! Christ is precious!' After a little silence, he looked upward and said, 'Who are these which are arrayed in white robes? And whence came they? These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.'¹⁴ He added, 'This is *my* tribulation that I am passing through; and my soul is washed in the blood of Jesus.'

Saturday 24, his brother George coming in to see him and asking him how he did, he answered, 'I am dying, and dying is hard work. But heaven is in view, and my soul is happy! The Lord hath done great things for my soul.' He earnestly exhorted him to seek the Lord, saying, 'Dear brother, do not live as you have done, and now do; nor put off repentance as I have done. God has given *me* a deathbed repentance. But he may not give it to *you*. Therefore begin today. Now is the accepted time.' He continued exhorting him, and reasoning till he prevailed upon him to promise he would fulfil his dying request, and he left him much affected.

After a short space he broke out in the following expressions of gratitude and love, 'Blessed be God for giving me my senses, and for the use of my tongue. I love him because he first loved me. And I love him with all my heart, my mind, my soul and my strength. My heart is filled with love! O Lord, enlarge my heart, or stay thy hand.'

To another, who had been a member of our society, he said, 'O Kitty, see what the Lord has done for me a poor miserable sinner. He has brought me out of darkness into his marvellous light. The Lord has done great things for me! O Kitty, be in earnest. Never think of turning back after having put your hand to the gospel-plow. O never think of turning your back upon the gospel. But set out afresh, and seek the Lord in good earnest.' She replied, 'I wish I was as happy as you.' He answered, 'It is the will of the Lord to make you so.' She wept much, to whom he said, 'I charge you to meet me at the right hand of God.'

To one of his old companions who entered the room he said, 'O William! The world is a dangerous sea. See that you do not give way to it. Be in earnest that you may meet me in the realms of bliss.' Another of his acquaintances coming in, upon hearing him exalt his voice in the praises of God, said, 'Don't spend yourself so much.' To which he made answer, 'I will praise the Lord as long as I have breath.'

Several young people coming in to see him, he spoke to them in the following manner, 'It is time for you to seek the Lord. You are not too young to die, therefore "Remember your Creator in the days of your youth."¹⁵ Seeing them much affected, and standing round the bed weeping, he said to them, 'I charge you all to meet me at the right hand of God. O that I could carry you all with me!' He continued

¹³Ps. 119:71.

¹⁴See Rev. 7:13–14.

¹⁵Eccles. 12:1.

happy the remaining part of the night, exhorting those which were about him to fight the good fight of faith manfully, to love God with all their heart—to love him above all. Adding, ‘For he that loveth father, or mother, wife, or children more than me, is not worthy of me.’¹⁶ He frequently called his friends, who were in the next room, to join with him in the praises of God, and expressed his affection for them by shaking hands with them repeatedly.

Sunday morning about five o’clock he called upon one of his brothers, who sat up with him (a member of our society, whom he desired to be with him as much as possible) and asked, ‘Do you think I am dying?’ To which he answered, ‘Yes, I think you have had death pains upon you for some hours.’ He clasped his hands together and said, ‘You have cured me. My pain seemeth all gone! Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly! Why tarry the wheels of thy chariot?’¹⁷ Looking upon his wife, he said, ‘My dear, have you given me up into the hands of the Lord? I have freely given you and my little babe into his hands, and he will take care of you.’ To a friend he said, ‘I shall soon be with my friends in paradise.’ One asked him if he found anything contrary to love. He answered, ‘No, my heart is filled with love. The Lord hath sanctified me throughout, body, soul, and spirit.’ About six o’clock he seemed full of desire to depart and to be with Christ. Being informed that God might have some useful end in view in sparing him a little longer, he answered, with sweet composure and cheerfulness, ‘I am willing to wait as long as he pleaseth.’ To a brother coming in he said, ‘I will praise my Maker while he lends me breath. O what hath Jesus bought for me!’ He added, ‘What do I hear!’ and turned his face toward the wall, and lay for some time very attentive. When one asked what he heard, he answered, ‘The sweetest music I ever heard in my life. Did you not hear it?’ His brother answered, ‘No; it is not for us, it is for your encouragement. The angels wait to conduct you safe to the heavenly mansions.’ He cried out, ‘O the pearly gates of the New Jerusalem! How I long to behold them, and see God in glory!’

A nephew of his coming in, he exhorted him not to spend his time as he had done, but to remember his Creator in the days of his youth, and said, ‘God may call upon you before you are aware. Go into the churchyard and look round the graves, and see how many youths are laid in the dust; and who can tell but it may be your turn next. Therefore seek the Lord while he may be found.’¹⁸ He spake much to the same purpose to some more that came to see him, who were much affected. To a neighbour that called to see him and asked how he did, he answered, ‘I am dying.’ When the other replied, ‘Poor creature!’ he immediately informed him, ‘I am not poor. The Lord hath given me a kingdom, which fadeth not away. And he hath given me the seal of my eternal inheritance.’

He was soon seized with a convulsion fit. When it was a little abated, and one asked if he would take a little wine, he answered, ‘I will drink no more wine “till I drink it new in my Father’s kingdom”.’¹⁹ A little after, he expressed his fears lest he should slumber. And when one advised him to take a little sleep, that he might be refreshed, he answered, ‘No, I will praise God while I have breath, as well as I can, until I shall praise him as I ought.’

A little before eight o’clock I visited him, as I had done the evening before. I have seen many happy souls in their last illness; but never one so triumphant under such torturing pain in the jaws of mortality. About noon, the friends about him thought he was going to depart. He lay quiet, and very attentive for some time with his face towards the wall, and then turned his face toward the company and said, ‘O the heavenly music! It is the sweetest I ever heard!’ When one inquired what it was like, he said, ‘It resembled trumpets and harps, but exceeded any he had ever heard before.’ He then cried out, ‘O, what glory do I behold! I have had a view of the unseen world! Come, Lord Jesus! Come quickly! I am ready, I have fought the good fight. I have just entered the field of battle, and conquered my enemies! The fight is

¹⁶Cf. Matt. 10:37.

¹⁷See Judg. 5:28.

¹⁸Cf. Isa. 55:6.

¹⁹Matt. 26:29.

over; and I shall soon hear the Lord say, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world?”²⁰ After he had breathed a little he said, ‘Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, even so saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.’²¹

Towards the evening, as death began to make swift advances, he said, ‘My hands are dead, I cannot shake hands with you any more. My head is dying also. My eyes grow dim. All seems dead but my tongue and my heart. O my dear friends, I shall soon be in paradise! O may I meet you all in the kingdom of my Father!’

His wife coming in, he said, ‘My dear, you was almost too late. I shall not speak many words more. Can you give me up?’ She answered, ‘Yes, I think I can. How do you find your mind?’ He said, ‘I am happy! God is love!’ Perceiving her weep, he said, ‘Why weepest thou?’ She replied, ‘I am glad to see you so happy.’ He then exhorted her and the rest of the company to follow him, and said, ‘May I meet you all around the throne, to sing redeeming love through the countless ages of eternity! This will heighten my joy.’

His weakness increasing towards the night, he could speak but little. But he lay quiet, with a heavenly smile upon his countenance. He whispered, ‘O, I hear that heavenly music again! Do you not hear it also?’ When one answered no, he replied, ‘The angels are waiting to conduct me to the heavenly mansions. O come Lord Jesus! I shall soon sup with him in paradise.’ The last words he was heard to speak were, ‘Come, Lord Jesus, my heavenly physician.’ A few minutes after, he fell asleep in Jesus about eight o’clock at night the 25th of January, 1789, in the 28th year of his age.

W. H.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 465–76.

²⁰Matt. 25:34.

²¹Cf. Rev. 14:13.

From Thomas Wride¹

c. February 1, 1789

My knowledge of her began in the year 1770, her abode being at a place called Fell Side,² where in a homely house, and with an honest heart, she gladly received and entertained the preachers of the gospel.

She was best pleased and most profited by that preaching which set forth Jesus Christ, as a complete and present Saviour. But this full salvation she did not enjoy; for, although she in the general could call Jesus Lord, by the Holy Ghost, yet she felt, and often complained, that she was not what she longed to be.

When I laboured on this circuit (five years after) she lived at Stikton, and received the preachers with her usual kindness. At my coming again, this last time, she lived at a place called Drumleaning. But as there appeared no good done by the preaching, and some other things being not agreeable, her husband and she thought it better to remove to Wigton; hoping to do and receive more good there.

On the first of January last [1789] I saw her, when she expressed a clear sense of the peace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Tuesday the 6th, she was taken ill; not worse to appearance than she had often been in time past, so that there was no particular sign of approaching death. On Friday the 9th one inquired of her if she thought she should get over this sickness. She answered, 'I cannot tell. But life or death, I am quite resigned.' About nine o'clock that night she proposed to her husband to fetch their daughter; who getting a neighbour to remain with her, he immediately did.

Returning about eleven o'clock, they spent near an hour together in conversation and family prayer, and then went to bed. About one o'clock she awoke and got out of bed. On her return, she telling her husband that her feet were very cold, he endeavoured to remedy it as well as he could; for neither of them seemed to think what was at hand. She then most tenderly embraced and kissed him saying, 'I am as full of Jesus as my heart can hold! I am as happy as if I was in heaven!' Then turning, as if going to sleep, she laid silent. In a few minutes her husband observed that she breathed slow; and continuing his attention, found she breathed slower and slower. Therefore he called to his daughter to bring a light, and to call some neighbours. But before it could be done, without any struggle, or the least bodily motion, she left this weary world behind!

Thus ended the race of Susannah Strong; a circumspect, zealous follower of the Lord Jesus. Who having her heart filled with his love, and blest with an anticipation of heaven, was without the 'pomp of dying' privileged to exchange faith for sight, on Saturday the 10th of January, about half past one in the morning.

Thomas Wride

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 12 (1789): 417–18.

¹Titled: 'A Short Account of Mrs. Susannah Strong'.

²This and the other villages mentioned are in Cumberland. They were part of the Whitehaven circuit, to which Wride was assigned by Conference in 1770, again in 1776, and finally in 1788.

From the Rev. Dr. Thomas Coke

Jamaica
February 3, 1789

Honoured and Most Dear Sir,

On Friday the 19th, we landed at Roseau, in Dominica, and found our former kind friend Mrs. Webley ready to receive us. She had been informed by one of our local preachers of St. Kitt's, who had lately made a visit to this island, of my intention to visit her soon, and accordingly with some other friends hired a large room for a preaching place. After waiting on Governor Orde,¹ who I think is as polite a man as ever I was in company with, I preached in the evening, and on the Sunday following. Mr. [John] Baxter also preached two sermons, whilst I made a visit to my old friend Mr. [Isaac] Charurier, and opened a door or two among the blacks in his neighbourhood. Before we left the island, we formed a little society of twenty-four desiring souls, some of whom had been members of our connexion in Antigua and St. Kitt's; and determined that Mr. [William] M'Cornock should take the care of this island.

On the 24th, we landed at Antigua. Surely this island is the favourite of heaven. It is supposed that it contains 7,000 Whites and 30,000 Blacks; and out of these 2,800 are in our society, and I suppose the Moravians have not fewer than 2,000 in theirs. So great a heaven is not known perhaps in so small a country throughout the world. My congregation in St. John's, and one more in the country, would not have disgraced even those parts of England where we have met with the greatest success.

I should not forget to acknowledge the usefulness of Mr. [William] Warrener in this religious island. Though Mr. Baxter has been indeed the father, under God, of this blessed work, Mr. Warrener has added not less than a thousand worthy members (I have reason to believe) to this society.

Nor should the beautiful proof of love which our society in this island give to their sick members be overlooked. They attend them in their respective neighbourhoods with the greatest diligence and patience; and where it is wanting, provide every kind of medical help for them, without regarding the expense.

Till lately the island was annually governed by martial law on Christmas day and the two days following, the Negroes always being allowed those three days for themselves, on which many tumults and even robberies had been committed. But religion has now rendered this custom needless, and the declaration of martial law is become a mere matter of form.

On the 27th of December, we set sail for the island of St. Christopher's. In our way we touched at Montserrat. But our only friend in that island, one of the most respectable characters in it, not being at home, we resumed our voyage.

On the 29th, we landed at Basseterre, the principal town of St. Kitt's. And here justice obliges me to bear a testimony of the good which has been wrought by Mr. [William] Hammet, who has been the instrument of one of the greatest works of God I have known in the circle of my labours, considering the time he has been employed in it, and the nature of the work in which he has been engaged. In two years he has raised in this island, which was perfectly barren of all religion at the commencement of his labours, a society of seven hundred members, a great part of whom, I have reason to believe, are members of Christ. Here the Lord has poured out the spirit of prophecy; two preachers being raised in this society, who are capable and willing to devote themselves entirely to the work of the ministry in this part of the world.

The second morning after my arrival, we were visited with a tremendous earthquake. The beds, the rooms, the whole house in which we were, shook most terribly for several seconds. The shock was felt in other islands.

From St. Kitt's we visited St. Eustatius. On Wednesday the 31st of December we landed there, and were received by Mr. Lindsey, one of our friends, with every mark of kindness. We soon found that

¹Sir John Orde (1751–1824), 1st Baronet, was governor of Dominica 1783–93.

poor Harry was banished from the island.² When he stood before the governor and council, to answer for the unpardonable crime of praying with the people, one of the council observed to him, 'Harry you must be flogged.' To which he calmly replied, 'Christ was flogged, and why should not I?' Soon after which they condemned him to be publicly whipped, imprisoned, and banished. The whipping was executed in a most unmerciful manner under the direction of one Isaac de Lion,³ a black man, and an enemy to all righteousness—such a picture of Satan for subtlety and barbarity never, I think, before did I behold. He is the great executioner of all the cruel edicts of the court for the persecution of the children of God.

The most famous, or rather most infamous edict which the rulers of this island have published, is as follows:

That if any white person should be found praying with his brethren: for the first offence he should be fined fifty pieces of eight; for the second, one hundred pieces; and for the third, he should be whipped, his goods be confiscated, and he should then be banished the island. That if a coloured man should be found praying: for the first offence he should receive thirty-nine lashes; and for the second, if free, he should be whipped and banished; but if a slave, be whipped every time.

This, I think, is the first instance known among mankind of a persecution openly avowed against *religion itself*. The persecutions among the heathens were supported under the pretence that the Christians brought in strange gods. Those among the Roman Catholics were under the pretext of the Protestants introducing heresies into the church. But this is openly and avowedly against *prayer*, the great key to every blessing. How such a diabolical persecution can be suffered in this liberal and tolerating age is really surprising!

However, we ventured to baptize about one hundred and forty of our society. And even under this heavy cross and hot persecution, our numbers amount to two hundred and fifty-eight. And of those, we have reason to believe that one hundred and thirty-nine have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

On Thursday, the 1st of January, we hired a sloop to carry us back to St. Christopher's. But, behold, as soon as we began to sail, we found that all the sailors were entirely drunk, the captain excepted! In a little time they drove the sloop against a large ship and damaged the boom and the yards of the mainmast. Soon afterwards, when we came to the end of the island, instead of crossing the channel to St. Kitt's, the sloop was carrying us into the open sea in its shattered condition. We then determined to return. But there was no one to turn the sloop about, till with great difficulty my friends, the missionaries, unacquainted with such business, brought it round. And after running against another ship, by which the rudder was broke, and the stern much damaged; and after bribing the captain with ten dollars, to save his own life as well as ours; we were landed again on the island of St. Eustatius.

This series of misfortunes which obliged us to return, appeared a loud call of providence for me to bear a public testimony for Jesus Christ. And therefore, lest any of our friends should suffer whipping, confiscation of goods, or banishment by admitting me to preach in their houses, I hired a large room for a month, and the next day preached to a quiet and attentive congregation, and published myself for the Lord's day following. All was peace till late in the evening, when the governor sent for Mr. Lindsey, at whose house I was, and threatened him with terrible punishments.

In the morning, while we were at breakfast, the marshal of the court entered with great form, and delivered us a message from the governor and fischal,⁴ which was that they required us to promise that we would not, publicly or privately, by day or by night, preach either to Whites or to Blacks during our stay in that island, under the penalty, on default, of prosecution, *arbitrary punishment* (that was the very expression), and banishment from the island. We withdrew to consult, and after considering that we were

²The Negro slave of this name, first mentioned in Coke to JW, Jan. 31, 1787.

³A note added when Coke included this letter in his full journal of his third trip: 'The very same man who received me with so much kindness on my former visit.'

⁴I.e., financial officer.

favoured by providence with an open door in other islands for as many missionaries as we could spare, and that God was carrying on his blessed work even in this island by the means of secret class-meetings, and that divine providence may in future redress these grievances by a change of the governor, or by the interference of the superior powers in Holland in some other way, we gave our answer, 'That we would obey the government.' And having nothing more at present to do in this place of tyranny, oppression, and wrong, we returned to St. Kitt's, blessing God for a British constitution and a British government.

But let me entreat, let me implore, all those who read or hear this journal, to remember that dear persecuted people in their daily prayers, that the God who heareth prayer may be graciously inclined, either to turn the hearts of the rulers of St. Eustatius to mercy and truth, or the hearts of their superiors in Holland to disarm them of their so much abused power.

From St. Kitt's we also made two visits to the island of Nevis. Here we were obliged to lie on the floor for two nights upon our hammocks. But God has opened in this island a wide door for the gospel. And the kindness of two or three gentlemen, particularly the judge of the Admiralty [court], to whom we are highly obliged, rendered our situation tolerably comfortable. We formed here a class of twenty-one catechumens, and left the care of the island to Mr. Owens.⁵

On Wednesday evening, the 14th of January, we set off for the island of Saba, which belongs to Holland. We had left at St. Eustatius Mr. [William] Brazier one of our missionaries, who had been raised under Mr. Hammet, and who had not been included in the wonderful message sent to us by the governor and fischal—there having been only three mentioned, Mr. Hammet, Mr. Meredith, and myself. However, the governor of St. Eustatius, all on fire to persecute, soon found him out, and by his threatenings dislodged him. Mr. Brazier, by the advice of a gentleman of the island (a man in power, but a Nicodemus), removed to the island of Saba.

When we landed, we were obliged to walk up a rock of a mile in length, which was in several places nearly perpendicular. Being informed that Mr. Brazier was at the house of the governor, we immediately went there, and were received with the utmost kindness and hospitality by him, his family, and the inhabitants in general.

The little island of Saba contains about one thousand Whites and about two thousand Blacks, men, women, and children included. For seventeen years that simple-hearted people have been without a regular minister. The governor, council, and people petitioned that Mr. Brazier, who had preached three times in the church (which is no contemptible building), might remain among them. I informed them of our economy, and particularly of our grand and indispensable custom of changing our ministers. They were willing to comply with everything, to grant to our minister the parsonage house, and to allow him a sufficient maintenance. What could I do? Mr. Brazier was appointed to labour under Mr. Hammet at Jamaica. But I could not bear that this delightful people should perish for lack of knowledge. I left therefore Mr. Brazier behind me, having spent two pleasing days with these inhabitants of the rock. May they all be built on the Rock of Ages!

My heart is too much engaged in the interests of this plain, honest colony, for me to omit transcribing the sentiments of a celebrated French writer, concerning them:

This is a steep rock, on the summit of which is a little ground, very proper for gardening.⁶ Frequent rains which do not lie any time on the soil, give growth to plants of an exquisite flavour, and cabbages of an extraordinary size. Through out America there is no blood so pure as that of Saba. The women there preserve a freshness of complexion, which is not to be

⁵Thomas Owens (d. 1808), of Irish birth, was admitted 'on trial' as an itinerant at the 1786 Conference in Ireland (see *Works*, 10:978). Two years later he was one of five preachers ordained by JW to serve in the West Indies (10:668). He served there for twelve years, before returning due to health issues. See *Minutes* (post-Wesley, 1808), 3:7.

⁶Note in original, 'This little island is about fifteen or sixteen miles in circumference.'

found in any other of the Caribbean islands. Happy colony! Elevated on the top of a rock, between the sky and the sea, it enjoys the benefit of both elements without dreading their storms. The inhabitants breathe a pure air, live upon vegetables, cultivate a simple commodity, from which they derive ease without the temptation of riches; are employed in labours less troublesome than useful; and possess in peace all the blessings of moderation, health, beauty and liberty.

This is the temple of peace, from whence the philosopher may contemplate at leisure the errors and passions of men, who come like the sea, to strike and dash themselves on the rich coast of America, the spoils and possession of which they are perpetually contending for and wresting from each other. Hence may he view at a distance the nations of Europe, bearing thunder in the midst of the ocean, and burning with the flames of ambition and avarice under the tropics; devouring gold without ever being satisfied; wading through seas of blood to amass those metals, those pearls, those diamonds which are used to adorn the oppressors of mankind; loading innumerable ships with those precious casks which furnish luxury with purple, and from which flow pleasures, effeminacy, cruelty and debauchery. The tranquil inhabitant of Saba views this mass of follies, and spins in peace the cotton which constitutes all his finery and wealth.⁷

On the 17th, we landed at Tortola. This island which contains about 1,000 Whites and 8,000 Blacks, is indeed ripe for the gospel. It seems to be the general cry of the Negroes throughout the island, 'Let us have, if possible, a Methodist minister.'

After giving the inhabitants of Road Town (the principal town of this island) two sermons, we sailed for St. Croix,⁸ an island belonging to Denmark. This last mentioned island is supposed to contain about 30,000 inhabitants, who in general speak the English language. It is highly cultivated, and the town of Basse-End,⁹ its capital, is far the most beautiful I have seen in the Caribbean islands. The governor-general, through the warm recommendation of a worthy and respectable friend in London, received us with great courtesy, and promised us all the protection and encouragement in his power.¹⁰ Two gentlemen in the town showed us many marks of respect, and an old Quaker lady permitted me to preach in her house, and afterwards informed me that it should be always at our service.¹¹

And now I found myself in the utmost doubt, and knew not which way to turn. Mr. Hammet was appointed for Jamaica; and there was no other missionary to secure the advantages which the Lord had given us in these two islands. At last we determined that Mr. Hammet should divide his labours between Tortola and St. Croix, till a couple of missionaries are sent from England to prosecute the openings which divine providence has afforded us, and which, I doubt not, Mr. Hammet in the mean time will greatly improve. I shall also, God willing, visit Jamaica, to prepare his way in that populous and important island.

We have now through the blessing of God on our endeavours, a prospect of much good in ten of the islands, which unitedly contain about two hundred and sixty thousand inhabitants, near four-fifths of whom are covered with heathenish darkness.¹²

I am, dear sir,

Your most obedient and affectionate son,

⁷[Guillame-Thomas-François] abbé Raynal, *A Philosophical and Political History of the Settlements and Trade of the Europeans in the East and West Indies*, 4 vols. (London: Cadell, 1776), 3:243–44.

⁸Orig. throughout, 'Santa Cruz'.

⁹I.e., Christiansted.

¹⁰Ernst Frederik Walterstorff (1755–1820) was Governor-General of the Danish West Indies from 1788 to 1794.

¹¹Her name was Mrs. Lilly; see Coke to JW, Jan. 26, 1791.

¹²Coke next lists the stations of the preachers, and the numbers in each society.

Thomas Coke

Source: published transcription; *A Farther Account of the Late Missionaries to the West Indies, in a letter from the Rev. Dr. Coke to the Rev. J. Wesley* (London: s.n., 1789), 3–12.

From Mary (Cooke) Clarke

St. Hellier's, Isle of Jersey
February 5, 1789

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Long, *long* as it is since I embraced my privilege of writing to you, I have not yet forgot to be grateful for many, *many* past favours. Often have I intended resuming my pen, and as often have been prevented. I remember the kind condescension with which you used to receive my letters, and I still hope you have not yet forgot your unworthy Mary Clarke. With a deeply reverential affection she thinks upon you, and presumes to look forward to the time when she hopes again to see you.

Many and strange things, my dear sir, have happened since last I enjoyed the satisfaction of your company. Then I was *single*, and an *inhabitant* of Trowbridge; now I am *married*, and become a *sojourner* in St. Hellier's. Seas divide me from my native land. But they cannot separate betwixt me and my heavenly Father! Blessed be his holy name, He is an *ever* felt source of boundless goodness, communicating liberally, not only beyond my deserts, but far above my expectations! And now to all the rest, he has added another blessing by giving me a son!¹ Yes, 'I have gotten a man-child *from the Lord*!' ² And herein many mercies are comprised. Wonders of deliverance have been wrought on my behalf. And still I am preserved to praise the gracious Author of every good and perfect gift. I receive my precious jewel as a present from my Lord, and even before its birth in vows of consecration I rendered it back to him again.

And now while the dear infant smiles with lovely innocence in my face, what are his mother's *fondest wishes* for him? None other than that he may be called of his divine Master to publish his word; a despised, yet honoured itinerant preacher of righteousness. To *this* he has been by his parents devoted from the womb; and their earnest prayers are that the good Lord may dispose and fit him for the work, and send him forth a favoured labourer into his vineyard. Without leave, we have presumed to call him after our reverend father and friend; fondly hoping he will never disgrace the name of John Wesley.

At my first coming to the islands I abode in Guernsey, But have been in Jersey for some time past, amongst a *prospering* and *affectionate* people; who respect and love me, evidencing both in every possible instance. Mr. [Adam] Clarke is now in Guernsey. Whilst he was here several were added to the society, and still both English and French go on to increase considerably. Not many wise, not many rich obey the divine call. Yet blessed be God there are some—some here and there—deservedly ranking amongst the brightest Christians in the island for piety and zeal. People crowd to hear the word of God preached, and attentively hear what is spoken unto them: They *throng* the house; and great numbers go back, because they cannot find room to *push* in. Mr. [John] Bredin has been with us three weeks. He likes appearances here, and is *much* pleased with his deeply attentive congregations.

It is, indeed, my dear sir, it is a happy sight, Zion's prosperity! My own spirit is enlarged while beholding an increase of its adorable Redeemer's kingdom. But little, you will say, will its general increase avail to me, unless it is also increasing in my own soul. I know this is a truth. But surely I may say, he is forming me for himself. Not a wish, not a desire would I have but such as are conformable to his will. Nothing but his presence satisfies me. And for nothing am I anxiously careful—knowing that he who keepeth Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps, and he it is who provides for and helps me. He gives me *all* I want, withholding no good thing from me. His *wisdom* to discern that which is best, his *power* to effect that which is best, and his *love* to bestow that which is best, All join to satisfy me with good, and to make me blest. Receiving so much, have I any reason to complain? Rather is there not good cause to rejoice, and be thankful!

¹John Wesley Clarke (1789–1840) is buried at City Road Chapel. See Stevenson, *City Road*, 378, 381.

²Gen. 4:1.

My friend Miss Lempriere, hearing of my intention to write, begs to be affectionately remembered to Mr. Wesley. She, with many others who respectfully esteem him here, would be very happy to see him in Jersey. But before this probably will take place, I hope for *myself* to see my honoured spiritual father in *England*; there to testify, as far as is in my power, how much I am

His obliged and affectionate,

M. Clarke

Address: 'The Revd J. Wesley Bristol'.

Heading: by Clarke, 'Copy of a letter to John Wesley'.

Source: manuscript copy for records; Bridwell Library (SMU), Mary Cooke Letter-book, p. 19.

From William Carter¹

Salisbury
February 28, 1789

Reverend Sir,

In reading your magazines I am often refreshed in my soul; more particularly in reading the accounts of some of the people of God. And it must be matter of joy to all that love our Lord to hear that he is still bringing in lost sinners.

A few months ago I was acquainted with a young man who died of a decline. His mother dying, exceeding happy, about three years before, he was convinced that a great change must be passed upon him also before he could leave the body with comfort. Some months before he died, being visited by several Christian friends, he was greatly alarmed and cried to God mightily to have mercy on him, and was determined not to let him go until he answered him.

About a fortnight before he died I asked him how it was between God and his soul? He said, 'I am happy, and see Jesus Christ evidently crucified and slain before my eyes; and find my guilt is all removed, therefore I long to depart and be with him, which is far better.' But though he was very happy all the day, yet if he fell asleep he sometimes awoke in a fright, and cried out, 'I have lost my God!' On this he would cry unto God until he had found a sense of his favour again.

The day that he died, I and several friends were with him. On my asking him if Christ was precious to him, he said, 'He is. And I can see him, look where I will!' At the same time his eyes were so fixed on that dear object that he did not care to look at any other.

His brother sitting on another bed which was in the room, he said, 'The place where you sit is covered with angels!' On my asking him again if he was happy, he said, 'Uncle, if I had but strength to speak, what could I tell you of! I never knew such happiness before!' And indeed his very looks declared this. For his face shined in such a manner as was truly astonishing! While the room seemed so sacred that it seemed as if some of the heavenly inhabitants were there indeed! Thus full of love and transport he continued a while, and then departed without a sigh or a groan.

William Carter

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 12 (1789): 357–58.

¹Titled: 'A Short Account of Mr. Simon Parsons'. This was likely Simeon Parsons, buried June 24, 1788 in Salisbury.

From [Hester Ann (Roe) Rogers?]¹

[Cork]
c. March 1789

Mary Mahony was very young, when her carnal relations forced her to marry a man for whom she had no affection. He proved a very wicked and bad husband; but the God of wisdom and love even out of this evil brought forth good. The trials she daily endured led her to seek rest and happiness in God, the source of bliss. When she began to hear the Methodists, her mind was drawn out in strong desires after God. But her husband often followed her, and dragged her out of the preaching house by the hair of the head. After some time he left her entirely, and she saw him no more.

She joined the society about ten years ago, and soon found peace with God, which she never lost; and about three years after obtained also a clear witness that her soul was cleansed through the blood of Jesus Christ from *all* sin. In this salvation she walked irreprovably to the day of her death. And though at some seasons she was buffeted with various temptations, yet she always emerged out of them more fully purified. She was called outwardly to follow her heavenly Lord in the way of the cross; but she joyfully took it up, and bore it with the meekness of her lamb-like Saviour. Like him, her language was, 'Not as *I will*, but as *thou wilt*.'² Her love to Jesus, and her zeal for the glory of God, as well as her love for precious souls, was very peculiar. And over those committed to her care she watched faithfully and diligently, with tears, and fastings, and much prayer on their behalf.

In her last sickness (thought to be a rheumatic fever) her agony of pain in every limb was extreme. But she said, 'When these hands and feet are tortured with such anguish as seems almost insupportable, I look up to my precious Saviour, and *see* by faith *his* dear hands and feet pierced, bleeding and nailed to the accursed tree for *my* sins; and the view of that mangled body, and precious head torn with thorns, and that precious blood streaming for my soul, sweetens all my pain, and makes me willing to bear all he pleases to inflict.'

After suffering thus about nine days, and constantly witnessing the goodness of God to her soul, she became delirious. But a few hours before her departure the Lord restored her reason. She was, however, speechless, till at last, after struggling some time as in an agony to say something, she cried aloud, 'Jesus is precious! Jesus is precious!' And then sweetly fell asleep in him, February 11, 1789, in the 26th year of her age.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 354–[56].

¹Titled: 'Some Account of Mrs. Mahony, of Cork'. The person sending this account is not named; but Rogers was currently living in Cork and the writing resonates with her style.

²Matt. 26:39.

From an Unidentified Correspondent¹

c. March 15, 1789

Hester Wells was always subject to timidity from her youth, and declared a few weeks before her death that she was seldom free from some fear or trouble upon her mind since she was a child. It was not a slavish fear, but an awful one, which kept her on her guard, and was a means (through divine assistance) to keep her from the allurements of the world, etc. As she advanced in years this timidity increased, for she was often troubled with a concern for others as well as herself. And when any neighbour or friend died, who had not a comfortable assurance with respect to another life, it gave her some uneasiness.

Her brother died about fourteen months, and her sister about twelve before her. They bore their afflictions with patience and resignation, and died in peace. Her sister in particular (who died in the twenty-fifth year of her age) left a joyful testimony behind her, and was very desirous to be with Christ. She often prayed for some token to certify whether her brother and sister were happy; which request, she said, was granted in a wonderful manner about four months before her death.

She was delivered of a son on the 19th of October 1788, and on the 27th in the morning was taken with a fit, which seemed to take away her senses. But after she recovered a little, and was able to speak, she repeated the word *sensible* many times, to convince her husband that she retained her senses during her swooning. She said, before the fit came on, that something came by degrees, till it seemed to have a great weight, but she continued in mental prayer and in a short time it fell off; which she said was like Christian's load falling off his back,² and she immediately felt great comfort. Her tongue was set at liberty, and all her fears were gone. She related such a history of her life as astonished those that heard it. Her mother went to see her the morning after this happened, to whom she said,

Mother I am not dying yet. I have more work to do. My fears are gone and I am happy. I have had a fit as they call it; but it was a vision to me, and it was so exceeding wonderful that I am not able to express it. I do not wonder now at my dear sister's being so willing to die. For I have experienced something similar to her, in respect to future glory, though far greater than she related. I am now satisfied of my brother's and sister's happiness; and I bless God for it. It was represented to my view as if all nations were gathered together and the day of judgment was come. And I thought I saw my brother and sister, who died last, with all my other brothers and sisters, who died in their infancy, being in all nine in number; and it appeared to me that they were in a happy state, and also that I and my parents should be happy too. Which gave me great satisfaction, and banished all my fears. The sight was so very wonderful that I am not able to express it. If I was able to retain it in my memory, it would fill a volume.

After this, the fever increased and affected her breast, which was not entirely healed at her death. At the end of three weeks after her delivery, she insisted on being carried to her father's at Bressingham [Norfolk]. And notwithstanding all the persuasions of those about her to the contrary, she would not be prevailed on to stay at her own house. And when she was told it would endanger her life (the fever being very high) she said she should catch no cold, God would preserve her. When some talked of darkening the room where she lay (because they said she was delirious), she heard them and said, 'If you darken the room, I shall have light as the Israelites had when they passed through the Red Sea;³ the light will appear on one side to *me*.' When they found her determined, it was agreed that she should be carried to her father's; where when she arrived, she was so joyful that in some measure she forgot her affliction. She said she was like the prodigal who returned to his father's house, for she was lost and is found, was dead

¹Titled: 'An Account of the Death of Mrs. Hester Wells'.

²In Bunyan's story, *Pilgrim's Progress*.

³Orig., 'read sea'.

and is alive again, and it is meet that we should be merry. And she endeavoured to sing some verses on that account.

The next day, her breast being very ill, the doctor was obliged to lance it. And in about two months after it was so well that we had some hopes of her recovery. But she seemed rather doubtful about it, and said, 'It must be as God pleases. I am resigned, welcome life, welcome death.' Soon after this a cough seized her, which continued till her death. She often mentioned the vision, and said she hoped never to forget it. And whenever she spoke of it, she said it had great effect upon her. She was confined to her bed only a few days before her death, and though her natural strength declined, her spiritual strength increased. For she was very cheerful, and bade her parents rejoice and give God thanks, for he would soon deliver her out of all her troubles. She was very thoughtful about her mother, who she knew would be very unhappy at her death; and would often beg and entreat her not to be sorry. For, said she, 'I shall be freed from all my troubles. I shall be admitted into the New Jerusalem, where there is no more sorrow, but joy for evermore. And there I shall behold my dear Redeemer, with the holy angels, and my brothers and sisters. Oh dear mother, do not grieve but rejoice! Again I say, rejoice! I hope you and my dear father will pray that you may be prepared to come to me. For I hope both you and all my friends and acquaintance, and all the Israel of God, shall meet together in heaven; and what joy will that be! Oh do not grieve, for it hurts me!'

About a week before she died, she heard a bird sing in the night. When some said they thought she only imagined it, she said she was certain of it. And behold, in the morning, when her aunt went down, there was a bird in the house! But what kind of bird, she could not ascertain. On opening the door it flew out. And when she was informed of it, she thanked God for sending such a token of her departure; and was very earnest in praying to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which she said was far better. It pleased God to favour her in a very extraordinary manner, which made her very cheerful and desirous to depart. On the Sunday preceding her death, one of the preachers called and prayed with her. And notwithstanding the cough was so frequent before that she had very little respite, it did not in the least trouble her during prayer, which she esteemed a wonderful favour and thanked God for it.

From this time she was rather more cheerful, notwithstanding her weakness of body. And being advised not to talk so much, because it brought on the cough and fatigued her, she said, 'What signified my body, that I should spare it? It is nothing but a lump of clay.' She often repeated these words in prayer, 'Come, Lord Jesus, and take me to thy heavenly kingdom. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.' She had many changes before she went off, which were amazing to those about her. For she went down (as it were) to the gates of death, and returned again; and said 'I thought I had been gone my long journey; but I am disappointed. It has pleased God to let me come again to speak to you once more. Blessed be his holy name!' This astonishing favour was repeated several times, which made some of those about her say they thought she would continue some days longer; upon hearing which she said, 'What! Do they say I shall live some days longer? I hope I shall be gone this night.' Her desires were granted, for, she went off before daylight the next morning.

She desired the woman who was to attend in laying her forth, etc., to give a signal when she thought she was going off, that she might spend her last breath in prayer. The woman promised she would, if it was in her power; but thought it would not be in her power, as she had so many changes; and she was afraid of disappointing her, by giving a signal too soon. For of all the instances she had seen in dying persons, she never had met with one like this. However, it pleased God to give her the signal; for, when the woman told her she was going, she answered, 'I know it', and desired to call her husband, who slept in another chamber (by her desire). When he came, she could not speak to him, but made signs to the woman, who had got something for her to drink, to give it to him that he might give it to her, which he did. Her last words that were understood were, 'Come, Lord Jesus, receive my soul into thy heavenly kingdom. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.' She continued praying as long as her strength and breath lasted, and then fell asleep in Jesus, on the third of March 1789, in the twenty-ninth year of her age.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 22–26.

From Julius Hardy¹

[Birmingham]
March 21, 1789

‘Thinking it my duty, I wrote a note today to Mr. Wesley expressive of the lamentable situation of Mr. John Undrell and his family (which is copied with my other letters) begging him to adopt some method for their relief;² and his answer thereto gave me much satisfaction: “He would do what lay in his power, in the case.”’³

Source: Summary in Hardy’s manuscript diary, p. 10.⁴

¹Julius Hardy (1763–1816) was a button-maker in Birmingham, and a member of the Methodist society there. See *WHS* 39 (1974): 97–103, 145–48.

²After he left the itinerant ministry Undrell set up business in Birmingham, but had now gone bankrupt.

³This answer was likely verbal, as JW was currently in Birmingham.

⁴‘The Diary of Julius Hardy (1788–93), Button-maker, of Birmingham’, transcribed by A. Marion Banks (s.l.: s.n., 1973); Birmingham Central Library, Local Studies Dept., MS 218.

From Members of Dublin Methodist Society¹

[Dublin]
[March 29, 1789]

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Methodism at its first rise wore the specious appearance of being only a kind of handmaid under the wings of the established Church, in order to supply their lack of service or discipline. This was an allurements to numbers who, although conscious of the fall of the Church as to its spiritual ministration, yet dreaded any open infringement of the national establishment.

For years this appearance has been inviolably kept up, and in this light and on this footing gained ground continually. Perseverance in this one point (viz., an adherence to the national Church) convinced the world of the purity and peaceableness of the society—that the conversion of sinners and not the ambitious aim of establishing a new sect was the sole object in view. Thus it became a kind of catholic Christian society, where dissenters of most denominations found an asylum. The only terms of admission being a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and a life conformable to that profession.

Hence the hours appointed for divine worship were so calculated as not to interfere with the established Church, Dissenting congregations, or indeed any profession of Christians; it being the avowed and chief boast of Methodism to edify all but separate none—unless freely for conscience sake they forsook their former connections.

By degrees this their boasted moderation has subsided. The humble handmaid who was contented to assist her mistress now wants to usurp the whole authority by officiating herself.

The converted clergy gave us the right hand of fellowship, but now start back at these rapid strides to ordination and separation. Every church was open to us. We were received with welcome to the table. But now [we] are viewed with a jealous eye, as persons ready to subvert the flock and steal away the congregation.

What necessity for the church service now more than 40 years ago? Has not the work of God increased for many years last past in this city? Arians, Socinians, and false teachers abounded much more then than now. The Methodists themselves have stirred up the clergy to jealousy and diligence. And from many pulpits you have the light of the Methodist dispensation reflected, however dimly it may seem to those that are used to the plain gospel.

This change cannot proceed from a purer spirituality or higher dispensation than Methodism set out with. The authors of it do not assert this.

Thus jointly and severally we lay our objections and complaints before you, submitting them to your consideration and entreating a removal of what we object to as cause of disunion in the society—and both needless and inexpedient to say no worse: the eleven o'clock service on the Sabbath day.

Richard D'Olier
Henry Brooke
Arthur Keen[e]
Alexander Boswell
John Armstrong
John Charurier
William Whitestone
John Sharman
Thomas Wade
Jeremiah Ashton

Joseph Bayly
Hannah Hill
John Patterson
Elizabeth Foote
Jane Freeman
John Clayton
Jane McKenny
Robert Verner
James Robinson
Elizabeth Cookman

Theodosia Blachford
Mary Rea
George Brooks
Sarah D'Olier
Ham[ilton] Tate
Alexander Campbell
Elizabeth Hammond

¹Thomas Coke sparked debate in Dublin during his visit in 1788, by holding Sunday service in the preaching-house during the standard hours for Church worship (see JW to Henry Moore, May 6, 1788, *Works*, 30:679). Most of the signatories appear in Cooney, 'Dublin Society'.

‘A true copy / 27th March 1789’

John Armstrong

Alexander Boswell

Arthur Keene

James Deaves

Address: ‘To the Rev. John Wesley’.

Endorsement: ‘Copy No. 1 / of the Remonstrances / to / Mr Wesley / 29th March 1789 / 31st March 89 /
4 April 89 / 18 April 89’.

Source: original copy for records; MHS Ireland Archives.

From Members of the Dublin Methodist Society

Dublin
March 31, 1789

Reverend and Dear Sir,

We beg you will accept our thanks for the speedy attention you have shown to the application we have made to you in behalf of ourselves and many more, who most unfeignedly love you.¹

We also thank you for the narrative of the changes which Methodism passed through, and the reasons of them. We observe with pleasure through the whole of what you said your fixed determination not to become a separatist. And as you have so publicly declared you are undetermined to continue or suppress the 11 o'clock service till you can be certified whether it has done most good or harm, we think it our duty again to address you, and leave the event to the Lord.

Why a separation is so offensive to us, and hundreds of your most affectionate children, we need not tell you, who by word and deed made us what we are. You have given us to apprehend it is both unlawful and inexpedient. Your societies were truly catholic. Upon that principle they subsisted ever till now, not interfering with the worship of the Church in general, or of any of the sectarians, some of whom were among us.

You cannot be offended or surprised at us for taking such huge offence at this alteration, so contrary to all your former practice and—in our apprehension—so destructive of your reputation, when we inform you that it was introduced with the most unequivocal and adamant declarations of an unalterable determination to make a total separation.² And of this opinion are most of those who are anxious for the continuance of this service, as well as those who oppose it. The steps which are taken appear to us to tend directly—though gradually—to it. A Church was not four miles from us, but at the door. No Calvinist was at Bethesda [Chapel].³ No St. Patrick's or St. Peter's shut, as in other summers, for repairs. No sort of necessity to justify such an extraordinary change; a change so contradictory to *Minutes* of Conference, etc., and 40 years' practice in this city. Besides, the person officiating at this unnecessary service, being a layman,⁴ shows it is done in direct contradiction to all the ideas entertained by those who were nurtured in the Church and acquainted with her discipline. We therefore apprehend [this] must be for the only purpose of effecting a total separation. In confirmation of our apprehension, we find an idea is sent abroad that all who object to this unnecessary assumption of the priestly office, and change in our practice, are fallen from grace. For these reasons we conceive there is a systematical pursuit of an object which you taught us to detest and you still disavow.

Far be it from us to believe or insinuate that you are apprehensive of any such system being in existence, much less that you are the planner of it. But when we see it asserted in print that the introduction of this service *here* was by your direction, we cannot but fear there has been and is much misrepresentation used.

We humbly submit it to your consideration whether an ungodly parson at St. Paul's, etc., or a preacher of licentiousness at St. Patrick's, where perhaps neither the one or the other ever was before or since, is a sufficient reason for a separation from anything but them very men. Have not Methodist pulpits been sometimes filled with a poisonous or profligate man, which never once gave us a moment's doubt of the truth of the Methodist doctrines or an idea of separating, save from them men.

¹They are referring to JW's oral response over Mar. 29–30, 1789; see JW, *Journal*, 24:126.

²The present debate had been sparked by Thomas Coke's visit in 1788, and he was known for pushing toward separation (see *Works*, 10:592, ll. 44–48).

³The Calvinist Rowland Hill had been there the summer of 1787; see JW to Henry Moore, Sept. 18, 1787, *Works*, 30:597.

⁴I.e., one of JW's lay preachers.

As you are in a state of deliberation, we beg leave to observe that it was your advice, and that of our preachers from the beginning, to attend our parish or St. Patrick's church. This was done. Some always went to the former, but more to the latter; till a few years back. Why? Because [of] the latter being flooded repeatedly (which was not formerly the case) and thereby rendered so damp that only those of our people who could not conveniently procure seats in other churches resorted thither. It is no wonder then if you found so few there. Had you been there last Sunday you might say the same thing you said in the society, without having just ground for drawing the same conclusion, because several of them were at the sacrament at St. Werburgh's, etc., at the same time you and Mr. Myles were administering it at Whitefriar's.⁵

Now beloved sir, that this forenoon service has been the cause of making strife and contention among those who were in great love and peace, we believe everyone will confess. That the continuance of it must be productive of much more, there is the greatest reason to apprehend. Can your most loving heart bear the idea of your children being devoured one of another? And for what? A thing unnecessary, unless to pave the way for a total separation.

May the Lord make you as heretofore an healer of our breaches, etc.

For ourselves and brethren,

Arthur Keen[e]
Richard D'Olier
Jeremiah Ashton

Alexander Boswell
John Armstrong

John Charurier
Thomas Wade

Address: 'To the Rev. John Wesley'.

Endorsement: 'Copy No. 1 / of the Remonstrances / to / Mr Wesley / 29th March 1789 / 31st March 89 / 4 April 89 / 18 April 89'.

Source: original copy for records; MHS Ireland Archives.

⁵William Myles (1756–1828) was born at Limerick, and admitted 'on trial' as an itinerant in 1778 (see *Works*, 10:474). He continued in service until he settled in Liverpool in 1824. He was currently appointed to the Dublin circuit.

From an Unidentified Correspondent¹

c. April 1789

About twenty-two years ago he was convinced that he was a lost sinner, by the preaching of the Rev. Mr. J. From that time he was very zealous for God's cause; and used his utmost power to get the Methodist preachers to Garton, where he lived. Mr. [Jeremiah] Robertshaw was the first that came. At this time he was a poor shepherd, and lived in a house which his master had built for him. But no sooner did he appear zealous for Jesus Christ and his cause, than he threatened to turn him out of it, and said he would not be sorry if his house were burned down, provided the preacher and all the Methodists were burned in it. Soon after, his own dwelling house, in the daytime, in a most unaccountable manner was set on fire and burned down. A gentleman (so called) threatened he would take up the next preacher that came, and have him before a magistrate. But in about a month, it pleased God to call him to give an account of himself before his awful tribunal.

A cottage being to be sold for a small sum, Matthew Lamplough borrowed the money and bought it, got it licensed, and in spite of all opposers, encouraged the preachers of the gospel therein; though at that time he was very poor, having a wife and four small children, a small house and but two mean beds in it. But he made the best accommodation he could; and the faithful servants of God, who sought not their own ease, but the good of souls, put up with it. Many now cried out, 'The Methodists will ruin him.' But when they found the reverse, they changed their note and said the preachers brought him money. He was poor enough indeed, yet for many years he maintained the gospel there at his own expense.

About seven years after he had sought the Lord his soul was set at liberty. And feeling the love of God, he was blessed with a peculiar spirit of humble love, which he exercised in encouraging others to come to Jesus, and continually exhorting those he met to believe in the Lord. All speak well of him in the circuit, especially in his own society, wherein he has been an instrument of peace and love for many years.

One who was at his house and conversing with him about the grace of God in the heart, asked if he had yet been freed from every sinful temper and inclination, so as to feel nothing but the love of God? He said he could not understand how that could be. But being told it was the plain promise of the gospel, and the whole design of God in justifying a soul to make it holy, and after hearing a sermon or two on the subject, he was delighted with the thoughts of it.

During his last illness he was full of happiness, and exhorted those who visited him to believe in Jesus, saying he was going to leave them, and telling how good he found the Lord to him. That he felt nothing but love in his heart, and gave glory and praise to God! A friend, in taking leave, told him he thought he should see him no more in this world. He said, 'It may be so, but oh how does the love of God burn in my heart! Whenever I begin to talk about Jesus, my heart is all on fire!' It was his general saying, as he grew weaker in body, that the love of God was springing up and flowing in his heart like a river. And to his last moment he said his heart was quite free from every temptation.

Not a thought did arise
To darken the skies,
Or hide for one moment the Lord from his eyes.²

Many visited him during his sickness (it being a consumption, which lasted some months), and as he lived, so he died, exhorting and persuading them to believe and love the Lord Jesus Christ. He died March 31, 1789.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 15–17.

¹Titled: 'An Account of the Death of Matthew Lamplough'. Lamplough (c. 1734–89) was buried in Garton on the Wolds, Yorkshire.

²Cf. CW, Hymns for Believers, #18, st. 5, *HSP* (1749), 1:221.

From Members of Dublin Methodist Society¹

Dublin
April 4, 1789

Reverend and Dear Sir,

We are happy that the manner and spirit wherein we wrote met your approbation. We believe our actions and words respecting this cause of so much uneasiness have generally been in the same spirit, for we fear God and love you.

We did not design to impose the trouble of a written answer upon you. Nor can it do the good you intend, equal to [an oral] one in the society. For we cannot impart the substance of your letter to one in twenty of those who are in as much uneasiness of this score as ourselves.

We beg leave to say we are confirmed in the opinion we have lately had too much ground for, that you are abused by false representation. You speak as you *hear*; we as we *know*—being on the spot.

Who attend the Church and sacrament now, oftener than they did two years ago? Not such of the society as now attend the 11 o'clock service (of those who do not, you speak after) who have been leaders or members 20, 10, or 6 years ago. And if it should be found (which we doubt) that those who lately joined the society, by going once a month, attend Church and sacrament oftener now than heretofore, at whose door is that evident fall from Methodist practice to be laid but the preachers? And why, they best know.

They make the strife who do not attend the service. If they quietly come to it, we know there could be no strife about it. But however quietly they stay away, they are equally sure there would be strife. They are not all the saints who go, and the only sinners among us who stay away. And till this is the case, we believe it impossible but there must be strife. But we have the consolation of being very certain there has been more warmth or strife on their side than ours. Herein we are confident, for many have been the bad words which have been and are given to those who do not attend. On this we will meet any who deny it, and convince you they do not speak the truth in love—if you will believe some of those that heretofore were of good repute for grace.

Have we no ground to fear a total separation? No ground? When your delegate,² your representative of yourself, when he is (and you are not) here urged us to become a distinct sect, and to go nowhere else. And declared it was the object nearest his heart, and that he would never cease till he accomplished it. This too when, without any *necessity* for it, he introduced this service which for the time absolutely separates from the Church. No ground to fear? When in direct violation of the constitutions of the Church a layman officiates, not only as a reader of the prayers but as a dispenser of the Lord's Supper.³ No ground to fear? When we learn from different parts of the kingdom several of the preachers express their desire of it.

Dear sir, we think we are grossly ignorant if any other end but total separation can be in view by this strange, unnecessary variation among us—no matter when to be completed. We think we 'leave to God what may come after' by laying the matter open *truly* to you, as also by prayer to him. And [we] are not without hope that he will induce you to restore the sweet peace and love which (whether right or

¹They are responding to JW to Dublin society, Mar. 31, 1789, *Works*, 31:36–38.

²I.e., Thomas Coke, in 1788.

³JW arrived in Dublin on Sunday, Mar. 29, just in time to preach and officiate at the service in Whitefriar's, but he was tired from a 30-hour voyage and had been ill during much of it, so he asked Myles (who was not ordained) to assist him in distributing the elements. The following week a paragraph appeared in the *Dublin Evening Post* which warned 'the Church was in danger' because of JW's use of a layman to administer the Lord's supper, and called upon the Archbishop and dignified clergy to take action; see *AM* 20 (1797), 313. This sparked a public debate in the Dublin newspapers that continued into June.

wrong; at one side or the other) it has been the cause of interrupting. And if persevered in, we fear will be the cause of destroying between many more than you are aware of.

By leaving to God what may come after, you cannot be supposed to recommend an inattention to the present or future. Your life and doctrines, as also your parental instructions, we through the goodness of God have better attended to. We have not so learned Christ or you. We see your care for the present and 'rising generation' as expressed in all of you, both public and private. We never heard of any *Minutes* of Conference giving contrary directions to those of 1768, page[s] 14 and 15.⁴

And as members of your society never hearing a design of or intending to set up a new sect, numbers were offended at the introduction of what has, and can have no other, tendency: 1) Because they did not join a society where any such practice was subsisting. 2) Because it did not in any respect interrupt persons from joining in the worship which they most liked elsewhere; it was avowed there was no such end in view. 3) Because experience proved that such union or society as had been, answered every purpose necessary for the attainment of true religion—as a glorious cloud of witnesses had testified, by finishing their course with joy. That therefore this variation or introduction of new things (which once admitted, know no end) must be for some other purpose than the promotion of real godliness and saving souls. 4) Because they have loved and do love you with the most ardent affection. You have merited all their love and gratitude. You have in a true sense brought life and immortality to light, to their view; and are to them as an angel of the Lord. By you they saw he had wrought a new thing on the earth. It is the new Jerusalem sent down from God out of heaven. For, as the Jerusalem above, it received all who received the Lamb for their light. A blessed type of glory! This you, in all manner of ways, avowed for 50 years was all you had in view. Even those who least loved you were hereby at length compelled to venerate you, and were brought to believe there was more in religion than they were aware of. Methodism began to excite the esteem of all, both in high and low degree. You warned not to change; that to become a sect would be to sink to what other are, etc. When this beauty, this glory of their Jerusalem was attempted to be amended, could they but fear it would be marred? Must not love for the heaven-born catholic society—in the preservation of which the glory of God, the salvation of man, and the reputation of their dear father (whether living or dead) was so deeply interested—awake, alarm every power of their soul? Consider, and feel for them. They see not with your eyes but such as God has given them. And bear with them. Ah, father, provoke them not to wrath whose wrath is excited, in respect to this bone of contention, by their extraordinary love and veneration for you!

We are much obliged by your speaking plain, It gives another proof how you are abused. Your questions imply answers which we beg leave to say are not founded. We do not separate from the Church much more than those we blame. 'We blame!' Not so. Some, the preachers, we blame; the people we pity. We do not separate more than the others, unless our going singly to Church three or four time for their once going in an ostentatious body can be deemed so. And even then those who go to St. Patrick's have no word of exhortation from the preachers so to do—for they only tell the people it being the first Sunday of the month there will be no forenoon service. If anyone but yourself had said so much about going to Church, when there was not service to be at Whitefriar's, as you did Thursday night,⁵ we have good reason to believe he would be silenced. How long have we been so fond of going to Church? Since we were awakened to seek the Lord. Are we fond of it at all? Yes, as fond as ever. Do you not go oftener to a Dissenting meeting than either to St. Patrick's or your parish Church? No, except such of us as were dissenters originally. Many of us go to their charity sermon[s], to cast in our mite for their children and to induce them to come to ours and assist our old women. But we rarely, if at all, go at other times.

We cannot tell whether most to blame or pity the informant of a few of us withdrawing our subscription for the school and preachers being *for this reason*. For we fear it could not be through

⁴I.e., *Minutes* (1768), Q. 23, Ans. 12, *Works*, 10:365 (on keeping to the Church).

⁵At a meeting of the society on Apr. 2, 1789; not described in JW's *Journal*, but noted in his *Diary*, *Works*, 24:277.

mistake. When Arthur Keene, etc., were stewards and last received the subscription for the preachers, they told those they received from it would be the last, as there was amply sufficient without that extra subscription for every purpose. So did A., B., and J., who succeeded them. And they told the truth. And therefore have not paid to it since. At this time this strife did not exist. It is well known, to those who could say anything to you about it, that the reason of not paying to the school was and is the erection of stairs said to be necessary for it, which blinded two room of the widows' house and damaged the wall, made it damp, and obstructed the free circulation of the air. Therefore some as trustees to the almshouse will not contribute to the school while such a nuisance remains. So that you are misled totally. The persons you name were not taking the miserable revenge you were informed of. But if you had been told the truth, and that this present practice was the cause, can you look upon it poor or low revenge not to strengthen men's hands in prosecuting a scheme which they believe must dishonour your memory and render your labourious works less useful, if not useless, by leading us into the lifeless formality of other sects.

You cannot surely think we can quietly see what appears to us in so alarming a light. Nor can we believe, while we hear from the pulpit and private persons the contrary, that our staying away will prevent noise. We again tell you it is the word of the day that those who do not approve are fallen from grace. A preacher, not long since, said in the hearing of many to one who expressed his disapprobation of it, that if he continued of that mind he did not expect to meet him at the right hand of God. You will not readily believe the language it has caused to be used.

Our love for you, and the way wherein we have been so much blessed, prevents a wish either to go or be driven from you or it. We therefore earnestly request in our own behalf, and that of some hundreds in town and country, that you will either publish in print, or declare in society meeting, an answer to the follow queries:

1. What were the reasons which made it *necessary* to introduce the 11 o'clock service.
2. Why is it continued? That is, what are the good effects it has produced that counterbalance the scandal, loss of time, and disquiet it inevitably has and will overwhelm you with; besides the setting those at variance who were at great peace in the land and unanimous to promote the cause of God, but are now occupied in defending themselves against each other—nay, at war with one another.
3. What is to be the extent of it? Is it to rest where it is, and they who from their coming among us were taught to believe it their duty to attend the Lord's Supper weekly are now to believe once in four is better? Or is it to introduce a minister, that we may have it weekly and so complete the separation?
4. Whether new practice or forms in worship are not as sufficient a cause of complaint as new doctrines, supposing both innocent in themselves.
5. Whether it is not as much the duty of ministers to forbear imposing anything on their people, as it is the people's quietly to submit.
6. Whether if ministers attempt to impose what appears contradictory to the forms of their union, can they be guiltless in the sign of God in complaining of the people's sober refusal of it. Is not calling their disapprobation want of a loving, peaceable spirit, etc., a sad instance of their own want of true charity!

May you be filled with that spirit which would never eat flesh, if it made his brother to offend;⁶ and that if anyone was offended, burned for him!

Let no one persuade you we are a part of a discontented faction. We are not. We were not complaining, but at sweet peace. The enemy saw it, and has made the beginning of strife. We longed for your arrival among us. We hoped, believed our dear father would feel for us as no one else could. Cause a cessation of hostilities among your children. This is an awful moment. We tremble, we pray. Hear us our Father who art in heaven, and be not deaf to us our father who art on earth! For ourselves and distressed brethren.

⁶See 1 Cor. 8:13.

Address: 'To the Rev. John Wesley'.

Endorsement: 'Copy No. 1 / of the Remonstrances / to / Mr Wesley / 29th March 1789 / 31st March 89 /
4 April 89 / 18 April 89'.

Source: original copy for records; MHS Ireland Archives.

Published Account of Wesley's Preaching Plan

[Dublin]
[April 7, 1789]

We hear that the Rev. Mr. Wesley, who arrived a few days ago in this city, intends visiting most of the principal towns in this kingdom, with his usual celerity [i.e., swiftness], though in the 87th year of his age.

And is to be at Mr. Tyrell's, at Ballyonan,¹ on Monday the 13th of April; Tyrrellspass, the 14th, at ten o'clock; at Mullingar and Longford in the evening of the 15th; Keenagh, the 16th; Athlone, the 17th; Aughrim, the 20th; in Eyrecourt, at noon, and Birr, in the evening of the 21st; Coolalough, the 22nd; Portarlinton, at noon, Mountmellick, at night, the 23rd; Maryborough, the 24th; Carlow, the 25th; Enniscorthy, at noon, and Wexford, in the evening of the 27th; Waterford, the 28th; — Friday, May 1st, Clonmel, at noon, Cappoquin, in the evening; Cork, the 2nd; Bandon, the 6th; returns to Cork, the 9th; Kilkenny, the 11th; Limerick, the 12th; Pallas, at noon, the 13th—and returns to Limerick; Kilchreest, the 15th; Ballinrobe, the 16th; Castlebar, the 17th; Sligo, Wednesday the 20th; Manor Hamilton, at nine of the clock, and Annadale, in the evening, of the 21st; Ballyconnell, the 22nd; Kilmore, on the 23rd; Cavan, in the morning, and Clones, at night, on the 24th; and at Brookeborough, on Tuesday the 26th; Enniskillen, at noon, and Sidare, in the evening, of the 27th; Kirlish Lodge, the 28th; Newtownstewart, the 29th; Londonderry, the 30th; — Coleraine, June the 3rd; Ballymena, the 5th; Antrim, the 6th, at nine o'clock in the morning, and Lisburn, in the evening; Belfast, the 8th; Portaferry, the 9th; Strangford, at ten o'clock, and Downpatrick, at night, the 10th; Tandragee, the 11th; Charlemont, the 14th; Dungannon, the 15th; Armagh, the 16th; Newry, the 17th; Drogheda, the 18th; and returns to Dublin the 19th.

Source: published transcription; *Dublin Chronicle* (Apr. 4–7, 1789), 1176.

¹In his *Journal* account of Apr. 13, 1789, JW identifies the place he preached as Clonard, a larger village two miles west of Ballyonan; see *Works*, 24:128.

From the Trustees of the Millbourn Place Preaching-house¹

North Shields
April 17, 1789

Reverend Sir,

For these three years past we have suffered a series of injuries and afflictions from the Methodist connexion, which we believe were intended by some ill-disposed persons to cause us to fly off from the connexion. But they finding that they could not succeed by such evil practices, it seems they have prevailed upon you to accomplish their *pious* business of separating this society from your connexion. And you have accordingly once more given orders for your preachers to withdraw from us. The reason given, is because we will not settle our house on the Conference plan.

When we met you at Newcastle last summer, you told us all that you required of us was that we should keep our doors open to receive your preachers; and you declared if we did so, you would take care that we should be supplied, and the preference be always given to our house. Now sir, have we ever shut our doors against any of your preachers? We have not. We have even suffered some of them to occupy our pulpit that were very unfit for the place—but this we suffered, as we suffered many other things, for the sake of peace. After having been very ill treated, and looked upon as rogues, cheats, and rebels, and swaggered over with all the tyrannical insolence that a proud, ignorant mind is capable of, when got into a little authority—we say, after having had such a sample of Conference *piety* and *moderation*, should we not be fools and madmen to settle our house just as our adversaries require?

No. We speak now as we have always done (without guile or dissimulation) that we will not settle our house upon any such plan. It was built with our own money, and we think those persons who are pretending a claim to it are more worthy of the epithets of rogues, villains, cheats, and swindlers than your humble servants,

John Rawson
James Hudson
William Todd
Robert Gray
Edward Coates
Samuel Burne
John Patterson
William Davidson

Source: published transcription; Coates, *New Portrait*, 54–55.

¹The trustees were responding to JW's final decision to stop sending preachers to Millbourn Place, communicated in his letter to Peter Mill, etc., Apr. 11, 1789, *Works*, 31:44.

From Edward Coates¹

North Shields
April 17, 1789

Reverend Sir,

I was very much surprised at hearing two of your letters to Mr. [William] Smith read at the last quarter meeting at Newcastle [in March 1789], wherein you are pleased to reproach me as a rogue and a cheat, and not fit for an honest man to keep company with.² How is all this?

You have at sundry times laid very bad things to my charge; and yet you always found those charges false, and my adversaries never dare to look *me* in the face, or make any attempts to prove any one of them! Yet you never did me the justice to let me know my accusers. But by your screening these cowardly villains, do you not make yourself a partaker of their sins? For if you did not give them encouragement and protection, they could not persevere in their evil ways. What a pity that the Rev. Mr. Wesley, who has preached so many good sermons, and wrote so many good things against evil-speaking, backbiting, and slandering, should make himself the patron of them that do such things! When a person of your profession speaks evil of a man, it is by many looked upon to be as true as gospel, without ever examining into the case. And as I am a person in business, and in various ways much connected with mankind, there is no saying what injury such reports may do me.

You further accuse me of being the author of all the mischief that has been at North Shields from the beginning of the dispute. I suppose you mean about the house commonly called Mr. [John] Reed's house.³ If so, I beg leave to say that all that I have done in the matter has been to defend⁴ myself and friends against the evil and wicked machinations of a few evil-designing men, and keep clear of the *reproach of removing my neighbour's landmark*,⁵ and being a companion of evil-doers, because I understood the Scriptures forbid such things.

Messrs. Reed, [Patrick] Watson, and [William] Hunter all declare that you encouraged that party in all that they have done, even from the very beginning; although you told us at the same time that you had nothing to do with them!! Nor was the mask ever thrown off till I wrote to you in January 1787.⁶ If this be true, you seem, rather than I, to have been the cause of all you speak of!!! And indeed, it is most notorious that falsehood, double dealing, dissimulation, and even right down barefaced lying characterize the business on both sides—i.e., Watson and company on the one side, and Mr. Wesley and his preachers on the other. You are very sensible that we have such a proof of this, in Hunter and [Peter] Mill, as is truly very alarming. And if *these men, with many others* that we have had to do with, are to be taken as a sample of your Conference, I really think any honest man that knows them would not choose to have anything to do with them. And these are your viceroys, sent to swagger over a few honest *good-natured*

¹In addition to signing the letter with the other trustees of the preaching-house at Millbourn Place, Coates wrote this personal letter in response to JW's actions that culminated in his letter to Peter Mill of Apr. 11.

²William Smith, JW's son-in-law, had written JW in early Nov. 1788, as a supporter of the trustees of Millbourn Place, which helped convince JW to rescind his first injunction against his preachers supplying their pulpit. Peter Mill then wrote JW a letter raising further charges about the trustees, which led JW to reimpose that injunction. When JW learned that Smith disagreed with this move, he conveyed his concerns about the trustees (and Edward Coates in particular) in letters to Smith. The contents of only one of these letters has been preserved; JW to Smith, c. Nov. 28, 1788, *Works*, 30:761.

³The competing Methodist preaching-house in North Shields.

⁴Orig., 'been all to defend'.

⁵See Deut. 19:14.

⁶See Coates to JW, Jan. 24, 1787.

useful men, with all the ignorance that a proud ignorant mind is capable of, when got into a little authority. What a pity but they had some better employment.

Now if these things be true (and you know they are true), who has most reason to complain? You, or the good-natured folks at Millbourn Place? You have injured our society. You have done everything in your power to ruin us, both as a religious and civil society. But pray wherein have I or my friends injured you? If you can make it appear that I have wronged you, or any other man, of your or their property, I will restore fourfold. But you cannot make this appear, and therefore you slander your neighbour. I hope you are not of the opinion of one of your preachers,⁷ who when accused of adultery, answered, he thought himself so much in the favour of God, that nothing *that he did would be looked on as sinful*.

Wishing you, reverend sir, very well, and success in all *good* things, I am,

Your humble servant,

E. Coates

Source: published transcription; Coates, *New Portrait*, 55–57.

⁷A note in original identifies the preacher as 'G. D.' George Dice was an Irish itinerant, who was dismissed from the connexion for adultery in 1786; see *Works*, 10:597, n. 178; and 10:978.

From Members of the Dublin Methodist Society¹

Dublin
April 18, 1789

Reverend and Dear Sir,

How great was our surprise and sorrow on Sunday night! Surely you could not suppose that those who for many years have been members of your society were ignorant of the nature of the visible and invisible church; and of the established Church of England, Scotland, etc., being but parts of the visible.

We cannot doubt your being a bishop in the Scripture sense of the word till we doubt our own experience. But we cannot infer that therefore you are a bishop of the established Church. And if you actually were last year legally made one, we do not apprehend you would have any right to appoint places for the performance of divine service out of your own diocese. We make no objection to what you have done respecting foreign parts.² It is nothing to the point at all. Our case is totally different.

We joined you, as a clergyman of the established Church, raised up and supported by the Lord to collect into a society all who desired to flee from the wrath to come. This society, we were told, was not designed to make *any separation*. The members were to attend Church and sacrament at all opportunities. And the times of its various public or private meetings did not interfere with those of the Church. It was such a society we united with. We never heard of any variation in these things till Dr. [Thomas] Coke proposed and urged our having the *Sunday Service* at Whitefriar's.³ It was in answer to him, that we would not have that service, the resolution you mentioned was signed; and not as a determination against separating from the Church, because there was no thought of any such thing among us. Consequently, no other cause than to resolve against it.

At the time Mr. [Henry] Moore wrote the letter you told us that you consulted the preachers in London upon, we *know* there was no good grounds of such complaint. It originated in a quarrel he had with Mr. [Edward] Smyth. Mr. [Rowland] Hill was not many days here, and if several of our people went to hear him, Mr. Moore it was who had taught them the way to Bethesda.⁴ He knew the design formed to introduce a separation, and dictated this prelude of it as the only means of keeping the people from wandering, when they never before wandered so little nor were in so happy a way. He received your assent; but was afraid to execute, knowing the discord it would produce.

But the Dr. [Coke] was not so. He, without enquiry and against remonstrance, began. What he avowedly did it for, we have told you. Yet you say he has no power, he can do nothing while you live, etc. But we see that his '*no power*' can do what you shrink from undoing, or investigating. We thought it impossible for you to proceed, to confirm such a contradiction to the principles of our union, without taking such steps as may enable you truly to decide on the *necessity* of it. The only answer you gave on this point that we are capable of discovering, we must again and again say is not founded, is an iniquitous impos[iti]on on you. We *know* the people never wandered so little as when this was introduced, and can produce respectable proof that they *now* wander (go to Plunket Street,⁵ for one place) more than for years before. Why, if Dr. Coke has no power, were we not called upon to attend and prove our assertions? If he can do nothing, why are we left in a situation of being apprehensive that he can do anything? He is

¹On the evening of Easter Sunday, Apr. 12, 1789, JW met with the Dublin society and 'explained to them at large the original design of the Methodists—viz., not to be a distinct party ...'; see *Journal, Works*, 24:128.

²I.e., his ordination of preachers as elders, to serve in North America and Scotland.

³I.e., JW's slightly abridged form of the BCP.

⁴See JW to Henry Moore, Sept. 18, 1787, *Works*, 30:597.

⁵A former Presbyterian church that had been purchased by Lady Huntingdon and offered services using the liturgy of the Church of Ireland.

nothing to us, it is true, but what you make him. It is not the Dr. but you we address. We did not so much as once name him. We also alleged other preachers were anxious for a total separation. You did not, before you went on your tour,⁶ call for the proof—that we might have referred you to the evidences in different parts of the kingdom. You had not one word in band, leader meetings, or love feast to induce you to continue this bone of contention. Must we not then suppose a secret influence, which dreads the light? It is true one or two mentioned some who within the last three months, and less, had received remission of sins. But surely that is no proof that nothing among us is wrong. We remember more than once you told us of the intoxicated clergyman who officiated at St. Paul's, and till the last time added that at receiving the elements from him one was justified.

We can conceive there can be variation without contradiction. That we may change many things and be unchanged. We think many things we cannot change unless we change and contradict our former selves. ~~Most of us never heard of Sir Richard's attempt before.~~ But being plain men and women, we cannot think you or we can act contrary to what *in all manner of ways* we said we would do, and not be chargeable with falsehood or deception. We said we would go to Church and sacraments as often as opportunity permitted, and that we never would vary in this particular. That was what all understood to be our meaning. ~~Now we go there once a month.~~ We were taught it our duty to imitate the primitive Christians in communicating *weekly*, and also showing our union with the spiritual worshippers and approbation of the doctrines of the Church (which had a blessed effect). But now we are told there is no contradiction to former declarations and practices in the going there three times seldomer than we did. If it is not separation while we go once a month, neither is it if we go once a year, or in 7 or 70 years. It is a general opinion that if a person once in his life participates of the ordinances of the Church, he does not separate, though that once be at the last moments. But if a number of people assemble to worship God in another place at the time of Church service three times oftener than they go there, what can anyone say but that they are three times more Dissenters than Conformists. But when the fact is they now meet about 59 times separate, and the sixtieth time go in a pretty large body to one Church in this city, as if to deride and show their force, what construction can anyone in or out of our connection put on it? Can you say that it is not contrary to the former practice of our people, as a people, and to rules of Conference and all your former directions? It is very worthy of remark that no regard is to be had to the men who officiate the first Sunday of the month; therefore there is now no more offence taken at the characters of ministers than forty years ago. Note this, and let no man tell us of wicked ministers again. Nor is it once hinted that the doctrines of the Church are more corrupt. The inference is plain, that it can be with no other view than to make another sect. Is this *lawful*? Is it *expedient*? We will now only request the answer to these two questions. Was the cause of God in your hands ever so prosperous in this kingdom as when this was introduced?

You said in your letter that we make the noise we complain of. Sir, in this we are bold to say you are as much abused as in anything beside. We hear of the wonderful things among all denominations, and in such a manner as silences and distresses us, because we cannot [but] think it is speaking evil of us falsely. *We* cannot argue against truth. It is not we who complain of it, that make the noise. We only faithfully echo it to you. You never were in so great estimation with the clergy as before this was introduced; nor had so many churches been open to you in this kingdom as the last time.

You said the society is in a most or the most prosperous state now. We cannot conceive what induced you to this opinion. Is it from the largeness of the congregation? It may be you are not informed that by the new gallery being built all the space under it and under the ends of the side galleries is unoccupied, even on Sunday evenings; by which means the house will not hold within about 200 as many as formerly. And yet none, as formerly, went away for want of room. Is it from more speaking at the bands, or love feasts than formerly? Is it from that sure barometer of open hearts, the redundancy of money in the stewards' hands? Is it from the overflow of attendants at this Sunday service and sacrament even when you were here? Though *we assure you* many were there who only went to see who then

⁶JW left Dublin, to tour Ireland more broadly, on Apr. 13, 1789.

attended to gratify you. Or can you *now* think so from the many more loving brethren who attended you out of town than heretofore?

We heard from you what gave us reason to fear this our further effort to restore peace, love, and prosperity among us will pass unheeded. But hope is not wholly extinct. We think you are not capable of flying to that Moravian subterfuge of silence; or only saying, '*It is all prejudice. It is all a lie.*' This we have long been taught is not being always ready to give every man a reason for the hope, or ground of hope, that is in us,⁷ that we are doing the things pleasing to the Lord. We again pray that you may be made the healer of our breaches, and provoke us only to love and good works.

For ourselves and distrusted brethren

Arthur Keen[e]
Jeremiah Ashton
Thomas Wade
John Charurier
Alexander Boswell
John Armstrong

Address: 'To the Rev. John Wesley'.

Endorsement: 'Copy No. 1 / of the Remonstrances / to / Mr Wesley / 29th March 1789 / 31st March 89 / 4 April 89 / 18 April 89'.

Source: original copy for records; MHS Ireland Archives.

⁷See 1 Pet. 3:15.

‘Observer’ to the Printer of the *Dublin Chronicle*¹

April 21, 1789

Sir,

I have always considered a newspaper as a very necessary and useful publication. It is a happy medium of mutual intelligence, and affords an agreeable method of communicating to the public whatever one thinks of importance to be known. Through this channel a young author may venture a stricture on a certain procedure, which undue modesty might hesitate to expose in any other view. He has besides the advantage of learning how he stands in the public opinion, when he can secretly smile at censure. Or, if he perceives himself slighted, he can sink into obscurity and no one will be at the trouble of enquiring after him. Let this opinion stand as an apology for the following observations.

I have sometimes seen, among other things of less consequence, the name of the Rev. Mr. Wesley in the papers, and his peregrinations announced;² in order, I suppose, that the public may be prepared for his reception. There never was a period when the proceedings of that reverend gentleman and his respectable fraternity called for a closer attention than now.

His long and avowed attachment to the Church of England, his repeated declarations in her favour, and his invariable resolutions of never separating from her, are well known; and are now, more than ever, the subject of conversation. By these pretensions, he has advanced his reputation to a considerable height. And the sincerity of them was never, till lately, called in question. It is true, there have always existed a few, even of the pious and learned, who have expressed their doubts in this particular. But such doubts have been generally considered as the result of *envy*, or some other similar and evil passion. And it cannot be denied that the growing sect has been beheld with a jealous and suspicious eye. However, as Mr. Wesley repeatedly confirmed his former resolutions against a separation, his popularity increased, and he was believed to be a sincere friend to the *Church*.

A few years ago a strange and unexpected phenomenon appeared, which agitated many who, till then, had apprehended no danger. Mr. Wesley began to exercise the office of bishop, in the ordination of several of his preachers; declaring himself, at the same time, a ‘scriptural *Επισκοπος*’ as much as any man in England or in Europe.’ It was then suspected, and whispered abroad, that he had changed his sentiments! Frequent murmurings were heard in his societies, and among his friends. Pamphlets were published against innovations; and the Methodists exhorted—*not to depart from the good old way, and not to meddle with those who are given to change*.³ In order to hush these clamours which had arisen, he assured the malcontents that the steps he had taken did not in the least tend to a separation from the Church of *England*, and protested in the most solemn manner that nothing was farther from his intentions than such a separation.

These declarations quieted the more simple ones, who deem it impious not to yield implicit obedience to their venerable teacher. While those who are prone to *carnal reasoning*, and to judge of actions by the *wisdom of this world*, remained unconvinced and discontented, suspicious of innovations, and persuaded that the face of Methodism was already changed. The Rev. Mr. Charles Wesley was amongst the latter. He ably defended the cause of *ancient* Methodism, and expostulated with his brother on the inexpediency and iniquity of a change in its constitution. But *his* remonstrances were scarcely heard; while the reveries of a ‘silly adventurer’, who bears the title of Doctor and Superintendent,⁴ were

¹This extended letter launched a vigorous debate in the *Dublin Chronicle* that would run for two months (see below). JW assumed that ‘Observer’ was either Edward Smyth (who denied it), or his curate William Mann; see JW to Adam Clarke, June 25, 1789, *Works*, 31:71–72.

²JW’s tour of Ireland had recently been published in the *Dublin Chronicle*; see Apr. 7, 1789.

³See Prov. 24:21.

⁴Note in original: ‘The Reverend Thomas Coke, late of Jesus College, Oxford, Doctor of Civil Law, Presbyterian of the Church of England, and Superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church in

extravagantly given into—to the no small dissatisfaction of many, who were grieved to see their hoary pastor become the dupe of *such a man*.

The day on which Mr. [John] Wesley last arrived in this city, seemed to some inauspicious. After he had preached in Whitefriar Street, he proceeded to administer the sacrament—when (*horrible dictu!*) he was followed by Mr. [William] Myles, who, without any previous ordination, assisted him in the character of a clergyman.⁵ Some, immediately on seeing this, left the house; some remained in their pews; while others approached the table, with trembling hearts and doubting consciences. What some perhaps might not suppose, Mr. Wesley still maintains his former ground; and, whether he *ordains*, or authorizes laymen to perform the offices of clergymen *unordained*, the public may rest assured that he will never separate from the Church of England.

Upon reviewing the facts which I have stated, I am apprehensive that they will appear paradoxical to some, who may be at a loss to conceive how *such proceedings* can stand with *such declarations*. But a right understanding of two words will reconcile these seeming contradictions.

Mr. Wesley has divested the Church of England of all its superfluities and incumbrances, its hierarchy, discipline, etc., and has reduced it to this simple point: *Coetus credentium*,⁶ a congregation of believers. From such a church as this he will not separate. It is true one might ask whether he himself, ten years ago, would have admitted this as a *true logical definition* of the Church of England? And whether, upon this principle, any dissenter in the kingdom might not defend himself against the charge of separation? But *carnal reason* is always suggesting something, and if indulged, will raise objections in infinitum.

Besides, he gives us to understand that by separation is meant a *total* and *immediate* separation,⁷ by which it is resolved to have no more connexion with the Church of England than with the Church of Rome. Such a separation he has always declared against. But a *partial* and *gradual* separation has already taken place, and it will inevitably spread more and more.

Hence it must appear that he is of the same mind now that he was forty years ago; and that, though he has taken many steps which some condemn, he may proceed even farther without being deservedly styled a *separatist*, or one who has receded from his first principles.

To be serious (for this is a serious subject), what apology can even the most Christian candour frame for a procedure which, to speak the most charitably, has so much the appearance of art and dissimulation? If the old gentleman has really changed his sentiments, why is he ashamed to own it? And why does he rather seek to palm a deceit upon simple, unwary souls? It is no shame for a man to grow wiser, to lay aside his errors and improve his first plans. Have not the wisest of men sometimes changed their opinions, and still preserved their character in the world? Why does not Mr. Wesley follow their example, that all men may applaud his honesty? Will he attempt a justification of his conduct, by calling it a *pious fraud*, which is serviceable to the interests of the gospel? The kingdom of Jesus Christ is not to be established by guile and hypocrisy. The genuine character of a minister of the gospel is that 'he walks not in craftiness', nor does the work of the Lord deceitfully, 'but, by manifestation of the truth, commends himself to every man's conscience, in the sight of God.'⁸

America.— Those who wish to understand his real character may consult 1 Tim. 3:6.'

⁵See JW, *Journal*, Mar. 29, 1789; and the remonstrance of some Dublin Methodists dated Apr. 4, 1789.

⁶Note in original: 'See *Arminian Magazine*, vol. 9.' I.e., JW, Sermon 74, 'Of the Church', §16, *Works*, 3:51. JW was citing the Latin translation of the Thirty-Nine Articles.

⁷Note in original: 'January *Magazine* for the present year.' I.e., JW's letter of Sept. 20, 1788, which he titled: 'Thoughts on Separation from the Church'; *Works*, 30:736.

⁸Cf. 2 Cor. 4:2.

But he pleads *necessity* as an apology for what he has done, and tells the public that he has not taken one step to which necessity did not oblige him. It was necessity which impelled him to commence a bishop—to authorize laymen to read the Church service, administer the sacrament, etc.—and to preach in church hours. The principal Methodists in this city required a reason why there should be preaching in Whitefriar Street at eleven o'clock on Sunday mornings. All the answer which they could obtain was that it was *necessary*. Necessary for what? Why, to unite them more closely to the Church, and to prevent their separating from it. *Risum teneatis amici?*⁹ — But I promised to be serious. Such a pretext may seem plausible to some, but it carries a contradiction on the very face of it. Those who scarcely know their right hand from their left may be so far imposed on as to believe *that to stay away from the Church will unite them closer to it!* But do Mr. Wesley and his preachers believe this? And do they, indeed, wish to accomplish such an end? *Credat Judaeus apello; non ego.*¹⁰

I am no Methodist, Mr. Printer. But I have always been a well wisher to the cause of *ancient* Methodism, and have maintained a sincere regard for its aged founder. I am grieved to hear so many severe reflections cast upon his hoary hairs; and am so sensible of the diminution of his glory, that I ingenuously confess I entertain a secret wish that he had quietly rested in his grave before these disturbances began. *Then* his sun would have set in full splendour, and he would have died deeply lamented! Whereas *now* his lustre is become dim in the eyes of his best friends; and it is to be feared his death will be regretted by scarcely any beside the vulgar herd, 'whose praise defames'.¹¹ Could I hope that he would pay any attention to the opinion of a friendly individual, I would exhort him to walk openly as in the day. And whatever change may have passed in his sentiments, to be ingenuous, and not to throw dust in the eyes of the ignorant by quibbling upon the words 'church' and 'separation'; by making declarations and doing actions which have no sort of consistency in them, and by showing other marks of duplicity.

I cannot conclude these remarks without addressing myself, in a few words, to those simple ones who are passively led about in this serpentine affair and bend, though with seeming reluctance, to the yoke of *non-resistance and passive obedience*. 'How long ye simple ones will ye love simplicity?'¹² How long will ye suffer yourselves to be duped out of your reason and your liberty, the liberty of thinking and judging for yourselves? Can you be so credulous as to believe that idle report which is industriously propagated among you; viz., that these changes in your order *will unite you more closely to the Church?* Was there ever a more absurd and ridiculous story framed? Does not everyone know that by the Church of England is meant principally the *government and discipline* of the Church of England, whereby it differs from other Protestant churches? And that the *Coetus credentium* has no more to say to it than to any other Christian church upon earth? Are ye so blind as not to see that your arch leaders are drawing you on by degrees, and will lead you, step by step, to a *total* separation? Will do it, did I say? They have already done it. It is not possible to proceed farther, unless from *separation* to *persecution*. Nay, to suffer a layman to administer the sacrament of the Lord's supper is not only to *separate* from, but to *insult* the Church of England; and is so manifest a breach both of order and decency that he who regards either must shudder at it!

But you are told, when you make any opposition, that you are *hindering the work of God*. And will you sacrifice your judgments to such senseless cant? Nay, this charge, whatever weight it carries, will fall not on you, but on those innovators who have introduced new forms and a new government among you. To speak in Mr. Wesley's style, *Let them take care. Let them see to it.* Your wish is to abide by your first principles, and quietly to go on in the *good old way*, which you have known from the beginning.

⁹Horace, *Art of Poetry*, l. 5; 'Friends, could you suppress your laughter?'

¹⁰Horace, *Satires*, I.v.100–101; 'The Jew Apella may believe [it]; I don't.'

¹¹Edward Young, *Love of Fame*, l.103.

¹²Prov. 1:22.

Neither are ye to be reputed disturbers of the peace, because ye seek to defend yourselves against those who would *deface* this way. For, 'The wisdom that is from above is first *pure*, then *peaceable*.'¹³

These, Mr. Printer, are my free sentiments. I could advance much more on the subject, but I fear you will think that I have already transgressed the limits of your paper. I have the honour to be

Your most obedient humble servant,

Observer

Source: published transcription; *Dublin Chronicle* (Apr. 21–23, 1789), 1228–29.

¹³James 3:17.

From Daniel Jackson¹

c. April 30, 1789

Elizabeth Mather was many years without the knowledge of God, being led astray by the lying vanities and vain allurements of the world. At length, he who came to seek and to save that which was lost sent his word with power to her soul, whilst Mr. B. was preaching in the corn-market in Warrington. The word pierced her conscience, and being convinced she had no righteousness of her own, she earnestly applied to the sinner's friend, and in a little time found him whom she ever after loved.

I have been acquainted with her about eight months, during which time she has been under heavy afflictions; but always happy, yea, always rejoicing in the great salvation. About six years ago, being told there was a greater salvation to be attained than what she had hitherto experienced, she believed the report; and to the joy of her soul, soon found the efficacy of the all-cleansing blood of Jesus Christ. From that time until she was removed to glory, she walked in the light of the Lord, and enjoyed the kingdom of an inward heaven. She had many and great trials through afflictions, poverty, and persecution. But her tempers, language, and calm resignation to the will of God, and her exceeding great joy in the Lord, always testified that she walked as seeing him who is invisible.

While she had strength, she boldly, yet calmly, reproved sin. Her word was as precious balm to the mourner and the tempted. Nor did she fail to excite believers to press into all the promised fullness of love. And in her last sickness, which was long and heavy, her full heart was continually breathing forth prayer, praise, and love. When drawing near her end, she said to a friend, 'We shall meet above. O what a meeting will that be! That word of our Lord should be sounding in every breath, "Be ye holy, for I am holy."² O my Jesus, nothing but thee to me be given! O put thine everlasting arms underneath me! O my husband, my love, my spouse, my all in all! Glory, glory! He feeds me amidst the lilies of the valleys!'

She then recapitulated the sufferings of her Lord. Whilst she lay still one went to her bedside, when she said, 'Do not, do not disturb me. I was feeding richly on my precious Jesus. Oh my love! But I cannot describe the love of God! Oh, what shall I do! Let him do with me as seemeth best to him. O what a sight will it be to see the patriarchs, apostles, the forty and four thousand, and all the dear children that are gone before! But I shall see them soon.'

My God assist me to proclaim.³

Here her speech failing, after a little she broke out again, 'These are they that come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. I shall dwell among them.' She asked one who was taking down what she said, 'What precious thing have you got there?' When the person answered, 'Writing a little'; she replied, 'If you want any dying words to be impressed on your mind, remember my dear Lord's dying words were, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me."⁴ At another time she said,

I'll praise my Maker while I've breath,
And when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler powers:

¹Titled: 'An Account of Mrs. Elizabeth Mather. By Mr. D. Jackson'. Elizabeth Ince (c. 1740–89) married John Mather in June 1771 in Warrington.

²1 Pet. 1:16.

³CW, 'For the Anniversary Day of One's Conversion', st. 8, *HSP* (1740), 121.

⁴Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34.

My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
While life, and thought, and being last,
Or immortality endures.⁵

All glory to my God, he has enabled me to cry out, "I long to be dissolved and to be with Christ."⁶ On taking a little drink she said, 'O my sweet Jesus, let thy blessing attend it.'

Several young people being present, she exhorted them with a loud voice to love God with an undivided heart; beseeching them to live in the continual practice of private prayer, and to let no rival draw their affections from Jesus, who is altogether lovely. She then stretched out her hand and said, 'For these nineteen days, no kind of food has come into my body; but my God, the rock of ages, has fed me richly with his grace, and has given me to drink of the water that flows from his right hand. O sirs, get your hearts filled with the love of God, and you will need nothing else. I have a fountain open to supply all my wants. Out of the riches of his fullness, I am the richest woman living. I am what I am not worthy or able to express, through his goodness.'

Being asked if she found a momentary supply? She answered, 'I have had a momentary supply for almost six years. He is my Alpha and Omega! If the taste be so sweet, what will the fullness be! Jesus gave me only a little of his bitter cup. He drank the dregs himself. When I look to that great being, that was offered up a sacrifice for me, it is beyond the description of men or angels! Thine appointed time, oh Lord, will I wait, till my Jesus come. This is but a moment to suffer with my Lord, and then to reign with him forever.'

Whilst some friends were going to prayer, and made some delay, she said, with a loud voice, 'Open your mouths, and he will teach you what to say.' She was very lively, rejoiced much, and prayed earnestly for those present. When one told her he was sorry to see her so ill, she said, 'I am going to Jesus. You must rejoice. O that I had but a voice that would sound through the globe to shout his praise. What a meeting will that be of Jesus and my soul! I shall then be lost in wonder, love, and praise! I lie in perfect resignation, and need nothing.' Speaking of her pain, she said, 'It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good. I shall soon be with him.' She then repeated the following lines,

Soon shall I pass the vale of death,
And in his arms shall lose my breath;
Yet then my happy soul shall tell,
My Jesus hath done all things well.

And when to that bright world I rise,
And join the anthems in the skies;
Above the rest this note shall swell,
My Jesus hath done all things well.⁷

She desired one present to be faithful to the grace God had given, telling her that his promises are all sure, and that not one jot or tittle shall fall to the ground. Another acquaintance being present, she said, 'O my Jesus, take this my child. Do for her what thou hast done for me. We shall meet together above to sing his praises. I am now near my journey's end. It has been hard work for me this night to get my breath, on account of the phlegm; but my God has been all in all unto me. He has not left me for a moment, and I know his grace is sufficient to keep a thousand souls in the most severe agonies; and is worth as many worlds. Jesus is still sweet, and is my all every moment.' She was now exceeding weak, but said, 'All the

⁵Isaac Watts, 'Psalm 146', st. 1, as in JW, *CPH* (1737), 9.

⁶Phil. 1:23.

⁷Samuel Medley, 'O for a heart prepared to sing', sts. 9–10.

days of my appointed time will I wait till my Lord come. Tomorrow, being Sunday, you will be feeding richly on the word of God. May it be as marrow to your souls!' She sighed and said, 'Why am I thus? Let my name be forgotten by men. Let no applause be given to me, for thou art all in all; and it is free unmerited mercy, that has done all for me.' Here she seemed to be quite exhausted. Being a little revived she said, 'Who knows but before this time tomorrow, I may be joining the hundred forty and four thousand, who are now before the throne of God.'

On Tuesday the seventh of April 1789 I called to see her, which was my last visit, and found her happy, longing for her Lord to come, but patiently resigned. She seized my hand and appeared as if she was departing. But afterwards reviving a little, she said, 'I have lost all care and fear. My Jesus does all for me.' But she was so faint I could scarcely understand her. Her husband [John] told me that it was the twenty-ninth day since she had taken anything solid into her mouth. She lived eleven days after this, happy in the God of her salvation; patiently and joyfully waiting for her summons. About two o'clock on Monday morning the twentieth, she said to her husband, 'My dear give me a kiss', and then solemnly charged him to give himself wholly to God, who would surely provide for him. She spake no more, and about half past seven o'clock fell asleep in Jesus.⁸

D. J.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 646–50.

⁸Elizabeth Mather was buried on Apr. 23, 1789 in Warrington.

From an Unidentified Correspondent¹

c. May 1789

The death of Mr. D— (an apothecary) who died at C— in the beginning of April 1789, was remarkable. He had lived a very wicked life; was young and full of spirits, and was easily drawn into evil; yet he had a wonderful turn for making money, and in many respects he had great abilities. He had married an elderly woman. But they disagreed, so that he ran into one excess after another, though he knew he was wrong, seeking happiness where it could not be found. He had very clear ideas of the plan of salvation; yet (as he often confessed) had no resolution, or strength to resist any temptation.

About four years ago he was dangerously ill, and greatly distressed in mind by reason of his sins which stared him in the face. He then made many good resolutions, but broke them as soon as his health returned.

Some time before his death he had a quarrel with another apothecary, who cut off part of his nose. This involved him in a lawsuit. Shortly after, his cellar was robbed. These things did not stop his career, though he saw the evil of his ways. He said to me after he had been robbed, 'If I had laid up my treasure in heaven, I should not have been robbed of it.'

A set of evil-minded and designing companions kept close to him, pretending friendship for him, whilst they only studied their own ends. He gave himself up entirely to gambling, and drinking spirituous liquors. This he did to banish vexatious thoughts, and was encouraged therein by his wicked companions. All these things together brought on a putrid fever, of which he died in eight days. He was ill two or three days before I saw him. When I went to him, he said to me, 'I'm taken short.' The disorder was violent, and his pain great. And indeed it is hard to conceive what he must have suffered between the pain of his body and the feeling sense he had of his state. He knew from the beginning that he would die of that disorder. When I spoke something to him of seeking the Lord, he replied, 'I can do nothing *now*.' When I bade him pray, he said he could not pray, nor dare he look the Almighty in the face, seeing he was such a sinner; and used many other expressions to the same purport. He continued in this way for two days. He saw his state clearly, yet could not pray. Once whilst I was speaking to him he got out, with some difficulty, these words, 'Lord have mercy upon me!'

At another time, when I was reasoning in my mind and unwilling to give him up, I opened the Bible, and happened on the parable of the lost sheep in the 18th [chapter] of Matthew, by which I was encouraged on his behalf. And the next time I saw him, found an amazing change in him. He had been speaking much to his wife about his wickedness and manner of life. And while the bell was ringing for church (it being the Sabbath) said, 'I shall never see another Sabbath. Many a one have I spent in idleness!' He said to me in a most earnest manner, 'I see I *must* go.' I asked him if he was willing? He replied, 'Whether willing or not, I *must* go. But if I had an assurance of my peace being made with God, I would rather die than live. I would rather know this, than to have the house full of gold.' I told him he might get it without money, for it was freely bestowed on all those who saw and felt their need of it, and encouraged him to seek it earnestly. 'But', said he, 'where is the faith? I want to know it *now*.' I stayed with him all that night, when he could scarcely cease talking of these things. His temporal affairs lay heavy on his mind, being in an unsettled way, and his money lent and scattered through the country. At a time when I was striving to point him to Christ, looking at me, whilst his eyes seemed to sparkle with pleasure, he said with uncommon earnestness, 'I think I *will* believe in Jesus.' And from that time he had a hope that God would not send him to hell. All his hope was in Christ, for he knew and said he was the worst of sinners; and that many had been hanged who were not so bad as he. 'I see', said he, 'every transaction of my life since I was six years old. But I have laid them all before the throne. I don't know what God will please to do with me. But I have an Advocate pleading for me.' He seemed pretty well

¹Titled: 'An Account of the Death of Mr. D—. Written by one who was often with him during his last illness'.

assured he should gain his suit. He desired me to pray that his reason might continue till morning, that he might settle his affairs; but he said he should not die for two days longer. His wife often brought me out of the room, fearing this talk would hurt him. I readily complied with her desire, knowing that God, who had given him these desires, did not want means to bless him, and that he would surely answer them in his own time.

When daylight appeared, he praised God for the light. His looks were wonderfully cheerful, and he seemed to have a pleasing sensation on his mind, which seemed to me to be a degree of faith in him who is the 'light of the world',² though he did not say so. Once he wished he had two or three of those *ridiculous* people (meaning the Methodists). I said they could do him little good, and that one word of prayer from himself were better than anything they could do for him. He replied, 'Would they not help to strengthen me in some degree?' But he rested satisfied.

Few were willing to go near him, the fever was so dangerous. However, I sent word to my brother, who came to him that evening and prayed with him. He begged of the physician who attended him to strive to prolong his life a day or two, till his temporal affairs were settled. The night before he died, he grew very ill. His pain exceeded anything imaginable. Yet all this time he cried mightily to God to have mercy upon him. For hours together his cry was, 'Jesus have mercy upon me! O do not take me away till I am prepared to dwell among the blessed! O give me a place among the blessed!' Many such expressions he used, and continued so till morning. I asked him if he could believe that God was able and willing to save him? He said he could, but wanted a fuller manifestation. Next day he settled his temporal affairs, which when done, he began again to call aloud for mercy. So that he could be plainly heard in the street, by his companions in sin, though they would not now come near him. His cries were sufficient to melt the most insensible heart. I trust some will remember that solemn scene. When I inquired now respecting his confidence, he replied several times 'in Jesus'. The fear of death was now gone. Yet he was not satisfied till filled with love; and it was not long till he was fully set at liberty. He then said, 'I know that my Redeemer is mine, and I am his. I think I see him looking down upon me with pleasure.'

It was very remarkable that about this time his pain was all removed in an instant. He turned to me and said, 'I am quite well. I shall not die. But', added he, 'let me die or live, I know I shall stand at the right hand of God.' He had every appearance of being quite well, except his breathing short. So that we were almost persuaded he would recover. From that time till he died, which was seven or eight hours, he felt no pain; but spoke to everyone quite easy, and exhorted, in a very solemn manner a friend of his who came to see him. He said, 'Do you believe you will ever die?' The other replying, 'To be sure I do.' He asked again, 'Are you ready to die?' He replied, 'I hope in the mercy of God.' To whom the sick man said with earnestness, 'Why I tell you, man, if you do not repent, and get your sins pardoned here, you will be damned!'

I left him now for some time, and when I returned found him crying earnestly to God that he would cleanse him from all unrighteousness—which he soon obtained, as was evident by the joy which appeared in his countenance. His speech began to fail. But his looks and expressions were surprising. Sometimes he would say, 'Holy, holy, holy!' At other times, 'Glory, glory, glory be to Jesus.'

About two hours before his departure he began praying for the world in a most earnest manner, though he could not express the words plain. He repeated over and over, 'O God of the world, and my God. God of the just, and of the unjust.' And then added quite loud several times, 'Amen.' He had wonderful views, and seemed to get an answer to his prayer; for he rejoiced in a prospect of that time when all the world should serve God. Whilst he was thus exercised, a preacher came in and prayed with him. He attended to his prayer and then went on again praying and rejoicing. Nor could he stop, except just whilst the preacher was at prayer. I asked him was he happy *now*? He replied in a low voice, but so as all around the bed could hear, 'very happy.' His senses continued to the last moment. He was going on saying something, but we could not understand him. His face being full of smiles of transport. When his breath just stopped without any struggle or pain, and his happy spirit took its flight to behold that Jesus

²John 8:12.

whom he so lately knew, and yet had so much longed to see! Surely this was a brand plucked from the burning! And is another instance of the willingness of God to receive every returning prodigal. And that Christ is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God through him. To whom be all the glory! Amen!

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 17–22.

‘Rusticus’ to the Printer of the *Dublin Chronicle*

[Dublin]
May 02, 1789

Sir,

I am a plain rustic man. It is not, therefore, to be expected that I should come forth to the public armed with logical arguments, like your correspondent the ‘Observer’.¹ I shall make no ostentatious show of wit and learning, either by a sly and dexterous manner of exposing the foibles of a *pious old man*, or by making use of classical quotations, as *he* does. I leave that to literary pretenders. It is my province to express my *plain* sentiments of *plain* facts, in *plain* English.

I shall not accuse the Observer of want of truth, by calling in question any of the facts which he has stated, for these are too manifest to all to be denied by any. Nor can I justly charge him with acrimony in his manner of writing, for he appears to be possessed of a good degree of candour and impartiality. But I submit it to you, sir, and to my candid readers, whether he is not reprehensible in the following respects. First, if I rightly understand him, he charges Mr. [John] Wesley with leading a whole multitude of simple souls astray, by a conduct that has the appearance of duplicity; and thus makes the guilt of that affair to devolve on him alone. In this particular I differ from the Observer, for it is questionable with me whether those *simple ones*, as he is pleased to term them, are not as chargeable with duplicity as Mr. Wesley; and what is more, whether it is not *their* duplicity which causes *his*. Those persons who pretend to be the most dissatisfied with his proceedings are as extravagant as others in the caresses which they heap upon him. And thus, while they inwardly grieve because they can obtain no *redress* of their grievances, they are taking the most effectual method to defeat their own purposes. I charitably hope that both wisdom and grace are, in a good measure, matured in Mr. Wesley—it is time they should. But it must be next to a miracle if he escapes a species of intoxication in the praises and flatteries which are so liberally bestowed upon him. Had the Observer duly considered this, he might have made more allowances for a man who has hitherto preserved a station in which, perhaps, no man besides himself could have stood.

Another particular in which the Observer seems reprehensible is his exposing this affair to public view; especially to the view of the *clergy*, who it may be expected will examine it more minutely than others. And indeed he is suspected of having had this in design. Would it not have been more charitable in him to have concealed his sentiments? By divulging them, has he not opened the mouths of the enemies of religion, and given them cause to say, ‘This house is divided against itself! It cannot stand’?² And is not his piece calculated to lessen the reputation, and impeded the labours, of a man who has done much towards the reformation of mankind? I need say no more on this point—suppose the rest.

A third thing which I shall mention is a failure in point of discretion. The Observer seems not to have known the dispositions of the people of whom he writes, and not to have been sufficiently aware of the consequences which his observations were likely to produce among them. Instead of attending to the truth of the facts which he relates, they are wondering ‘Who can be the writer?’ And instead of answering his queries, they are curious to find out his name. And though they may be very shrewd in their guesses, he has given them an opportunity of saying many things disrespectfully of him. Perhaps they may turn his own arguments against him, and accuse *him* of duplicity, in holding forth an anonymous publication. Or if they can find no flaw in the matter of his writing, they will be sure to find it in his *manner*. Justly or unjustly, they will charge him with a *bad spirit* (a cant word among them, which will answer almost any argument, and repel the force of almost any truth). And he, poor man, will be in danger of falling into the same disgrace with his late brother, ‘Thomas Attentive’,³ who it seems, though attentive to everything

¹See the letter by ‘Observer’, dated Apr. 21, 1789.

²Cf. Matt. 12:26.

³Note in original: ‘The author of a pamphlet lately handed about among the Methodists. I suppose he is since dead of a broken heart. Alas, poor Tom! [see above, ‘Thomas Attentive’ on Thomas Coke,

himself, had so little attention paid to him by anyone that he met no other reply than this, 'He wrote in a bad spirit.'

To these things I shall only add that it is a pity the Observer did not employ his pen and abilities on some other subject. He may have done both himself and others some harm; it may be questioned whether he has done either himself or others any good.

I am,

Yours, etc.,

Rusticus

Source: published transcription; *Dublin Chronicle* (May 2, 1789), 2.

‘Ascanius’ to the Printer of the *Dublin Chronicle*

[Dublin]
May 12, 1789

Sir,

Your correspondent ‘Rusticus’ is one of those characters which it is not easy to comprehend. The generality of your readers must be at a loss in what view to consider him. Perhaps it is his wish not to be understood. From the general tenor of his *piece*¹ it should seem that he is the friend of Mr. Wesley, and that he wishes to offer something as a palliation of his conduct. But if I am not mistaken, by the concessions which he makes, he gives a mortal stab to the very cause he means to defend. Plain it is, however, that while he thinks the ‘Observer’ reprehensible in *exposing this affair*, he can throw out a sarcasm against something that displeases him as *slyly* as another.

He sets out by professing himself not skilled in argument, and contents himself all the way with making a few common-place observations such as do not at all affect the subject in dispute, but such as he may hope will best secure him against attack. I hope I shall not be thought uncandid in considering him in the light of one of those gentlemen who find it an easy matter to make such remarks upon a writer as they hear others make.

He has no reason to expect that the Observer should favour him with a reply. For what should he reply when, according to Rusticus’s own confession, he has neither misstated a single fact, not shown any want of candour? But as perhaps it may be a secret gratification to Rusticus to have his publication some notice taken of, a disinterested person shall so far gratify him as to convince the public that there is no solidity in anything that he has advanced.

In reply to his first remark, it will be sufficient to say that the Observer has advanced nothing which is contrary to Rusticus’s opinion—viz., ‘that Mr. Wesley’s people are as chargeable with duplicity as himself, and that it is *their* duplicity which causes *his*’. I do not see that the Observer pretends to assign the *causes*, but confines himself to the *facts*. Whether the *preacher’s* duplicity originates in the people, or the *people’s* in the preacher, or whether both are not involved in the same guilt, has therefore nothing to say to the present question.

His next remark comes with more force, and stalks with an air of dignity and serious importance. He intimates ‘That such an affair ought not to have been exposed to the public view, especially the view of the *clergy*, and that it would have been more charitable in the Observer to have concealed his sentiments.’ I wonder how Rusticus could forget that excellent Scriptural proof which so much corroborates his opinion, ‘Charity shall cover *the multitude of sins*.’² With this addition, his argument would have stood complete, firm and invincible; and a conclusion might have been drawn from it which would have reflected great dishonour, and thrown a heavy censure on the Observer. For, according to this hypothesis, whatever *duplicities* or *sins* the Rev. Mr. Wesley might be chargeable with, the Observer’s charity (had he possessed any) would have *covered* them *all*. Whereas, by exposing them, he has given the religious world a convincing proof that he is destitute of that love which *covers all things*.

I apprehend, sir, none of your sensible readers will allow that this is a true explanation of a text of Scripture, nor a just method of reasoning from it; for it will prove either too much or too little. Certainly there are some sins (call them by what softer name your please) which no charity should cover, in the sense of the word now contended for. I ask, therefore, of what kind are those sins which ought not to be concealed? The answer is plain. Those which are of a public nature. Those which affect whole communities, and are likely to lead multitudes into error. Those deep laid schemes of religious policy which, under the specious pretences of attachment to the established religion, are carried on with no other design but to promote the interests of a *sect*. Suppose then the Observer considered the conduct of Mr.

¹See above, May 2, 1789.

²1 Pet. 4:8.

Wesley and his preachers in this point of view? It is possible he might, nor would he have been singular in his views. In such a case, ought he to have concealed his sentiments? Or ought he not rather to have borne a public testimony against such proceedings? Is not Mr. Wesley a public character? And does he not hold himself accountable to all the world for the propriety or impropriety of his conduct? If he conducts himself in a manner which seems ambiguous, and contrary to his repeated declarations, has not anyone a right to call for an explanation? Those inconsistencies, which the Observer points out have long been a stumbling-block unto many, and it is time to have them removed out of the way. Mr. Wesley well knows how many private letters have been addressed to him upon the subject. Every application of that sort has been to no purpose. He would never condescend to give a fair unequivocal answer to anyone. He has, therefore, no right to complain of the steps that are now taken. Let any impartial person duly consider the import of those words of our Lord, Matthew 18:15–17. And then let him show, if he is able, wherein the Observer's conduct has been either uncharitable or unscriptural.

With respect to the remarks which the world may make of the 'house divided against itself', I apprehend [that] to remove the causes of *just* reproach from the church of Christ is the most effectual way to silence the enemies of religion. And when those causes are connived at, it is no wonder if internal divisions and external infamy are the consequences. When St. Peter practised dissimulation among those of the circumcision, St. Paul (regardless of what the world might say) withstood him to the face.³ And I suppose St. Peter could have attempted a justification of his actions by at least as good a plea as any that Mr. Wesley has to urge. In this particular therefore, I beg leave to differ with my friend Rusticus, as I cannot but think the Observer has rendered signal service, both to the church of God and the world at large, by his publication. And I confess that, were I a clergyman (and perhaps I may arrive at that honour at a future period), I should think it incumbent upon me to warn the flock of that deception which he has made manifest.

The last particular in which Rusticus thinks the Observer censurable, and which he calls a failure in point of discretion, is a complication of trivial things such as, I am confident, no man would have laid down that was not at a loss for something better. A few words will show the weakness of the whole.

If those who are the subjects of this dispute are more curious to find out the real name of the Observer than to answer his arguments, it is no favourable sign either of their superior understandings or the goodness of their cause; since it is not the name of the writer, but the things he has written, which they are concerned in. It is possible indeed they may be better versed in the art of *guessing* than that of reasoning. But all their guesses will amount to no *certainty*: let them guess on. But, suppose they could obtain their wish, and catch the name which they so ardently long for, no personal reflections will weaken the power of argument or change the face of one fact.

I should be glad to be informed if every author is obliged to give up his name? If it is always a mark of duplicity to conceal it? And by what law? For if it is, the charge of duplicity inevitably falls on most modern writers; as there are comparatively few who sign their names to what they publish. There is every reason to believe that the Observer concealed *his* from a charitable motive, as he appears to be no enemy either to Mr. Wesley or his people. For my part, in order to stop every mouth, I advise him to give up his name, whenever he is publicly called upon to do it by *him* whom the affair most concerns. He has truth on his side, and seems well qualified for a proper defence. Unless I am mistaken, he is more than a match for any that will venture to enter the lists of controversy with him.

But it seems he has to fear that the Methodists are not only well versed in the art of guessing, but have also the gift of *discerning spirits*. Or what is worse, that they will be sure to accuse him of a *bad spirit*, guilty or not guilty. It may, however, yield him some consolation that Rusticus acquits him in this particular. I am sure every candid person will do the same. As to 'Thomas Attentive', I had never the honour of an acquaintance with such a gentleman, nor know I into what disgrace he is fallen.⁴ But I hope

³See Gal. 2:11.

⁴See 'Thomas Attentive' on Thomas Coke, Oct. 10, 1788.

the Observer will never feel so disappointed in a matter of this sort as, like him, to die of a broken heart.

It still remains a doubt with me whether Rusticus intends his remarks as the expression of his own sentiments, or whether he does not harbour a sly design of discovering the nakedness of the land, by exposing the weakness of *their* cause who have nothing stronger to object. If he is to be considered in the latter view, he is not so great a *rustic* as he pretends; and it must highly divert him to see his feigned objections so seriously answered. I offer what I have written to the consideration of the candid and judicious, and remain, sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

Ascanius

Source: published transcription; *Dublin Chronicle* (May 12–14, 1789), 42.

From Arthur Keene

Dublin
May 12, 1789

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Your letter from Portarlington I received, which I now have before me, not willing to give it the like treatment which my last sent to you unfortunately met with at your hands.¹ I must own yours to me nearly surprised me as much as mine could possibly do you.

You quite mistake, I assure you, if you suppose I have sold either my conscience or judgment to Mr. [James] Deaves or to any other man. This is a thing I trust I shall never do (while the Lord is pleased to continue to me my little portion of reason) to him or to any man on earth, or be a tool to any. I greatly have loved and do still love and respect Mr. Deaves. And I trust I shall ever continue to love him. But he shall never influence me one inch farther than my conscience and judgment approve. Neither should he (were he even so inclined), or any man or body of men, ever tear me from you contrary to my own judgment. I bless God I have a will of my own.

You are totally and as much mistaken in that injured, upright man as ever you were in any man living, or since the day you first preached the gospel of glad tidings through our Lord Jesus Christ. Would to God you had a Mr. Deaves in every of your societies throughout this kingdom. In that case you would be able to come to the knowledge of the truth, if you would but *believe*. For this moment I believe there does not exist a more honest upright man on earth than he is, nor one who disinterestedly loves you better.

I believe you act to the best of your judgment, but I greatly lament that you will suffer your judgment to be so misled in regard of persons who have ever from their joining with you been most firmly attached to you and the cause you are engaged in—not in word only but in deed and in truth. I therefore say I do sincerely lament that you know not or that you so sadly mistake those your best friends.

Instead of separating chief friends from you, I can and do declare that both myself and Mr. Deaves have laboured to keep them from separating. It is the greatest affliction to my soul to find that you have suffered others to separate you from your old and well proved friends. Would to God that I could undeceive you and prove to you who it is that are your friends. And that it is not us that have changed, but others have changed. It is the wish next my heart to be as we were, and to see the work of the Lord prospering as it did, and to have as much of your love as ever—which never will or can be the case while this bone of contention continues.

As to six only signing the last or some others of our late remonstrances to you, we desired no more to sign them, wishing to prevent as much as possible a party spirit from spreading amongst us, and hoping to have the evil removed by the private endeavours of a few of us whom I thought you would have believed and have attended to—as in times that are past. Otherwise, and only for those prudent reasons, and from a wish not to make bad worse, we could have obtained the signatures of many, very many, times six of your loving, peaceful children I assure you—and I will add, many hundreds in this society who did look for and expect this evil to be done away by you, and who do still look for its removal at your hands. Be not deceived. This is the truth, which I now again declare unto you, and dare not but declare it unto you, and beseech you in the name of Christ speedily attend unto, and not suffer confusion and destruction to take place amongst us. It is just at hand, but you and you alone have power to prevent it, ere the destroying angel yet arrives to confirm the gloomy sentence of banishment from each other, no longer to have communion and fellowship as brethren. The Lord influence your heart to this peaceful sentence, and grant us a reprieve yet even so long as you live, we ask no more, we will leave the rest to God.

I will not trouble you with anything more. Neither will I worry you with further joint remonstrances. I have no pleasure in giving pain, especially to one I love. I will therefore 'let you alone',

¹Keene was replying to JW's letter of Apr. 23, 1789, *Works*, 31:47–48. He apparently sent JW a prior letter, to which JW failed to reply.

hoping God will convince you though I and others fail. However, my conscience would not let me alone until I had said this much in answer to yours.

I bless God I have not done anything herein through strife. Neither have I acted herein to you or any other in or from a bad spirit. I have not wished or endeavoured to injure you, the Lord knoweth. What I have done, I have done from real conviction to be my duty to God, to his cause, to you, and to my many distressed brethren, some of whom united with me and assisted me much in conveying our sentiments and that of hundreds more to you.

May God convince you of the uprightness of my intentions, and that of many others, in this matter, that you may hearken and agree to our just supplications. And may he give you such a portion of that wisdom and Spirit from above as may enable you to determine in that which may tend most to his glory and the peace and prosperity of your little Zion. So prays,

Your affectionate but afflicted,

A. Keen

Address: 'To the Revd. Jno Wesley / Castlebar'.

Source: (Keene's?) manuscript copy for records; MARC, DDWes 9/37.

From Ann Bolton¹

[Witney]
c. May 15, 1789

A nervous disorder had for some years preyed on her constitution; especially since the death of her dear little boy in the river. But for several weeks this complaint, with the addition of others, so bore down her natural strength that she daily wasted away. As in a similar case the air of Finstock had relieved her, she wished to try it again. On Saturday, April 25, 1789, I took her to my brother's with a servant to attend her.² Tuesday I went over, and found her much worse, from grievous spasms on her lungs. On Wednesday night she grew delirious. Here my conflict rose to a great height. Mr. [John] Trimmell coming over by 2:00 in the morning, I soon understood her danger and felt myself unequal to the shock. I retired to call on God respecting the event, but could only repeatedly cry, 'Lord she is no longer mine, but thine.'

This increased my fears, and my soul entered into such an agony as it had never before endured. I beheld the uplifted hand, and like Abraham of old, when about to slay the sacrifice, dared not to reply against it. But this dispensation, severe as it appeared, was tempered with much mercy. On Friday morning, while my brother prayed with her, the Lord heard us in our trouble and her reason was restored, and continued most of the time afterwards during her sufferings. Convulsion fits seized her about a week before her departure, which seemed to be the chief engine in taking down her frame. These appeared to be very afflictive to her, and once, as one made an attack, she cried out as in fear, 'The distortions!' (pointing to her face) 'The distortions!' I said, my dear sister do not fear, God is able to keep it off. Only cry, 'Lord help me', and he will help. She did so immediately, and it approached no farther; on which she expressed her admiration at the goodness of God.

For the first two or three days, she was at times in great anguish of spirit. The giving up her husband and four children, cost her many sighs and groans. It was a sore struggle between nature and grace; but grace was predominant, and made her victorious. She relinquished all she held near and dear upon earth, and turned wholly unto the Lord. Her peace now flowed as a river, and her joy in God her Saviour abounded also. Her tongue was loosed to declare the loving kindness of the Lord, and her heart felt happiness in him. 'O!' said she, 'that all might die as I do! But I fear they will not. I am dying in the truth!' At another time, 'I am dying in the Lord! Jesus is mine! He has saved me, and I am saved. Bless the Lord, O my soul! He is my Jesus, my Saviour, my God.' To me, she said, 'Is this dying? Why, there is no misery in this. I used to be afraid there would be misery in it' (meaning I suppose in the article of death) 'but there is none at all. What I feel, is glory begun upon earth.' She seemed very desirous of showing forth the praises of her Redeemer.

My brother Edward, being very tenderly affected toward her, feared her earnest speaking would hurt her. 'My dear brother', said she, 'would you hinder me from praising my God while I live? No,

I'll praise my Maker while I've breath,
And when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler pow'rs:
My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
While life, and thought, and being last,
Or immortality endures.'³

¹Titled: 'An Account of the Illness and Death of Mrs. Trimmell. By her Sister'. I.e., Sarah [Bolton] Trimmell; by Ann Bolton.

²Edward Bolton Jr. lived in Finstock.

³Isaac Watts, 'Psalm 146', st. 1, in JW, *CPH* (1737), 9.

Thus she continued to extol the goodness of her Maker in every interval of sense. One time she seemed to have such a manifestation of divine love and power as was almost likely to waft her away. 'It is such a fullness!' said she, 'Such a fullness! Hold me or I shall be gone.' I put my hands on her arms, as if, to her imagination, I would prevent it. At another time as I sat by her silently in the night, she pleaded with God in some reasoning petitions, and then added with sweet composure, yet with much emphasis, 'Show me thy glory!' In a moment her soul seemed to be filled with effulgence divine, and heaven transfused within her! Then she cried, 'Glory, glory, glory', till her strength and speech quite failed. After a pause she said, 'O what blessed employment!' She seemed very tender of the honour of Jesus, ascribing all her salvation to him in many expressions. Looking at me, she said, 'My dear sister, I have given you up too. You are not my Saviour'; referring, I believe, to times past, when her dependence was too much placed on me.

To a dear friend, whom she much loved, and who had constantly attended her, she said, 'Mrs. H. is the veil taken from your eyes? It is from mine; and there is nothing between me and heaven. I am the bride, Jesus is the bridegroom, and I am ready dressed. It is nothing of my own, it is he that hath put on me the white raiment. O publish it abroad! Tell to others how graciously the Lord deals with me.' And much more to the same effect. She desired me to speak to several persons whom she could not reach, and charge them from her to care for their souls, and prepare for eternity.

To a friend who came many miles to see her, she expressed great pleasure in having an opportunity of testifying to him the Lord's gracious dealings with her, and spoke with much humble triumph over death and the grave; cautiously giving all the glory to her Saviour. 'When you visited me at Witney', said she, 'I told you I was not willing to die. But it is not so now, I am made quite willing.' On his asking if any of the promises was more to her than another, she replied, 'No, they are all so precious. I do not know which to prize most. O sir!' she added, 'what I feel is worth ten thousand worlds! There is nothing to be compared with it!' With the most affectionate solicitude, yet calm fortitude, she committed the care of her children to her husband; and with all the tenderness of a dying mother, charged her eldest son respecting his future conduct. 'My children', said she, 'shall be the Lord's children. I obtained that promise from God long since, and I believe it.'

From the very first attack of this sickness (which was apparently but slight) she had a strong persuasion on her mind it would be unto death. Speaking once of something she wished to be done after her decease, I said, 'The Lord may raise you up again.' 'Yes', said she, 'he will, he will raise me up in the resurrection.' On Monday night about 11:00, I perceived the awful moment hastening by a rattling in her throat. I retired then, and vented my full soul in the most ardent prayer to God, that as he had in rich mercy prepared her for a safe passage, he would also give her an easy one. This matter lay very near my heart, and oh may the goodness of my God therein never be forgotten by me!

I returned to her, armed with divine power, and with the most intrepid courage said, 'My dear sister, do not fear. The Lord will be with you all the way through. There is a convoy of angels stands ready to conduct your soul into Abraham's bosom.' She said, 'Yes', repeatedly, with the appearance of much delight. The mucus that fell on her throat was removed, and she lay quite calm, frequently saying, 'I am Christ's. I am dying in Christ', etc., till her power of utterance quite failed, and she only breathed shorter and shorter, till she breathed no more. And on Tuesday the 12th of May 1789, at 3:00 in the morning, her happy soul was sweetly dislodged from its tenement of clay.

A. B.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 82–86.

Anonymous Correspondent to the Printer of the *Dublin Chronicle*

May 18, 1789

Sir,

My residing in a remote part of the country for the last four or five weeks precluded me the pleasure of seeing your useful paper. But on last Saturday evening for the first time, the stricture of a young author on a certain procedure, who calls himself 'Observer', attracted my attention, upon one of your papers falling into my hands.¹ The author, from concealing his name, hopes to reap two or three advantages. But I beg leave to observe another, which I apprehend to be of more importance to the young author than any he has yet mentioned; namely, that he might rest satisfied, that the Rev. Mr. Wesley would never stoop to answer his anonymous writing, but leave him to plume himself with the honours of his fancied victory. Our young author confidently proceeds to affirm, that it was upon Mr. Wesley's attachment to the Church of England, his repeated declarations in her favour, and his resolutions of never separating from her, that he advanced his reputation. But here he has certainly missed the mark. For if an attachment to the Church, and declarations in her favour, and resolutions never to separate from her would thus advance our reputation, Mr. Wesley would have many equals, even among that part of mankind who pass unnoticed. But his reputation is long since established on a more excellent basis. We know that for many years he has been a most indefatigable labourer in his Master's work. And he has prospered accordingly, so that a multitude of the converted, who are ornaments to the Church and zealous for the welfare of the state, are not ashamed to be called his sons in the gospel. This, together with his exemplary piety, were more likely to advance his reputation than his attachment to any creed or confession. But like a very young author, he adds, that Mr. Wesley's popularity increased as he repeatedly confirmed his former resolutions against a separation. Here I must once more make free with you correspondent, by taking notice of his mistake. He should have said, that Mr. Wesley's popularity increased with the number of his religious societies, and with the increase of his useful writings and other labours.

Our young author observes that when Mr. Wesley began to ordain some of his preachers, many were agitated who till then apprehended no danger. I should not wonder indeed if the powers of darkness were thrown into commotion upon this step. For till then Satan was quietly suffered to extend his dominions in the West India islands, and to lord it over God's heritage there. But now the fable prey is snatched from the teeth of the mighty. Nor does the work end here, for many of the more respectable inhabitants have cordially received the gospel. Our Observer sneers at Mr. Wesley's saying that necessity urged him to this step. But whoever would wish for proper information upon this point, may read the *Arminian Magazine*, vol. 9, p. 677.² Your new correspondent says that about this time the Methodists were exhorted not to meddle with those who are given to change. Upon this plan, it is thought that they should have nothing to do with the Observer; for to use his own words, 'carnal reason' would suggest that he is one whose religious system has been very fluctuating. But he proceeds to suggest that some of the Methodists deem it impious not to yield implicit obedience to their venerable teacher. But when did this become one of their tenets? I have an universal acquaintance with that people in this kingdom, and some little in England, and I never knew one man among the Methodists to hold such an opinion. But this ignorance of our young author may be easily excused, as he informs us he is no Methodist.

Our Observer in his way takes notice of the labourious Dr. [Thomas] C[oke] by the name of the 'silly adventurer'. But how did the Dr. acquire this name? Why, by exposing himself to the violence of the torrid zone! To offer salvation to the outcasts of men there. And by bidding defiance to the inclemency of North America in search of that which was lost. But for the Doctor's real character we are referred to 1 Tim. 3:6., which begins with the words 'not a novice'. This I can assure the author is the

¹See the letter by 'Observer', dated Apr. 21, 1789.

²JW, 'Of Separation from the Church', Aug. 30, 1785, *Works*, 30:371–73.

very conception I have of the Doctor myself. But as I dislike the tearing of a text from its connection, I beg leave to observe the context. If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop must be blameless, vigilant, like Dr. Coke. Sober, of good behaviour (the very features of the Doctor). Given to hospitality, apt to teach, both abroad and at home—for which the Doctor is called a ‘silly adventurer’. Not given to wine; No! (for the Doctor is abstemious). No striker, not greedy of filthy lucre (if he was he would have no business among the Methodists). No brawler, like some that have rose up against him. Not a novice; No, for he is a man of good sense. Now this is the character, which through inadvertence your correspondent, sir, has given the man whom he abuses with the name of Silly Adventurer.

But like a man that scarcely deserves the name of Observer, the author seems to question whether any Dissenter in the kingdom, upon Mr. Wesley's principles, might not defend himself against the charge of separation. But if our young writer would wish to be convinced of his error, let him attend the Sabbath-morning's service in Whitefriar's when Mr. Wesley is there; and except he is determined not to be an Observer, he may have his scruples removed. For what body of Dissenters in the kingdom attend to the established form like that part of the Church known by the name of Methodists.³ So that after all the Observer has said and sneered upon the occasion, it has not yet, and I hope never will seem good to Mr. Wesley to depart from the doctrine of the homilies, articles, liturgy, and creeds of the established Church. And after all this, if like a young Observer, as well as a young author, he will call Mr. Wesley separatist, we must leave him to his folly.

But having gratified himself with too much humour, sarcasm and sneer, he at length calls to order with these words: ‘But to be serious’ (for this is a serious subject). Would it not be better if the author had been cool enough to have observed this a little sooner. But now we have a promise of seriousness. I shall take the liberty of observing how he will perform it.

When the necessity of reading the Church-service in canonical hours was pleaded by some of the Methodists, the author says with a sneer, ‘Necessary for what? Why to unite them more closely to the Church! *Risum teneatis amici?* “Friends can you restrain your laughter?”’ Is this seriousness? But he once more corrects himself by saying, ‘I promised to be serious.’ But can he imagine our blindness so great that we cannot see the breach of his promise. If this be his constant practice, I would exhort the Methodists not to meddle with one that is so given to change.

Since the Church-service has been introduced into the Whitefriar preaching-house, a few men have branded the Methodists of Dublin with the name of ‘separatists’. But it is well known that according to the calculation of some who have a right to know, that out of 1200 Methodists in the society in Dublin, 300 of them were rarely found in the established church on any Lord's day. But it might be questioned, how then did they occupy their time on that day? Far be it from me to suspect that at least 900 God-fearing persons spent their hours idly at home. No! But now having a taste for extempore preaching, some joined in the worship of the Moravians, others went to hear Lady Huntingdon's preachers, some having a better taste heard Mr. M'Dole, while others of them went to the celebrated Bethesda [Chapel] and other dissenting meeting-houses. Now this is a matter of fact that will not bend; so that many hundreds of the Methodists never joined in the worship of the established church at all.

From this view of things, sir, I will submit it to the judgment of your unprejudiced readers whether the change that has lately taken place in Whitefriar's has brought those persons nearer to the established church or set them at a greater distance from it. The Observer tells us that he is no Methodist. But he might have saved himself the trouble, for the bad temper in which he writes, and the abusive language he has been pleased to adopt, would fully convince a discerning man that he did not deserve the name of a Methodist. But though our young author is not of this party, yet he gravely tells us that he has always been a well-wisher to it, and has maintained a sincere regard for its aged founder. But I enquire in the name of common sense, did ever a man of reason or religion take such an uncommon method of expressing his sincere regard? For the sake of those who would wish to see the present fruit of our

³I.e., use the service in the BCP.

Observer's sincere regard, I shall range them in order as I find them in his stricture. To prove to your readers, sir, that the Observer loves Mr. Wesley, he takes his stand behind the unmanly cover of a fictitious name, and 1) calls him a dupe, 2) charges him with art and dissimulation, 3) of palming a deceit on unwary souls, 4) of pious fraud, 5) of guile and hypocrisy, 6) tacitly affirms that he is a man of craftiness and does the work of the Lord deceitfully, 7) that he does not walk openly as in the day, 8) that he throws dust in the eyes of the ignorant, 9) that he is a quibbler, 10) that his words and actions are totally inconsistent, 11) showing other marks of duplicity (that is, deceit, doubleness of heart), 12) that he is an innovator. These are the colours into which a young limner dips his inauspicious pencil, when he attempts to portrait that aged, faithful servant of the most High. Now, Mr. Printer, if these are fruits of your new correspondent's sincere regard, I think the man would be out of his reason who would court his friendship.

Our young limner is very sensible of the diminution of Mr. Wesley's glory. But how does this appear? Is it from the growing multitudes which God is raising unto him every day as his sons and daughters in the gospel? Is it because that from an individual God has multiplied the number of his converts as the stars of Heaven? Not only in these kingdoms, but in America and the West-Indies? And if we can believe a late information, even France begins to feel the influence of the reformation. I say, are these the arguments that our young writer would bring to prove the diminution of Mr. Wesley's increasing glory?

But to crown the whole, he ingenuously confesses that he entertains a secret wish that Mr. Wesley had ere now been in his grave. The Rev. Mr. Wesley has had many controversies with men of different persuasions and yet more different dispositions, and he has often received much abuse from men that have suffered themselves to be overheated with their subject. But I do not at present recollect that an imprecation like unto this ever struggled into birth until now.

But this infant writer is afraid that Mr. Wesley's death will be regretted by scarcely any but the vulgar herd 'whose praise defames'. But he is sure of this? Nay, but is there a probability it will be so? Who can tell but after all the author of the stricture has said, some of the polite, the well-bred, yea and some of the learned may still retain their good opinion of Mr. Wesley, and for ought to Observer knows, go so far as to drop a grateful tear under his funeral sermon. But will their praise defame? If ever young champion should venture to draw his sword in public again, it is humbly recommended to him that he would beware of rashly cutting the sinews of both truth and modesty. But if the author could expect that Mr. Wesley would attend to his opinion, he would exhort him. Pray did he make trial? Why did he let the sun go down upon his wrath? And much less send his severe stricture into the world before he had spoke to him upon the subject face to face?

The Observer, to take his leave of the subject, addresses the peaceable Methodists by the name of simple ones and dupes. But what has this quibbler Mr. Wesley, and these arch leaders his preachers (as the Observer is pleased to call them), duped them out of? Why out of their reason and liberty, adds the Observer. He should have said out of the abuse of their reason, and the liberty of sinning. Would to God that all your metropolis were thus duped! Then should immorality hide her baleful head in your streets.

He adds, the Methodists cannot take another step from the Church, except from separation to persecution. But they beg leave to decline that matter, as it is thought the talents of the Observer are better calculated for the purpose. But where would our young guide lead the society? Would he indeed bring them to the cathedral, and no where else? I confess for my part I greatly doubt this. But that may be owing to my living at such a distance from town. It is thought by some that Acts, 19th chapter and the former part of the 27th verse, is too applicable to the author.⁴ But like a man of a fruitful invention, should he find out the additional name of evil surmises for them, let him remember that he has told us that carnal reason indulged will raise objections in infinitum.

Let us now examine who is the butt of all this sarcasm and bitterness. It is a man who for half a century has with unconquerable fortitude and unwearied diligence been going about like his Master doing

⁴'Our craft is in danger to be set at nought.'

good; and according to a calculation made some years ago preaches 800 times a year, and has sent into the world more than 100 useful volumes. And now in the 87th year of his age, does he decline any of his former labour? No, not a little!

When your new correspondent finds courage to favour us with his name, it is not unlikely he shall hear from me again. But I am no admirer of fictitious names. I have the honour, sir, to be

Your most obedient and very humble servant.

Source: published transcription; *Dublin Chronicle* (June 4–6, 1789), 126–27.

From [Edward Jackson]¹

c. May 20, 1789

Joseph, the son of Paul and Jane Stones, was born at Sheffield in the county of York, in the year 1785. Even from his infancy there was an uncommon seriousness observable in his demeanour. When he was two years old his mother thought proper to teach him to say his prayers, and to her great astonishment found that he could already repeat the Lord's prayer, and some others which he had learned by hearing the other children. He then began to take great delight in going with his parents to the house of God, and was very attentive to what the preachers said.

One Lord's day Mr. [Edward] J[ackson], whilst preaching, observed one that was asleep and called to him, to awake. This made great impression on the child's mind; who, when he got home, went into the next neighbour's house and desired to have two books—saying he wanted to preach, and be like Mr. J[ackson]. From this time he took great delight in singing, and scarcely ever after, during his life, omitted a day without praying, singing, and preaching (as he called it), with a becoming seriousness.

On another Sabbath-day shortly after this, being at chapel with his father, when the first hymn was given out, he knowing the tune and hymn very well, led it off; which excited the admiration of all that were near him. He knew all the preachers, and whose turn it was to preach.

His compassion for the poor was wonderful. If he saw a poor person in the street, he was not satisfied without bringing them to his mother to relieve them. One day meeting a poor woman, he brought her home and gave her a piece of bread; and then conducted her to the next house, in hopes of getting her more.

On the Wednesday before his illness, Mr. [John] B[eanland] being at his father's house, asked him if he would sing and pray.² He replied, 'Yes, if you will give me a book'; which was immediately done. Then he kneeled down with his hand before his face. Mr. B[eanland] said, 'That is right, my dear. Now you are asking a blessing upon the word; now you are to sing.' Then he sung three verses of the first hymn in the book. He then kneeled down and repeated the Lord's prayer. Then rising from his knees, Mr. B[eanland] said, 'You are to preach next.' 'No', said he, 'I must sing first'; and then sung the following verse,

May I but find the grace,
To fill an humble place,
In that inheritance above;
I'll stretch my utmost string,
And loud hosannas sing,
To spread thy fame, redeeming love.³

When he left the room, Mr. B[eanland] observed to his parents, and Mrs. J[ackson?] that it was strongly impressed on his mind, the child would not live long. So that he was not at all surprised when he heard of his death, shortly after.

On Saturday following, being May 2, 1789, the child, having been at school, complained that he was poorly and had a violent pain in his head and breast. But at intervals he wanted to pray and preach. On Sunday, [May] 3, he was struck with a kind of stupor, which was succeeded by the scarlet fever,

¹This was almost certainly by Edward Jackson, who was currently the Assistant of the Sheffield circuit.

²John Beanland was also assigned to the Sheffield circuit.

³This is st. 20 of a poem by JW's itinerant preacher Benjamin Rhodes would publish in 1796; first line: 'My heart and voice I raise'. Rhodes likely taught it while stationed in Sheffield in 1784.

accompanied with a putrid sore throat. Tuesday, [May] 5, he was again restored to the use of his understanding, and retained it to the day of his death. He suffered much bodily affliction; yet he bore it with lamb-like patience, and was never heard to murmur or complain.

Saturday, [May] 9, he, being exceeding fond of the persons who live in the adjoining house, desired to be taken there; which was immediately done. He then desired the mistress of the house to let him kneel down and pray. She also kneeled down by him to support him. He sung three verses of that hymn, 'My God, the spring of all my joys',⁴ and then prayed. Although the woman did not profess much religion, yet it so affected her as to draw tears from her eyes. On Monday, [May] 11, being taken there again, he asked for his books, and on their being given to him, he turned them over and over, as if looking for some particular passage. But being tired and spent, he shut them again, and said he would preach when he was better.

On Tuesday night, a person who sat up with him observed that he was now and then a little inclined to sleep, but it appeared by his motions as if some one was before him, with whom he wanted to be gone. He often expressed a great desire to go, saying, 'I *will* go, but let me go *now*.' On Thursday, [May] 14, it seemed as if he had some heavenly sight before him, by his making signs with his fingers. And in a while after, he in a very fervent manner repeated, 'Amen!' This night he spent much in the same manner as Tuesday night. Friday, [May] 15, he was very much afflicted, but calmly resigned. And that night, without either sigh or groan, his happy spirit took its flight, being aged three years and five months.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 12 (1789): 638–40.

⁴Isaac Watts, included by JW in *CPH* (1738), 35–36.

From Duncan Wright

c. May 20, 1789

Reverend and Dear Sir,

You will, I doubt not, excuse my not giving you some short account of my dear partner sooner; as I find it no easy matter to do it even now.

About fifteen years ago her uncle, George Gibbon, brought her from Lumley in the county of Durham, then a dark place, to a kind friend's house in Yorkshire; where it pleased God to awaken her the first time she heard me preach. After a severe conflict, which lasted some months, the Lord set her clearly at liberty whilst at private prayer, and gave her a sense of forgiveness. Being of a delicate habit, and of exquisite feelings, she suffered much from various quarters, and had many trials from her carnal relations.

This partly induced me, after three years acquaintance, to take her into my care.¹ And I bless God, I never had any reason to repent of my choice; for she did me good and not evil, all the days of her life. I believe those that knew her saw she had wisdom far beyond her years. A little before her marriage, she had such discoveries of the love of God as she never felt before. And I hope some in Macclesfield do not forget her fervency and artless simplicity, while she poured out her ardent soul in supplications with the sick, and also with those who were well. But her sympathy was so strong that she was obliged to decline visiting some of the sick, being frequently ill for hours after seeing them. Indeed I often thought that by her deadness to this world, she was not long to be an inhabitant of it. For many times she gave away her last sixpence, or borrowed to send to the poor and sick.

Thus her love to her Redeemer was seen in her tenderness to his distressed members. Nothing gave her such pleasure as the prosperity of Sion; and nothing such grief, as the defection or lukewarmness of those who professed to be the followers of Christ. She was a simple open-hearted Methodist; and one, more free from the selfish passions is seldom found. She would often say to me, when leaving any place, 'If we do not leave this house and furniture, etc., better, if possible, than we found them; how do we love our neighbour as ourselves?'

As she had uncommon communion with God in his word and ordinances, so she had the most exquisite delight in seeing him in his works. Whether she walked the sandy beach, the pebbly shore, or strayed among the rude rocks by the sea side; or viewed the mountains and vales, the trees, woods and fields, birds or flowers—all excited her wonder, love, and praise. She was indeed one of them of whom the poet says,

Blows not a floweret, in the enamelled vale,
Shines not a pebble, where the riv'let strays.
Sports not an insect, in the spicy gale,
But claims their wonder, and excites their praise.²

And frequently, while we rode by a fine seat she would say,

In pleasures, the rich man's possessions convey,
Unenvied I challenge my part;
For every fair object my eyes can survey,
Contributes to gladden my heart.³

¹Duncan Wright married Dorothy Taylor (1749–89) on May 3, 1777, in York.

²John Scott, 'Elegy Written at the approach of Spring', st. 17, published by JW in *AM* 3 (1780): 397.

³Thomas Fitzgerald, 'An Ode', st. 4, in JW, *MSP* (1744), 2:142.

Yet alas! It too frequently happens that where the perceptions of pleasure is exquisite, so is that of pain. And she was indeed a child of pain, seldom a day or an hour without it. But she would say, without affectation, 'I would not be without one pain of my heavenly Father's sending. He cannot err, I must not choose.' Often singing

Pain, my old companion pain,
Seldom parted from my side;
Sacred, salutary gain,
Here, while God permits, abide.⁴

When she had any ease, she was remarkably cheerful. That was a favourite verse of her's, especially in her last illness,

In blessing thee with grateful songs,
My happy life shall glide away;
The praise, that to thy name belongs,
Hourly with lifted hands I'll pay.⁵

And often, while she had any strength, did she awaken herself and her sister that slept with her, in singing praises to God her Redeemer.

Although this treasure was deposited in a frail earthen vessel, yet I hoped that some turn in her constitution might prove favourable to her health. Till on changing some part of her apparel once at Manchester, she got that cold which settled on her lungs. When one that loved her pronounced her in a consumption, and I found her hectic pulse beat one-hundred and twenty times in a minute (which it did for thirteen months), I found it high time to consult Dr. Taylor of Boston [Lincolnshire]. He freely and honestly told me that he had more hope from her native air and exercise than from medicine. I thought it therefore my duty to take her home to her native air, to live or die with her relations, where I hoped such care would be taken of her as she could have nowhere else.

Soon after we came to Sunderland, we were informed that her only brother, a stout young man, a seaman, while bathing in the sea in the West-Indies, was so bit and mangled by a couple of sharks that he died in ten hours. His soul was her chief concern. However, as she had taken much pains with him in times past, and he heartily loved her, there was hope of his dying in a praying spirit.

When her fever was sometimes high, and her spirits in a tumult, she would say, 'O what would become of me, if I had all the work of religion to begin now, when I cannot keep my mind a moment fixt on one object!' yet, when she was at the lowest, the very mention of being with Jesus used to raise her spirits in an instant. And at times she was so rapturously happy, and in such ecstasies of joy, that one in the house said, to some near her, she was light-headed. But she overhearing her, replied, 'No, Sally, I never was more in my senses than now.'

Mention being made in her hearing of some who supposed the soul remained insensible from death till the resurrection. she said, 'I can never believe this doctrine.'

[...] Can a soul [...],
Enlarging still, be but a finer breath
Of spirits dancing through their tubes awhile,
And then forever lost in vacant air?⁶

⁴CW, 'For One in Pain', st. 1, *HSP* (1749), 1:263.

⁵Daniel Israel Lopez Laguna (tr. by JW), 'God Our Portion', st. 6, *HSP* (1739), 197.

⁶James Thomson, 'A Poem ... [for] Isaac Newton', *ll.*, 166–70.

St. Paul knew better, when he desired to be dissolved and to be with Christ; which he knew was far better than all he could enjoy of him in this world. When, in the course of conversation, mention was made of some who had a strong desire of seeing their friends after their decease, she said to me, 'My dear, have you any desire of seeing me?' I answered I had not, as I could only desire it on two suppositions: first, if I doubted of the immortality of the soul; or secondly, if I doubted of her future happiness. And as I doubted of neither, I saw no need of it. Mr. Benson's Essay on the immortality of the soul, coming to hand, about this time,⁷ I read her the most of it, with which she was much satisfied. Indeed she read as much in her illness herself as her strength would permit. And when she could sit up, she had a book in the bed with her as long as she was able to read it.

It may seem mysterious that a weakly, tender creature like her should be kept so long in the furnace. But her heavenly Father had certainly some wise design in it. Besides her purification, perhaps it might be intended for the good of those about her, both saints and sinners; and also that we might be willing to let her go to rest, and she to be with her Saviour.

Although she generally had a cheerful countenance, and no tincture of melancholy, when she had the least respite from pain; yet for some days before her departure she looked solemn and serious, as an inhabitant of eternity. On which I said, 'My dear, have you not a smile for me?' She replied to this effect, that it was a very serious thing to die! Observing her very low, I said, 'But is there no joy of hope!' 'O yes', said she, as cheerful as she could, 'Sufficient cause of joy.'

A day or two before her decease I asked if she had any uneasy fears. 'None', said she, 'but lest I should not behave with becoming patience in this last conflict.'

On the evening before she went hence, while one of her sisters was in the room with her, she said to me as I went in, 'My dear, I have been telling my sister that this has been my best day, my wedding day. Would you have me say any more?' I replied, 'Then you find all peace and joy within.' 'Yes', said she, 'would you have me say any more?' Perceiving her very weak, and all the symptoms of death upon her, I replied, 'We do not desire to fatigue you now with much speaking. We are quite satisfied.'

We observed with thankfulness that few in her circumstances could be less troublesome than she was; her mother and sister only sitting up with her alternately the last night. And she well knew and practised Mr. Herbert's advice,

Affect in things about thee cleanliness: [...]
Let thy mind's sweetness have its operation
Upon thy body, clothes, and habitation.⁸

After a weary night, on the 14th of May 1789, about ten o'clock in the forenoon, she said 'Lord have mercy on me.' Then turned on her left side, and quietly breathed her last; while we kneeled down and gave her back to him who lent her to us for a season, in hopes of meeting soon again in the realms of day.

Upon the whole, if love to God, if filial piety to parents, if love to the godly, and pity to the vilest of sinners, are signs of true religion; she possessed them in no small degree. Although I had little hopes of her recovery from the time I found her complaint fall on her lungs. And although I could say, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.'⁹ Yet I found it no easy thing to part with her, who had been my pleasant companion for twelve years. And I have often since been tempted to express myself thus in the language of the poet,

⁷Joseph Benson, *A Scriptural Essay Towards the Proof of an Immortal Spirit in Man* (Hull: George Prince, 1788).

⁸George Herbert, *The Temple* (1633), 'The Church Porch', ll. 359–62; in JW, *Select Parts of Mr. Herbert's Sacred Poems* (London: Hawes, 1773), p. 9.

⁹Job 1:21.

Tell me, thou soul of her I love,
Ah! Tell me, whither art thou fled;
To what delightful world above,
Appointed for the happy dead?

Or dost thou, free, at pleasure roam,
And sometimes share thy partner's woe;
Where, void of thee, his cheerless home,
Can now, alas! small comfort know?

Oh! If though hoverest round my walk,
While under every well known tree,
I to thy fancied shadow talk,
And every tear is full of thee.

Should then the weary eye of grief,
Beside some sympathetic stream,
In slumber find some short relief,
O visit thou my soothing dream.¹⁰

Rather let me say

But soon, lovely treasure,
I'll meet thee with pleasure
In regions above, to be parted no more!¹¹

D. W.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 74–80.

¹⁰James Thomson, 'Ode', *The Works of James Thomson* (Dublin: John Exshaw, 1751), 1:343–44.

¹¹Benjamin Rhodes, 'On the Death of a Dear Friend', st. 2. Rhodes would publish this hymn in 1796, but it was apparently circulated in Methodist circles before this.

Thomas Hanby to James Oddie

Grantham
May 21, 1789

... Since I wrote last I have been in deep waters on account of my administering the Lord's supper, which I think it my duty to do—and especially to those who for conscience cannot go to the Church. Mr. [John] Wesley has written and ordered me to lay it aside. I wrote and told him if I did, I should sin, because I was persuaded it was my duty; and therefore I could not oblige him. Then he ordered the clergy and preachers in London to undertake me.¹ I have received their letters, and wrote for answer I must do as I have done; and provided Mr. Wesley had given me up into their hands, they must act according to their judgment, for what I did was from a divine conviction, etc., etc. I have for some time expected another preacher to take my place. But as he did not come, perhaps they will refer the matter till the Conference.

Mr. Wesley has ordered Joseph Taylor (who opposes me all he can) to remove the leaders who had been the promoters of the sacrament. And provided he does it, there will be a division I expect. ... I am of all others the most improper person to make a stand in defence of a precious and much neglected ordinance. However hither to, though infinite mercy, I have been quite firm and unmovable. And our solemnities are much owned of God, and I have much employment in the sacred service. I hardly need add, for this you will naturally suppose, that I meet great opposition from the high Church bigots. ...

Your very affectionate friend and brother,

Thos. Hanby

Address: 'Mr Jam[e]s Oddie / Kighley / Yorkshire'.

Source: secondary transcription; MARC, MA 1977/485.²

¹Neither of the letters between JW and Hanby are known to survive. JW had ordained Hanby for service in Scotland in 1785; but Hanby had moved back to England, appointed to serve the Nottingham circuit by the 1788 Conference, under Joseph Taylor as Assistant. While Taylor acceded to JW's desire that he voluntarily abstain from exercising his 'ordination' rights in England (see JW to Joseph Taylor, Nov. 16, 1788, *Works*, 30:760), Hanby refused to do so. JW then encouraged James Creighton, Peard Dickenson, Henry Moore, and Thomas Rankin to appeal to Hanby; see JW to Dickinson, Apr. 11, 1789, *Works*, 31:41–42.

²A transcription of the full letter was published in *WHS* 4 (1904): 171–72.

From the Rev. Edward Smyth

To the Printer of the *Dublin Chronicle*

[Dublin]

June 11, 1789

Sir,

As the Rev. Mr. [John] Wesley has taken the liberty of introducing my name, at full length, in your last paper,¹ with an intention of representing me in an unfavourable light, I am therefore under the necessity of answering for myself. But I confess, it is with reluctance that I appear before the bar of the public. Not that I am afraid of having anything laid to my charge, but because I must stand forth as a witness against an elder in the church, who has been long honoured for his work's sake, and has been the instrument of calling many sinners to repentance, faith, and holiness.

He would not, I am persuaded, have made so free with my name if he did not imagine that I was either the author of the publication which bears the signature of 'Observer', or that I furnished the writer with some argument, as they are so similar to those I used in a *private* correspondence with himself.² But I can truly assure him that I knew nothing of publication till it came forth from the press; and when I saw it, was really grieved that his late inconsistent conduct should be exposed to the view of an ungodly world, who are too ready to take advantage of any dissension between professedly religious characters.

However, since it is now become a matter of notoriety, and I am *forced* to be a party in the dispute, I must therefore declare, that though I could have heartily wished the Observer's remarks had never appeared, yet I perfectly coincide with him as to the substance and justice of them. And [I] must aver that Mr. Wesley's answer is not altogether consistent with truth, as I could very readily prove. But this is not so much my province, and I wish to spare him. Therefore, leaving 'Observer' to make what animadversions he pleases, and believing him fully qualified to show the futility of Mr. Wesley's defence, I shall only remark that the whole drift of it is to prove himself a staunch member of the Church of England, and that I am Dissenter. But if we are both to be judged of by our *practice*, certain it is he is more a Dissenter than I am. He does what I do not. He openly violates the most sacred laws, and undermines the very constitution of the Church: by exercising the office of a *bishop*, to which he was never legally called; by allowing Dr. [Thomas] Coke the same privilege; by appointing laymen to read the prayers of the Church, to preach in several parishes of the kingdom, and employing them sometimes to baptize and administer the sacrament. With what face then can *he* attempt to exculpate himself from the charge of a separation, and to criminate *me*? Why, the truth is, he wants to prejudice the public in his own favour, and against me. And he is afraid that many of his society here will leave him, and frequent 'the celebrated Bethesda'.

Neither my brother nor I thought it advisable to admit lay-preachers.³ This stirred up their jealousy, envy, and other evil passions. And in opposition to us, 'Dr. Coke began officiating at their chapel' in Whitefriar Street.⁴ This (by the bye) is the first time I have heard their [preaching-]house called a 'chapel'. Mr. [William] Myles, who is now the high-priest there,⁵ has declared more than once 'that if

¹See JW, 'To the Printer of the *Dublin Chronicle*', June 2, 1789, *Works*, 31:61–64.

²This private correspondence is not known to survive.

³William Smyth (d. 1807) was the older brother of Edward Smyth. In 1786 William built (entirely at his expense) Bethesda Chapel, which he intended as a type of 'chapel of ease' for evangelical-leaning members of the Church of Ireland. But it was not yet sanctioned by the Church. Thus Edward (as chaplain) and William avoided practices that might endanger this.

⁴Smyth is quoting JW's letter of June 2.

⁵Myles was the Assistant for the Dublin circuit; he would not have talked of himself as a priest.

he and his lay-brethren had been permitted to preach in Bethesda, they would never have had service in Whitefriar Street at eleven o'clock.' On what principle, therefore, it has been undertaken, I leave all thinking men to judge; and also in what spirit it has been carried on. Everyone who is acquainted with Dr. Coke, and his mode of acting, knows he is a professed Dissenter. Mr. Myles is likewise one in his heart, as I and many others have heard him declare. These, then, are the men who have influenced Mr. Wesley to establish the Sunday-service, against the repeated remonstrances of the most sensible men in their society.⁶ And yet (oh, where is sincerity!) they agree in saying, 'It is to unite the people more closely to the Church.' What! Can anyone of common sense believe that men who are wishing for a *separation* from the Church, would ever adopt a measure 'to unite them more closely to it'? Who can be foolish enough to think they would pursue a method which would militate against their own principles and designs? Or who can suppose that by keeping the people three Sundays in the month from the Church, they mean more firmly to attach them to it?

Much more I could add upon the subject, but waive it at present, and hope Mr. Wesley will not oblige me to speak more pointedly plain. He knows I have it in my power. If therefore he desires to prevent me, let him confess his imprudence in bringing my name before the public. But if he will not do me this justice, he may expect to hear further from

Edward Smyth

Source: published transcription; *Dublin Chronicle* (June 11–13, 1789), 152.

⁶See the four letters of remonstrance above.

From Adam Clarke

Jersey
June 13, 1789

Reverend and Dear Father in Christ,

My soul embraces you in the Lord, and ardently wishes you all possible salvation. As I have sometimes been obliged to trouble you in difficult and embarrassing matters in order to get advice and direction, should I not, when a happy issue is granted, inform you thereof, that you may rejoice in our joy?

About three weeks ago I returned from Guernsey, where I had been labouring for three months. This uncommon stay was occasioned by Mr. [John] Bredin's indisposition in Jersey, from which he was rendered incapable of removing. For upwards of a year I have been endeavouring to get our chapel in Guernsey settled on the Methodist plan; but from repeated disappointments and demurs I was led at last nearly to despair of accomplishing my design. You know that Mr. [Henri] De Jersey and Mr. [George] Walker had taken the ground from the bailiff. At that time I could get it in no *other* way. You may easily recollect the circumstances we were then in. And the idea of settling it by trustees was utterly rejected, as there was no such mode in the laws of the islands.

I translated and retranslated the form of settlement in the larger *Minutes*, but was told the court would not accept it. Mr. De Jersey then told me 'there was a form of law by which it could be settled on *myself* with the continued power to nominate my successors'. But though this was the only recourse I could then see, yet I *would* not trust myself. I felt through the grace of God that I was now honest, but I did not know what I might be in future. At last, after much perplexity and many prayers to God, I got a court called for this purpose, and through his astonishing mercy got the *form* admitted, and a *public act* of the court to make it legal. And now the whole is settled according to the Conference plan in the hands of five trustees as long as the island shall be in the British possession. Glory be to God for his astonishing acts of goodness and mercy! Amen.

Here then is a beautiful capacious temple, raised to the name of Jesus, where hundreds upon hundreds flock to hear the word of life with a seriousness and attention which evidence they profit thereby. I had preached in it about six weeks before I returned here. The whole cost will, I think, amount to about £650; and upwards of £400 of that has been the liberal contribution of our handful of blessed people.

Through lack of money, we were once almost at a stand in the building. But God inclined the hearts of a few persons to lend me several sums on my own account, and the same goodness has since redeemed me from the debt. What now rests due is to Mr. De Jersey, who has manifested an uncommon degree of disinterestedness throughout the whole. If ever a house was built by faith and prayer, this is one. The Lord, I believe, will make it a praise in the earth. Amen. It gives me, my dear sir, not a small degree of satisfaction to think that if God removes me, my successor shall be free of embarrassments from this quarter.

Our brethren in Jersey have proposed building one also, and already there is between 300 and 400 pounds subscribed towards it. But there is a great difficulty to procure ground, and it is thought from something the Dean¹ dropped to one of our friends, that the building will be opposed by the 'states' (as they are called) of the island. 'But God is above men, devils, and sin.'²

During the part of the winter I was in this isle, I preached once or twice a week at St. Aubin's. Here I had the roughest treatment I ever met with. The mob tore the house almost to pieces, and sometimes I believe I escaped death as with the skin of the teeth. During my absence it had been given up, as Mr. Bredin, through his sickness, was not able to attend. Since I returned I have been twice, and preached on the quay. But the constable (who is the civil magistrate here) pulled me down last Sabbath,

¹Francois Le Breton (1739–1802) was currently Dean of Jersey.

²CW, 'The Good Fight', st. 6, *HSP* (1742), 137.

and gave the mob liberty to do as they would, after saying that I might preach in a house if I chose, but not on the quay. Through divine goodness I got safe off, after having been drummed out of the place, and receiving no other damage than a few strokes on the knuckles with the drumsticks. In the Lord I enjoyed peace, power, and happiness, and this they could not overbalance. There are many here affected under the word, notwithstanding the little persecution, and one has died in the Lord.

The Lord is visiting us in a particular manner in St. Helier's. The seed that I have been long and earnestly sowing here relative to a *present* and *full* salvation seems now to be taking a blessed rooting in many hearts. Within the last fortnight several have been much quickened in the pursuit of it, and three at least have received this pearl of great price. Some say they may be deceived. It is possible, but three clearer testimonies I think I never found. It is true *ecstatic* joys and rapturous delights are not their portion. But that pure love, perfect peace, and heavenly meekness which, to me, characterize the mind that was in Jesus, they blessedly enjoy and fully evidence in their conduct. One of these is a very sensible woman, who was convinced under your preaching when you were here.

I have established 5:00 prayer-meetings for those only who have obtained or are groaning for *full* and present redemption, and God is remarkably with us. It seems nothing can stand long against such wrestling souls, who are ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό.³

I am every hour in expectation of more deliverances, as several are on the very brink. This doctrine is the glory of Methodism and the essence of the gospel. When this doctrine shall cease to be preached among us, our glory will depart from us. God will cast us off, and choose to himself another people. May one of your dying charges to the preachers be, 'While you have breath, maintain that the blood of Jesus cleanses *here* from *all* sin!' O may God make us all more diligent and earnest in this important work, for Christ's sake! Amen.

Jane Cock is still well and happy. Mrs. Saumarez gains ground. Miss Lempriere is very upright, but very diffident. And all you were acquainted with continue steadfast.

My wife and child are well, blessed be God!⁴ And so is my sister-in-law, who is still with us.⁵ They both send their love to you, and so I am persuaded our little John Wesley would, were he capable. I should be very glad, reverend sir, could you give us an account of our next year's destination ere the Conference sits. The information *afterwards* may be long ere it arrives, and even then passages are so uncertain it might be some weeks before we could cross the channel. A word of previous notice in our circumstances will be very necessary and affectionately received. Nor will such a previous intimation hasten our departure before the proper time. Wherever God directs you to send us we will cheerfully go. I bless the Lord, my dear Mary is willing to go *anywhere*, and I trust I shall not be less so. We find happiness in submitting our whole souls to God, and are determined never to rest till we are filled εἰς πᾶν τὸ πλῆρωμα τοῦ Θεοῦ.⁶ O how astonishing is this saying!

Our souls greet you in the Lord. And with hearts full of filial gratitude and love we remain, reverend and dear sir,

Your affectionate children in the Lord,

A[dam] and M[ary] Clarke

Address: 'The Revd. Mr. Wesley / New Chapel / City-Road / London'.

Postmark: 'JU/20/89'.

Endorsement: by JW, 'Ad. Clarke / June 16 1789 / a[nswere]d 25'.

Source: holograph; MARC, WCB, D6/1/102.⁷

³'Of one mind, gathered in one place'; see Acts 1:4, 2:46.

⁴Mary (Cooke) Clarke and John Wesley Clarke.

⁵Apparently, Elizabeth Cooke, Mary's oldest sister.

⁶'with all the fullness of God'; see Eph. 3:19.

⁷Previous transcription (with a couple of errors) in Dunn, *Clarke*, 64–67.

‘Observer’ to the Printer of the *Dublin Chronicle*

June 13, 1789

Sir,

I am very conscious, that it is not an easy matter for a writer to divest himself of prejudice and partiality. It is, perhaps, impossible, even with the utmost precaution, that he should not look more favourably on his own production, than on that of another. Unless he watches over himself with a jealous eye, and labours by every possible means to forget himself in what he has written, passion will prevail over his better judgment, prejudice will cast a veil over his foibles, and he will remain a stranger to himself, not discerning what manner of spirit he is of.⁸

These have always been my sentiments, and I was never more persuaded of the truth of them than now. Whether I have improved by such sentiments, and how far, I submit to the decision of men of deeper experience and riper judgment.

When I heard that there was such a thing framed as an answer to my late observations,⁹ I was desirous of seeing it, as you may suppose, hoping that it might afford some new matter for the exercise and improvement of my *infant* abilities, such as would finally terminate in my honour. But how was my vanity checked! And how exceedingly disappointed I felt! When instead of finding any of my arguments answered, I saw such a miserable attempt towards it only as just served to convince me of the writer's good intentions to have done it, had he been able!

Upon a cursory view of this formidable piece, I confess I was a little afraid. For, seeing the words ‘young author’ and ‘infant writer’ staring me in the face, in almost every sentence, I concluded that the writer was some great Goliath; and that I, who am but a weak infant, should certainly be crushed to death. However, my fears of this sort subsided as I proceeded to examine it more minutely in all its parts.

But I was no sooner delivered from my fears, than I was exercised with another disagreeable sensation. When I observed the many severe charges exhibited against me by this Goliath—charges not only of infant weakness, sarcasm, sneer, bitterness, bad temper, and abusive language; but of rashly cutting the sinews of both truth and modesty!—I began to suspect that I had been grossly deceiving myself, and that I was the very person who ‘knew not what manner of spirit I was of’.¹⁰ I took up my manuscript, rubbed my eyes, and examined every paragraph, and every sentence, in such a manner as I had not done before. But all to no purpose. So I was obliged to console myself with this reflection, that it was as possible for one man to be mistaken as another, and that it was as probably the mistake might lie in my opponent as in me. I flattered myself that I had manifested at least a tolerable degree of candour in my publication. And it is no wonder if I am confirmed in that opinion. For of all the remarks which I have heard made upon the ‘Observer’ in this city, I do not recollect a single charge of bitterness; no, not even by an intimation. And unless I am the most mistaken of all men, unless I am not only partial to myself but totally destitute of all discernment, there is not one-tenth part of the bitterness expressed in my whole piece which this nameless writer vents in a single paragraph. Our papers are both extant, Mr. Printer. Let them be compared, and let your impartial readers judge.

I shall take no improper advantage of my antagonist by exposing his composition, as I apprehend he makes no pretensions to literary attainments, and perhaps is a younger author than myself (though he is not candid enough to own it). His lame conclusions, awkward paragraphs, ill-constructed sentences, low diction, vulgar interrogations, bad pointing, and endless repetitions shall therefore pass without a stricture.

Neither shall I weary your readers' patience, by making remarks upon everything which he mentions. Sometimes I find him making calculations in which I do not feel interested; and at other times giving insinuations which I do not understand, either because they have no meaning, or none that

⁸See Luke 9:55.

⁹See anonymous correspondent to the *Dublin Chronicle*, May 18, 1789.

¹⁰Cf. Luke 9:55.

concerns me. In the one case I shall leave him to finish his calculations, and in the other to explain himself.

He seems very desirous of passing for a wit. To true wit he has no more just pretensions than he has to a piercing understanding. But a kind of low wit, of the basest sort, is a prominent feature in his performance. In this I shall not condescend to humble myself to him. I remember the saying of a wise philosopher, which is not inapplicable in the present case, 'What! If an ass should kick me, must I needs kick again?'¹¹

When I view that part of my opponent's work which should be argumentative, it directly reminds me of those celebrated lines of Pope, where he thus addresses the Goddess Dulness,

For thee I dim these eyes, and stuff this head,
With all such reading as was never read;
For thee, explain a thing till all men doubt it,
And write about it, Goddess, and about it.¹²

He industriously (I cannot do him the honour to say artfully) endeavours to evade the force of every argument. But it is in such a manner as betrays the most consummate ignorance, and an utter want of candour. Sometimes by skipping over the most material parts of my paper, sometimes by fulsome encomiums on Mr. [John] Wesley and Doctor [Thomas] Coke, and sometimes by boisterous declamation against the Observer, he labours to blind the eyes and stun the ears of your readers, and to conceal his own inability. Thus does he 'write about it, and about it'.

From these preliminary remarks it may be seen that I expect no honour in the present combat. I heartily wish, for my own sake, that your correspondent's performance had been better. But that it is no better is not the fault of the author's will, but the defect of his understanding. I will now convince your readers that this Goliath is a mere stripling, and that his whole piece is as destitute of solid argument as of a signature.

He intimates that the most important advantage which I was likely to receive from concealing my name was a probability that Mr. Wesley would not stoop to answer me on such ground. In reply to this I shall relate a simple fact. There appeared, a few weeks ago, a paragraph in one of the public papers, intimating that Mr. Wesley was bribed by an annual sum of money to speak in favour of the king. This, observe, though an anonymous note, and though so unlikely a story as not to gain the credit of perhaps an individual, Mr. Wesley stooped to answer, to the no small astonishment of his friends and all sensible men!¹³ But when the Observer appeared, and stated such facts as are notorious, in which his venerable character is impeached, he excused himself—for what reason let the public judge. But the best answer to my opponent in this particular, sir, is your paper which now lies before me; in which I see that Mr. Wesley *does* stoop to answer my anonymous writing, and does *not* leave me to plume myself with the honours of my fancied victory.¹⁴

Your correspondent goes on to tell us by what means Mr. Wesley has increased his popularity, *rather* than by his professed attachment to the Church of *England*. That the repeated declarations of Mr. Wesley in favour of the Church of England has been a means of increasing his popularity, and that his

¹¹Cf. William Hickes, *Coffee-House Jest*s (London: S. Crowder), 75.

¹²Alexander Pope, 'The Dunciad', ll. 248–52.

¹³Neither the original paragraph nor JW's described answer have been located. The charge likely related to JW's public concern for King George III during his recent illness; see JW's circular letter on a fast-day for King George, Feb. 3, 1789, *Works*, 31:10–11.

¹⁴Quoting anonymous to the *Dublin Chronicle*, May 18, 1789, in reference to JW to the *Dublin Chronicle*, June 2, 1789. Note in the original adds: 'The Observer will reply to *him* in due time.'

popularity has decreased as there appeared to be less sincerity, or less consistency, in those declarations are facts which cannot reasonably be denied. And as this is the plain sense of what I affirm, I beg leave to answer my opponent by a simple negative, 'I have *not* missed the mark.'

That Mr. Wesley's exercising the office of bishop greatly agitated his societies is a fact of the same kind with the former; and all Goliath's flourish upon the powers of darkness does not disprove it.

I have been again rubbing my eyes over the *Arminian Magazine*, in order to find out that necessity for a change in the constitution of Methodism which he speaks of, but I see no such thing. I suppose it is owing to my infant understanding.

If this Methodist knows none in Mr. Wesley's societies who implicitly follow their venerable teacher, I—who am *no* Methodist—know many such; and therefore, though he readily excuses *me*, I cannot think *him* so excusable.

Had my opponent wisely consulted the reputation of his friend, he would not have exposed him to a second attack by a weak effort to defend him, but would have passed over in silence (as he has done other much more material parts) that part of my stricture which so justly censures him; as I am persuaded the Doctor has scarcely a friend in Ireland or in England, a man of understanding, that would venture to vindicate his conduct. Is he not as a fire-brand wherever he goes? And is there any peace where he sets his foot? Are not the societies thrown into commotions by his presence? And can my opponent be so ignorant as not to know this? The Rev. Mr. Charles Wesley was so apprehensive of the ill effects of his mischievous spirit that, when both were on their knees in one place, he solemnly entreated that God would confound his measures.¹⁵ But his exposing himself to the heat of the torrid zone, and to the colds of North America, is opposed to screen him from the censure of folly. Have not many fanatics, from a mistaken zeal, voluntarily deprived themselves of the comforts and necessities of life, torn their own flesh, confined themselves on the tops of pillars, and actually starved their souls out of their bodies? And what then? Why the Doctor is an adventurer. And who denies it? That he is not a silly one, remains to be proved. My opponent tells us that he is *blameless*, that he is *no brawler*, and that he is *apt to teach*. But all that know the Doctor must consider this comment as a burlesque upon him. I am, at least, too well acquainted with his conduct, and with his expressions, to believe either that he is *blameless*, or that he is *no brawler*. And how it can be demonstrated that he is *apt to teach*, I am at a loss to conceive. I have frequently heard him preach (if what he says in the pulpit deserves to be called preaching), and I can testify as an individual, that he was never apt to teach *me*. As I am not, perhaps, so full of bitterness as your nameless correspondent wishes to represent me, I am unwilling to say more until I am provoked to it. When I am, I will, in a future paper, give an account of one of the Doctor's edifying sermons, as a specimen of his abilities and as a proof of his aptness to teach. But if any are doubtful in this particular, I recommend it to them to hear for themselves. Your correspondent's intimation that I have inadvertently given the Doctor a better character than I intended by my reference, betrays either so much ignorance, or so much disingenuousness, that I will not honour it with a reply.

'Like a man that scarcely deserves the name of Observer' (*mighty witty!*), 'the author seems to question whether any dissenter in the kingdom, upon Mr. Wesley's principles, might not defend himself against the charge of separation. But if our young writer would wish to be convinced of his error, let him attend the Sabbath-morning's service in Whitefriar's when Mr. Wesley is there, and except he is determined not to be an Observer' (elegant!), 'he may have his scruples removed. ... So that after all the Observer has said, etc., it has not yet, and I hope never will seem good to Mr. Wesley to depart from the doctrine of the homilies, articles' (no, not even from the *twenty-third*!)¹⁶ 'liturgy, and creeds of the established Church. And after all this, if like a young Observer, as well as a young author, he will call Mr. Wesley separatist, we must leave him to his folly.'¹⁷ *Bravo, bravissimo!* I observed that it might be

¹⁵Note in original: 'I had my information from one who was present on the occasion.'

¹⁶The article against lay preachers.

¹⁷'Observer' is quoting and commenting on the fourth paragraph of the letter he is critiquing.

questioned, whether Mr. Wesley would always have admitted *coelas credentium*¹⁸ to be a *true, logical* definition of the Church of England; and whether, upon *this* principle, any dissenter in the kingdom might not defend himself against the charge of separation. Pray, Mr. Printer, does your correspondent say anything which looks like an answer to this query? But—‘he writes about it, and about it’. Permit me, however, to ask in my turn, What is the Observer to do when he attends Sabbath-morning’s service in Whitefriar’s, when Mr. Wesley is *not* there? Why, ‘except he is determined not to be an Observer’, he must observe—not only unordained but illiterate men, who can neither speak nor read English, turning the excellent order of our Church into burlesque.¹⁹

My antagonist seems highly displeased because I sometimes make myself a little pleasant. But I refer your readers to a second view of the Observer, and if it appears that I have causelessly indulged myself in too much sarcasm and sneer, I submit to correction.

Your correspondent goes on to inform us that, till morning service was introduced into Whitefriar’s, the Methodists were dispersed among different dissenting congregations. Surely this ignoramus intends not to insinuate that the Whitefriar’s congregation is *not* a dissenting congregation. Until therefore he shows the superiority of Whitefriar’s, above the ‘celebrated Bethesda’²⁰ and other dissenting meeting-houses, the utmost that he can be understood to mean is that dissenters ran about from one dissenting meeting-house to another.

By the number of divisions which I see of 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc., it should seem that I have brought twelve different charges against Mr. Wesley.²¹ But any schoolboy, with the help of [Samuel] Johnson’s *Dictionary*, will reduce them all to three—viz., *dissimulation, inconsistency, and innovation*. Does my opponent prove, or attempt to prove, that any one of these charges is unjust?

That Mr. Wesley’s glory is diminished, and that he has sunk in the reputation of his best friends, are truths which, whether credited by your correspondent or not, are known by thousands, and more respectable men. And what he terms an imprecation which never struggled into birth till now,²² is a wish which many more pious and worthy characters than his, who thus names it, entertain. Yea, Mr. Wesley’s own brother, unless he is strangely belied, not only secretly entertained, but frequently expressed such a wish, in private conferences with his friends.

Perhaps the Observer may be one of those who will drop a tear under Mr. Wesley’s funeral sermon, should he survive him. What then? Why he is still afraid that his death will be regretted by *scarcely* any besides the vulgar herd, ‘whose praise defames’.²³ Nor can he conceive why, for such a fear, he should be reputed to have ‘rashly cut the sinews of both truth and modesty’.²⁴

Your correspondent asks why I did not speak with Mr. Wesley face to face; and I refer him to Ascanius for an answer.²⁵

His three following paragraphs are evidently of that sort which requires no answer. But his conclusion is curious. He tells us that he is no admirer of fictitious names, that it is not unlikely the Observer may hear from him when he finds courage to give up his name—and then, very consistently, concludes without signing his own name! Does this nameless simpleton suppose that there is any material

¹⁸‘A congregation of believers’.

¹⁹The lay preachers would at this point have been reading morning prayers in the early service. See *Works*, 31:62.

²⁰Bethesda Chapel, where Edward Smyth was chaplain.

²¹See the eighth paragraph of the letter he is critiquing.

²²The wish that JW had died before he ordained any of his lay preachers.

²³Edward Young, *Love of Fame*, I.103; quoted in ‘Observer’s’ first letter.

²⁴Quoting the letter he is critiquing.

²⁵See ‘Ascanius’ to the *Dublin Chronicle*, May 12, 1789; who stressed JW was a public figure.

difference between a *fictitious* name and *no name*? Between an anonymous letter, and a letter without a name? Is not the very design of a fictitious name to conceal a real name? And does not he as effectually conceal his name, who leaves a blank at the bottom of his letter, as he who borrows a name? With what face, then, can he demand the Observer's name, while he conceals his own?

I think, sir, I may now conclude as a great man once did upon a similar occasion. My opponent has accused much and proved nothing, railed much and hurt nothing, laboured much and gained nothing, talked much and said nothing.²⁶ If any one assertion of mine is proved false, or any one charge unjust; if any one fact is disproved, or any one argument refuted; let me pass, not only for an *infant*, but for an idiot, and let the heavy hand of this great Goliath fall upon me. I have once more the honour to be, Mr. Printer,

Your most obedient and humble servant,

Observer

P.S. If any expression in these strictures should seem severe, the Observer's apology is the conception which he forms of his opponent: as he would be ashamed to use what might seem an illiberal expression to a man of liberality. The Observer hopes that his next letter will convince the public of the truth of what he says.

Source: published transcription; *Dublin Chronicle* (June 13–16, 1789), 158–59.

²⁶See Joseph Hall's conclusion to *The Honor of the Married Clergie* (London: W. Stansby, 1620), 342.

From Matthias Joyce¹

[Coleraine]
c. June 15, 1789

John Stephens was a young man of deep piety, and wise above his years.² His abilities were such that he promised fair to make a very shining figure in the church, both in usefulness and holiness. He was greatly beloved by the people in the circuit where he travelled, for it was their general opinion that he was one of the holiest young men in the world. I, who knew him well, can safely say he was an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile.³ He was a great lover of gospel duties, particularly Christian conversation, visiting the sick, and private prayer. These I believe he preferred to his necessary food. By his sweet example he often drew me with him to the beds of the sick and afflicted; and also to the throne of grace when we were alone, and thereby became instrumental in refreshing and strengthening my soul. He set the example of his blessed Master before him, and his daily care and study was to imitate it. Though he was only about one or two and twenty years of age, yet he was far from being a novice. He had the judgment and solidity of a man of threescore, and might well be considered as a father in Israel.

He had kept a journal of his experience, from the year 1785 to the month in which he died. An extract from which, namely the last day's observations therein mentioned, I here subjoin, in his own words.

June 1, 1789. Whilst I was riding last Tuesday to various places, I was seized with two severe pains (besides all my other disorders), one in my shoulder and the other in my side; which continued till I came to Coleraine on Saturday. From that time I could preach no more. Neither could I rest in my bed through the violence of my pains.

Whilst I travelled on the circuit, though I was much afflicted, yet I was generally happy in preaching, and had as much liberty as I could desire. On the Sabbath-day, May 24, I was truly blessed indeed at a class meeting. Yesterday (a day much to be remembered by me) when I arose, and bowed in private before my God, he poured upon me a spirit of prayer, and enabled me to come to him, through my great Advocate, just as I was. And he manifested himself to my soul in such a manner that every bar to my happiness was removed and my soul was left at peace, resting in the arms of a God of infinite love. Bless the Lord, oh my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! Many precious promises were brought to my mind, on which, through grace, I could lay hold by faith. And I could trust both my body and soul to my loving, dying Saviour, whom I could embrace with all my powers. At present, I can say, 'My beloved is mine, and I am his.'⁴ And blessed be his dear name, my pains are almost gone; and I trust, through divine grace, that I shall arrive safe at the desired port.

From this time he could write no more. His bodily affliction had for some time before this depressed his spirits, so that he did not rejoice in the same degree he had formerly done; yet he still felt a constant peace, and a sense of his acceptance.

¹Titled: 'A Short Account of Mr. John Stephens. Written by Mr. Matthias Joyce'.

²John Stephens (c. 1768–89) was admitted 'on trial' as an itinerant at the 1788 Conference (see *Works*, 10:645) and stationed on the Coleraine circuit under Joyce as Assistant (10:651). His death was recorded at the following Conference (10:676).

³See John 1:47.

⁴Song of Sol. 2:16.

On Tuesday the second of June, he was able to walk about, and was remarkably blessed in private prayer; for he was overheard by one in the adjoining room, rejoicing in God in an extraordinary manner. On Wednesday he was obliged to take to his bed; at which time I conversed with him, and found him happy and resigned. In the evening Mr. [John] Wesley came and found him in the same frame,⁵ as did others on Thursday. On Friday morning early, being obliged to accompany Mr. Wesley on his journey, I had only time to kiss him, and recommend him to God. And on my return to Coleraine a few days afterward, I found that he was dead and buried.

I was informed that he had been speechless for three hours and a half before his death. He suffered much, his body being extremely convulsed; yet his confidence remained unshaken till his spirit returned to God about half past ten in the morning of June the 10th, 1789.

M. J.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 12 (1789): 632–34.

⁵JW arrived in Coleraine the afternoon of June 3, 1789.

‘Observer’ to the Printer of the *Dublin Chronicle*

June 18, 1789

Sir,

In my last letter which you did me the honour to publish, I confess I had the vanity to consider myself ultimately addressing one whom I looked down upon as an inferior.¹ And were it not that I am persuaded the degree of illiberality manifested throughout his whole piece more than deserved that degree of contempt which I showed for him, I should think it incumbent upon me to apologize to the public for an expression or two which I therein used.

But I have now to do with a very different character—a character which I highly venerate.² The Rev. Mr. [John] Wesley is both a man of learning and a man of understanding; a good divine, an able logician, and on many subjects a pleasing writer. For these reasons, were there no other, he is worthy of honour. As, therefore, he has ‘stooped to answer my anonymous writing’, I shall reply with all due respect.

At the same time, I must do myself the justice to show the weakness of such a defence as surely no man of his understanding and abilities ever before made; and such as, I am persuaded, *he* never would have made, had he not been drawn into it by the advice of his friends, who are more desirous of establishing his reputation, than wise. How much wiser a part would they have acted, had they advised him to ‘Leave the Observer to plume himself with the honours of his fancied victory!’³

He begins by saying that, ‘as soon as he was gone from Dublin, the Observer came forth’. The Observer came forth in *due time*; and it was not Mr. Wesley’s presence in Dublin that prevented his coming forth sooner. But ‘he came forth with his face covered’. And it would have been just the same thing, had his face been uncovered. When the facts which he stated are disproved, Mr. Wesley has a right to call for the Observer’s name, that all the world may know who *he* is that has done him this injury! But, until the former be done, the latter can be of no consequence.⁴ He adds, ‘Afterwards he came out under another name.’⁵ That is begging the question, Mr. Wesley.

I cannot but remark that there is a little difference between the judgment of Mr. Wesley and his nameless abettor.⁶ The latter charges me with the utmost bitterness, with ‘cutting the sinews of both truth and modesty’, as if my pen had been the roughest tool ever before employed. The former says, ‘my words are smoother than oil’, and allows that I have, at least, the appearance of candour. However, I understand Mr. Wesley. His meaning is that my words are smooth for no other purpose than to find a readier entrance; like a man who makes the edge of an instrument the finer, in order that he may cut the deeper. For he says that all my candour is intended to prove this point, ‘That he is a double tongued knave, an old crafty hypocrite, etc.’ Thus, instead of disproving the facts, which are the evidence of my several charges,

¹See ‘Observer’ to the *Dublin Chronicle*, June 13, 1789.

²JW to the *Dublin Chronicle*, June 2, 1789, *Works*, 31:61–64.

³Alluding to anonymous to the *Dublin Chronicle*, May 18, 1789.

⁴Note in the original: ‘The liberty of concealing one’s name, though most wicked when used for the purpose of scandal, is a privilege which no candid writer should be deprived of. There are so few publications which do honour to the names they bear that I can form no high opinion of his wisdom who ventures his name out in public before he has been tried as an author. Such a one is more conceited of his abilities than likely to improve them. Anonymous publications have, besides, this advantage, both to the writer and the reader: they have a tendency to prevent *personal reflections* in the former, than which nothing ought more studiously to be avoided in all controversial writings; and they are calculated to remove prejudice in the latter, whose judgment frequently receives a wrong bias from partial affections.’

⁵JW assumed one or both of ‘Rusticus’ and ‘Ascanius’ were the same author as ‘Observer’.

⁶I.e., anonymous correspondent to the *Dublin Chronicle*, May 18, 1789.

he artfully lumps the whole into one general charge of hypocrisy! From such a beginning, we can expect no other than such an end!

Dissimulation is certainly hypocrisy. But there are various degrees thereof: even from Satan's transforming himself into an angel of light, down to modern complaisance, and much lower. When St. Paul withstood St. Peter to the face, it was for his dissimulation that he withstood him. But did he mean 'that St. Peter was a double tongued knave, an old crafty hypocrite, who had put on religion as a cloak, and had, from the beginning, been saying one thing and meaning another'? Could I suppose that my observations were calculated to prove as much as Mr. Wesley affirms, I would now declare, in contradiction to myself, 'that I do not believe Mr. Wesley to be a double tongued knave, an old crafty hypocrite'. But I do charge him with a species of dissimulation. And as I have taken up my pen, I will never lay it down, till either by the force of my arguments, or by *his* taciturnity,⁷ I have convinced the public that I have made good that charge.

It shows how hard Mr. Wesley is pushed when, instead of closing in argument, he can prevail on himself to tell first one old tale and then another about what he was, and what bishop such a one said, thirty, forty, or fifty years ago. For my part, I have seen so many stories printed by Mr. Wesley (through misinformation, mistake, forgetfulness, or some worse imperfection of his nature); stories which carry neither truth nor probability along with them, and which I know to be falsehoods;⁸ that unless he could produce the written testimonies of those *bishops*, what he says will gain little credit with me. However, they all rest quietly in their graves, and will never rise from the dead to contradict him; at least, not till the resurrection.

But, allowing that bishops *then* thought favourably of Mr. Wesley and his proceedings, it is nothing to the point. I see his design. It is to draw the public into an opinion that Methodism is on the same footing *now*, that it was thirty or forty years ago. I must beg his pardon for denying the fact, and for guarding the public against such an opinion. *Ten* years ago he dared not to exercise the office of a bishop, by ordaining any of his preachers! *Five* years ago, even in the City Road Chapel, the Methodist *Cathedral*, laymen were neither permitted to read the Church service, nor to preach in church hours! *Three* months ago, such a thing was not heard of in all the societies as a layman administering the sacrament of the Lord's Supper!⁹ And I am confident, had Mr. Wesley's resolutions been asked before these things took place, they would have been such as he expresses at the end of his postscript: 'I never will assume the office of bishop. I never will authorize laymen to read the Church service and to preach in church hours. I never will suffer a layman to administer the sacrament, *while the breath of God is in my nostrils*.' Let him only produce a bishop *now living*, either in England or in Ireland, that approves of his measures as consistent with a member of the established Church, and we will allow it to have some weight. But if he cannot do this, he only trifles by mentioning the names of such as are dead, and cannot speak for themselves.

I pass on from one paragraph to another, till I see John Wesley signed at the bottom. But the end is like the beginning, as wide of the mark as from east to west! Did I not know Mr. Wesley to be a man of deep penetration, I could easily excuse all this trifling. Were he on the other side of the argument, in how ridiculous a light would he make it all appear! But as it is not my intention to divert myself and the public by exposing the old gentleman, I pass by to his postscript, the only part which comes near the dispute.

He begins, 'When I said, "I am scriptural bishop", I spoke on Lord King's supposition that bishops and presbyters are essentially one order.' Mr. Wesley's words are, 'I firmly believe, I am

⁷I.e., refusal to answer.

⁸Note in the original: 'The Observer will prove what he says, if Mr. Wesley chooses to call upon him to do it.'

⁹This is a bit misleading. William Myles did not 'administer' or 'officiate' the Lord's Supper on Mar. 29, 1789; he simply assisted JW in distributing the elements.

scriptural ἐπίσκοπος, as much as any man in England or in Europe.’¹⁰ Now, if this be *his firm belief*, what has Lord King to say to it, any more than John-a-Nokes¹¹ or Thomas Styles? By his own confession he dissents from the Church of England in *principle*; and his repeatedly exercising the office of bishop proves him to be a Dissenter in *practice*.

He allows that he did authorize Mr. [William] Myles to assist him in the sacrament, and asks, ‘How it proves the point in question, and what law of the Church forbids it.’ Surely the old gentleman forgets himself! Does not the twenty-third article of our Church as expressly forbid it, as it is possible for words to do it? I will insert it, Mr. Printer, for the perusal of your readers.

‘It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching, or ministering the sacraments in the congregation, before he be lawfully called and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge *lawfully called and sent*, which be chosen and called to this work by *men who have public authority given unto them* in the congregation to call and send ministers into the Lord’s vineyard.

Perhaps Mr. Wesley will quibble upon the latter part of this article, by saying that *he* has ‘public authority given unto him’.¹² But I shall ask, in my turn, By what law? By the law of toleration, as a Dissenter—and by no other. However, I leave him to explain as he pleases. I am prepared to answer.

His asking ‘what law of the *primitive* church forbids his practice’, has just as much to say to the question in dispute as asking, what law of the Church of Scotland, or the Church of Geneva, forbids it?

He allow[s] also, ‘That to say he will not leave the Church, meaning thereby a congregation of believers, is trifling.’ I appeal then, to all the world, if Mr. Wesley is not a *trifler*.¹³

He concludes by saying, ‘Unless I see more reason for it than I ever yet saw, I will not leave the *Church of England as by law established while the breath of God is in my nostrils*.’ I have heard him repeatedly make the same declaration, without the first additional clause. But he now becomes more guarded; and whatever steps he may take, or whatever declarations he may make, *next week*, he will preserve his word. However nothing more than his own express declaration (‘I am a Dissenter’, or which is the same thing, ‘Go to Church no more’) is wanting to complete the business. For he is, otherwise, both in principle and practice, as much a Dissenter from the *Church of England as by law established*, as it is possible for him to be.

Mr. Wesley’s continually harping on the expression, ‘go to Church no more’, shows that it is his last resource. A poor resource it is! On this principle, it seems merely *going to Church* or *staying away from Church*, constitutes a *Churchman* or a *Dissenter*. Nothing can be more absurd. It were as reasonable to suppose that a Member of Parliament, by frequenting the Court, proves himself a staunch friend to the King; and by absenting himself from it, proves himself a traitor! No. He who secretly condemns, and openly violates, those laws by which the Church of England is governed is a Dissenter to all intents and purposes, though he should go to Church every Sunday. And he who inwardly approves of, and outwardly obeys those laws, is a *Church of England man*, though he should be seldom found within her walls. One Sunday in every month *only*, the Methodists in Dublin are allowed to go to Church! And yet for going to Church twelve Sundays in a year, though on other Sundays they are in Whitefriar Street, burlesquing both the clergy and the prayers, they must be reputed staunch members of the Church of

¹⁰Note in original: ‘See *Arminian Magazine*, Vol. IX, page 50.’ I.e., JW to CW, Aug. 19, 1785, *Works*, 30:366–68.

¹¹A name given a party in legal proceedings whose true name is unknown (like ‘John Doe’).

¹²Rather, JW argued he was the one who *administered* the sacrament on Mar. 29, 1789; with Myles only assisting in distributing the elements, as was common for lay people in the early church.

¹³Note in original: ‘I refer the reader to his whole letter, *Arminian Magazine*, vol. IX, page 50.’

England!

To you I make my ultimate appeal, O ye ecclesiastics, both superiors and inferiors! Ye whom the Rev. Mr. Wesley modestly styles, 'mitred infidels and heathenish priests'.¹⁴ Why do you lie dormant? And why do ye not arise to vindicate your *Church* and your *cause*?

I am, Mr. Printer,

Your most obedient humble servant,

Observer

Source: published transcription; *Dublin Chronicle* (June 18–20, 1789), 172–73.

¹⁴This phrase is from an early hymn of CW, *Elegy on Robert Jones* (Bristol: Farley, 1742), l. 388, p. 19. JW quoted it somewhat ironically in his manuscript letter to CW of Aug. 19, 1785 (see *Works*, 30:366–68). Perhaps CW had shared the letter with 'Observer'.

‘Monitor’ to the Printer of the *Dublin Chronicle*

June 19, 1789

Sir,

I do assure you, it is with much more pain than pleasure that I have perceived of late those talents which were the gift of the God of harmony and peace, so heartily exerted to the promoting of discord, and to the disuniting of those whom the auspicious influence of the gospel has knit together in the purest ties of Christian love.

Had the allegations of the Observer, the Rev. Edward Smyth, and some others, been addressed to the serious part of mankind only, it is more than probable I should have remained a silent spectator. But now that they are retailed by the news-boys, and become the subject of the common tap-room, perhaps I may not be deemed impertinent for taking notice that the Rev. Edward Smyth cordially agrees with the Observer in the substance of his first letter against the Rev. John Wesley.¹ From whence it is plain that he adopts the opprobrious phraseology of that publication, for which, peradventure, he may at some future period be called upon for an explanation.

Mr. Smyth is pleased to charge Mr. Wesley with an untruth. But what is this falsehood? Why simply this, that Mr. Wesley affirms that, a few years since, Mr. Edward Smyth earnestly desired that he (Mr. Wesley) and all the Methodists should separate from the established Church. And will Mr. Smyth venture to deny this? Admirable proof of human frailty, I will not say corruption! I beg leave to refresh his treacherous memory with a few occurrences at a certain Conference of the Methodist preachers in Dublin.² It is well known that he warmly introduced the subject of separation there, and lest his recollection should not fully serve him, he brought such auxiliaries in writing as he esteemed most necessary on the occasion. Waving the tedious debates of that day, and the warm and rational opposition he then met with, I shall only particularize one repulse he met with from an old preacher, who rising said, ‘Rev. sir, it would be much better that you were zealously employed in the saving of souls than in the forming of modes of church government for us.’ Upon the whole, it appeared to the Methodist preachers who composed that Conference that the rash proceedings of the Rev. Edward Smyth were rather the production of prejudice, in consequence of his expulsion from the Church, than that of cool reason, or the guidance of the Holy Spirit, which he so affected.

Mr. Smyth proceeds by saying, ‘If we are both to be judged of by our practice, certain it is that Mr. Wesley is more than a Dissenter than I am.’ But how does this appear? One argument to prove it is Mr. Wesley appoints laymen to read the prayers of the Church. Such a practice was never discriminated by the name of Dissenter in the north of England where I have been; where, in the absence of a minister, a young man, previous to his ordination, was appointed to read the prayers of the Church, and close the service by reading a homily. As to Mr. Wesley’s exercising the office of a bishop, and sending a layman with the cup, I apprehend he has given his answer. But as to his employing any of his preachers in any part of the kingdom to baptize, it is truly a new discovery! But where did it happen?³ We demand farther proof for this, before we can give it all that weight that the Rev. Mr. Smyth desires.

But now that Mr. Smyth submits to be judged of by his practice, I am inclined to think it will shortly appear that he is unquestionably a Dissenter, though I am far from thinking that name a dishonour to him. And first, let me not be too severe, when I call to his memory the circumstance of his being

¹See Edward Smyth to the *Dublin Chronicle*, June 11, 1789.

²A conference of just the preachers in Ireland; see JW, *Journal*, July 7, 1778, *Works*, 23:98.

³Joseph Benson had baptized at least one young man in 1783; but he was instructed by JW not to do so again. See JW to Benson, May 19, 1783, *Works*, 30:145–46.

deposed from his cure by the Bishop of Down and Connor, the Rev. Mr. W[ard] and Mr. T[rail].⁴ We have not yet forgot the insurrection he made in the church on that Sabbath-day, crying out with vehemence, 'Who's on the Lord's side? Who? Who's for Christ, and who's for Baal? Let such of you as are for Christ, follow me!'—while some of his adherents answered aloud, 'Rejoice, the Lord is King!'⁵ Was this conduct, in the presence of the bishop, some of the clergy, and the congregation, in the house of the Lord, expressive of either wisdom, decency, or reverence for the Church?

But does his reverence for the highest officers in the Church, more than the transactions of that day, declare him to be a true Church-man? Let them answer this question, who have read his trial (p. 130), where he turns to ridicule the man whom I would scripturally call the angel of the church [i.e., the bishop]; and speaking of men of that description indiscriminately, calls them lords over God's heritage, and adds that each of them would have the world to look upon him as God; then bitterly rails at that well-known mode of expression among bishops—'We'. Another expression of his want of reverence for the church, appears in p. 134: 'Let him' (meaning the bishop) 'and all who are tenacious of the dignity of bells, steeples, forms, and surplices, preach to lime, stone, and velvet cushions—but for my part, I think the canopy of heaven is a very good sounding-board.'

The Bishops are not the only objects of his ridicule, but the other clergy must feel his lash. He says (p. 110), 'They think it part of their office to oppress the poor for their tithes, to drink and hunt, to frequent horse-courses, cock-pits, assemblies, and gaming tables, charitably fearing if they abstained from these fashionable diversions their parishioners might follow their bad example.' But not satisfied with these complicated charges and sneers, he calls them 'wolves in sheep's clothing' (*Farewell Sermon*, p. 2).⁶ And without respect of persons, says, 'they are destitute of all vital godliness, and not feeling the gospel to be the power of God unto their own salvation, they and their poor deluded hearers are content to starve on the husks of religion. [...] How confounded' (continues Mr. Smyth) 'must they appear before the awful tribunal of the Lord Jesus! When he will say unto each of them, "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant."'”⁷

But if this be not sufficient to shew how far Mr. Smyth is disunited from the Church, I will add another of his sentiments (p. 15). Still speaking of the clergy of the established Church, he says, 'what dependence then can be placed on such ministers, as for a livelihood—for *filthy lucre-sake*—will pray out of a form which they disapprove of, and condemn in the pulpit what they have just read in the desk.'⁸ Where is their candour or honesty? Is not this base prevarication, to say no worse?

But to demonstrate a little farther that Mr. Edward Smyth has missed the mark, when he affirms that Mr. Wesley is more a Dissenter than he, their practice being the criterion: Now it is a notorious fact, that Mr. Wesley frequently attends divine service in the established Church, and still recommends the same practice to all his hearers in this kingdom, only with some small exception in the city of Dublin, the reasons for which have been plainly set forth. But does Mr. Smyth either practise this himself or urge it upon his hearers? Witness ye who are his constant hearers in canonical hours! Mr. Wesley frequently receives the sacrament of the Lord's Supper from the hands of the established Church, and enjoins the same practice on all who will be influenced by him. But is this the practice of Mr. Smyth? Let them answer this question who constantly receive the cup from his hand! If the members of Mr. Wesley's

⁴James Traill was Bishop of Down and Connor, 1765–83; Ralph Ward was Vicar-General; and William Trail was an assistant.

⁵See *An Account of the Trial of Edward Smyth, late Curate of Ballyculter, in the diocese of Down* (Dublin: William Kidd, 1777), 127–28.

⁶I.e., Edward Smyth, *A Farewell Sermon, designed for the well-beloved Parishioners of Ballyculter; on the removal of their persecuted minister*, 2nd edn. (Belfast: Hugh Warrin, 1777), 3–4.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 16.

societies who were formerly of the Church of England are entering upon a state of wedlock, it is the established clergy in general who are employed upon the occasion. When they have their children to be baptized, these are the gentlemen who perform that ceremony. And when they rest from their labours, it is the clergy of the established Church who attend their interment. But is this the case, or is it likely to be the case, with such as closely adhere to Mr. Smyth? If not, with what propriety can Mr. Smyth say that Mr. Wesley is more a Dissenter than he?

As to the violent threatenings which are breathed out by Mr. Smyth against Mr. Wesley, they are with me circumstances of no great moment, as I do not entertain so much as a doubt but Mr. Wesley shall be able to answer for himself.

Had not Mr. Smyth invited your readers, sir, to judge of him by his work, his former conduct might have been easily passed in silence. Nay, Christian tenderness would have checked the rising curiosity which would have prompted us to turn over those sheets of his early labours which I have made free to quote! But since, in an unguarded moment, he has invited the public to such unlimited freedoms, he may find for ought we can at present tell that this is but a prelude to what may follow.

Believe me, sir, that the present dispute is so far from being the welcome entertainment of the circle of my acquaintance, that it is with unfeigned sorrow they of late beheld the display of such abilities from various quarters, employed to no better purpose. And while the Observer is pleased to laugh, the truly serious are inclined to mourn, and could heartily wish that his distinguishable abilities had been rather turned against the practical atheism of the present age. And while Mr. Smyth approves of such measures, it is humbly suggested that it would be more to the advantage of his character, as the Christian, and the preacher, had he endeavoured to extinguish that fire that has been so rashly kindled. Let it never be forgotten, 'That blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God.'⁹ For my part, I shall esteem the declining state of this dispute as the increase of my happiness. I would derive an additional pleasure from being able to check the undue warmth of your respectable correspondent Mr. Smyth. And I wish I had it in my power to convince him that if he suffers himself to be stirred up to rash resentment by this letter, it is an effect I would not at present wish to produce. And now to conclude. If I have said anything that is in the smallest degree worthy of note, I doubt not but your judicious readers are possessed of candour enough to give it the weight it deserves without my name. But if otherwise this small attempt deserves no notice, it would be ineffectual to subjoin the most respectable character.

I have, sir, the honour to be,

Your most obedient, and very humble servant,

Monitor

Source: published transcription; *Dublin Chronicle* (June 27–30, 1789), 202.

⁹Matt. 5:9.

Anonymous Correspondent to the Printer of the *Dublin Chronicle*

June 20, 1789

Sir,

Your condescension in giving to your readers my last letter,¹ flatters me with a hope of the same success once more.

The Observer's second letter lies now before me, wherein I perceive he labours to render me as contemptible in the eyes of the public as he possibly can.² This is no trifling point when gained. I think he scarcely does me justice when he says I would pass for a wit, for I can assure him that's no favourite character of mine.

He charges me with heaping fulsome encomiums on Mr. [John] Wesley, but I am not yet convinced that I have said anything in favour of that useful character which his labours of love to the world have not loudly demanded.

If the Observer, after rubbing his eyes (as he is pleased to term it) and reading the *Arminian Magazine*, can find no reason sufficient to satisfy him for Mr. Wesley's ordaining preachers for North America, which is so overrun with Arianism, and for the West Indies, which in no small degree has been sunk into infidelity, practical atheism, and superstition; it would be in vain to attempt a recital of those reasons which are assigned at large for such a conduct, as it is to be feared the Observer would be still found among the number of the malcontents.

He charges me with passing in silence the weight of his arguments. But I beg leave to retort this mode of acting upon him in one instance among many. He says, 'This Methodist knows none in Mr. Wesley's societies who implicitly follow their venerable teacher; I know many such.' Now this is not the point in hand. I only denied that there were any in Mr. Wesley's societies who count it impious not to implicitly follow their venerable teacher. And I am disposed to believe that the Observer, with the full stretch of all his abilities, will find it no easy matter to prove that there are.

He says of Doctor [Thomas] Coke: 'Is there any peace where he sets his foot? Are not the societies thrown into commotion by his presence? And can my opponent be so ignorant as not to know?' To which I answer, if it be ignorance not to know that the Doctor is a constant mischief-maker, and a breaker of the peace wheresoever he sets his foot, I candidly confess my ignorance. But I apprehend that the unhappy dispute which at present subsists between him and a few of the Dublin Methodists will no more prove that he destroys the peace of all the Methodist societies in these three kingdoms, America, and the West Indies, wherever he sets his foot, than it will prove that because the gentle Observer has bestowed the name of firebrand upon the Doctor, he will offer like treatment to every man he meets.

The Observer attempts to compare the zeal of the Doctor with the folly of fanatics, who from a mistaken zeal voluntarily deprived themselves of the comforts and necessities of life, and at length starve their souls out of their bodies. Exquisite comparison! But who among these fanatics referred to have been so successful as the Doctor in the reformation of mankind, if we only instance his labours in the West Indies? But if to indulge the Observer's humour, the Doctor must still bear the title of silly adventurer, the worst I wish your correspondent is that he may shortly commence as very an adventurer as the Doctor, only with tenfold greater success.

I think it a pity that the well-meant labours of the Doctor have been so thrown away upon your correspondent, sir. He says he was never apt to teach him, meaning (I suppose) that he ever was profited under the Doctor's sermons. Among many reasons which might be assigned for this unhappy casualty, I select one from the inspired pen. 'The word did not profit, not being mixed with faith in those that heard it.'³ But who was to blame for this, I will leave the candid reader to conclude.

¹I.e., anonymous correspondent to *Dublin Chronicle*, May 18, 1789.

²'Observer' to the *Dublin Chronicle*, June 13, 1789.

³Heb. 4:2.

But if the Observer be provoked, he will do something very worthy of note in his next letter. I can assure him that for my part, I am so far from desiring to irritate him against an absent character, that I do not know that I should wish to provoke him to strife against the most avowed enemy that I have under the sun.

It is true, I did make free to observe that I thought your correspondent a little too keen, and bordering too much upon a bad temper. But in his last he has set me right, he was only making himself pleasant! But if this were true, I humbly confess sir, I shall never wish to see him in a passion. But I am greatly blamed for intimating that the Observer gave the Doctor a tolerable good character in his last publication. But I appeal to every moral, unprejudiced man, was not such an intimation as much to his honour as to say that the Doctor was lifted up with pride, and had fallen into the condemnation of the devil, which your correspondent would now force the world to believe was his meaning?

But he still dwells upon the words 'church' and 'separation', and does not seem to be altogether pleased because I would so much as insinuate that Mr. Wesley is not a separatist. But until such times as I evidently see such a change in Mr. Wesley's practice, and manner of treating that subject, as I never yet saw, I cannot avoid the retaining of my former sentiments. His practice on this point is: He goes to the established Church and hears sermons, he there receives the sacrament, and advises all who will be advised by him, in his different societies through this kingdom, to follow his example; and in room of tolerating his preachers to baptize, as one has lately suggested, he would not baptize a child himself when I saw him last before he has sent for the rector's liberty. To this his practice I may add his answer to that question. 'Sir, do you mean a church of believers, when you tell us, you will not separate from the Church?' He replies, 'No! I mean the Church as by law established, from which I never will depart as long as the breath of God is in my nostrils, except I should see some cause for it, which I have never yet seen.'⁴ After this, what farther cause of dispute?

But the polite Observer continues, 'Surely this ignoramus' (true refinement this!) 'intends not to insinuate that the Whitefriar's congregation is not a Dissenting congregation.' Indeed but I do more than insinuate this, for I roundly assert that it is not a Dissenting congregation, and I hope never will. But the Observer would have my reasons, and demands the superiority of Whitefriar's above the celebrated Bethesda and other Dissenting meeting-houses. To which I can answer: [First,] the Methodists of London, who have had the prayers of the Church read to them, sometimes by ordained, and sometimes by unordained men, for more than 40 years, were never considered as a body of Dissenters. And why should the congregation of Whitefriar's be discriminated by that name for following the same steps about the space of one year? Secondly, it is a rule with the congregation of Whitefriar's to go to Church one Sunday out of the four. There they partake of the Supper of the Lord, they are married by the established clergy, their children are baptized by the same hands that have joined their parents together, if they are afflicted they are visited by the same clergy, and the same reverend gentlemen attend their funeral solemnities. Now sir, all these circumstances, joined with the respect which the judicious part of that congregation retain for the Church as by law established, are partly my reasons for asserting that the congregation of Whitefriar's is not a body of Dissenters.

There needs no great literary attainments to tell this plain, artless story. Nor yet to confute him when he says that the Whitefriar's congregation was a body of Dissenters even before the church-service was introduced there. If they were, why has he raised this outcry about a separation? What could they have separated from? Not from the Church, I humbly conceive, if they were already Dissenters.

I hope your correspondent will please to observe that I bestow no low wit of the basest sort upon this his evident mistake. When in my former letter I laid down to the Observer a plain scriptural rule, 'If thou hast ought against thy brother, go and speak to him face to face',⁵ he refers me to Ascanius—most unanswerable argument! But I entertain some fears that some of his readers will not feel its weight.

⁴JW to the *Dublin Chronicle*, June 2, 1789, *Works*, 31:61–64.

⁵Matt. 18:15.

Reader do you fully understand this method of reasoning?

However disingenuous I may appear in the eyes of the Observer, I must admire him as a man of some abilities, and could sincerely wish that they were exercised to a more excellent purpose. But as he has thought fit to stoop to reproachful names, such as an ass, an ignoramus, and firebrand, I think it best to bid him farewell. For however ignorant, base, and vile he may please to represent me, I have not so learned Christ.

I have, sir, once more the honour to be,

Your much obliged, And very humble servant.

Source: published transcription; *Dublin Chronicle* (June 23–25, 1789), 186.

From Rev. William Black Jr.

[Nova Scotia]
June 22, 1789

My fears last fall drew from me, in my letter to you, a naked relation of our discords.¹ After the heat of temptation was over, and the two brothers, James and John Mann, came to see and talk with brother [James] Wray, all was love and harmony, and I trust nothing but peace is now found amongst us.²

Source: published transcription; Richey, *William Black*, 250.

¹This letter is not known to survive.

²After six years serving in England, Wray had been ordained by JW for service in North America in 1787, and appointed as Assistant for the work in Nova Scotia (10:631). He was not well received in this leadership role as an 'outsider'.

Rev. Edward Smyth to the Printer of the *Dublin Chronicle*¹

[Dublin]
June 22, 1789

The truly generous man will never triumph over his fallen antagonist, who sues for mercy. Therefore, as the Rev. Mr. Wesley acknowledges I 'laid him on his back', I shall not take the advantage to 'tread his guts out', but show myself 'as merciful as I am stout'.

Edward Smyth

Source: published transcription; *Dublin Chronicle* (June 22–23, 1789), 184.

¹Smyth was replying to JW's letter of June 20, 1789 in the *Dublin Chronicle, Works*, 31:70.

‘W.’ to the Rev. Edward Smyth

Limerick
June 22, 1789

Reverend Sir,

While the public attention is arrested with a dispute brought forward by an anonymous signature, permit me to request an answer from you to the following queries:

When did you renounce your rooted aversion to the Church of England (or Ireland) as to adopt those orthodox opinions which teem in your attack or reply to the Rev. John Wesley?

Have you not in public companies and private conversation repeatedly insisted that no good could be done until Mr. Wesley absolutely renounced his connection with the Church?

Did you not in a public sermon delivered in this city in the Methodist preaching-house, and in several select companies, enforce the following charitable sentence: ‘The clergy if they only get the fleece, care not if the devil had the flock?’

When you answer the foregoing queries to the satisfaction of several friends of the truly Reverend John Wesley, whose general conduct through life during the period of near a century has been consistent; and of your acquaintance, who with regret observe your marked tergiversation in little less than a third part of the time; you shall hear further from a real friend of your’s and your family.

W.

Source: published transcription; *Dublin Chronicle* (June 25–27, 1789), 194.

‘Charitas’ to the Printer of the *Dublin Chronicle*

D[ean]’s C[ourt], [Dublin]
June 23, 1789

Sir,

From a consideration of your paper being the impartial channel of much useful and pleasing information, I have attached myself to it as a constant reader; and am unfeignedly concerned to find that an irreligious contest (not argument) should have, for some time past, engrossed the public attention, to the great prejudice of vital religion and the decay of virtue. If the venerable name of Mr. John Wesley had not been so invidiously involved in the most uncharitable part of the question, my thoughts at this time should have been entombed in oblivion.

I presume the sum and substance from which such severe and unjust strictures originated was simply this: About a year ago, Mr. Wesley assented to (not urged) the having of forenoon service in Whitefriar Lane meeting-house (or chapel, as Mr. [Edward] Smyth sarcastically hints), merely with a view to accommodate the preacher’s useful discourses to a great number of his hearers whose extreme age, infirmities, or perhaps whose engagements in a domestic or servile way, precluded them from the morning and evening preaching. But his acquiescence was accompanied with this special reserve, that previous to their discourses they should read and use the whole church-service, including occasional psalmody in the place of hymns. He likewise not only recommended but enjoined it as a peculiar and indispensable duty on both the people and preachers, to attend their own parochial or other churches and receive the Lord’s Supper on the first Sunday of every month. How this could be called a secession from the established Church will be easily and best determined by every unprejudiced person. But against whom did this militate? Or to what denomination of Christians did this give offence? For many of the Dissenters, of various descriptions, have occasionally attended, without uttering one word which breathed the least disaffection. No, all was love; all was unity. Nay, I have been passing by, after leaving another house to which my opinions are charitably attached, have shaken hands with my Methodist brethren and, under divine mercy, neither of us questioned the other on the subject of our attendance. For we concluded that through grace, love was the harbinger of our discretion.

Neither has it been considered by the Church of England ministers, dignified or inferior, as a lessening of their establishment or their utility. Far otherwise, for those gentlemen had sufficient penetration and little jealousy. They clearly saw that the measure was wisely designed to diffuse useful scriptural knowledge to a number of poor people whom their discourses might not probably reach; and regarding the design in Christian candour, they forbore all argument. Whereas if the church-service had been mutilated, or a systematic alienation introduced, the ready pens of such a number of able writers would long before have evinced their disapprobation. The fact is, they view the immorality, debauchery, and licentiousness of the age in their proper mirror; and therefore they allow no luke-warm praise to a set of men whose exemplary lives justify their principles, and whose strength and time are devoted to promote piety, sobriety, and knowledge among the lower and most important orders of the state (the working people). And these great ends once obtained, they cheerfully cooperate with the legislature, by preserving philanthropic toleration in undisturbed repose.

To whom then, it may be asked, are the public indebted for the pains which have lately been taken to pare away the established reputation of one of the best men of the present whole age? The answer is obvious: To those who, wishing to monopolize all from both Church and meeting-house, are desirous of having a preeminent regard had to their chapel only; and whose apprehensions were alarmed, lest the number of their semi-church-auditors might too visibly decline. To the man who had left the Methodists in a fit of contempt, as he had done the established Church some time before.

In short, Mr. Edward Smyth, of the E—a, in the year 1778 had expressed a warm desire that the Methodists should renounce all connection with the Church (observe at this time the Bethesda [Chapel]

was not built).¹ Nay more, he once, in a paroxysm of frenzy, threw his gown on the floor and declared himself to this purpose, 'It is a Babylonish garment, and the mark of a false prophet.' From which it follows that every impartial inquirer will be led to impute his present use of both gown and prayer-book rather to political motives than to any thing else. Add to this, that many of his hearers have frequently found much fault with his readiness to rail at the established clergy in particular. To what doth such a train of inconsistencies tend? Whether to edification, or separation, let common sense determine. To this let it be subjoined that Mr. Smyth's administering the ordinances so frequently in his own chapel leaves no opportunity for his communicants to receive in the [established] churches. However, what puts his abstracted desire beyond a doubt is his forming a society similar to the Methodists, although he formerly exploded the idea of class-meetings.

Alas! How prone are the best of Christians to reconcile contradictions, when they lose sight of that love which beareth all things, and taketh up no reproach against its neighbour! Mr. Smyth has (in the opinion of a multitude of professors) shot an arrow in the dark (i.e. in a mood without reflection). He has, from the fountain of his knowledge, clothed a slanderous design under the most unsanctioned figure rhetoric could furnish—i.e. by way of apophasis he insinuates that 'he hopes Mr. Wesley will not oblige him to speak more pointedly plain, he knows I have it in my power'²—thereby leaving the world at large to figure to themselves every crude, dark, and invidious thought which the busy enemy of souls will too readily fabricate and suggest. And in the second paragraph of Mr. Smyth's letter he says, he 'perfectly coincides with the substance and justice of the Observer's remarks'; and consequently makes himself (by adoption) at once liable to all the virulence and party-heat which that anonymous writer's passive spleen had subjected him to. And in the three lines immediately following he writes thus: 'he must aver' i.e. if we understand him, his love of peace and singleness of disposition for gospel-privileges constraints him to aver 'that Mr. Wesley's answer is not altogether consistent with truth, as he could very readily prove.' What a strong antithesis is marked here! Mr. Smyth avers, i.e. affirms the truth itself; and Mr. Wesley has no regard to the God of truth, whom he professes to worship in spirit and truth. Mr. Smyth says he wishes to spare Mr. Wesley. If so, why did he not convey his reply under the more conciliating influence of the words 'error', 'misapprehension', 'misconception', 'misconstruction', or a variety of synonymous words equally well calculated to assist the modest writer, as well as to reconcile the many differences which oftentimes (through the short-sightedness of human frailty) arise among the wisest of mortals? In the beginning of Mr. Smyth's letter he 'confesses it is with reluctance he appears before the bar of the public'. Yet on the conclusion he winds off with all the vehemence which the most highly improved orators are accustomed to use; i.e. he challenges the good old man to relinquish his knowledge of that which he heard Mr. Smyth declare, and dub himself the agent of falsehood.

Mr. Wesley's uniform good life has, it seems, defended his body against the rage of disease and infirmity. Hence too (under the divine permission) his mental faculties have been preserved nearly in their vigour, although in the 87th year of his age. And to him may be applied the poet's words, '*memoria thesaurus artium*'.³ But Mr. Smyth would fain divest him of the invaluable treasure, by enjoining a confession of imprudence; or, in other words, by unsaying what his memory and conscience forbids. And the injunction is closed with the sad alternative that 'if Mr. Wesley does not comply with this most Christian requisition, he must expect to hear from him'. Query what may follow? *Anathema Maranatha*.

I acknowledge that the thirst of popular applause is interwoven in the human nature. But surely an exorbitant desire for raising our own good name on the ruin of our neighbour's (and that neighbour bound to us in the ties of gospel-love) is a pitiful ambition, and every way unworthy of the ministers of the everlasting gospel, whose souls should be filled with soft compassion, and whose powers, though angel-bright, are yet awfully benign and so vigilantly observant of their Lord's command touching humility, as

¹See JW, *Journal*, July 7, 1778, *Works*, 23:98.

²Edward Smyth to the *Dublin Chronicle*, June 11, 1789.

³'His memory is a treasury of arts'.

to be always ready, with St. Paul to say, 'would to God you could bear with me a little in my folly—and indeed bear with me.' 2 Cor. 11:2.

Strenuous to conclude, I take leave to ask what advantage will accrue to Mr. Smyth from the poignancy of his reflection either here, or in England? Will they add one member more to Bethesda? Will the Church of England (from which he sits apart) bend to his opinion? Will the Methodist society decline? Or will the long-earned and ever-pious character of wisdom and worth which Mr. Wesley has for an age eminently sustained, lose one atom of its lustre? Oh, no! For God's promises to his servants are unshaken.

Had Mr. Smyth been present when the communion was administered by Mr. Wesley at Whitefriar Lane on the Lord's day of the 21st instant.⁴ I'm inclined to believe the mask of pompous diction would have given place to the overteeming tears of penitential reflection. He would then have preferred the pleasure resulting from a conflict between sin and righteousness, to the unhallowed combat of a paper-war founded on religious, or rather irreligious, punctilios. How sweetly pleasing that! How painfully distressing this!

I shall dismiss the purport of this paper by commending Mr. Smyth and his coadjutors to the sacred care and keeping of the 'God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore'.⁵ Amen.

Charitas

Source: published transcription; *Dublin Chronicle* (June 27–30, 1789), 195.

⁴See JW, *Journal*, June 21, 1789, *Works*, 24:144.

⁵2 Cor. 11:31.

‘Monitor’ to the Printer of the *Dublin Chronicle*

June 23, 1789

Sir,

Seeing that part of your publication which before contained useful knowledge now taken up with controversy, I am induced as a lover of concord, and one zealous for the prosperity of the gospel, to take up my pen and briefly advise the parties concerned to give over so vain and fruitless a pursuit, as it will tend to create discord in religious society, sap the foundation of Christianity, and render its professors (who thus lash each other) ridiculous in the sight of men, and draw upon them the displeasure of the Almighty. Can your correspondents forget St. Paul’s advice to the Ephesians (4:3), ‘Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice. But be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God also for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.’ Man was created to glorify God here, by living a life of holiness and rendering all the service he can to his fellow-creatures. But does he fulfil the intent of his creation when, instead of rendering service to his fellows, he is calumniating and detracting them? Surely he does not! For he should do good (if in his power) to all, even his bitterest enemies. Is it not then a pity that they who should be fellow-labourers in the vineyard, do fall out among themselves; and instead of rearing the tender fruit destroy it, and trample under foot the work of their own hands? Should not men of sense and religion rather instruct the ignorant by revealing truth, than turn them out of the way by disputing one with another? Let them hear St. Paul to Timothy—‘O Timotheus, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane, empty babblings, and oppositions of knowledge falsely so called; which some professing have erred from the faith’ (Timothy 6:20–21). Let them hear also Joseph’s advice to his brethren, Genesis 45:21, ‘See that ye fall not out by the way.’ Why then should men on the same errand, by their different conception of the same thing, let their sentiments break out into open sarcasm and bitterness.

It is a matter of concern to every well-wisher to religion that any occasion for such disputes should have arisen at a time when an unaffected unanimity was necessary to finish what they had begun. There is but one great Legislator, one supreme, all-wise, and uncontrollable Dictator of worship and belief, the Author and Finisher of faith, from whom only it is dangerous to err. Warmed, enlightened by that spark the Almighty has implanted in the human breast, men should love, help, and build each other up. Love suffereth long and is kind, love envieth not, love acteth not rashly, is not puffed up, etc. And if men were possessed of this love, they would be more liberal in their sentiments than to condemn others for not joining with them in opinion, especially when they are assured that he (and only he) who feareth God and worketh righteousness in all ages shall be accepted. And again our Lord tells us that, ‘He who doeth the will of the Father who is in heaven, the same is his mother and sister and brother.’¹

It were glorious indeed if a true spirit of Christianity universally prevailed, and the lives, tongues, and hearts of men were alike harmonious; if their minds were the constant seats of knowledge, piety and virtue; if pastors were assistants to happiness and not the oppressors of mankind. And if that love of God which passeth knowledge, and universal love for each other, were diffused through all ranks of people, then indeed would they answer the end of their creation, by glorifying their Creator here, and be in the sure way of arriving to the eternal enjoyment of him hereafter.

Before I conclude, sir, I must inform your correspondents that I have no enmity to any, but can truly value what appears good in all. Therefore I entreat them to put an end to an affair which can be productive of no good consequences to either party. Hoping there may be no farther occasion for an interference of this kind, I subscribe myself, sir,

Your most obedient and very humble servant,

Monitor

Source: published transcription; *Dublin Chronicle* (June 25–27, 1789), 194.

¹Matt. 12:50.

‘Spectator’ to the Printer of the *Dublin Chronicle*

June 25, 1789

*Lusisti satis, edisti satis atque bibisti:
Tempus abire tibi est: ...*¹

Sir,

I am one of those stubborn men who, when plain facts are in question, will be satisfied with nothing less than demonstration. I am always making unnecessary distinctions—between reason and passion; between declamation and solid argument; between evasive quibbles and direct answers. In short, I am one of those conceited, disagreeable beings, whom your correspondent the Observer calls ‘carnal reasoners’; being a great bigot to the sentiment of the celebrated Cicero, ‘*Plus apud me [...] ratio valebit, quam vulgi opinio.*’²

I have carefully examined all those letters, *pro* and *con*, which your paper has lately afforded the public on the subject of Methodism. Whether it is my partiality to the Observer which carries away my judgment, or whether my opinion is founded on reason, I will not say. But so it is that, on the one side I see a close, though candid manner of reasoning, supported all the way by plain, undeniable facts and sound arguments; and on the other, nothing besides impertinent remarks, noisy declamation, vain quibbles, and guilty evasions. I flattered myself, however, that when the Rev. Mr. [John] Wesley came to town I should *hear* something better than I had *seen*; supposing that he had wisely reserved his main arguments, till he should have an opportunity of bringing them forth before a large audience, when the Observer’s weakness and shame would appear together in full view. With this expectation I have constantly attended Mr. Wesley’s public discourses.

I must remark, by the bye, that as soon as I showed myself in Whitefriar Street meeting-house, I was surprised to see the eyes of almost all the congregation turned upon me! And, while I was endeavouring to find out the cause, I heard one saying to another, in a pretty loud whisper, ‘*That’s the Observer!*’ I smiled at the mistake, and began to pique myself a little upon the honour that was done me; when the sudden recollection that I might shortly share in the Observer’s shame made me change countenance, and wish that my *short face* had been in a less conspicuous situation.

I heard, at different times, different things. But nothing to my satisfaction. Nothing that answered my expectation. I heard Mr. Wesley’s apology for calling in Mr. [William] Myles to assist him in the sacrament. It was no other than this, ‘That he was just come from the sea, weary and fatigued, and needed assistance.’ I heard a repetition of things which I had heard before, I suppose a hundred times, respecting his ordaining ministers for Scotland and America, and refusing to do the same for England and Ireland. And I heard him affirm, with much emphasis, that all this did not prove him a Dissenter. ‘For’, said he, ‘no man is a Dissenter but one who deems the Church service unlawful.’ I believe all the women in the congregation, and the greatest part of the children, thought these things mighty argumentative, and felt the force of them! But my *reasoning spirit* kept my mind very differently employed. For,

In the first instance, I was asking within myself, what necessity there was for Mr. Wesley to administer the sacrament in Whitefriar Street, when he was so much fatigued as not to be able to do it? And whether his affectionate people would not rather have excused him, than been eye-witnesses to such a breach of *decency* and *order*? In the second instance, I was asking whether it was in Scotland or in England that Mr. Wesley exercised the office of bishop? And whether a private clergyman could ordain ministers in England, either for Scotland, America, or any other part of the world, and be considered in any other light than as a Presbyterian? And finally, I was enquiring what does Mr. Wesley mean by ‘deeming the Church service unlawful’? He can have no reference to *human* laws, whether civil or

¹Horace, *Epistles*, II.ii.214–15; ‘You have played enough, have eaten and drunk enough. It is time to quit the feast’ (Loeb).

²Cicero, *Paradoxa Stoicorum*, I.8; ‘Yet with me true reason will carry more weight than the opinion of the common herd’ (Loeb).

ecclesiastical. He must mean therefore, 'that no man is a Dissenter but one who deems the Church service *sinful*'. But how any sensible man could utter such an assertion is what I cannot account for. Lady Huntingdon's people not only do not deem the Church service to be unlawful, but are strongly attached to it. But are they not Dissenters? Do not all men consider them, and do they not consider themselves, as such? Nay, I have the honour of an acquaintance with many of the Presbyterian clergy, and I do not know one who deems the Church service to be sinful. It is true they like *their own* form of worship better than *ours*; but they think it no *sin* to join occasionally in worshipping God, *even in a church*. Thus does Mr. Wesley flee from one false refuge to another! What will he have recourse to next?

I think I may now address him in the language of my motto,

*Lusisti satis, edisti satis atque bibisti:
Tempus abire tibi est: ...*³

He has trifled long enough. He has lived long enough. Or, if God should prolong his life, it can seemingly be for no other purpose but to convince the world—that *the best of men are but men at the best*. I address the Observer in similar language, *Probasti satis, confirmasti satis atque refutasti*.⁴ I say more: *Vicisti---tempus abire TIBI est*.⁵

From your's, etc.,

Spectator

Source: published transcription; *Dublin Chronicle* (June 25–27, 1789), 194.

³'You have played enough, have eaten and drunk enough. It is time to quit the feast' (Loeb).

⁴'You have proved enough; you have sufficiently confirmed and refuted.'

⁵'You won; it is time for *you* to go.'

‘Humanus’ to the Printer of the *Dublin Chronicle*

June 27, 1789

...ubi plura nitent ..., non ego paucis
offendar maculis quas aut incuria fudit
aut humana parum cavit natura....

Horace, Epistulae, Ad. Pisones¹

Sir,

I am not a member of the Methodist society. I am, and I trust ever shall be a sincere member of the Church of Ireland as by law established. But I love good men of every denomination, and it pains me to the soul to see a venerable old man, whose excellent intentions, and unparalleled labours entitle him to the universal esteem, run down, and worried, without mercy, because he has been betrayed into indiscretions, which perhaps it was not possible for him in the nature of things to have avoided.

I do not censure the Observer for taking up the pen. I reprobate every step tending to separation from our excellent Church as cordially as he can do—and I am free to own that such steps are observable amongst the Methodists. But it had been the part of common charity to have enquired how far Mr. [John] Wesley was blameable on account of those steps. And it was doubly incumbent on one who professes *kindness* for him to have considered whether much might not be offered to *excuse* what perhaps it was impossible entirely to *defend*.

I do not mean to enter the lists with Observer. I have no inclination to engage in controversy with any man, and least of all with Observer. If even his *kindness* wounds, if his very *tenderness* has a sting in it, his unqualified attacks must be dangerous indeed. I only mean to lay before a candid public such considerations as a dispassionate view of Mr. Wesley's conduct suggested to myself, and which I am bold to expect will have weight with every man of *unequivocal* liberality.

I do not assert that Mr. Wesley has *in all instances* acted with judgment. But whilst we censure the apparent *indiscretion*, should we not consider the peculiar circumstances of the *man*. By a series of events, which I dare not deny to have been providential, the care of many thousand souls has fallen upon him. With respect to these he has ever appeared to have had but one end in view—their *salvation*. But who, I ask, could hope to maintain invariable discretion in the management of so unwieldy a body? Let the general character of its numerous members be examined into. Perhaps the *candid* enquirer will be obliged to acknowledge that a majority of them are sincerely pious. But he must also see that numbers even of these are ignorant, illiterate, and open to a thousand prejudices. Mr. Wesley knows too well the value of sincere piety not to own it in its homeliest garb, and cultivate it under the most disadvantageous circumstances. But from this what difficulties must he not be involved in? How often has he been obliged to yield to a weakness rather than turn him that was weak out of the way. How frequently must he have been reduced to such a dilemma as to be forced to acquiesce in what he could not cordially approve. I am far from insinuating that any circumstances could betray Mr. Wesley into an acquiescence in *moral evil*. But I am persuaded he has frequently sacrificed everything but a *good conscience* to the spiritual advantage of his people. Thus it is certain he has in many instances deviated from the *strict* order of the Church and from *canonical* regularity. But in *every* instance I am assured he did it unwillingly—from necessity as he conceived—in order to more extensive good.

But how shall we clear Mr. Wesley from the charge of *inconsistency* in thus deviating from the laws of the Church, while he declared himself of its communion, and was continually professing his love to it? I answer that by such declarations Mr. Wesley meant neither more nor less than that he cordially approved of the doctrines, the liturgy, and the public worship of the Church; and that he would ever

¹Actually, Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 351–52; ‘when many things in the poem are beautiful, I shall not take offence at a few blots which a careless hand has let drop, or human frailty has failed to avert’ (Loeb).

continue to join in its ordinances and sacraments.² But on no occasion has he pledged himself to adhere to *every ritual observance* of the Church. Had this been his intention, he would certainly have accepted of that preferment in the church which his virtues and well-known abilities, even in early youth, entitled him to expect. But considering himself as called by providence to move in a wider sphere, he has ever held himself at liberty to act with regard to ceremonial observances as might be most conducive to his grand design. Nay more; I do not doubt but it is Mr. Wesley's opinion that the peculiar rites or ceremonies of the best constituted church in the world (and such I very believe he considers the Church of England) are of little account when compared to the salvation of *one* immortal spirit—and that a rigid attention to the *former* would be dearly purchased with the loss of the *latter*. On this principle he has evidently acted through life, and to this alone I am persuaded his deviations from canonical exactness are to be attributed.

I am aware it will be objected that Mr. Wesley's late deviations from the rules of the Church of England, have far exceeded any of his former ones. But candour would lead one to enquire whether those measures have originated with Mr. Wesley, or whether he has not acquiesced in them as unavoidable. I have already observed that Mr. Wesley has often been obliged in matters not morally evil, to sacrifice his judgment to the prejudices of his people. And I am persuaded it is the case in the present instance more than ever. A growing tendency to a separation from the Church has been long observable among the Methodists; not only many of the people, but not a few of the preachers seem to have fallen into this delusion. Mr. Wesley has long laboured to stem the torrent. But is it to be thought he could repress the prejudices of twenty thousand people? If Mr. Wesley had not been sincerely attached to the Church of England, the greater part of the Methodists had probably ere this become absolute separatists. Nothing I am sure has prevented them but his continued exertions. And though he has thought it best to yield *in part* to their inclinations in Dublin, (I verily believe in hope that by doing so he might still preserve in them *some sort* of connexion with the Church), in every other part of the kingdom he has used every means in his power to repress their growing prejudices. I and many others have been witnesses to his honest zeal. And with the deepest conviction I believe that his attachment to the established Church is unfeigned; that his aberrations from its discipline have been, to his apprehension, necessitated; and that, if by any declaration of his he has imposed upon the world, he has been, in the first instance, imposed upon himself.

Every man has his foibles—and no foible has been more remarkable in Mr. Wesley than an unbounded confidence in those he loved. Everyone that is acquainted with him *may* know that this amiable weakness is 'the worst imperfection of his nature'.³ The consequence has been that he who had possession of his heart, had too frequently in some degree possession of his understanding too. By this means he has been persuaded into measures which, had he been left to himself, he would no doubt have cordially disapproved. Nay more—steps have been taken in some cases by his confidential friends without his knowledge, and when he became acquainted with them, he acquiesced in them, because he could not remedy them. I doubt if this was not precisely the case with respect to the eleven o'clock service in Whitefriar Street.

Add to all this that Mr. Wesley is just now entering on his eighty-seventh year. Is it to be expected that at so advanced a period, he should act with that determinedness which he manifested at a more vigorous age? Or is it extraordinary that at his time of life he should at an unguarded moment be

²Note in original: 'To straiten the terms of church communion is seldom serviceable to a church. An excessive rigour might *annihilate* it. Were it certain "that none are of a church who secretly condemn or openly violate those laws by which that church is governed", it would follow that the Church of England has exceeding few members, particularly amongst the *clergy*—few of whom there are but either "secretly condemn" some or other of the *articles*, or "openly violate" some or other of the canons. It were safer as well as more liberal to allow everyone to be of the church, who conscientiously attends its worship and receives its sacraments—and it will be hard to prove they are not.'

³Quoting 'Observer' to *Dublin Chronicle*, June 18, 1789.

betrayed into inadvertencies which formerly he escaped, or yield to persuasions which one he would have withstood?

Far be it from me to insinuate, by way of apology for Mr. Wesley, that his mental faculties are actually decayed. Everyone who has the happiness of conversing with him knows the contrary. Everyone that hears him speak will acknowledge that, with respect to his intellect, as well as in all other respects, he is a transcendent old man. But age must bring infirmities, and Mr. Wesley is not exempt from the common lot of man. Seventeen years ago he candidly declared himself unfit for *controversy*—‘*Non eadem est aetas*’, saith he, ‘*non mens*.’⁴ If such was the case with him at seventy, what must it be at eighty-six? Is it strange then that he should in many things *yield* rather than *contend*; that he should cease to *struggle* where he cannot hope to *prevail*; and as far as he can, acquiesce in the prejudices of his wayward children, that he may still have it in his power to inculcate upon them *the religion of the heart*.

Mr. Printer, I am astonished that these obvious considerations did not occur to your correspondents, that they did not soften the rigour of their censures, and mitigate the cruelty of their insinuations. Nay more, I am amazed that humanity itself did not suggest that some degree of tenderness was due to old age—to the old age of one whose piety makes him venerable—who has spent fifty years in the uninterrupted labour of love—and who, in spite of his increasing infirmities, still goes on, exhausting the feeble remains of life in ceaseless endeavours for the happiness of mankind.

Mr. Wesley’s foibles have been largely dwelt upon. And if his virtues have been brought forward, (I would almost say) it has been only to wing the envenomed arrow, that it might the more effectually transfix his reputation. But Mr. Wesley has indeed *virtues* which I wish for their own sake your correspondents had been more sedulous to emulate than to tarnish. His foibles are the foibles of the best of men; but his virtues are those which constitute the perfection of human character.

Very lately, Mr. Printer, I had an opportunity for some days together of observing Mr. Wesley with attention. I endeavoured to consider him not so much with the eye of a friend as with the impartiality of a philosopher. And I must declare, every hour I spent in his company afforded me fresh reasons for esteem and veneration. So fine an old man I never saw. The happiness of his mind beamed forth in his countenance—every look showed how fully he enjoyed ‘the gay conscience of a life well spent’.⁵ And wherever he went he diffused a portion of his own felicity. Easy and affable in his demeanour, he accommodated himself to every sort of company, and showed how happily the most finished courtesy may be blended with the most perfect piety. In his conversation one might be at a loss whether to admire most his fine classical taste, his extensive knowledge of men and things, or his overflowing goodness of heart. While the grave and serious were charmed with his wisdom, his sportive sallies of innocent mirth delighted even the young and the thoughtless. And both saw in his uninterrupted cheerfulness the excellency of true religion. No cynical remarks on the levity of youth embittered his discourses. No applausive retrospect to past times marked his present discontent. In him even old age appeared delightful—like an evening without clouds—and it was impossible to observe him without wishing fervently ‘May my latter end be like his!’⁶

But I really find myself unequal to the task of delineating such a character. What I have said may to some appear as panegyric. But there are numbers, and those of taste and discernment too, who can bear witness to the truth, though by no means to the perfectness of the sketch I have attempted. With such I have been frequently in his company, and everyone of them I am persuaded would subscribe to all and more than all I have said. For my own part I never was so happy as while with him, and scarcely ever felt

⁴‘I am no longer the same age, nor mind.’ Cf. Horace, *Epistles*, I.1.3–4.

⁵Alexander Pope, ‘To Mrs. M. B., on her Birthday’, *l.* 12.

⁶Num. 23:10.

more poignant regret than at parting from him, for well I knew 'I ne'er should look upon his like again.'⁷

Such, Mr. Printer, is the man whom for a few questionable matters, your correspondent has laboured to blacken with insinuation, and to brand with infamy.⁸ Such is the man whom they have charged with deliberate fraud and wilful falsehood. Such is the man whom, because he has opened his mouth to complain, and because he has dared to name a *name*, they have charitably determined to *hunt down*. '*Hic pietatis honos?*'⁹ Let them, if they are void of humanity, go on with their design. They may shorten the few remaining days of the hoary saint, but they will not be able to destroy his peace of mind, or lessen his eternal reward. A good conscience will support him in the midst of calumnies; and 'surely his judgment is with the Lord, and his work with his God'.¹⁰

Humanus

Source: published transcription; *Dublin Chronicle* (June 27–30, 1789), 206–07.

⁷Note in original: 'I cannot help applying to Mr. Wesley the beautiful character which Cicero gives in his *Cato Major* of Q. Maximus: "*Nec vero ille in luce modo atque in oculis civium magnus, sed intus domique praestantior. Qui sermo, quae praecepta! Quanta notitia antiquitatis, quae scientia! ... Omnia memoria tenebat non domestica solum, sed etiam externa [bella]. Cuius sermone ita tum cupide fruebar, quasi iam divinarem, id quod evenit, illo exstincto fore unde discerem neminem.*"' ['Nor was it merely in public and under the gaze of his fellow-citizens that he was great, but he was greater still in the privacy of his home. What conversation, what maxims! What a knowledge of ancient history, what skill in augural law! ... [he] knew by heart the entire history, not only of our own [wars], but of foreign [wars] as well. I was, at that time, as eager to profit by his conversation as if I already foresaw what, in fact, came to pass, that, when he was gone, I should have no one from whom to learn.']

⁸Note in original: 'Questionable only with respect to Mr. Wesley on first sight, as I trust all candid men after reading the above paragraphs will acknowledge. Let it be observed, I am concerned for Mr. Wesley *alone*. Those of the Methodists who are determined on separation I would strenuously oppose, if I hoped it would answer any end. But their *determination* too strongly implies that they are not to be wrought on by rational arguments, and verily the loss will be their own.'

⁹Virgil, *Aeneid*, i.253; 'And thus is piety honoured?' (Loeb).

¹⁰Cf. Isa. 49:4.

‘Philopacis’¹ to the Preachers, Stewards, and Leaders of the Methodist Society

June 27, 1789

‘He that justifieth the wicked and he that condemneth the just,
even they both are an abomination to the Lord.’

Proverbs, 17:15

Gentlemen,

Having been for some time a constant reader of the *Dublin Chronicle*, and perceiving many letters tending to disputation seemingly wrote by men professing religion, I cannot but lament the error into which all seem to have run: one party threatening, another vindicating, and a third thrusting his opinions to public scrutiny as matters of fact.

Any unprejudiced person may easily perceive by the language and heat with which each proceeds, whether it is consistent with true religion. Does it agree with the words of our Lord, ‘A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another.’² Or can a censorious world say, ‘See how those Christians love.’³

Many of the Methodists can with truth assert that the work of conversion prospered for a series of years in Dublin. Each quarterly meeting was pregnant with thankful souls who, with uplifted hands and eyes overflowing with gratitude, were not ashamed to declare to the glory of God what he had done for them. Not an annual meeting passed without an increase. But alas, this harmony is broke! No more do the voices of an united people supplicate heaven. What then can be said of those who, seeing the sad effects of a late institution, will persist in carrying it on? If they have more religion, let them show it by more humility—need I say it is one of the first fruits thereof.

Since private remonstrance has had no effect, would it not be better to have recourse to religious argument? For what shows detraction from religion more (in gospel ministers) than strife? It contains ‘envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness’.⁴ The beginning of it is ‘as when one letteth out waters, therefore leave off contention’.⁵

Not all the arguments of Observer are sufficient to convince me that his conduct is consistent with true religion. Are we not told in Scripture that ‘A wrathful man stirreth up strife, but he that is slow to anger appeaseth it.’⁶ Need I appeal to a discerning public to know whether Observer has been a stirrer up, or an appeaser? St. Paul advises in his Epistle to the Romans, ‘Let us walk not in strife and envying.’⁷ Nay we are told that, ‘only by pride cometh contention’.⁸ And the Lord is of purer eyes than to behold vanity. It is much to be feared a false ambition has taken place of religion, and been the chief corner-stone to his assertions.

I could not help taking notice of some words I heard more than one Methodist say (who were upholders of the late institution) ‘Let us alone. If it is of God it will stand; if not, it will fall.’⁹ That the words are scriptural, I allow; and hope the said gentlemen will also allow that, though the institution is upheld by a few, yet the general effect is a fall—a fall of the most serious nature, from a state of unity,

¹I.e., Lover of Peace.

²John 13:34.

³Cf. John 13:25.

⁴BCP, Litany.

⁵Prov. 17:14.

⁶Prov. 15:18.

⁷Cf. Rom. 13:13.

⁸Prov. 13:10.

⁹Cf. Acts 5:39.

peace and happiness, to one of discord, disquietude, and unhappiness. Can this tend to the salvation of souls? Surely 'a house divided against itself cannot stand'.¹⁰

Look well to it. See from what side the evil comes. Will it be said that the Rev. Mr. Wesley, who has so long supported the character of an equitable and holy man, will not be led away by a few? Are two or suppose three hundred (who attend eleven o'clock service in Whitefriar Street) a sufficient balance against the remainder in society, which consists at present of near twelve hundred?

I have the honour to be, gentlemen,

Your most obedient and humble servant,

Philopacis

Source: published transcription; *Dublin Chronicle* (June 27–30, 1789), 207.

¹⁰Cf. Mark 3:25.

Rev. Edward Smyth to the Printer of the *Dublin Chronicle*

[Dublin]
June 29, 1789

Sir,

If I have any distinguishing virtue, it is *honesty*. I like to use plain dealing myself, and allow others to use it with me. For this reason, I signed my name to the few remarks which Mr. [John] Wesley brought upon himself, by first entering the list of public controversy, speaking of me with an illiberal design, not only in your paper, but in his pulpit, and his magazine. I patiently bore with him till *thrice* attacked. And as he blamed the Observer for 'coming forth with his face covered',¹ I therefore wore no mask, and thus gave him every fair advantage. Had I advanced anything which he could have confuted, I am well persuaded he would not so readily have quitted the field.² And if the numerous seconds who are now ready to take up the arms he has laid down,³ had as much prudence as himself, they would never attempt to engage me, but rather be thankful that I suffered him so quietly to retreat. Whatever they, or others may think, I still declare that I wish to spare him. But 'when I speak to them of peace, they make themselves ready for battle'.⁴ And wherefore? Because their passions get the better of their reason. They are mortified and chagrined that their champion is fallen, and consider themselves as involved in his defeat. They are ashamed of the weak defence he has made, and are therefore attempting to revive the contest, hoping that they may meet with better success. But conscious they would be foiled if they exposed their persons to a fair attack, like the treacherous Indians behind their bushes, they cast their 'fiery darts',⁵ envenomed with cruelty and malice. Taking insidious refuge under a fictitious signature, from this covert they throw mire and dirt enough, in hopes some of it may stick. For they have no weapons to use; while truth, justice, and invincible argument are the armour in which I appear. In this panoply, I defy all their impotent efforts. *Magna est veritas, et prevalebit*.⁶ Nothing can penetrate this shield. From the quiver of calumny they may 'shoot their arrow, even bitter words'.⁷ But impregnable truth repels them, so that they fall into the pit from whence they were taken.

It has been always reckoned unmanly, cowardly, and unchristian, to make personal reflections of an injurious nature without giving the subjects of them an opportunity of knowing who their adversaries are. Thus to wound their reputation, is acting like a veiled assassin, that stabs him in the dark. If this be allowed, then every villain is at liberty to propagate the most scandalous lies concerning the most unblemished characters. And as 'the world which lieth in wickedness'⁸ is prone to imbibe every slanderous report, particularly if levelled against those whose principles and practices testify that the deeds of the world are evil, he is sure to gain credit with some. And while *he* is behind the curtain, laughing at those whom he has made the objects of his unjust ridicule and cruel satire, *he* rests secure from every attack; though, if discovered, the tongues of all men might justly condemn him, and the badness of his character would invalidate his testimony with many.

¹JW to the *Dublin Chronicle*, June 2, 1789, *Works*, 31:61–64.

²Referring to JW to the *Dublin Chronicle*, June 20, 1789, *Works*, 31:70.

³Smyth was replying in particular to 'Monitor' to the *Dublin Chronicle*, June 19, 1789; 'W' to Edward Smyth, in the *Dublin Chronicle*, June 22, 1789; and 'Caritas' to the *Dublin Chronicle*, June 23, 1789.

⁴Cf. Mic. 3:5.

⁵Eph. 6:16.

⁶'Truth is great, and shall prevail.'

⁷Ps. 64:3.

⁸1 John 5:19.

But *supposing* an anonymous writer should tell the truth, I would ask, Is he doing to others as he would have them do unto him, on a reverse of circumstances? Would he like to have his own faults laid open to public view? Would he not blush, and be confounded at the very thought? Why then has he no feeling for others? Why does he take an advantage which he will not allow his opponent? Ungenerous indeed! Certain I am, it is the fear of having their own follies or crimes exposed that induces such numbers to conceal *their* names, while they endeavour to make the names of *others* contemptible and infamous, though much better men than themselves. If the authors of many satirical strictures were known, how often might their own words be retorted upon them? How often might it be said, '*Clodius accusat maechos Catilina, Cethegum.*'⁹

While, therefore, in a dastardly manner they secret themselves from notice, and set others up, as in a pillory (frequently without justice), for the mob to hiss at them and pelt them, it is a sure sign they are afraid the tables might be turned, and they themselves become the objects of popular odium and scorn. The man who can adopt this motto as his own,

... *hic murus aeneus esto,*
*nil conscire sibi, nulla pallescere culpa,*¹⁰

will neither be ashamed nor afraid to give his antagonist the same liberty which he takes himself

In all polemical writings where the characters of men are called in question, the disputants should always avow their names, for this plain reason. Regarding their own reputation, they will take care to advance nothing but what they know or believe to be true, or which, by false colouring, they can exhibit in that sight. They are sensible that the eyes of all men are upon them, and that they must be accountable for every sentence which does not accord with truth, equity, and decorum. Thus they are restrained within proper bounds. But if they keep their names out of sight, they may then abuse one another with all the foul language of Billingsgate,¹¹ and forge the grossest falsehoods; so that, in many cases, it would be impossible for the public to know on which side the truth lies. And probably he who had the most fertile invention, or abounded most in scurrilous invectives and low wit, would be unjustly pronounced the conqueror.

Besides, when men write under feigned names, numbers of quiet, inoffensive people are brought into the quarrel. I am persuaded I should never have been engaged in this disagreeable contest, had it not been for the anonymous publication against Mr. Wesley. And I know that a pious, peaceable man among the Methodists is now suffering undeserved reproach from many, because they *suppose* him to be the author of the address, signed 'Thomas Attentive', though he has solemnly denied it.¹² His numerous friends too, who have espoused his cause, are obliged to be parties in the dispute; and thus the spirit of contention prevails over the meek spirit of Christ. We cannot hinder the world from forming conjectures who are the authors of those pieces with which the press teems; and when some circumstances, or evil surmisings, lead them to think they have discovered the authors, then 'bitter envying and strife ensue, and where these are, there is confusion, and every evil work'.¹³

In order, therefore, to prevent such dreadful mischief, I shall take no notice of any hireling scribbler, or anonymous libeller, even though he assumes the name of 'Charitas'. Charity is one of the

⁹'Claudius accuses the men Catilina [and] Cethegum.' Lucius Sergius Catiline and Gaius Cornelius Cethegus were accused leaders of a conspiracy to overthrow the Roman consuls in 63 BC.

¹⁰Horace, *Epistles*, I.1.60–61; 'Be this our wall of bronze, to have no guilt at heart, no wrongdoing to turn us pale' (Loeb).

¹¹The fish market in London; known for its foul language.

¹²See 'Thomas Attentive' on Thomas Coke, Oct. 10, 1788.

¹³Cf. James 3:14–16.

cardinal graces, and the brightest star in the Christian hemisphere; but 'the name of this' fallen 'star is Wormwood' (Rev. 8.11). *Absinthium* is his proper title. He has dipped his pen in wormwood and gall, yes he is 'in the gall of bitterness, and' (I fear) 'in the bond of iniquity'.¹⁴ And yet he styles himself 'Charitas'. No marvel, truly, 'for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light'.¹⁵ O pure and chaste Charity, how art thou prostituted! I must allow, indeed, that he has the most unbounded charity for Mr. Wesley, as may be seen by his adulatory eulogism; but for *me* he has not the least. To use his own words, he has entirely 'lost sight of that love which beareth all things, and taketh up no reproach against its neighbour'.¹⁶ He has, likewise, great charity for *himself*, by the false assumption of the name. For if his own had been to it, I should have proved him one of the most *uncharitable* men that ever took a pen in hand. But at present I shall only say, concerning his assertions in general, what a blunt, honest man once said to a celebrated controversial writer, 'Bellarmine, thou liest.' It may be necessary also, in particular to observe, that Mr. Wesley, *mendax* Charitas,¹⁷ and many others have put a wrong construction upon some of my words, I am afraid with an intent to irritate the minds of many against me.

After speaking of 'a separation from the church', and of no other point whatever, I said, 'Much more I could add upon the subject' that is, of a separation, 'but wave it at present, and hope Mr. Wesley will not oblige me to speak more pointedly plain', that is, upon the subject of a separation. 'He knows I have *it* in my power.'¹⁸ What have I in my power? Why to speak more pointedly plain upon that subject. Is not this the clear obvious meaning of the passage? But one line being taken out of the connexion in which it stands, and a word being altered, I am then made to say, by Mr. Wesley's misquotation, 'He knows I have *him* in my power.'¹⁹ Thus am I falsely charged with 'leaving the world at large to figure to themselves every crude, dark, and invidious thought, which the busy enemy of souls will too readily fabricate and suggest'; and am represented as 'clothing a slanderous design under the most unsanctioned figure rhetoric could furnish'.²⁰ Is this ingenuous? Oh where are the properties of that grace Charitas pretends to? True 'charity is kind, both not behave itself unseemly, is not easily provoked; thinketh no evil, and rejoiceth in the truth.'²¹ Whereas pseudo Charitas seems to rejoice in unkindness, unbecoming behaviour, anger, evil judgment, and lying.

I certainly have it in my power to speak more pointedly plain upon the subject of a separation, and Mr. Wesley knows it. For he has many letters of mine upon that head, and I have his answers.²² If he be not satisfied—if he thinks I have done him the least injustice, and he wishes to convince the world how wrongfully I have accused him—let him only dare me to publish the letters, and it shall be done. His strenuous advocate allows that 'his mental faculties have been preserved nearly in their vigour'.²³ Is he not therefore able to defend himself? While *he* is silent, and so many other mouths are open, and goose-quills employed, do they not pay him a very ill compliment, as if he was not capable of maintaining his ground?

¹⁴Acts 8:23.

¹⁵2 Cor. 11:4.

¹⁶'Caritas' to the *Dublin Chronicle*, June 23, 1789.

¹⁷I.e., 'false or deceitful Charity'.

¹⁸The quotations are from Edward Smyth to the *Dublin Chronicle*, June 11, 1789.

¹⁹See JW to *Dublin Chronicle*, June 20, 1789, *Works*, 31:70.

²⁰'Caritas' to the *Dublin Chronicle*, June 23, 1789.

²¹Cf. 1 Cor. 13:4–6.

²²These letters are not known to survive.

²³'Caritas' to the *Dublin Chronicle*, June 23, 1789.

But if he be judged unable, are all his Myrmidons²⁴ to be let loose upon me? Am I to be worried, like a bull, with fierce mastiffs? I know there are some thousands who idolize him as Charitas does. And whoever speaks a word against him, though strictly true, may expect nothing from them but 'Anathema, Maranatha'.²⁵ I am not, therefore, willing to put my hand into a nest of hornets; for though *numbers* of the Methodists are really pious, harmless people, whom I highly esteem, yet I can assure you, Mr. Printer, *some* of them have *stings* in their tails. I therefore declare again, I will give no heed to nameless writers amongst them; for I should have an endless work of it, and I can employ my time much better. I should have an army to contend with. I should have the work of Hercules. No sooner would I cut off one of the heads of the great monster, than another would instantly sprout up. So that I should find it a most labourious business

...to subdue
The Hydra of the many-headed, hissing crew.²⁶

But more important work demands my attention, and I would rather live in peace than be embroiled in war. Monitor's advice for a cessation of arms is good, and should be followed by all parties.²⁷ But if turbulent spirits must needs fight, who will not dare to show their faces, I shall leave them to 'plume themselves with the honours of their fancied victory'.²⁸ Yet, if Mr. Wesley, or any other gentleman, will put his name to anything he pleases to write, I shall certainly think it my duty to reply. Nay, if Mr. 'Charity' himself, bitter as he is, will come out of his lurking-place and meet me on even ground, I shall show him with what ease I can repel his onset, and perhaps convince him (because I have *truth* on my side) that he has met with more than his match in

Edward Smyth

Source: published transcription; *Dublin Chronicle* (June 27–30, 1789), 204–05.

²⁴'unscrupulous followers'.

²⁵1 Cor. 16:22. Note in the original: 'I was lately conversing with a friend who disapproves of Mr. Wesley's proceedings as much as I do; nevertheless he said, after reading Observer, "Though I and many of the Methodists dislike his present measures, yet when he is publicly attacked we must all unite in defending him."'

²⁶John Dryden, 'Threnodia Augustalis', st. 16.

²⁷See 'Monitor' to the *Dublin Chronicle*, June 19, 1789.

²⁸Cf. anonymous to the *Dublin Chronicle*, May 18, 1789.

‘Observer’ to the Printer of the *Dublin Chronicle*

*Dictum sapienti sat est.*¹

June 30, 1789

Sir,

My cousin German the ‘Spectator’ wisely admonishes—*It is time for you to go off.*² I take the hint, according to my motto, ‘A word to a wise man is enough’. The public are by this time sufficiently informed in this affair, and should it proceed much further, will soon tire. I therefore embrace the opportunity of making a formal exit.

Your nameless correspondent’s second letter is such, from the beginning to the end, as he cannot reasonably expect any reply to.³

In last Saturday’s paper I see another anonymous publication which bears the signature of ‘Charitas’;⁴ by mistake I suppose—it should have been ‘Malignitas’.⁵ Or, if it must be *charity*, it is of the hottest kind I ever saw, such as is well expressed in these droll lines,

His words are sweet as sugar-candy;
His love’s as *hot as pepper-brandy*.

However, as this writer does not venture to attack me in a formal manner, I shall only give him a little friendly advice. He had better take care how he touches ‘that anonymous writer’s passive spleen’, lest he should oblige me to come forth from that obscurity into which I am about to retire, to show him, ‘by way of *apophasis*’, the difference between *contest* and *argument*; between his flimsy declamation and good

¹Terence, *Phormio*, 542. ‘A word to a wise man is sufficient.’ Or ‘Can’t you take a hint?’

²‘Spectator’ to *Dublin Chronicle*, June 25, 1789.

³I.e., anonymous to *Dublin Chronicle*, June 20, 1789. Note in the original: ‘Your intelligent readers will at once see the insignificance of the whole. Yet for the sake of those who are *less* intelligent, I here add the following detached sentences, to justify my proceeding. Is not the repetition of the words “young author”, “very young author”, “young limner”, “infant writer”, etc. a poor attempt at the lowest kind of wit? Is there any material difference between “implicitly following” and “deeming it impious not to follow”? If not, where is Goliath’s retort? When a text of scripture is referred to, may not the reference be confined to a part, as well as the whole, of the verse? Is not this allowable among divines? And is it not enough that the writer makes himself understood? If so, where was my inadvertence? Is not what he calls a “pain, artless story” (i.e., all that he says about Doctor Coke, the necessity of ordination, and not separating from the church,) the most consummate nonsense that was ever penned? Can a sensible man read it without laughing immoderately? And does not he, who goes on thus to insult common sense by the mention of things the futility of which has been demonstrated again and again, deserve to be called “ignoramus”, or any other name which the Observer can prevail on himself to give him? Is not the latter part of the sixth paragraph in ‘Ascanius’ (“Mr. Wesley well knows how many private letters have been written to him upon the subject, etc.”) a full answer to his asking why I did not speak with Mr. Wesley face to face? If it is, is not what he calls an evident mistake of *mine*, an ignorant blunder of *his own*? See the *Chronicle* for May 14, page 42 [i.e., See ‘Ascanius’ to the *Dublin Chronicle*, May 12, 1789]. Were I to enlarge on these particulars, I could place Goliath in a view much to his dissatisfaction. That I refuse to do it, is because I can perceive he is already pretty well humbled. I hope, however, that my clemency will teach him to be more cautious in future.’

⁴‘Charitas’ to *Dublin Chronicle*, June 23, 1789.

⁵I.e., malice or malignity.

common sense. Lest I should prove to a demonstration that his head was never *thesaurus rationum*.⁶ And lest I should discover the *weakness* of his 'angel-bright powers, so awfully benign, so vigilantly observant. *How painfully distressing THAT!*'

My friend 'Monitor' writes like a plain, peaceable man—*peace be with his spirit*.⁷

'Humanus'—another 'Monitor'—and 'Philopacis', came forth in the last *Chronicle*.⁸ But I perceive they are all going off into the regions of eccentricity, which I never bargained for; neither is it my intention to follow them. I have kept invariably in *one* point of direction; and if they refuse to meet me in *that*, I am not obliged to run after them in any other.

It may seem necessary however, before I make my escape, to give some account of myself. 'Charitas' not only asserts, but roundly affirms, that it is to the Rev. Mr. Smyth the public are indebted for this controversy. I most solemnly declare, that neither Mr. Edward Smyth, nor any other person belonging to or in the congregation of Bethesda [Chapel], directly nor indirectly, had any concern with *me* in this business. It originated entirely in myself. I was prompted by no one. I consulted no one. I received assistance from no one. Whatever guilt there is in the affair, I alone am entirely chargeable with it. Neither did I take up my pen rashly, without due consideration and reflection. I have been a silent observer some years, and did not come forward till I saw a flagrant cause. Nor before I was pretty well aware of the consequences, and prepared for the worst that could happen. Nor, finally, was I urged by any interested motive; except a wish to serve the church of God, and a regard to *sincerity* and *truth*. I have no sinister end to accomplish. I am no such person. I believe I was never suspected of being such a person. And though I do not choose to give up my name, my character is such as defies the keenest censure. I am a conscientious man; one that fears God, and endeavours to work righteousness; a friend to pure and undefiled religion—but a foe to all *cant*, and all *duplicity*.

This shall suffice, Mr. Printer, as my apology to you and the public; of whom I now take my leave, and sink into my original obscurity, where I shall remain a *silent Observer*. In the mean time I shall exercise my *infant* abilities on some other subject. And if you deem the production of my pen worthy of the public notice, you may shortly hear from me again in another character; no more, I hope, as the
Observer

P.S. If any of these eccentrical bodies should stray into that point of direction in which I have moved, I shall be very sensible of it; and, it is not improbable it may again draw me forth to give them an unwilling meeting.

Source: published transcription; *Dublin Chronicle* (June 30–July 2, 1789), 210.

⁶A treasury of reason.

⁷'Monitor' to *Dublin Chronicle*, June 23, 1789.

⁸Both letters are dated June 27, 1789.

From the Rev. Edward Smyth and the Editor

For the *Dublin Chronicle*

[Dublin]
July 2, 1789

Mr. Edward Smyth presents his compliments to 'Monitor'—is much obliged to him for the honour he has done him in 'turning over the sheets of his early labours'.¹ And as Mr. Smyth still wishes to 'invite the public to the same unlimited freedom', he now begs leave to inform them that his works may be had at the shops of Mess. Dugdale and Charurier in Capel-Street. It is happy for 'Monitor' that he did not appear *propria persona*, as Mr. Smyth would then have proved him to be little less than an idiot or a knave.

Errata in the Rev. Mr. Smyth's letter in our last:²

Column 1, line 34. For 'wild assassin that stabs him,' read, 'veil'd assassin that stabs them.'

Line 68. For 'culpa,' read 'culpa.'

Column 2, Line 32. For 'there the spirit,' read 'thus the spirit.'

Line 75. For 'no point,' read 'no other point.'

Column 3, line 12. For 'invidious,' read 'invidious.'

Line 41. For 'with a fierce mastiff,' read, 'with fierce mastiffs.'

Every due and impartial attention has been paid to our several correspondents, who have favoured us with their sentiments on a late controverted subject—the procedure of Methodism; and every letter, that was deemed fit for the public eye, has been inserted. The matter of the controversy seems to be this:

Certain facts have been stated. Viz.: That Mr. Wesley declares it as his firm belief that he is a scriptural bishop, as much as any man in England, or in Europe. That Mr. Wesley frequently exercises the office of bishop by ordaining some of his preachers. That he authorizes laymen to read the church-service in the Methodist meeting-house. And that he did, in a single instance, permit a layman to administer the cup in the sacrament.

One party urged that these declarations, and these measures, are altogether incompatible with the government and discipline of the established Church. Another party endeavours to defend these principles and practices as consistent with being churchmen, because the Methodists love the church-service, and because they sometimes go to church. While a third party allows the inconsistency of such a procedure, and reprobates those visible steps towards a total separation.

Each party perhaps might find something farther to say; but nothing, it is apprehended, that will afford much more information. It is hoped, therefore, it will offend no party that no more papers on this subject will be inserted in the *Dublin Chronicle*.

Source: published transcription; *Dublin Chronicle* (June 30–July 2, 1789), 216.

¹'Monitor' to the *Dublin Chronicle*, June 19, 1789, made reference to *An Account of the Trial of Edward Smyth, late Curate of Ballyculter, in the diocese of Down* (Dublin: William Kidd, 1777); and Edward Smyth, *A Farewell Sermon, designed for the well-beloved Parishioners of Ballyculter; on the removal of their persecuted minister* (Belfast: Hugh Warrin, 1777).

²The corrections are incorporated in the transcription of Smyth's June 29 letter above.

From the Rev. John Christopher Kunze¹

New York
July 3, 1789

My Very Dear Sir,

It would be imprudent in me to trouble you at your venerable age with a new correspondence. I only beg the liberty to send you this, without expecting or desiring an answer. It cometh from a person hitherto unknown to you, but to whom you were not unknown these twenty-six years. In Germany, my native country, I heard of you. In the year 1770, when in London, I was anxious to have some conversation with you, but was informed, you were not then in town. In America I beheld, since the said period, the monuments of your deeds wrought in God. I was for fourteen years German Lutheran minister at Philadelphia, and now five at New-York. All this time I viewed, with heart-felt pleasure and gratitude to God, the work carried on in America, under your advice and direction. Souls that came to a knowledge of themselves and their Redeemer, were directed by me to partake as much as possible of the instructions and directions of the Methodist preachers; and as many as understood English did so. I had many conversations with your labourers, dined and prayed with them, instructed some in Hebrew, heard often, in Philadelphia particularly, their sermons, and was a strenuous advocate for them in our synods, where prejudices prevailed.

I own, not many of my countrymen in the interior parts espoused their cause. Your preachers came not thither, being strangers to the language. For in Pennsylvania there are counties where no English soul is found. But this was remedied in some measure by a German clergyman of the Calvinist persuasion,² who constantly employed himself in preparing some young Germans, who were called by the grace of God, and sending them in the manner of your travelling preachers.

He found, as you may think, opposition in his synod. But seeing that he was not the only German minister who found this way profitable for the welfare of the poor Germans in the back parts, they would never attempt to excommunicate him. Their chief objection always was, 'the intention is, to form a particular church, and all at once they will draw the net.' I professed against such an intention with more vehemency and perseverance than I ever wished to have done. In this particular, dear sir, you have disappointed me, and many true American servants of that Lord whom you and yours serve.

Persons who become serious under our ministry, hear your ministers, are invited by them to a closer connection, and then leave us. 'What then, you will say, if Christ is preached?' No, my dear sir, I wish to keep such in my congregation, whom I have taken captive with my bow. They ought to be my assistants in catching others. Perhaps you will say, 'Follow our practice, and lead them on, and they will stay with you.' To lead them on, sir, I have in Germany and in America at all times used the necessary means. I keep private hours in my own house, and frequent exercises in other houses. But to find a whole society of children of God is more powerfully alluring. The number of converted souls in all the different congregations in this city, and in the world, are small, your congregations perhaps as yet excepted.

But to what end do I write this? The Methodist Church in America hath been lately established. I have poured out my sorrows into the bosoms of some, and I cannot deny, some people in connection with you have produced reasons by no means without weight. Thousands of children in the back parts were without baptism, and to some Methodist ministers the English bishops denied orders. The first remark alone is satisfying to me. To judge of the second would require more knowledge of the circumstances.

¹John Christopher Kunze (1744–1807), a native of Saxony, was orphaned in 1758 and began study at the orphanage in Halle. He went on to attend the University of Leipzig, and worked as a teacher and an orphanage inspector before being ordained as a Lutheran minister. Kunze emigrated to colonial America in 1770, serving as Lutheran pastor, before becoming a teacher at the University of Pennsylvania, and Columbia.

²Philip William Otterbein (1726–1813).

But if you believe, dear man of God, that there are true servants of Christ in America yet in different churches; was there no other way both to heal such wounds and not to wound such ministers? Suppose you had divided all your labourers into two classes—viz., ordained ministers, and occasional preachers—and had fixed it as an unalterable rule that only the latter sort of labourers should be sent into places where there are Protestant churches and settled ministers? The first class would have been thin in the beginning, but I think, the necessity of increasing it would have been astonishing; and then your establishment would not have yielded a mixture of joy and grief to any of the servants of God.

I take the liberty to send you a few publications of mine. They are printed in too small characters for the eye of an aged man; but some places perhaps will be thought interesting for you, as they describe the religious situation of our American Germans, and it is only for such passages I send the pamphlets. Some person may be found to read them before you. That you understand the language, I have learned from your *Journals*. I wish to God that in this some of your young American ministers would imitate you. How much good could they do to the poor forsaken Germans at the borders of the Indians!

May your Lord and Master bless you with a thousand fold blessing, and then call you to his full reward! In the breasts of thousands you are and ever will be, as in mine, the blessed of the Lord, before whom I hope to embrace you. In the mean time permit me to subscribe myself, dear and reverend sir,

Your devoted and younger brother in Christ,

J. C. Kunze

[editorial addition: I am exactly of the same judgment with Mr. Kunze. J.W.]

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 590–93.

From Arthur Keene¹

Birr
July 4, 1789

Reverend Sir,

I have very longingly looked for and expected some such account from you or of your proceeding in Dublin as might contribute to my ease of mind and enable me to return at once from my present exile to you, to my brethren, my home, my children, my friends, from whom you and you alone have driven me. But to my deep concern and affliction, no such account as can give me consolation or comfort hath as yet reached the place of my present habitation. Here therefore, or with some other kind Samaritan must I, for my own quiet, sojourn a little longer—a thing truly distressing to myself and family. But as I wish not to pain you by my presence, and as I cannot—I dare not—act the hypocrite towards you or any man, I am forced to this situation. I therefore give up every hope of seeing you more in the flesh. What pity we who have loved and who have enjoyed sweet fellowship so oft and so long together must disunite and cease to love and help each other more! A dreadful melancholy thought. However, at your door I must lay all the blame, the loss, yea perhaps the eternal loss of numbers, and of my present peace. It seems a little thing with you to cut off and banish from your society your old tried friends. But with me it is no small concern.

Indeed, for some days past I have not had freedom or power to answer your letter, but thought I should show you that civility which my last to you did not meet. [I] am sorry to observe that in your last you continue to harp on the same false notes of dust and torn, etc. When a person who tells me I have neither common sense to know and relate anything, or truth to be believed, shall style himself my old tried friend, I stagger at the assertion. For who would esteem the dupe led blindfold by whoever may first lay hold of him? As you have declared it would be a sin in you not to uphold the means taken for the professed design of totally subverting the Methodist economy we were used to, and making them a sect on your death, I must, I cannot but, look on you as having very palpably contradicted your former principles and practices in Dublin.

It is not others, but your throwing dust that has forced me and keeps me away from you, my home, and all that are dear to me. And how you can continue to act in the manner to produce such sad effects, with a good conscience, I leave to God and to your own soul to determine—for I cannot.

May God give you light to see what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of his concerning us, and to restore and unite once more into that bond of love and union in which we have so happily drawn for many, many years your once loving, peaceful, increasing, prospering, and dutiful society of Dublin. So sayeth the soul of

Your greatly afflicted and sorrowing,

Arthur Keen[e]

Source: Keene's manuscript copy for records; MHS Ireland Archives.

¹Keene was replying to JW's short note of June 25, 1789, *Works*, 31:72–73; with an eye to earlier letters from JW.

From Adam Clarke

Jersey
July 15, 1789

My Reverend Father in Christ,

In my last I gave you a short account of the prosperity of the work of God among us, and of the prospect we had of an increase.¹ Since that time the Lord has indeed wrought wonderfully.

You perhaps remember the account I gave you of the select prayer-meetings, which I had just then established for those only who had either *attained* or were *groaning* after *full* redemption. I thought, as we were all with one accord in the same place, we had room enough to expect a glorious descent of the purifying flame. It was even so. Great was the grace that God caused to rest on us all; and soon five or six were able to testify that God had cleansed their souls from all sin. This coming abroad, for it could not be long hid, the change being so palpable in those who professed it, several others were stirred up to seek the same blessing. And many were literally provoked to jealousy.

Among whom one of the principal was Mr. [Jean] De Quêteville. He questioned me at large concerning our little meeting and the good done. I satisfied him in every particular; and being much affected, he said, 'It is a lamentable thing that those who have begun to seek God since I did, should have left me so far behind. Through the grace of Christ I will begin to seek the same blessing more earnestly, and never rest until I overtake and outstrip them, if possible.' For two or three days he wrestled with God almost incessantly. On the 30th ultimate, he came into my room with great apparent depression of spirit. Earnest inquiry was evidently impressed on every muscle of his face. 'How shall I receive the blessing? And what are its evidences?' were nearly the words with which he accosted me. I gave him all the direction I could, exhorted him to look for it in the present moment, and assured him of his nearness to the kingdom of God. He returned to his room, and, after a few minutes spent in wrestling faith, his soul was fully and gloriously delivered. He set off to the country and, like a flame of fire, ran over all the societies in the island, carrying the glorious news wherever he went. God accompanied him by the mightily demonstrated power of his Spirit, and numbers were stirred up to seek, and several soon entered into the promised rest.

I now thought it was requisite to be peculiarly workers together with God, and therefore appointed a *love-feast* on the 5th instant. Such a heaven opened on earth my soul never felt and my eyes never saw before. Many glorious love-feasts I have had the privilege of enjoying in England and Ireland. but this one exceeded all, and was beyond anything I can describe. Several were filled with pure love; and some then and since have, together with a clean heart, found the removal of inveterate bodily disorders, under which they had laboured for a long time. This is an absolute fact, of which I have had every proof which demonstration or any other kind of evidence could afford, or rationality demand. One thing was very remarkable in this love-feast: there was no false fire; no, not a spark that I could not wish to have lighted up in my own soul to all eternity. And though God wrought both on bodies and souls, yet everything was under the regularity of his own Spirit, and fully proclaimed its operation alone.

To speak within compass, I think there are but less than fifty or sixty souls which in the space of less than a fortnight have entered into the good land; and many of these are established, strengthened, and settled in it. Still this blessed work goes on, and daily we receive good news from town and country. This speedy work has given a severe blow to the squalid doctrine of sanctification by or through sufferings, which was before received by many to the great prejudice of their souls. For more than a year past I have been obliged to attack it in public and private. And though, through the help of God, I sufficiently proved its absurdity, yet several would believe their own way, notwithstanding all I said. But now these palpable evidences overpower all prejudices. Glory be to God for ever!

I never knew an instance where a revival has been entirely confined to the people of God as this has in general been. Ordinarily he pours out of his Spirit to convince the world, and then a fresh

¹See Adam Clarke to JW, June 13, 1789.

manifestation is granted to his house for its edification. Thus he proceeds from the least to the greatest. But among us he has reversed his general conduct, and beginning with those who are greatest in his sight, i.e., his followers, he is now giving us drops which sufficiently presage a glorious shower, which I have much room to hope will shortly descend on the worshippers of the outward court. Several of your particular acquaintances, my dear sir, have had a large share in this blessed work. Among many others, Mrs. Guillaume,² Madame De Saumarez, and Miss Lempriere. The former is one of the greatest monuments of God's power and purity I have seen; the latter are blessedly brought out of the dreary estate of distress and despondency, in which,

Inspired by true religious fear,
They served God with hearts sincere.³

Several who had long been adepts at making Procrustes' bed⁴ are now redeemed from every particle of sour godliness. Mr. De Quêteville's natural temper you were in a measure acquainted with. But what a change has God wrought! He has now all the meekness, gentleness, and simplicity of the gospel, united with that burning zeal before which mountains shrink into mole hills, and aided by that faith to which 'all things are possible'.⁵

At poor St. Aubin's, where I have encountered so many rough storms, God is begun to work. I have lately joined a very eminent gentlewoman of that place in society, who I believe will be an ornament to the church of Christ. There are there about a dozen in society, and some of those are renewed in love.

At St. Helier's, St. Mary's, St. John's, and St. Ouen's the work is greatest. But every other society has partook of a portion of the same spirit. I cannot give you, reverend sir, the particulars of this work, which I hope is only yet begun. Let it suffice to say that Jesus Christ is evidently here in his triumphal car.

O Jesus, ride on till all are subdued!⁶

You will easily discover, my dear sir, the need this people have of a preacher deeply taught of God. O send them such an one! One who believes present and full salvation with all his soul, and preaches it with all his strength. The Lord Jesus direct you in your choice! Amen.

I have two days ago received your affectionate favour of the 25th ult., for which I most cordially thank you.⁷ You tell me you think I should go to Dublin. I have no doubt but I can show you many fitter for that important place than I am. You kindly order me to meet you at Leeds. It is true the journey is long, but we will encounter it in the name of the Lord. I shall stay here as long as I possibly can, that the people may have as little lack as may be. When we have the happiness of seeing you send us where you please. My dear Mary is perfectly willing to go wherever you direct, and I trust I shall not make the least objection. I am not fit to stand at the helm in any place. But if I know myself, I am perfectly willing to be a Nethinim⁸ to the congregation of the Lord.

²Clement Guillaume Jr. (1754–97) married Marie Rachel Arrivé in Mar. 1781.

³Cf. CW, Hymn on Isa. 1:10, st. 1, *Scripture Hymns* (1762), 1:361.

⁴A Greek mythological figure who made everyone fit the same size bed, by either stretching them or cutting off part of their legs.

⁵Matt. 19:26.

⁶CW, 'After Preaching to the Newcastle Colliers', st. 12, *HSP* (1749), 1:312.

⁷See JW to Clarke, June 25, 1789, *Works*, 31:71–72.

⁸Hebrew for a temple assistant. See Ezra 7:7, etc.

With a soul full of affection, I remain, reverend and dear father in Christ,
Your dutiful son in the gospel,

J. Wesley

Address: 'The Revd. Mr. Wesley / at his Chapel / Leeds / Yorkshire'.

Postmarks: 'Southampton' and 'JY/23/89'.

Endorsement: by JW, 'Adam Clark / Jul. 20 [sic] 1789'.

Source: holograph; MARC, WCB, D6/1/106.⁹

⁹An earlier transcription was published in Dunn, *Clarke*, 67–70.

From John Braithwaite¹ and Associates

c. July 30, 1789

Reverend and Dear Sir,

You will please to look with a favourable eye upon these few lines, which we, who have never had the pleasure of being personally known to you, now send.

Our design in thus addressing you, dear sir, is to plead for one who, we understand, has been represented to you in Conference as a person that acted in a manner unbecoming a Methodist preacher. Mr. Wiltshaw,² the person above hinted at, is a much-injured but faithful servant of God, and has behaved with singular piety and unblamable conduct during the time of his labouring in this circuit. His preaching has (through divine assistance) been a means of converting many precious souls, who were in a dark and ignorant state, to a saving knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. We, his unworthy intercessors, who are in the morning of youth, have the pleasure and satisfaction to acquaint you, dear sir, that by his truly pious and zealous admonitions, and exemplary deportment, we have not only been convinced [of sin], but also brought into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

We have also the happiness to inform you, honoured sir, that not only *we*, but many of our intimate acquaintance of both sexes, who with us are in the bloom of life, have tasted of the loving kindness and pardoning love of our exalted Redeemer [through his ministry].

Now judge, honoured sir, how great must be our grief to hear that this, our loving father in God, has been thus vilified and misrepresented unto you. Since his arrival amongst us, true Christianity has been manifested in all his actions, shone with unsullied lustre, and continues so to do in this circuit. Be impartial then, honoured sir. Let injured innocence meet with a gracious reception from you; and screen him, by your protecting hand, from the tempest which at present hangs lowering over his head. We not only wish him freed from this imputation of guilt, but also that he may continue another year in this place; where, by his assiduous and unwearied diligence in his vocation, there seems to be a shaking among the dry bones.

In hopes that these, our most fervent desires, may have some weight in favour of Mr. Wiltshaw, we remain, reverend and dear sir,

Your affectionate brethren in the Lord,

J. Braithwaite, etc.

Source: published transcription; *Life of the Rev. John Braithwaite*, by Robert Dickinson (London: John Broadbent, 1825), 22–24.

¹John Braithwaite (1770–1822), a native of Cumberland, was converted at Whitehaven and became local preacher there. He was admitted ‘on trial’ as an itinerant in 1790 (*Works*, 10:712), and other than 1818–19 when a health issue led him to step aside, he served till his death. See *Minutes* (post-Wesley, 1822), 5:296–97.

²John Wiltshaw (b. 1745) was first admitted ‘on trial’ in 1773 (*Works*, 10:415) and served for two years; in 1788 he was admitted again ‘on trial’ (10:644) and assigned to Whitehaven (10:649), where he met Braithwaite. Wiltshaw disappears from the *Minutes* after 1791.

From an Unidentified Correspondent

c. August 1, 1789

Having just received the following letter from a friend, I think it proper to communicate it to the public.

Considering the nature of a magazine, and the variety of persons through whom this in particular circulates; considering how various they are in their capacity, in their judgment, in their taste, and in their degrees of spiritual light and understanding; a little reflection may convince us that in the very nature of things it is impossible to *please all*! Nay, one might venture to say to please half, or even one third of our readers. Perhaps, among five thousand subscribers, not even five would be found to agree in their judgment and taste with respect to *all* the articles of *this* or any other magazine.

I believe we might apply in this instance, as well as in many others, the fable of Jupiter and the countryman who petitioned him concerning the weather.¹ When our subscribers shall all agree what kind of magazine they would have, you may promise, 'They shall have it.' Some doubtless would delight in what is as dull as Sternhold and Hopkins;² others in what is as sublime as [John] Milton or [Edward] Young. Yea, however you could combine the *utile* and the *dulce* together,³ yet you could not please all.

Some years since it was objected to the magazines that they consisted of *too few* articles, being usually about twelve. Objections of an opposite nature have been made of late years—namely, that each consists of *too many*; perhaps three or four and twenty. In order to avoid both extremes, may not a medium be observed and each magazine generally consist of about sixteen or eighteen articles? You will excuse, I doubt not, what I have written, as you see my intention.

I perfectly agree with this advice, and purpose it shall be taken for the time to come.

J. W.
Taunton
August 12, 1789

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): iii–iv.

¹I.e., Aesop, 'Jupiter and the Farmer'.

²I.e., the old-style psalter still used by some in the Church of England by Thomas Sternhold (d. 1549) and John Hopkins (d. 1570).

³The 'useful' and the 'sweet'.

From John Crump

Dominica
August 12, 1789

Reverend Sir,

Though I am not personally acquainted with you, I take the liberty of giving you an account of the death of the late Mr. [William] M'Cornock, a missionary sent hither last year by your order; and this liberty I take, through the respect which I bear to his memory.

Shortly after his arrival in this island I met him about a mile from where I live, very much embarrassed with an unruly mule. I made my servant to fix on well his saddle and bridle, after which Mr. M'Cornock mounted. I urged him to go home with me. But as he had promised to preach at Mr. [Isaac] Charurier's, he went there directly.

Some time afterwards he came to see me. And he exhorted the slaves here, which had great effect, for they were greatly taken with him. His admonitions were very agreeable. He was as easy in a house as a young child. He was a sensible and agreeable companion, and one I have reason to regret [losing] very much. He has frequently suffered very great insults in the town of Roseau, when doing duty in a house he had rented for that purpose. They were chiefly sea-faring people, and when they went away he was undisturbed.

He was loved and like by the better sort of people, especially those who were inclining to God. He went twice or thrice to Prince Rupert's Head, about thirty miles from where I live, and generally went by water. But his last jaunt thither proved fatal to him. He brought a horse, that he might stop with and exhort the inhabitants on the road to Prince Rupert's Head. This was a most severe and fatiguing journey, especially for a gentleman not inured to the climate. He caught a severe bilious fever, and after he got to his journey's end, he continued preaching to and exhorting the people there for about three days. Then he took to bed, and lay two days delirious, when our blessed Lord took the man to himself. I rejoice for him at his happy change; but regret for myself. I am too much affected write as fully as my inclination dictates. I have the honour to be with great respect, reverend sir,

Your sincere and very humble servant,

John Crump

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 14–15.

From Rev. William Black Jr.

[Nova Scotia]
c. September 1, 1789

Reverend Sir,

I have herewith transmitted the number in society—viz., 575, upwards of 400 of whom profess faith. Since my last letter to you we have added 30 more. The work gradually increases. We have had hard work preaching to a dead, hardened, ignorant people in this town (Halifax), but God is now giving us to see the fruit of our labours. My soul cries out for God, yea the living God: all else is vain and joyless; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

I am, my dear father, ...

Source: published transcription; Richey, *William Black*, 258.

From the Rev. Ezekiel Cooper¹

[Baltimore]
September 10, 1789

Respected Sir,

It has been for some days impressed on my mind to write to you. I wish the reading of my letter may not prove a task, and take you from a more profitable employment. But considering the subject-matter is the glorious work of God, and that you wish to hear of Zion's prosperity, I am persuaded you will, if possible, make it a satisfaction.

I expect to continue yet some time in this town. The work of the Lord appears as lively as ever. The brethren are alive and pressing forward after more of that mind which was in Christ Jesus. A number lately have experienced that his blood cleanseth from all sin; and not a week passes but there are conversions, and frequently every day for days together.

At our quarterly-meeting the 8th and 9th of August and the following week Satan's kingdom suffered great loss. I did not know but he would be quite conquered in this town. However, he was cast out of many hearts by the stronger than the strong man.

The first day of the quarterly-meeting we had a melting time: many cried bitterly for mercy, and some souls were born of God. Among whom there was a young lady, who thought before that she would never cry out, in public at any rate; but blessed be God, she was converted that day and lifted up her voice aloud with others.

Sunday, the second day of the quarterly-meeting, was, I think, as awful and glorious a day as ever I saw. In the love-feast at eight o'clock we truly had a little Pentecost, and dwelt as it were in the suburbs of heaven. Glory appeared to rest on every countenance, while one after another feelingly declared what God had done for their souls, as if their tongues were touched with a live coal from the heavenly altar.

In public preaching the word was so accompanied by the energy of the Holy Ghost, that there were few but felt its mighty power. Some of the most unlikely to turn to God were brought to tremble and weep. We broke up on Sunday night very late, many being converted. Some were two, three, and four hours on their knees, and on the floor, in bitter cries and agonies for mercy, till they could rejoice in God their Saviour. What power! What awe rested upon the people.

Some, after they went home, could not sleep, but wept and prayed all night. The next day was such a time as I know not how to describe so as to give you a just idea of it. The Lord took the cause into his own hand, and showed us that he could and would work for his glory, and the salvation of souls.

I was sent for early in the morning to visit a respectable young lady, who had not closed her eyes the whole night. When I went into the room, she was in the arms of a young woman who had lately found peace, weeping and praying, but almost exhausted. My heart was much affected at seeing her penitential sorrow. She now saw the vanity of this world, and the need of a Saviour. She felt her misery and lost condition. And her cry and prayer was, 'Save Lord, or I perish.'² I exhorted her to believe, and then sung and prayed with her. She continued thus for several hours, when a number of friends full of faith were collected to supplicate heaven in her behalf. And the Lord broke into her soul, and she lifted her voice with others in loud praises to God. O Lord, how wonderful art thou, and thy ways past finding out!

This is only a small part of this day's work. About ten o'clock in the morning a number of mourners got together in a private house, where the work of conversion began. First one, then another, found the Lord. The news spread. The people collected till the house and street were filled with numerous

¹Titled: 'An Account of the Work of God at Baltimore, in a Letter'. Ezekiel Cooper (1763–1847), a native of Maryland, joined the Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1785. He served as a travelling preacher in mid-New England for many years, and was editor and general agent of the Book Concern from 1799 to 1804.

²Cf. Matt. 8:25.

believers, and a wondering multitude, and continued so without the least intermission till night. We then repaired to the church, and presently had it full (though no previous appointment had been made for meeting that night). And we did not break up till two o'clock the next morning, which made sixteen hours without intermission, excepting while we went from the private house to the preaching-house.

Some who came quite careless, and indeed making diversion, were converted before they returned. Many hard-hearted opposers are conquered at last, and are now engaged in seeking their salvation. Tuesday was like unto Monday, though there were not so many conversions. The meeting began at 8:00 in the morning, and continued till 10:00 at night. Wednesday and Thursday the work went on. I cannot, with any certainty tell how many were brought in that week, though they were many, and they still continue coming.

Religion is the general topic of conversation now in town, among all kinds of people; some aspersing, some wondering, others enquiring, rejoicing, etc. The people appear panic-struck. And our reverend neighbours are warning their flocks to take care of these wild sort of people, the Methodists. But the people have got sense enough, I trust, to judge for themselves.

The country-circuits are flaming. The preachers are much alive. The fire runs as in stubble. On the other side of the Chesapeake Bay there is a mighty work; hundreds I hear of in different parts turning to God. I don't know but these earthquakes of the Lord's power and love will soon run through the continent. O Lord! Hasten the time!

I am, respected sir,

Yours affectionately,

Ezekiel Cooper

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 409–11.

‘Civis’ to the Printer of the *Bristol Gazette*

September 15, 1789

Sir,

The reverend gentleman whose strictures upon the quality of *hops* you inserted in your last *Gazette*,¹ and to whose opinion I frequently pay the utmost respect, seems in some part to be mistaken.

I shall not take upon me to determine whether hops as an ingredient in malt liquors are pernicious or salutary in point of health. But I believe it is pretty generally understood that the malt liquor known under the denomination of porter is much lighter and more wholesome than Bristol ale, and yet the proportion of hops used in the composition of the former is abundantly greater than in that of the latter.

Malt worts, it must be admitted, have always been justly in esteem as antiscorbutic. But the term ‘worts’ conveys the notion of an unfermented liquor, which however proper it may be in the way of medicine is altogether unfit as a common beverage.

Worts which have undergone a previous fermentation acquire a new name, being thence denominated beer; and there is good reason for assigning to it a new name, since by this operation it assumes properties so surprising and different from anything it possessed as worts. If you place wort in an alembic, in the distillation nothing will ascend but a pure limpid water. The operation may be continued, till the residuum will put on the appearance of a colophony or melosses.² Try the same experiment upon beer or fermented worts: in the first place, an ardent spirit will arise, next an oil accompanied with phlegm, then an insipid water, leaving a residuum consisting of a tartareous acid and much earthy matter. Again, it is well known that fermented liquors have an intoxicating quality, and this in proportion to the strength or richness of the original extract. Whereas if a man were to drink a gallon or more of the richest worts that ever were drawn, it would not produce the least symptom of intoxication.

Thus then it may be inferred that, as unfermented worts are not proper for common beverage, so fermented worts or beer may be equally improper in scorbutic, nephritic, and other complaints in which malt *worts as such* are safely and successfully prescribed.

But it still remains to be considered whether the addition of hops in brewing is salutary or pernicious, and it is a question of some importance.

If good malt liquor could be made without hops, the saving in this respect would be such as might very well enable the brewer to pay an additional duty on his beer equal to five times the annual revenue arising from hops; and the hop yards might be converted into excellent corn land.

The writer is desirous this subject may be further investigated by some abler hand than, sir,

Your obedient servant,

Civis

Source: published transcription; *Bristol Gazette* (Sept. 17, 1789), p. 3.³

¹See JW to the *Bristol Gazette*, Sept. 7, 1789, *Works*, 31:108–10.

²‘Colophony’ is a rosin; ‘molass’ is defined in *OED*, ‘Scottish. A liquor distilled from molasses’.

³Reprinted in *Bath Journal* (Sept. 21, 1789), p. 3; and *Bath Chronicle* (Sept. 24, 1789), p. 2.

‘Miso-Blaberos’ to the Printer of the *Bristol Gazette*

c. September 25, 1789

The public lately received a very great alarm from a letter inserted in your *Gazette* by the Rev. Mr. Wesley on the subject of hops; wherein that gentleman, with a laudable humanity, announced to us a danger of which we had hitherto entertained no apprehension, and cautioned us against the infusion of that ingredient in our beer on account of its poisonous quality.¹ His assertion, without doubt, was the result of his own conviction. But the authority on which he grounded it was only that of an old obsolete act of Parliament. And in what respects it is poisonous, or what is its mode of operation on the animal frame when taken internally, he has not informed us.

This subject was afterward discussed in part, with great candour and modesty, by an unknown correspondent of yours under the signature of ‘Civis’.² But even this gentleman has left us in the dark. For after all his chemical researches he concludes with saying, ‘It remains to be considered, whether the addition of hops in brewing is salutary or pernicious, and it is a question of some importance.’

Indeed it is a question of the highest importance. And I am much surprised that, at a time when every branch of philosophy is so accurately studied and so clearly understood, no one has been kind enough to furnish us with a solution. I desire to know, Mr. Printer, what we are to do in this case, who are totally unacquainted with the elements of chemistry or the mysteries of the medical science. For malt liquor, you know, is become an essential part of our diet; and if so many millions of persons are every day swallowing down draughts of real poison, it is high time that we should be undeceived, and learn the necessity of preserving in future the invaluable blessings of health and life by an alteration in our practice.

If an abstruse question were proposed (wherein the public interest is concerned) relating to jurisprudence, we should certainly look up for a decision to the gentlemen of the long robe. Or if any difficult case of conscience required explication, we should expect to derive instruction from the learned students in theology. How natural then is it for us to apply for information in the present instance to those medical gentlemen, who may be considered as the guardians of the public health, and who are best qualified for affording us the satisfaction required!

Miso-Blaberos

Source: published transcription; *Bristol Gazette* (Oct. 1, 1789), p. 3.

¹See JW to the *Bristol Gazette*, Sept. 7, 1789, *Works*, 31:108–10.

²*Bristol Gazette* (Sept. 17, 1789), p. 3 (transcribed above).

‘Anti-W’ to the Printer of the *Bath Chronicle*

c. Sept. 30, 1789

Sir,

Ne sutor ultra crepidam, says an old proverb.¹ And had Mr. [John] Wesley been contented with mending the slipper of our good mother Church, he might have left behind him a character for superior discernments, as well as for superior piety. But having, like the cobbler of old, obtruded his crude opinions on the public in matters foreign to his profession and knowledge, in which his ignorance has been repeatedly detected and exposed, the more discerning part of mankind have been inclined to believe that the reverend gentleman was more fortunate than judicious in his theological innovations. Nor will his late letter from Bristol, in which he descends from the sublime studies of divinity and physic to humble considerations and animadversions on the produce of malt and hops, at all add to his reputation. The whole letter is written with so little knowledge, either theoretical or practical, of the subjects in question, that no serious reply could have been expected, had not the many enquiries that have come to my knowledge convinced me that beer drinkers in general are almost as ignorant of the properties of their common beverage as the reverend animadversor himself.

Mr. Wesley asserts, first, that hops are poisonous; and secondly, that they, or any other bitter, are not necessary to the preservation of malt liquors.

The last objection will be done away if we can confute his first position, which he attempts to prove by saying that no physician in his senses would recommend hopped malt liquor to patients in the scurvy, gout, or stone; and therefore, that hops are poisonous. But let it be observed that by the same mode of reasoning he might prove: Because no physician in his senses would prescribe roast beef and plum pudding to a patient in a high fever; and because deadly poisons might in many complaints be very properly administered; that therefore beef and pudding are poisonous and deleterious drugs wholesome food.

Now sir, I would prove that hops are wholesome, not upon my own assertion but upon the credit, and under the authority, of many most eminent physicians and chemists—in whose opinions they are aromatic, balsamic, stomachic, and antiseptic; and that, since their more copious introduction into malt liquors, putrid and other disorders have been less prevalent in this kingdom than in the days of King James or Queen Bess, when the worty, viscid, and insipid preparations from malt probably tended very much to prepare the habits of the people for the more ready infection of the plague, and other afflictive diseases that ensued. These physicians likewise allow that hops are aperient, diuretic, purifiers of the blood, and corrective of the numerous ills that so much prevailed from the use of the ancient worty, unhopped beers, which instead of attenuating and improving, only introduced viscosity and sliminess in the blood, clogged its circulation, deranged the whole animal economy, and accelerated the attacks of gout, stone, jaundice, dropsy, apoplexy, and a long etc. of complaints.

A sensible correspondent in a late newspaper asks, why porter, which is much impregnated with hops, is so much more wholesome than Bristol ale, into which a very small portion of that vegetable is infused?² I answer, for the reasons above given, and because Bristol and many other ales are too much like the incompletely brewed malt liquors that were produced in the reigns before mentioned, and in many places even so late as the juvenile years of Mr. Wesley. Further, I beg leave to add that porter is very generally recommended by the faculty to wet nurses, because it is superiorly wholesome, nutritious, creative of good chyle, and the best milk for the nourishment of the tenderest and most delicate offspring in the creation. They recommend it too to very many invalids of various descriptions. But when do they prescribe Mr. Wesley's worty, viscid, vapid ales? Though a decoction of malt, or wort, be often

¹‘The shoemaker should not go beyond his bounds’; i.e., stick to your area of knowledge. Cf. Pliney, *Natural History*, XXXV.85.

²See ‘Civis’ to the Printer of the *Bristol Gazette*, Sept. 15, 1789 (above).

administered in scorbutic cases, I humbly conceive that it would not be recommended as a continued beverage in any case; and that when recommended, it is only for a short time in aid of a vegetable diet, or from the want of it at sea—as the maladies to be expected from a long continuance of an almost indigestible, viscous, unattenuated wort are too well known to the gentlemen of the profession not to be cautiously guarded against.

That I may not appear, like Mr. Wesley, to depend too much upon my own dogmatical assertions, I beg leave to refer the inquisitive reader for satisfaction to the works of Quincy, Shaw, Pringle, Newmann, MacBride, Huxham,³ etc., etc., which will confirm what I have advanced on the subject of hopped malt liquors, particularly, that they are *balsamic, stomachic, nutritive*, and *antiseptic*. Protected by such authorities, I say, (in Mr. Wesley's language) '*Deny who dare the salubrity of hops.*'⁴

This point being, I flatter myself, established, I shall take very little pains to controvert Mr. Wesley's experiments of brewing malt liquors to keep sound, without hops or other bitter. This experiment is not sufficiently detailed to be accepted as evidence, even under the authority of Mr. Wesley's assertion. I will only counterassert, from my own professional knowledge, that neither Mr. Wesley nor any other person can brew malt liquors of the usual strengths without the aid of hops, or some substitute, to stand the ordeal trial of the torrid zone, or even of the warmer seasons of this kingdom. And to hazarding this assertion on my reputation as a brewer, I will add the risk (leaving my name with you) of forfeiting 500 guineas, to be disposed of in any pious undertaking Mr. Wesley may choose, *provided* he will, either by himself or agent, prove the truth of his assertions, by experiment, on the premises I am in the practice of brewing at. Which I will readily accommodate him with, as well as with the requisites of malt, water, and needful assistance—*provided likewise* that, if the experiment fail, Mr. Wesley will indemnify me from the consequent damages. This, I flatter myself, Mr. Wesley will consider a liberal proposal, and embrace it with all the ardour of a man seriously disposed to root out a vulgar, pernicious error.

But that it is neither a vulgar nor pernicious error may be pretty conclusively inferred from the practice of very many intelligent brewers in London, who are not only gentlemen of liberal education, but particularly conversant in chemistry, and those walks of science calculated to elucidate the nature and properties of malt and hops; and so confirmed by practice in the theoretic results of their philosophical researches, that they will not be inclined to bow to Mr. Wesley's superior intelligence in the art of brewing. Or to have it believed that they are so little awake to their own interests as, if hops could be dispensed with, to compliment government and the planters with a free gift of so large a portion of their capitals as is necessarily expended in the purchase of hops. This, alone, would overturn a thousand of Mr. Wesley's arguments, or round assertions.

If I may judge from Mr. Wesley's language in the third and fourth sections of his letter, he considers decoctions of barley and malt as exactly similar! And from several other passages, as well as from his unfortunate quotation from Ovid to prove the Baucis's sweet wort and Yorkshire ale were the same thing, I very much suspect that he does not know the difference betwixt wort and ale, or whether there be any difference at all, except from the addition of hops. *Risum teneatis!*⁵ Can anyone, with such evidence of the ignorance of the reverend Instructor of Scientific Brewers, restrain his risible muscles? A wort Baucis might extract from his *rostá polentá*,⁶ and offer it as a curiosity to his thundering guest. But if he had attempted, in that climate, to convert it either into Yorkshire ale or Olympian beer, I presume to say that in the operation it would have become vapid and acid, totally unfit for the hospitable Baucis to

³John Quincy (d. 1722), Peter Shaw (1694–1763), John Pringle (1707–82)], Jeremiah Whitaker Newman (1759–1839), David MacBride (1726–78), and John Huxham (1692–1768).

⁴See JW to *Bristol Gazette*, Sept. 7, 1789, §7, *Works*, 31:108–10.

⁵Horace, *Ars Poetica*, l. 5; 'Can you refrain from laughing?'

⁶'roasted corn'.

have offered as a dainty beverage to the fastidious king of the gods.

I have not however, with your permission, yet done with Mr. Wesley. I must convict him of having, in one instance at least, dealt in the *marvellous*, with a view to impose on the public; from which some folks may conclude he has so dealt in other instances. He has endeavoured to impress his readers with an idea that its revenue from hops, because it amounts to £200,000 or £300,000 per annum, it is of serious consequence to government to retain. I assert that such a revenue never was produced in one year in this kingdom from that article; and further, that during the period Mr. Wesley says the use of hops has so much increased, the average annual amount of the duty has scarcely, if at all, exceeded £80,000. Such a glaring mistake, and so gross an instance of want of information as this, would throw a veil of doubt over the assertions of any man less subject to error than Mr. Wesley is known to be. For the truth of my assertion, and for the untruth of [Mr.] Wesley's, I appeal to the Records in the General Office of Excise in London.

I am sorry to be thus blunt with the opinions of a gentleman of Mr. Wesley's venerable age and character. But I flatter myself the refutation of error, and the elucidation of a subject the public is so much interested in, will sufficiently apologize for

Anti-W

Source: published transcription; *Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette* (Oct. 1, 1789), 2.⁷

⁷Abridged reprints in *Bury and Norwich Post* (Oct. 7, 1789), p. 4; *Derby Mercury* (Oct. 8, 1789), p. 1; *Stamford Mercury* (Oct. 9, 1789), p. 3; and *Northampton Mercury* (Oct. 10, 1789), p. 4.

'No Brewer' to the Printer of the *Bath Journal*

Bath
October 2, 1789

Sirs,

The question respecting the salutary or pernicious effects of hops, lately agitated, is of a nature too interesting to be dismissed without due investigation. With a view to obtain satisfaction on a subject so important, I beg permission, through the medium of your journal, to solicit an answer to the following enquiries.

First, is the use of hops in medicine so general as to give any considerable degree of authority to the representation of their virtues as stated by 'Anti-W' in the last *Bath Chronicle*,¹ and said to be confirmed by several respectable medical names? I do not recollect ever to have heard of hops being prescribed in any disease. Nor do I observe them noticed in the new *Pharmacopoeia* of the London college [of physicians].

Secondly, if hops *are* applied medically, in what *form*? If they are used in decoction, the qualities they exhibit in that state will not, I presume, even indicate the properties they will assume subsequent to fermentation; and it is possible the favourable character they have obtained may not be derived from an intimate acquaintance with their properties after fermentation.

Thirdly, is it not the meaning of those who advise the omission of hops in brewing malt liquor that there should be an additional quantity of malt employed? And is it certain that they suppose beer thus brewed will, or is required to, keep so long as with hops?

Fourthly, is the great age of beer injurious, friendly, or perfectly indifferent to the human constitution?

Fifthly, as cider, wine, etc, acquire properties after fermentation so totally different from those of the recent juice, is it probable that malt wort would not suffer a similar alteration? And after such a change does it still remain 'worty, viscid, and vapid'?²

Sixthly, Can no proof in point be adduced of persons having brewed palatable wholesome beer without hops? I have been informed such experiments have been made, and with the completest success.

Judicious answers to these enquiries would, I apprehend, terminate the discussion satisfactorily. There is one gentleman in this city whose publications uniformly tend to improve the understanding, and promote the health of mankind, who is every way qualified, by accurate experiments and rational deduction, to communicate the information desired. I sincerely wish the subject may engage his attention. It will prove an useful and agreeable exercise of his own superior powers, and be the means perhaps of removing groundless fears, or of excluding from our breweries the cause of them.

I am, sirs,

Your obedient humble servant,

No Brewer

Source: published transcription; *Bath Journal* (Oct. 5, 1789), p. 2.

¹(Oct. 1, 1789), 2; see above.

²Quoting 'Anti-W'.

‘Anti-W’ to the Printer of the *Bath Chronicle*

c. October 6, 1789

Sir,

A correspondent in the last *Bath Journal* signs himself, with *much propriety*, ‘No Brewer’.¹ And I strongly suspect that he might have added, *very emphatically*, alias ‘No Physician’, alias ‘John Wesley’.

If he had been a physician, he would not have made his first questioning enquiry. He would have known (what I have somewhere read, though without at present recollecting the particular authorities) that preparations of hops have been prescribed in the *forms* of decoctions and juleps to resist pestilential diseases of various kinds, to remove certain female complaints, to relieve putrid sore throats, and even hysteric and hypochondriac disorders.

In reply to his second head of inquiry, I beg leave to ask Mr. ‘No Brewer’, conformably with his Socratic drift of reasoning, *if he knows* that the *preservative* produce of hops *will* ferment? If he knows that fermentation will only take place by a combination of acids and alkalis? And *if he knows* that there is so much *acid* in a decoction of *hops* as will, when united with the alkali of yeast, produce that wonderful operation? For my part I have *suspensions* that the preservative produce of hops undergoes, by the fermenting union with wort, very little alteration further than complete comminution and homogeneous admixture.

Thirdly, if it be the intention of those who wish to discard hops from the brewer’s pharmacopoeia to increase the portion of malt, I beg leave to ask if they think that the extirpation of hop-grounds, and their appropriation to the culture of barley, will supply the necessary addition of malt? A very little consideration will, I believe, dictate a decided reply in the negative. And if so, what becomes of Mr. Wesley’s exulting, ‘*stroke indeed*, so well-deserving the consideration of all lovers of their country’?²

Fourthly, I will ingenuously tell Mr. ‘No Brewer’, what however will make very little in his favour, that hopped beers are in general kept no longer, under the present practice of brewing, than it would be *requisite* to preserve those that might be unhopped, *were* such to become the future fashion of brewing. But that, nevertheless, I am one of those who think that old ale, like old wine, is *in every respect* better than that which is new.

In the fifth place, the enquirer may convince himself, by tasting a variety of modern ales, that the majority of them, after such fermentation as they usually receive, are yet both *worty*, *viscid*, and *vapid*.

And sixthly, *if* proof can be adduced that palatable beer has been brewed without hops, *can* it also be proved that such liquor has been produced without aggravating the evil by a more than proportionable addition of expense in the extra-addition of malt? Or, what is of infinitely superior consideration, *can* it be proved that such *hop-less* liquors are *not* friendly to the attacks of putrid disorders? I will tell you what I have heard, and partly knew, of a very respectable and worthy physician, the late Dr. Till-Adams of Bristol.³ He (for doctors disagree) thought that malt liquor would do better without than with hops, and tried the experiment till he was repeatedly attacked by *putrid* complaints; and finally, in the bloom of life, fell a martyr to a *putrid* fever—not improbably produced by his favourite *hop-less* beverage.

After what has been said, I have only to add, *qui vult decipi decipiatur*.⁴ Let the admirers of Mr. Wesley’s system of *primitive* brewing brew and drink their pestilence-inviting beers. But let those who have a greater regard for their constitutions and purses cautiously not the issue of such an adventurous innovation.

Anti-W

Source: published transcription; *Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette* (Oct. 8, 1789), p. 2.

¹*Bath Journal* (Oct. 5, 1789), p. 2 (see above).

²See JW to *Bristol Gazette*, Sept. 25, 1789, *Works*, 31:117.

³John Till Adams (1748–86).

⁴‘Let the one who would be deceived, be deceived.’

‘A Plebeian’ to the Printer of the *Bristol Gazette*

c. October 6, 1789

Sir,

I am only a plebeian and a young fellow of two and thirty, therefore cannot presume to so large a share of learning and experience as your reverend and venerable correspondent of eighty-eight. But with all due deference to one whom length of days has taught knowledge, I beg leave to trouble you with the result of *my own* considerations upon the subject which has so lately occupied a portion of your entertaining paper, engaged the pens of some, and excited the wonderment of many.

Had the dissertation upon the use of hops rested with the reverend gentleman who first made known their pernicious qualities, respect to the opinion of so venerable a sage would have kept my pen and tongue in profound silence. But seeing it has given rise to several curious remarks, and is now become a temporary topic, open to the remarks of every individual, I freely send you my sentiments upon the subject.

When hops were *first* introduced into the composition of which beer is made does not clearly appear from history. In support of the opinion that it was originally *sweet* your reverend correspondent has quoted the following line from Ovid.

[...] *Bibendum*
Dulce dedit, tostá quod coxerat ante polentá.

He gave to drink—a portion of the best,
Smooth to the lip and *sweet* unto the taste;
Twas made of that which now we barley call,
In water mash'd, but parched first of all.

This is indeed the description given of it by Ovid, who flourished in the Augustine age, and wrote it about the time of the birth of Christ. But let us see what Pliny says, who flourished only 40 or 50 years after.

*Lupo salictaris Germani suam condunt cervisiam.*¹
The Germans make their beer of the *hops* which grow in willow grounds.

Pliny wrote as a traveller. He has pointed out the use of hops in beer not as a *new* thing, but as a custom in use among the Germans long before he visited them, and probably long before the time of Ovid. He also points out the spots in which they delight to grow—‘in willow grounds’—in low moist lands. Hence it is obvious that the use of hops in beer is a custom of about two thousand years standing. And that, although they might not have been known to the Romans in the time of Ovid, yet at the very moment in which he wrote the above description they were actually used by the Germans. Probably they were introduced among the Romans soon after Pliny wrote his history, and were by them imported into Britain.

But the question is, are hops of a poisonous quality? I think this will be sufficiently answered by the following general aphorism.

All bitters (as well as all evergreens) do more or less partake of a poisonous quality. Hops then *do* possess a poisonous quality. But it is one of those poisons which, while used with moderation, may be safely used with advantage and success, especially when mixed with another ingredient which like malt

¹Note in original: ‘See Ainsworth’s *Dictionary* under the words “Lupus” and “Salictarius”’. I.e., Robert Ainsworth, *Thesaurus linguæ Latinæ compendarius: or, a Compendious Dictionary of the Latin Tongue* (London: Knapton et al., 1736), vol. 2; who cites Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, xxi.50.

liquor is of a luscious taste. This was the method of Mithridates in his famous counter poison—he mixed figs with bitter herbs and thereby preserved his body free from infection. The use of hops in beer is not only to give it a pleasant, palatable taste, but to correct those flatulences and fermentations which would arise from the effects of sweet drink. As for their use in the preservation of the beer, I believe it merely ideal, and that good fermented beer, will preserve itself by its own strength.

Culpeper in his English herbal has given us an account of the virtues of hops, very different indeed from that of your reverend correspondent. He says, 'they open the body, cleanse the blood, expel the gravel, and cure all manner of cutaneous disorders, the decoction of the flowers and tops help to expel poison, and the seed taken in powder killeth worms,' He adds, 'Mars owns the plant, and Doctor Reason will tell you how he performs these actions.'²

The Derbyshire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, and Yorkshire ales, upon which so much stress has been laid, is no criterion whereby we are to judge of the effects of hops in beer. Different counties produce a different liquor, and the qualities of them seems to depend not so much upon the different ingredients of which they are compounded, as upon the age at which they are drank. Publicans in their different districts always consult the taste of their neighbours more than that of strangers and travellers. In some places the country people will not drink it unless it be two years old, by which time it becomes sharp and squalid, which gave rise to the following remark of a foreigner on the Derbyshire ale:

Of this strange drink so like the Stygian lake,
(They call it ale)—I know not what to make;
They drink it thick and vent it very thin,
Of course much dregs there must be left within.³

In other places they prefer the sweet taste and drink it at a very early age.

Finally, sir, I shall make free to assert that the ill effects of malt liquor as now usually drank does not arise from the pernicious qualities of the small quantity of hops used therein, but from its being drank to a superfluity. While drank with moderation it may be done with safety. It certainly invigorates the animal spirits, promotes perspiration and health (if the body is not previously disordered by other causes), and keeps off the rust of old age. Such seems to be the most rational opinion, such is the opinion of many; such also was the opinion of old Brawn, and of Mr. [Thomas] Carew who honoured his memory with the following epitaph:

Here Brawn the Cornish beggar lies,
Who counted by his tale
Some six-score winters and above,
Such virtue is in ale;
Ale was his meat, ale was his drink,
And ale did him revive,
And could he still have drank his ale
He had been still alive.

I am sir, yours,

A Plebeian

Source: published transcription; *Bristol Gazette* (Oct. 8, 1789), p. 3.

²Nicholas Culpeper, *The English Physician Enlarged; with three hundred and sixty-nine medicines made of English herbs* (London: Churchill, 1708), 173–74.

³Quoted, for example, in Robert Morden, *The New Description and State of England* (London: for the author, 1701), 34.

‘Veritas’ to the Printer of the *Bristol Gazette*

October 6, 1789

From the several letters which have appeared in your paper respecting the use of hops, I have been led to examine the statute book of the reign of James the First, to see if the legislature had ever deemed them *poisonous*, as the question implies. And so far from the legislature’s fixing such a character on them, I do not even find that they ever *prohibited* the use of them. On the contrary, it seems to me that they encouraged the growth in England. For by an act passed in the first year of that reign, cap. 18th, entitled, ‘An act for avoiding of deceit in selling, buying, or spending corrupt or unwholesome hops’; reciting to the following effect—viz., that great frauds were practised by foreigners, merchants, strangers, and others, in the false packing of ‘foreign hops brought into England from foreign parts by way of merchandise to be sold’, with leaves, stalks, powder, sand, straw and with loggets of wood, dross and other soil in sacks of hops, for increase of weight; by means of which false package the subjects had of late years been deceived to the value of £20,000 yearly, besides the danger of their healths, for that in many of such sacks there was not found scarce one third part of good hops, the rest being dross and soil.

It is therefore enacted, that if any foreigner, stranger, native Englishman, denizen, merchant, or other person did after Michaelmas then next, bring into the realm from any foreign dominion any hops being unclean, corrupt or mixed with any powder, dust, dross, sand or any other soil whatsoever, the person so offending should forfeit such hops.

And for avoiding of sickness by using of such *unclean hops*—it is further enacted, that if any brewer or other person should buy such hops so brought from beyond the seas or growing within the realm, and should employ them in the brewing of beer or ale to be sold, *being unclean, corrupt or mixed with any powder, dust, dross, sand, or any other soil whatsoever*, every person so offending should forfeit the value of the hops so bought, employed, or spent in brewing;—one moiety of which forfeitures to be paid to the king, and the other moiety to the person who should seize or sue for the same.

I am, yours,

Veritas

Source: published transcription; *Bristol Gazette* (Oct. 8, 1789), p. 3.

‘Oxoniensis’ to the Printer of the *Bath Chronicle*

c. October 6, 1789

Sir,

The question having been lately agitated, ‘whether hops are salutary or injurious to the human frame’, and Mr. John Wesley having given a decided opinion that the hop is a pernicious weed, it appears to be of some import to society that this fact should be ascertained.

I must however, first observe that Mr. Wesley’s conclusions are drawn from false premises; and that the mischief attributed to the hop really arises from the saccharine matter of the malt, which when diluted becomes similar the saccharine juices of some vegetables and many kinds of fruit, and after due fermentation acquires an inebriating quality. It is moreover by no means proved that the bitter quality of the hop is not necessary for the preservation of beer. And Mr. Wesley should have been taught from long experience that it is not the use but abuse of this liquor which causes those evils of which he appears to be so apprehensive. And it is an indubitable fact that no liquor will so perfectly agree with the stomach of an Englishman as beer that is of a proper age and strength, and which has been prepared with a due proportion of the hop.

But admitting that beer is sometimes found to have disagreeable effects on the constitution, great allowances are to be made for the many pernicious drugs which are often used to give beer an intoxicating quality—as opium, grains of paradise, cocculus indicus, and perhaps some other narcotics. I am also informed that gentian and aloes, and that probably the coarser sort, even supply, in some measure, the place of the hop.

Hops having a bitter taste, less ungrateful than most of the other strong bitters, accompanied with some degree of warmth and aromatic flavour, I have myself the fullest conviction of their being salutary. And I am confirmed in this opinion not only from the general consent of mankind, and the constant use made of them for several hundred years, but also from the authority of the scientific Caius, an able and experienced physician, remarkable for his learning and the Latinity in which his thoughts were conveyed.¹ He had occasion to give this subject a thorough investigation, from a false idea which then prevailed that the hop (which about that time had been introduced into the art of brewing) had given rise to that dreadful and destructive disease, the sweating sickness. Having discussed the subject in a cool and dispassionate manner, he proved from experiment, and the most conclusive arguments, that the hop was not only innocent but salutary.

To the above authority, I shall beg leave to add that of Dr. Lewis, who is well known to have been not only a physician of real ability and great reputation, but also an excellent chemist. He tells us that the extracts obtained from hops are elegant balsamic bitters, and promise to be applicable to valuable purposes in medicine; though scarcely regarded as a medicinal article, and scarcely otherwise used, than for the preservation of malt liquors; which, by the superaddition of this *balsamic, aperient, diuretic* bitter, becomes less mucilaginous, more detergent, more disposed to pass off by urine, and in general more salubrious.²

Let therefore the lovers of beer enjoy their potation. Let them procure it genuine, and use it with moderation. For when disease or dislike do not forbid it, it will be found to be more salutary than most other liquors, and infinitely superior to the various mixtures prepared with different kinds of spirits.

I am, sir,

Your very obedient servant,

Oxoniensis

Source: published transcription; *Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette* (Oct. 8, 1789), p. 2.

¹John Caius (1510–73).

²William Lewis, *An Experimental History of the Materia Medica* (London: Baldwin, 1761), 355.

‘Anti-W’ to the Printer of the *Bath Chronicle*

Bath
October 9, 1789

Sir,

Your very judicious and able correspondent, ‘Oxoniensis’, having stated in your *Chronicle* of yesterday, that ‘many pernicious drugs are often used to give beer an intoxicating quality, such as opium, cocculus indicus, etc., and gentian and aloes, to supply the place of the hop’;¹ I regret that I am not able, for the honour of brewers, to refute so serious a charge. I believe it to be too well founded; and sorry am I to say that many of the profession are either *so* ignorant, *so* destitute of every philanthropic idea, or *so* lost to every sense of honour and honesty, as to adopt practices that I could easily prove are as impolitic in a prudent system of brewing as they are injurious to the public and disgraceful to the practisers. But it is not easy to convince the unprincipled, or to illuminate the understandings of the weak.

I have long lamented my inability to suggest an adequate remedy for the evil alluded to, which led me sometime ago to submit to the Bath Society for the Encouragement of Agriculture, Arts, etc., an idea for offering a premium for such a discovery. The committee to whom it was referred were pleased to adopt it, and inserted in their premium book for the current year, as follows: page 50, premium 9.²

Detection of unwholesome ingredients in beer. ‘To the person, who, from chemical analysis, shall discover an easy and certain method of detecting the infusion of any unwholesome ingredient in small or strong beer, sold by common brewers, to the end that families may be enabled to detect such dangerous impositions, five guineas’.

Some benevolent friend of society, skilled in chemical science, may probably be induced to investigate this subject; and, if successful, he will merit the warmest thanks of every good man, and a distinguished rank amongst the benefactors of mankind.

So anxious am I that such a discovery should be effected that if two or three gentlemen, whose rank and fortune entitle them to take the lead in matters of public concern and utility, will unite to encourage the undertaking by advertisement, I will most readily offer my humble assistance, and subscribe ten guineas towards the establishment of a fund for the *ample* remuneration of any candidate that shall be thought deserving of the Bath Society’s premium.

I wish your learned and intelligent correspondent’s leisure and inclination may induce him to take the preceding into consideration. The style and manner, though I have not the honour of knowing who is concealed under the signature of ‘Oxoniensis’, lead me to believe that the writer has both ability and influence to engage sufficient patronage for the encouragement of a discovery, that it will do equal honour both to his head and to his heart to promote.

I am,

Your obliged humble servant,

Anti-W

Source: published transcription; *Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette* (Oct. 15, 1789), p. 2.

¹*Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette* (Oct. 8, 1789), p. 2 (see above).

²*Rules and Orders of the Society instituted at Bath, For the encouragement of agriculture, arts, To which are added, lists of the society’s premiums* (Bath: R. Cruttwell, 1789).

'No Brewer' to Printers of the *Bath Journal*

Bath
October 9, 1789

The well-written letter of 'Oxoniensis' in the *Bath Chronicle* of October 8,¹ by the information it conveys, is calculated to establish a favourable opinion of the hops, as combined with malt in the popular beverage of this country.

For my own part, I am perfectly free from any painful apprehensions of the ill effects of hops. I however considered their properties as not clearly ascertained nor general known, and wished some medical chemist to investigate the subject with the attention its importance required. If, without reiterated experiments, their virtues are sufficiently known already, I have not the least inclination to asperse their character.

If I am right in my conjecture, 'Anti-W' is a person of unimpeachable honour in his business, and I am sorry he cannot write without irritability on an occasion which by no means justifies it.²

I am, sirs,

Your very obedient humble servant,

No Brewer

P. S. The remarks of 'Oxoniensis' on the noxious ingredients made use of by *some* brewers deserve particular attention. Those men, who can wantonly sport with the health and lives of their customers in the manner alluded to, deserve, in my opinion, a species of punishment which inhumanity itself has never invented.

Source: published transcription; *Bath Journal* (Oct. 12, 1789), p. 2.

¹See above, c. Oct. 6, 1789.

²See the letter by 'Anti-W', c. Sept. 30, 1789.

From John Bousell¹

October 14, 1789

Dear Friend John Wesley,

With this I present thee with a pamphlet for thy perusal.² If thou art persuaded it is dictated by the Master, receive it as from him. Look not at the instrument, at the meanness of the vessel by which our heavenly Father conveys us food. I doubt not but thou hast been an instrument in the Master's hand of good unto the inhabitants of this nation, in awakening many thousands out of a state of lethargy. Go on in the name of the Lord, and may his blessing attend thee, and the angel of his presence encamp round about thee, and accompany thee though this vale of tears! And when thy earthly habitation of clay shall be dissolved, may thy soul be translated into those regions of immortal bliss where the morning stars sing together, and the sons of God shout aloud for joy!

I am free to inform thee, my friend, that from my childhood I have been seeking a city called Jerusalem. I have heard and read many excellent things concerning her: that her walls are salvation, and her gates praise; that her gates are continually open, both day and night; and that her priests are clothed with salvation and her ministers are as a flame of fire. O that I might gain an entrance in at the gate of the Holy City, and know the laws, statutes, and commandments of the great King of kings; and do them, that I may have a right unto the tree of life, and eat of the heavenly fruit of paradise, and live for evermore! And may thou my friend partake with me. May we drink together of the streams of that pure river which proceedeth from the throne of God, clear as crystal! May it be our concern to walk in the counsel of the Holy One of Israel while here, then we shall have a well grounded hope of being admitted into the kingdom of glory hereafter. And may thou, my ancient friend, for whom I feel a sincere regard, pray unto the Lord, the fountain of light and wisdom, to direct thy steps in righteousness, that great may be thy peace, and that thy peace may flow as a river into thy soul, and that thou mayest have to drink deep draughts of divine consolation of the joy of God's salvation! May the Lord anoint thy head with holy oil, and cause thy cup to run over. May the Lord spread a table for thee in the sight of thy enemies. May my God teach thy hands to war, and thy fingers to fight, against the enemies of his holy kingdom. And may thou be instrumental in his hands, in bringing the children of men unto the mountain of the Lord, unto the house of the God of Jacob, who has promised to teach his people his ways, and to guide them in the midst of the paths of judgment, causing those that love him to inherit substance.

If mankind were to hear and obey the voice of the Spirit of God, they need not the teachings of men. If the sheep of the Lord's pasture hearken and obey the voice of the good Shepherd and follow him, he will lead them into the green pastures. It was the concern of the ministers of Christ in the morning of the gospel-day to turn men from darkness unto light, from Satan unto God, and from the teachings of men unto the word of God. The engrafted word to which they bore testimony was able to save the soul, that their faith might not stand in the wisdom of words but in the power of God alone. This is the rock upon which the church of Christ is built, and against which the gates of hell are not able to prevail. There is no other foundation can be laid, than what is already laid—viz., Christ Jesus, the wisdom and power of God, the divine light that enlighteneth every man coming into the world. Those that walk in this heavenly light become the children of the light, and of the day, in whom there is no cause of stumbling.

I write not these things, my friend, under an apprehension, thou art a stranger unto them, but to stir up the gift of God in thee that thou mayest be exercised under the influence of this divine gift in

¹John Bousell (c. 1726–1801) was a Quaker living in Norwich. After the death of his wife in 1780, he felt moved to a career of spiritual reform, addressing both the public and various religious groups (including calling the Quakers back to their 'primitive' form. See Frank Baker, 'John Wesley and John Bousell', *Journal of the Friends' Historical Society* 40 (1948): 50–53.

²John Bousell, *The Trumpet of the Lord sounded upon the Mountains ...; and an Epistle to the Methodists* (Norwich: Yarrington and Bacon, [1789]).

forming a people that may live to the praise and glory of God. Remember the great apostle Paul saw that, after his departure, grievous wolves would creep in, not sparing the flock. O that all who profess themselves ministers of Christ might move under the constraining influence of pure disinterested love! That they and their hearers might be rooted and grounded in love. That they might comprehend the heights and depths, and know and experience divine love to possess their souls. That they may enjoy this treasure in their earthen vessels. And this will be the happy experience of all those who are looking with a single eye unto God, whose dependence upon, and expectation is alone from him, from whom every good and perfect gift cometh. He is the God and Father of the spirits of all flesh, the fountain of light and love, in whom there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning. His love is as great towards man, his beloved offspring, in this as in any other age. In that love that is without dissimulation, I salute thee, and bid thee farewell in the Lord,

A travailler for the prosperity of Sion,

John Bausell

P. S. I am at present separated from all society. I can see no people I can join in religious fellowship with. I have had two meetings with thy people at North Walsham to comfort, but was refused the like opportunity last week. The excuse my friend C— made was, it was contrary to thy rules. I hope thou makest no rules contrary to the gospel rule to do by others as thou wouldst be done unto. I hope better things of thee. I attempted this summer to speak after the minister had done in the Tabernacle at London, but they pulled me down.³ I write these things that thou mayest be instrumental in promoting a more noble liberal conduct among thy people.

I should be glad to see thee with any of thy friends, and if thou feel freedom to have a meeting at my house, it is open to receive thee. And if thou conclude upon it, please to let me know, and I will by divine permission give notice of it next week. I have thought, if thou and those that minister in the word and doctrine among thy people wait upon God to be endued with wisdom and power from him to feed the flock, his blessing will attend you. But if the preachers move in their own will and wisdom, the Lord will set them aside, and raise up others to bear testimony to his great power, goodness, and love. For he will have a people that shall worship him under the influence of his own Spirit. These he will own with his presence. Those that honour God he will honour.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 15 (1792): 162–65.

A Few Words to Those Called Methodists⁴

Friends, how is it with you? Are your hearts true to the Lord? Then are you his friends indeed. Are you given up in your minds to serve and obey him, as he maketh known his holy will unto you? If you be, then will he carry on the work which he has begun amongst you. For a day of visitation has been extended unto you in a particular manner. Are ye, my brethren, willing to become fools for his sake, who said they that would be his disciples must take up their daily cross? Are you willing to follow him through suffering? I believe some of you are. Go ye forward in his name, and be ye valiant for his cause, and rest not satisfied with a discovery of your own undone states and conditions, but press forward until you witness the seed of the kingdom to work in your hearts, and to leaven you into its own nature. Trust not in man. Let your dependence be upon the Lord alone. Look unto him and be saved. Wait upon him in the silence of all flesh and ye shall witness his life-giving presence to be amongst you, and his banner of

³It is unclear whether Bousell meant City Road Chapel, or the (Calvinist Methodist) Tabernacle.

⁴John Bousell, *The Trumpet of the Lord sounded upon the Mountains ...; and an Epistle to the Methodists* (Norwich: Yarrington and Bacon, [1789]), 10.

you will be love. Move not until he shall move you to speak unto the people or to supplicate his great name. For if you do, you may get a form like unto others, and be as destitute of the power. Then better had it been if you had never known the way of the Lord. Be you not ashamed of the cross of Christ, neither be ye conformable to the way of this world. If you fall into this state you will make no progress in religion, but will be as dwarfs, and some of you will return to your old way of living again.

Brethren, I know but little of you, but have sometimes found love in my heart towards you. It is in that love that I write these things, and must now leave you to the Lord.

From Thomas Tattershall¹

November 3, 1789

Reverend Sir,

I went this morning to see Mrs. Perkins, of Morley, in Norfolk, and found her asleep; concerning whom I had the following strange account from her husband and nurse.

She began to take long sleeps about the middle of October 1788, and slept frequently during the six week days, and waked on the Sabbath. This she did for seventeen weeks during last winter; but not all together—sometimes three weeks, sometimes four weeks successively. She then awaked on a week day for a little time, and then fell asleep till the Sabbath again.

About a week after Easter, she slept eleven days and a half and two hours, without waking at all. During this sleep, a doctor blew something up her nose, which caused a running at her eyes but did not wake her. They put a pin through her ear, and another through the web or thin part between her fingers; but it had no effect. So that several doctors were of opinion they might cut part of her flesh off without awaking her.

During these sleeps she hath no sustenance given her, and yet she is not emaciated. She takes very little food when awake, and that they put into her mouth like a child, and with great watchfulness. For she bites at them who feed her, and frequently bites herself till the blood comes. She eats now about once in three days. When awake she frequently attempts to take away her own life.

She is in her fiftieth year, and of a brown complexion. Her sleep is apparently natural, her pulse very regular, and her arm flexible; but her neck quite stiff, as if dead. Only one of her eye-lids moved fast. This morning she was of a proper warmth. But the nurse says she hath more changes than she can describe; sometimes very hot, at other times she sweats uncommonly. She is so sore they cannot put on her lays; and her body works so amazingly, they can see it through her gown, etc. Sometimes they could scarce perceive her breath, even by a glass held to her.

Many hundreds have visited her, and many of the faculty. Now have all given her over for some weeks past. In short it appears an unaccountable phenomenon; and when, or how it will end, God only knows. I am

Your dutiful son in the gospel,

Thomas Tattershall

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 138–40.

¹Titled: 'A Strange Account of a Sleeping Woman'.

From Frances (Mortimer / Wren) Pawson¹

November 7, 1789

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I feel a great desire to be an instrument in the hand of God, in stirring up the women here to press after all that lies before them. It is my own aim to increase in grace myself; sensible that I cannot retain that which I enjoy, unless my soul is athirst for more. From the time that the Lord saved me from inbred sin, my mind has been deeply sensible of the necessity of seeking an establishment in this liberty. I found this could not be attained unless the eye of my mind was ever looking unto Jesus. That it was by faith I must attain it. Under trials I have been taught not to reason *but believe: to stand by faith*. By thus maintaining my ground, an increase of love has more or less followed, and I have been enabled to overcome. It seemed needful for me ever to preserve a tender conscience. And for the least thing which I did or said, which I thought upon reflexion might have been said or done more to the glory of God, I ought to go immediately to the blood of sprinkling to have it fully washed away. Likewise ever to remember that *I am nothing*; and to put away whatever would lead to spiritual pride.

By following these simple instruction, the Lord has endued me with power, not only to hold fast my confidence but to preserve a constant hunger and thirst after more grace. My heart has many times cried unto the Lord that I could not rest till I awoke up more abundantly after his likeness. An increase of light and life have been imparted to me whilst I have been thus following hard after my God. Many who profess to enjoy this liberty, appear after many years to have barely preserved it. Upon conversing with them, I do not perceive that they have increased much, either in heavenly wisdom, power, or love. Is it not one reason, dear sir, that the small progress which many make, is because they rest content with preserving their present attainment, without looking for more? On the contrary, when I meet with some of my particular friends, I perceive a growth in grace in them. They seem to have gained experience by the things which they have passed through, and *'to sink more and more into that true nothingness, whereby we possess all things'*.

They appear to be fighting the fight *of faith*, and growing thereby. Living near to Jesus. So that fresh light seems imparted to them, as well as to those whom they are instructing. 'Thus holding the head, from which all the body by joints and bands have nourishment, and are knit together, they as well as those who are thus minded, appear striving to increase with all the *increase of God*.'²

I want to follow such as through faith and patience inherit the promises, and are ever aiming to come up higher! Our Lord declares that this can only be accomplished *by faith*. According to your faith, he says, be it unto you.³ Surely they who are not pressing into greater liberty this way, are not going forward. My mind is so impressed with this idea that if a day passes wherein I am not striving to get a nearer union and communion with my God by faith, although I cannot charge myself with a neglect of prayer or any of the means of grace, yet if *believing* for the next step which is before me be omitted, I feel as if I had not been doing *that work* (from which all others should flow) implied where our Lord says to those who asked him, 'What shall we do that we might work the work of God?'⁴ 'He answered and said unto them, this is the work of God that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.'⁵

A view of the willingness of God to bless and save me, and all who come unto him, into farther heights and depths of redeeming love than I have yet attained, often fastens upon my mind; and causes me to mourn not only for myself but others, that we are not on full stretch to enjoy more of the divine life.

¹While the author is not named in *AM*, the identity is confirmed by JW's reply of Nov. 16, 1789.

²Col. 2:19.

³See Matt. 9:29.

⁴John 6:28.

⁵John 6:29.

And that our spiritual senses are not more awakened to discern and pursue the things that are excellent. Sometimes I have likewise a spiritual view that the day is hastening when this will not be the case. That Christ's kingdom will not only be more abundantly enlarged, but deepened in the hearts of his children. The light of faith more fully discovered, and the way to the holiest of all more clearly manifested. My heart, when thus enlarged, has wrested much in prayer—the language of which has been, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!'

I am, dear sir,

Your affectionate daughter in Christ,

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 15 (1792): 554–56.

From Alexander Mather¹

Wakefield
November 26, 1789

Reverend and Very Dear Sir,

The relation in which I stand to you requires that you should have the earliest information of everything which nearly concerns me. I therefore cannot refrain from giving you an immediate account of the very great loss which I sustained this morning, in my dear partner's being removed from me into the world of spirits.

You have frequently heard of the long and severe affliction with which she has been exercised for fourteen months past, and have sincerely sympathized with us. Indeed the pains in her bowels, attended with frequent and violent vomitings (which the advice of the ablest physicians could not remove) were very great, and for the last ten days excruciating, so as to bring her to the end of her probation this morning about seven o'clock. Amidst the bitters in this cup, however, there were some sweets intermingled, of which she and I were feelingly sensible. She had sometimes a night's rest undisturbed. And when it was not entirely so, yet we were unfeignedly thankful. Our temporal wants were all amply supplied, and that without being particularly burdensome to the dear affectionate people among whom we lived. Our spiritual consolations were not few, nor small, of which many of our friends were witnesses who called in their way to and from Conference—who, as they watered by their counsel and prayers, so they were refreshed again by seeing her constancy and confidence, as well as by her clear and experimental converse about the deep things of God. She manifested an entire resignation, a steady patience, and a childlike spirit, willing to be or do any thing, and thankful for every office of kindness which she received from those about her. She had not, indeed, any particular ecstatic transports, either at the last, or during the whole of her affliction. Yet she had a strong, clear confidence in God, through Christ, whose blood she knew had cleansed her from all sin.

When I now look back for nearly thirty-seven years which we have spent together, and review her life, conduct, and conversation, a thousand things occur to me which add an additional lustre to her character, endear her memory, and serve to make her appear more amiable than even whilst she lived with me.

As to her life: She spend more than thirty years of it in the world, without the experimental knowledge of God, though she had the advantage of knowing the Scriptures from her youth. During that period she had passed through many scenes; had been exposed to many dangers both by sea and land; and had learned many useful lessons, which she improved afterwards to our mutual advantage, as well as to that of the community to which she belonged. And though her economy and management respecting temporals may seem a small thing to some, yet it is a thing needful to be attended to by all, especially those who are called to an itinerant life.

She was particular in the care and management of all our apparel. This she had good in its kind, though not dear, as she chose always to pay ready money for this, and for every other necessary used in the family. And if she had not money, she chose to wait, rather than run in debt. She observed the same rule respecting the things found by the society. And when we succeeded any who had used a contrary method, she always found cause to approve and follow her own. She used often to say, 'When I have my money, I can choose not only my article, but my shop, and on most occasions my price; but if I have not, I must give up these at least.' Nor was she less careful of the furniture belonging to the houses wherein we lived; which she always left, and kept clean, and whole, and in good repair, and in sufficient quantity for a family of the same size. As she had a particular place for every thing, so it was replaced as soon as it had been used, and therefore her house, or apartment, however small, was never in confusion. She was remarkably industrious, always doing her own work, and for upwards of twenty years attending upon

¹Titled: 'An Account of the Death of Mrs. Mather'. Alexander Mather married Mary Duncan on Feb. 24, 1753, at the Fleet Prison chapel in London. She was buried on Nov. 29, 1789 in Wakefield.

such of the preachers as were with us in the house. Nor did she keep a servant till 1786, when her niece came to live with her. And though she was thus busily employed in household matters, yet it did not prevent her attendance upon, or usefulness to, the souls she had under her care.

Her natural understanding was good; her memory strong and retentive; her spirit active and resolute. Her experience was deep, sound, scriptural, and rational. In 1753 she had a clear sense of the pardon of all her sins that were past, even before she heard the Methodists; which she retained, with very few and short interruptions, to her dying moment. About the year 1756 or 1757, under the ministry of the late eminent Mr. Thomas Walsh (whose memory was ever dear to her) she was fully convinced of the remains of evil in her nature; even while she retained a clear sense of her acceptance, and power over all inward sin. She then saw also clearly the absolute necessity, as well as the possibility, of being *now* saved from all *indwelling* sin. Whereof, under the same ministry (while treating on Isaiah 26:1), she had a clear evidence; and that her soul was *so* saved as to prove salvation for walls and bulwarks.

It was in consequence of this, that she so freely gave me up to my present work. And if ever, by any means, this confidence was clouded, she gave the Lord no rest till it was fully cleared up again to her soul's comfort. And so far was she from becoming independent on Christ by this profession, or supposing that any profession would do which was not productive of personal holiness, that she often declared: 'Her whole dependence was only upon Jesus. That they were mistaken who supposed heaven to be merely a place, and not a state. That she was well assured if we did not carry heaven with us (meaning thereby the soul's conformity to God, in consequence of its union with Christ), we should not find heaven hereafter.'

She was ever eager and solicitous to show that all our salvation was by the means of faith alone, and therefore instantaneous—not barely as it respected the *reception*, but *intention* of every branch thereof. This she could conceive to be no longer retained than the soul was in the act, or exercise, of faith. Yet she could not allow by any means that faith is to be substituted in the place of holiness, in those who were the subjects of it, being well assured that the heart is purified thereby.

Thus she lived, and thus she taught, to the comfort of many, whom she ever led to that Rock which was higher than they. And she sometimes blamed even me, saying, 'My dear, you are too abstruse. You go too far about the matter. Poor souls want to see Christ their *all* for salvation. Were *I* to direct the people so in my class and band, they would be strangers to the dying Lamb; but blessed be God, we have not *now* an unbeliever amongst us, though there were many when I first took it.' This was absolutely true, especially in a very large class at York, and another at Sheffield. In which there were many, when she began to meet both, as well as diverse new members, who were joined to both after she took the classes. Indeed she always travailed in birth for those under her care, and gave neither them nor herself any rest till they felt their need of, and came to enjoy either pardoning or perfect love, of which many can bear their testimony. It is true that even this gift of God rendered her subject to the envy of many, both leaders and preachers. Nay, I myself was ready to wonder that she should herein excel me. Yet so it was, and none could deny the facts. Not a few had imbibed very wrong ideas of her, and consequently represented in an unfavourable light the instrument whom God condescended so to honour, by making this use of her. Indeed I myself (with shame I confess it) was wont to pass a hasty censure upon her *manner* in some things: particularly in speaking her mind freely to all, when called to defend what she judged to be truth. I too often overlooked the noble principle and pure intention of such conduct; namely, an abhorrence of all that was evil, or had the appearance of it, in *all* men, but especially professors; and also a sincere desire to promote the honour of God, the good of his cause, yeah and do real good to those she so plainly dealt with. From this unfavourable impression (or snare of the devil) which I had given way to, I was wholly, as in a moment, delivered on the morning of the 22nd instant, four days before her death. God, in mercy, giving me a view of the brighter side of the scene; while he brought to my mind her zeal, diligence, labour, grace, sufferings, trials, oppositions, unshaken confidence in God, together with her remarkable usefulness for more than thirty years.

This, as it produced much consolation on the one hand, so it caused not a little shame, self-abasement, and confusion on the other. I was now led, from what I felt in myself, to think that her departure was at hand. And I cannot express with what solemn satisfaction I was led by this bright ray of the Sun of Righteousness (for such I may call it) to the east, west, north, and south, to call to mind the

numbers to whom God had made her the happy instrument of conviction, conversion, edification, and sanctification. This gently soothed my rising sorrows, and at the same time more than ever united and endeared her to me; whilst I found a willingness to resign her to him who was now going to reward her with the crown prepared for them who turn many to righteousness.

As to the cause of her death, I might perhaps date it from the time of our coming to Sheffield in August 1786, or soon after. As the manner of her meeting a class had been much spoken of, and many who had occasionally met with her had found much consolation, some leaders requested her to meet their classes. She went out one evening in November (the weather being severe) to meet a class and caught cold, which brought on a cough, which no means used could totally remove. This laid the foundation of sundry disorders, and a severe fever in the spring. And though she recovered from the fever, yet her strength did not return. Her legs swelled and her cough became very troublesome.

Her constitution having received such a shock at that time, I had thoughts of leaving my dear friends there, thinking a change of air might be of use. But when I mentioned it to her, she said, 'My dear, I am happy. I may be ill at any other place. My large and prosperous class is very dear to me, and you may be more useful the second year. We are the Lord's, and he can and will take care of me. I am his whether I live or die. If he takes me from you, he is still able to preserve you, while you are devoted to him and his work, which I hope you ever will be.' We therefore remained, and she was tolerably well the next year, though weakened much by the cough, and exceedingly apt to catch cold.

After we came to Wakefield, the first time I went round the circuit I was sent for, as she was taken with a violent bilious cholic. I found her very ill, but perfectly resigned, and her mind was calmly stayed upon God, and sweetly at rest in him. By the blessing of God on the means then used, she grew better for a time. But in the spring the disorder returned, attended with severe vomiting, and violent purging. In the midst of all this she preserved an unshaken confidence, her mind undisturbed, and her soul in patience. A change of air being advised, she went to York, partly to be near her son [Alexander Jr.], and also to have such advice as might be procured there. She bore her journey pretty well (being supported in the chaise by her daughter on one side, and her sister on the other; but especially by the consolations of God). Having stayed there a few weeks, she returned much weaker, having had many severe attacks whilst there.

These continued still more frequent, and more severe, during the summer; under all which she still preserved an undismayed confidence, of which many of the preachers who called were witnesses. And my dear colleague, brother Highfield,² had a more particular opportunity of seeing this, and the divine support which she experienced as she drew nearer to her end; and (as he said) of profiting by her conversation. 'What a sad thing' (she said) 'would it be if I had a God to seek now? But I experience him to be ever ever nigh.' Being truly sensible of her approaching dissolution, she gave directions concerning her funeral, and the week before she died laid out everything that might be wanting at her death. When her daughter, who was now with her, was much affected at this, she said, 'Why do you weep? I am preparing for my wedding day. It will be my happiest day.' She then took to her bed, from which she was moved only once or twice afterwards. During the last week she suffered much, but was more patient and more resigned than ever; still confident in God, and wholly disengaged from all things below, till she shook off the earthy tabernacle, and went to taste of the joys prepared in the mansions above.

I now enter upon a state of probation to which I am practically a stranger. Therefore I know not how I shall act. But my design and desire is so to act as may tend most to the glory of God, for which end I ought only to live. I remain, as ever,

Your very affectionate, and dutiful son in the gospel,

Alexander Mather

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 365–72.

²George Highfield (1761–1852) was admitted 'on trial' as an itinerant at the 1786 Conference (see *Works*, 10:596). He remained active into advanced years. See *Minutes* (post-Wesley, 1852), 12:13.

From William Green

[King's Lynn]
c. November 30, 1789

My Dear Sir,

Your very great condescension in answering my papers greatly endears you to me; more especially as in all your controversial writings the Christian and the gentleman shines so conspicuous.¹

You complain of my 'spirit and manner'. As to the former, I must be totally ignorant of myself if I did not write in as good a spirit as I wish to die in! The manner I must own is very bold. But I presume, sir, there is something to be said for me! You must know I had finished my strictures before I had a thought of putting them into your hand. But as you came to Lynn just about the time, a thought struck my mind that I would give you the perusal of them. I had my scruples indeed touching the manner in which they were wrote, but I depended upon your good nature in passing it over. But if I had addressed you immediately by letter, I had most certainly wrote in a more becoming manner. For although I am entirely free from the fear of any man, yet I should be very sorry to drop a word, either by letter or in conversation, that might have the least tendency to offend you. And I must be the most egregious blockhead living, not to know that you are my superior in every sense of the word.

You endeavour, sir, to split the hair: 'God does send wicked ministers to speak the truth, but not to speak lies. Harken not unto them when they speak lies, but hearken to them when they speak the truth. They shall not profit the people when they speak lies, but they shall profit them when they speak truth.' This is the distinction you make. But I think the Holy Ghost never intended any such distinction to be made.

I entirely agree with you sir that thousands perish through a total contempt of religion, by continuance in gross sins, and by sins of omission; and that God will not suffer a man who sincerely strives to obey him to perish for lack of knowledge. But I must believe that the *doctrine* of salvation by works hath an immediate tendency to alienate the minds of the hearers from Jesus Christ, the one only way of salvation.

You say, sir, 'to renounce the Church' (wicked ministers and wicked people) 'is in fact to renounce connection with me'. If these two things are really inseparable, I verily believe that you must immediately lose the better half of your most excellent sons in the gospel, and that the whole Methodist connection must tumble to pieces! As to myself, I do not renounce the *Church*, but I do utterly renounce attending the ministrations of *wicked* men. Neither can I in conscience exhort others so to do. But I shall esteem it my highest privilege, while I live, to be connected with that very respectable body, of which (under God) Mr. Wesley is the head.

Your saying, 'I defy any man living to prove that I have contradicted myself at all in any of the writings which I have [published] from the year 1738 to the year 1788' is a very great word even for Mr. Wesley to speak.

¹In 1789 Green read JW's sermon on 1 Sam. 2:17, that had been published in *AM* (1788), 340–48, 397–403 (see 'On Attending the Church Service', *Works*, 3:465–78). Here JW urged his followers to continue attending the established Church, even if the priest was 'ungodly', arguing that God can work through 'ungodly' men. Green took exception to this sermon and wrote out a set of strictures on it. He finished just as JW was passing through King's Lynn on Oct. 14–15, so Green gave JW a copy of the strictures. JW sent Green a sharp reply c. Nov. 21, 1789 (see *Works*, 31:137–39), which drew this response.

Ere I conclude, permit me sir to ask a question. Would it not be well to lay my papers before three judicious impartial friends?² 'In the multitude of counsellors there is safety.'³ Only it will be necessary that the spirit, the manner, and the writer be left entirely out of the question! The question is, are they scriptural, or are they not?

Excuse my freedom sir, and believe me when I assure you that I love and esteem you as much as ever I did. I am

Your obedient son and servant in Christ,

Wm. Green

Source: secondary transcription by Green; MARC, PLP 46/16/2, pp. 3–4.⁴

²In his letter to Joseph Benson, Green said he had sent copies of his original strictures to Benson, Samuel Bradford, and Thomas Tennant. No copy is known to survive.

³Prov. 11:14.

⁴Green's holograph to JW is not known to survive. Green included this transcription in a surviving holograph to Joseph Benson, c. mid-Dec. 1789.

From Samuel Mitchell¹

c. November 30, 1789

He was born in Ireland, in the county of Antrim, and parish of Ballinderry. About the latter end of the year 1769, he was led by curiosity to hear Mr. John Smith preach. The word was attended with divine illumination to his soul, which induced him to attend again for edification. Not long after, it was attended with the power of God to the conviction of his conscience for the guilt of sin. In his distress he cried unto the Lord night and day, but still became more weary and heavy laden in spirit. Until one night, returning home from a prayer meeting, he began to reason thus with himself, 'Others have found peace with God in every age, but I fear I never shall, for the door of mercy seems shut against me.' He then roared aloud through the disquietude of his spirit, and continued grovelling on the cold earth with tears, prayers, and cries to the Lord Jesus, for several hours together; but received no satisfactory answer. At length, benumbed with cold, and wounded in spirit, he rose up and went home. There he could find no ease, and ran out of his house into his garden, where he kneeled down in the greatest agony and poured out his soul in prayer, and continued so until he felt that all his wisdom was foolishness, his strength weakness, and that his tears and prayers could not merit a blessing at the hand of a righteous God.

He then sunk under his load of misery and darkness, when in an instant Jesus spoke peace and love to his soul. And immediately a bright light shone around him, so that he could discern the smallest objects. He went on his way rejoicing for about a fortnight after his justification, when being at private prayer, the Lord deeply convinced him that there were sinful corruptions still remaining in his heart; particularly the remains of unbelief, which prevented his having and enjoying every promise of God as his real inheritance. The language of his heart then was,

'Tis worse than death my God to love,
and not my God alone.²

His soul now hungered and thirsted after the living God, and was as much distressed in seeking a clean heart as he had been in seeking pardon. Only he did not feel guilt or the wrath of God upon his soul. He went on thus for some time mourning, and attended all the means of grace. He almost fainted with holy thirsting and ardent desire, till in the time of his extremity, God applied those words to his heart, 'I will, be thou clean',³ and gave him the witnessing Spirit to testify that the work was wrought. He had never lost a sense of his acceptance with God, notwithstanding the great anguish he felt in seeking a clean heart. He then went on his way, rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, and in everything giving thanks.

Jesus all the day long
Was his joy and his song.⁴

All his words were in wisdom, and attended with a divine power. And his actions and even tempers bore witness that he had union and fellowship with the Father, and the Son, through the blessed Spirit. In short, his meekness and moderation were known unto all his acquaintances, and he continued to adorn the Christian character in this manner for near nineteen years.

About August 1788 he felt the beginning of a consumption which afterward proved fatal. A considerable time before he died he attained the full assurance of hope, and could exult as on Pisgah's top, and view the celestial land with constant and triumphant faith. Once, when I asked him if he could

¹Titled: 'A Short Account of Mr. Thomas Kinley. By Mr. Samuel Mitchel'.

²CW, 'The Resignation', st. 2, *HSP* (1740), 76.

³Matt. 8:3, Mark 1:41, Luke 5:13.

⁴Cf. CW, Hymns for One Fallen From Grace, #15, st. 4, *HSP* (1749), 1:124.

resign his wife and helpless children, he said, 'A few days ago, I began to think about them very deeply, and found my mind distressed for a moment. But the Lord by his Spirit reproved me, and applied those words, "Cast your burden upon the Lord and he will sustain it."⁵ And ever since, I can at all times commit them with all my cares to the Lord Jesus, who (I know) careth for me, and hath given himself for me, and has washed my soul in his own precious blood.' Then his soul was so filled with ecstasy that he broke out in rapturous praises to the Lord, in a wonderful manner. Indeed from that time he astonished all who visited him, when they saw his resignation, mingled with pure zeal, lively faith, and perfect love, breathing through every word, and shining in his looks when he lay silent, through difficulty in breathing. He said that from the time when God first manifested his pardoning love to his soul, he was not ten minutes destitute of a sense of his acceptance; and then added with uncommon emotion, and praise to the Most High, 'I shall now never lose a sense of his favour through all eternity.' He increased more in spiritual strength, the weaker his body grew, and warned the young, the old, rich, and poor to prepare to meet him at the right hand of the Majesty on high. He went off in the triumph of faith, full of hope and love, on Friday morning the 20th of November 1789.

S. M.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 465–67.

⁵Cf. Ps. 55:22.

From Samuel Copleston¹

c. December 1, 1789

Coriolanus Copleston was born at Chertsey, in the county of Surrey, August 22, 1761.² The Lord drew him by the cords of love when he was about eleven years old. He often used to retire to his chamber and pour out his soul to God, and made many resolutions to serve and obey him. He had dreadful thoughts of death and judgment, which caused him to weep and pray earnestly. Once when he was at prayer, he had such a sense of God's love, and of his acceptance through a crucified Saviour, as made him weep tears of joy, and to renew his resolutions to live to him alone.

He now saw everything in a new light, and was determined to save his soul. He thought most people were beside themselves, for he never heard them talk of Christ, which grieved him exceedingly, and made him weep in secret. When he was about twelve years old, his mother was taken dangerously ill. At which time he went with two of his brothers to gather nuts, and whilst they did not seem to think about their mother, but were light and trifling, he did not join with them as his heart was too heavy. Therefore he turned back, when they were out of sight, and vented his full heart in tears and prayers that the Lord would spare his mother. For he thought he should lose all earthly comfort when she was gone, and that no one would care for his soul. Nor did he cease praying and crying till the Lord gave him a comfortable hope that he heard his prayer; and when he came home, his mother was better and mended apace from that time, and he believed that the Lord raised her up in answer to his prayer.

At the age of fifteen he was put apprentice to a baker in Hertfordshire. While he was there, which was three years, he wanted both precept and example. This was a great hurt to his soul, for seeing nothing but the enjoyments of sense he gradually went down the stream. His master quitting business in the middle of his apprenticeship, he was sent to St. Albans. While he was there, he set out afresh, having found some young men that were seriously inclined, who appointed one or two nights in a week to pray with each other. He stayed there but a few months, and then removed to Patton in Bedfordshire, where meeting his brother Lancelot,³ they strengthened each other's hands in the Lord, and attended Mr. [John] Berridge's ministry. His health being impaired, he went home, and after spending a few months there, came to London. But having no friends here, and living with a vile youth who had been his fellow apprentice, he was drawn away by and followed him in vice; which broke his delicate constitution, and soon brought upon him symptoms of a consumption.

It pleased God to restore him to health again, and he now renewed his former resolutions; but frequently broke them. However he resolved again and again, and in a short time became acquainted with a young woman whom he married.⁴ This involved him in many difficulties. Yet through divine mercy, it was attended with good, for the Lord made him instrumental in her conversion. She fell into a consumption after her first lying-in. The Lord gave her to know that her sins were forgiven for Christ's sake, and she died shouting the praises of redeeming love.

¹Titled: 'A Brief Account of Coriolanus Copleston. By Mr. S. Copleston'. Samuel Copleston (c. 1764–1835) was a son of Rev. Coriolanus Coplestone (c. 1719–1800), a curate at the parish church in Luton who invited JW to preach there in 1772 (see *Journal*, Jan. 16, 1772, *Works*, 22:304). Samuel joined a Methodist society at the age of 18 and by his later 20s was also serving as a local preacher. Eventually persecution in Luton led him to move to Leighton Buzzard, where he founded a society and provided leadership until his death. See *WMM* 58 (1835): 804.

²Samuel's older brother, Coriolanus Copleston (1761–89), was baptized in Cobham, Surrey on Aug. 22, 1761.

³Lancelot Copleston was baptized in Feb. 1763 in Cobham, Surrey.

⁴Coriolanus married Ann Olney on Dec. 4, 1783, in Luton.

One night as he was mourning before the Lord, he gave him such a sense of his mercy as constrained him to rise and praise him. His wife waking asked, 'What was the matter?' He answered, 'The Lord is so merciful to me, who have so often abused his goodness, that I could not but rise to praise him.' She complained of the hardness of her heart, and desired him to pray for her; and they spent the night in weeping before the Lord. His wife's death proved a means of stirring him up to seek the Lord with his whole heart. In the year 1785, he went to London again. His soul was now athirst for God. He joined the society immediately, and the Lord soon set his soul at liberty.

One evening at West Street, under preaching, he saw himself such a sinner that he wept sore all the time; of which he gave the following account in a letter. 'As I was weeping and mourning before the Lord, in a moment these words were applied to my mind, "Has any man condemned you?" My soul seemed to reply, "No man, Lord". Then the Lord answered, "Neither do I condemn you, go in peace and sin no more."⁵ Blessed be God, now I can calmly rejoice in God my Saviour.' After he had been at London a few weeks, he went to live with a gentleman in Bishopsgate Street. Whilst he was there, he rejoiced in the liberty of the sons of God. He prayed with the servants morning and evening, and was greatly beloved by them.

In a letter dated December 24, he says, 'This morning I find my soul sweetly drawn out in prayer to God, that he would not leave me a moment, but dwell in my soul continually.' In another of March 1786, he says, 'My heart is fixed, O may God keep it fixed forever, or I shall soon stray. But he is able to keep it to that day; and has promised that he will.' One day being out in the rain he caught a violent cold, which settled a cough upon him that never left him. At Easter he was obliged to leave his place and come home. I went to meet him, and found him so weak that he could scarce walk across the room, yet rejoicing in the Comforter. He exhorted me to expect a present salvation. And while he was setting forth the Saviour of sinners, as with open arms ready to embrace all mankind, the Lord shed abroad his pardoning love in my heart, and I gave the glory to his holy name before all who were present.

After staying at home a few months, in the close of the summer he returned to London, being in some measure recovered, and wrought at his business. While he stayed, he trampled on sin through faith in the Redeemer, which is confirmed by his letters, a few quotations from which I here insert.

October 11, 1786. I am fixed on the rock of eternal ages, which cannot fail. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. For he saves thee out of the hands of all thine enemies, and crowns thee with mercies and loving kindness.

October 22. Glory be unto God. He leads me on conquering, and to conquer; and keeps me from the spirit of the world, from the corruptions of my own heart, and saves me for his name and mercy's sake. Thanks be unto God, who has bought me with his own blood, that I might serve him in newness of life. O that all my old life was dead! Blessed be God I do die! Yet it is but slowly. O my God, make bare thine almighty arm, and glorify thyself by nailing all my earthly affections to thy cross. And let them eternally die, that I may prove the fullness of thy resurrection's power, and to thy name be all the glory.

December 26. I have been poorly this week past, yet wrought very hard. I dwell with wicked companions, whose mouths are full of cursing and all manner of abominations. But Jesus keeps my soul in peace. Glory be to God, this will not always last. The time is hastening apace: a little more faith and patience, and I shall wear a glorious crown.

Give joy or grief, give ease or pain;
Take life or friends away:
I trust to find them all again,
In that eternal day.⁶

⁵Cf. John 8:10–11.

⁶Cf. CW, Hymn III, st. 9, *Funeral Hymns* (1759), 6.

His disorder increasing, he was obliged to leave his place and come home. After some time he grew better. But the ensuing year he caught repeated colds, which brought on his old disorder again, and gradually wore him down. Yet still he increased in spiritual strength.

The state of his mind appears from a letter which I received in August 1788.

I still find that I have a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. O that I could love him with all my heart! I have given up myself into his merciful hands, and have a strong confidence that he will perfect the work he has begun in my poor heart.

October 1788. I find the presence of the Lord saving my soul from sin, though he has not yet destroyed its root. But blessed be God, it does not reign, for Jesus enables me to go on conquering still.

December 24, 1788. What a blessed life is the life of faith, and a well-grounded hope of a better resurrection! There are many who have gained the port, and we are daily hastening thither, where all tears will be forever wiped away.

In the former part of the year 1789, he could not write; but in July, he wrote as follows:

I have been very near landing on the blissful shore. But the Lord's time is not yet. I have been better for three or four days past. It is through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom. Who would refuse to follow their suffering Lord, when they know the blessings he has promised, even for light afflictions, which are but for a moment, an exceeding and eternal weight of glory!

August 5, 1789. I find free access to a throne of grace, by the blood of Jesus, and trust that all things shall work together for my good. The trial of our faith is precious. This is the gold that is tried in the fire of tribulation, which makes us rich. I find Jesus is my only friend. His comforts refresh my soul. He is my life! My God! My all!

He bore the decays of nature with Christian fortitude, and could not refrain from exulting often at the prospect of being forever with the Lord. As long as he was able, he preached Jesus to all that came to see him.

Sunday the twenty-second of November was the last day of his sitting up. I believe on Sunday night the work of sanctification was completed in his soul; from which time he was full of love, and heaven was in his countenance. One of his friends coming in on Monday morning, and asking him how he found his mind, he answered, 'O! happy! I have built upon a rock!' He lay very still all day. If any asked him how he found himself, he answered, 'In peace.' I spent most of the day with him in repeating texts of Scripture, and verses of hymns, and it was a happy day to my soul. He was very sensible till about eleven o'clock, when his convulsions came upon him very fast. But even then, at intervals, he repeated texts of Scripture; and between 5:00 and 6:00 on Tuesday morning took his flight to eternal day.

S. C.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 360–65.

From Mrs. Planche (and William Hunter)¹

c. December 1, 1789

I was born August 18, 1744. My father lived in Fort William, in the highlands of Scotland. He had a place under government, but the rebellion breaking out, the town was burned, and he lost all his property. My parents had seven children, and as I was the only daughter that lived, I became my father's darling. When I was very young, I felt the drawings of the Lord upon my heart, and had strong desires to love and serve him. But alas, I knew not the way, and had no one to teach me. When I was about thirteen years of age, I dreamed one night I was upon the sea, and the ship was lost and all hands but myself, and after many struggles and great dangers I escaped safe to land upon a broken plank of the ship. When I got on shore many persons came about me, and took me away to a place where I had an awful sight of the sufferings of the damned. I cried mightily to the Lord to save me from this place of torment, and could see no way to escape. But turning about, I perceived a grave person, who looked earnestly at me, and inquired how I came into that dreadful place. I was afraid at first to speak. But taking courage, I told him all that had befallen me. I then thought he took hold of me, and brought me into a place of perfect safety, and after giving me many good instructions, which made deep impressions on my mind, he left me and I awaked in the utmost distress, but had no one to advise or instruct me.

I now sensibly felt my want of something to make me happy; but knew not where to find it. For I had no knowledge of Christ as the Saviour of lost sinners. Sometime after this my father removed to London, where I became acquainted with Mr. Planche, and after some time we were married. He was a Swiss Protestant, but had no acquaintance with that religion which saves the soul. After we were married, I found it necessary to be acquainted with the French language, as many French gentlemen resorted to our house, who could not speak English. For this purpose I took a journey with a family to France, where I continued for some months, and entered into all the fashionable vices of the French nation. Yet in the midst of all, I was at times exceedingly unhappy, and often thought, 'If I die in this state I must be undone forever.'

After I had lived ten years with my husband, his health began to decline, and he was advised to go to France. But he grew worse, and soon after died. He wished much for a Protestant minister to pray with him. But as we knew none, I prayed with him as well as I could, and was in great distress about his soul. It pleased the Lord to leave me a poor widow in a strange land. And when I returned to England to settle my affairs, I found myself without any subsistence for myself and child. My case at this time indeed seemed very hard. But the Lord was pleased to take this method to bring me to himself, and to humble my proud and stubborn heart before him.

About this time my dear mother died, and my father being left alone, I went to live with him. But how uncertain are all things under the sun! I had not been long with him till he also was taken away by a sudden stroke, and with him all my worldly expectations. Yet how wise are all the dispensations of God! Being then at Hartley Pans, settling my affairs, I providentially met with Mr. [William] Hunter, and immediately knew him to be the very person I had seen in my dream above mentioned. After I had heard him preach twice, the Lord applied the word to my heart with great power, and I felt myself a lost, undone, helpless sinner.

My state of mind was now distressing. I had many doubts and fears, the burden of sin lay heavy upon my conscience, and I groaned under it. But the same blessed Spirit which convinced me of sin,

¹What we know about Mrs. Planche is from this autobiographical account: She was born in Scotland in 1744, moved to London with her family in the early 1760s, and married her husband (of French Swiss heritage) there; he died about 10 years after the marriage and she went to live with her parents now living in Seaton Sluice, just above Newcastle. Her parents died soon after, and then Mrs. Planche went to live with her brother in Kelso, Scotland. She may be Eleanor Napper, who married James Planche in London in 1769, but this has not been confirmed.

likewise opened to me the way of salvation through a blessed Redeemer. And the views I had of him under that character, filled my soul with a pleasing hope. I came to his footstool with tears, and cried, 'Save Lord, or I perish!'² O how I longed to come to him; but found I was shut up in unbelief, and could not break my chain.

I was now going to Scotland, to live with my brother in Kelso. When I arrived there, I seemed strange to my relations, who wondered what had made the change in me. Especially as I could not go with them into all the vain amusements of life, as I was wont to do. Here my outward trials were not a few, and my inward exercises very painful. I could hear of no Methodists nearer than forty miles, namely at Alnwick. And hearing that they preached there, I took a journey, in order to hear them. Here I met with Mr. Hunter again. I heard him preach several times, and the word was spirit and life to me. I found a divine attraction upon my heart, and had many visits of God's love. But I wanted justifying faith, and a clear sense of my interest in Christ, and determined not to rest till I found it.

Going out into the country to hear my friend preach, on the ninth of May 1781, the Lord then spoke peace to my soul. He took away all guilt and condemnation from my conscience, and shed abroad his love in my heart. I knew my sins were forgiven, and that I was accepted in the Beloved. O how precious was Jesus now to me! I did indeed love him with all the powers of my soul, and made a free-will offering of myself to him, to be his forever. O what a heaven did I enjoy in his favour and love. And how did I feel my soul united to his dear people! I was determined to cast in my lot among them, though I was at forty miles distance. Mr. Hunter admitted me into society, and I found this an addition of my happiness, that my name was among God's chosen ones. My soul was abundantly blest the few days I tarried at Alnwick. Every means was sweet to me, for I found my Jesus in them all. The dear Methodists in Alnwick were kind to me, beyond expression, and have been ever since. I pray God to reward them abundantly for the same.

When I returned to Kelso, I found exercise enough for all my grace. I was indeed in the midst of lions, and had not one I could speak to that understood me. I now began to learn that if I would go to heaven, I must bear the cross and suffer persecution. And indeed I had a good share of the same. But my blessed Lord gave me strength sufficient to my day. I had a holy pleasure in suffering shame for his sake, and I felt it sweet to suffer with Jesus. 'Sufferings lead unto the crown.'³ As I had no acquaintance with any preacher but Mr. Hunter, I frequently wrote to him to pay us a visit at Kelso. But the distance being so great, he seemed not inclined to it. Therefore I took the liberty to write to Mr. [John] Wesley upon the subject, who desired Mr. Hunter to spend a few days at Kelso. He came with some other friends from Alnwick; and when I saw them, my heart rejoiced with great joy. He preached several times to great multitudes, who heard with the greatest attention. He paid us a second visit, and this laid the foundation for preaching the gospel at Kelso.

In June 1782 the Rev. Mr. Wesley, in his return from Scotland to Alnwick, made his way through Kelso and spent a night with us, and lodged at my brother's. I cannot express the joy I felt when I saw him. He preached in the evening from Revelation 20:11–12. O what I saw in hearing this great subject explained! The whole scene was opened to my mind, as if I had been standing before God's flaming eyes. At five in the morning he preached from 1 Corinthians 13, and gave such a description of love as I never heard before. O, it was sweet to my soul! I clearly see that love makes a Christian. Yea, love is heaven. Glory be to God, he has given me to taste of this love, which makes my soul truly happy and lays me low at his footstool.

O love divine, how sweet thou art!⁴

²Cf. Matt. 8:25.

³Cf. Rev. 2:10.

⁴CW, 'Desiring to Love, Hymn V', st. 1., *HSP* (1749): 1:58.

I followed Mr. Wesley to Alnwick, and had the happiness of hearing him preach several times. I was abundantly blest in every means, but especially at the sacrament. I had marvellous views of my Lord's sufferings and death for me the chief of sinners. I left Alnwick and went on to Newcastle, where I spent several weeks to great profit, heard much preaching, and got acquainted with many godly persons who were of great use to me. This was indeed a blessed season to me. I found I gained much ground, and received a good degree of establishing grace. I got stronger confidence in my blessed Jesus, and he was indeed precious to my soul.

I tarried at Newcastle till after Conference, having some hopes that preachers would be sent to Kelso; but was disappointed at this time. I left Newcastle and returned to Kelso, and cried to the Lord day and night that he would be pleased to send the gospel to this dark country. The Lord heard my prayers. For some time after, Mr. Hunter being sent into Scotland, came and preached at Kelso several times, and at many other places. He met with great opposition from every quarter. Nevertheless the Lord began to work. Several were awakened, and a few justified; so that we got a small society formed, and I got companions in the good way. This was great consolation to me, so that I went on my way rejoicing. Yet in the midst of all this I had many trials, storms without, and painful conflicts within, on account of the remains of sin in my nature.

I heard Mr. Hunter preach upon the subject of sanctification, and clearly understood there was a liberty to be enjoyed in the grace of God which I had not yet attained. Although I never lost the evidence of my justification, yet I was at times very low, and my mind was clouded. I still kept hold of my blessed Jesus, and often said, 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.'⁵ After I had gone on thus for more than four years, I began to have a more painful conviction for a deeper work of grace in my soul. I had no doubt of God's love to me, yet I felt myself very unlike him, and clearly understood that nothing unholy could dwell with him. I likewise saw in the clearest light all that provision treasured up in Christ for this great purpose; and that the end of his coming into the world was to save his people from their sins.

My soul was greatly encouraged in the views I had of these things to look up and hope for the salvation of God. I found my soul all on fire for this. I fasted, prayed, and wept. I wrestled hard for the blessing, till he in infinite mercy heard and answered my prayer. He came into my soul with such a display of his grace and love as I never knew before. All my bands were loosed, and my spirit was set perfectly free. I felt an entire deliverance from all the remains of sin in my nature, and my precious Jesus took full possession of my heart. I found my soul sink down into such a state of near union and fellowship with him as I am not capable of describing. My soul was all peace, love, heaven. O my precious Jesus, what hast thou done for me, the very chief of sinners! Lord, not unto me, not unto me, but to thy name be all the praise!

This great change did the Lord work in my soul on the 11th of November 1786, about eleven o'clock in the forenoon, and I trust I shall remember the same forever. Since that time, I have found an increase of all that he hath blest me with. I find my soul fixed and rooted in Jesus, and I hang upon him as a helpless child upon its parent for all it wants. I find I am in his blessed hand as a piece of passive clay, and can say in all things, 'Not my will, but thine be done.'⁶ He gives me power to watch and pray, and guard that sacred treasure which he hath blest me with, till he shall call me hence to see his unclouded face, and to live with him forever and ever!

[Editor's note: 'What follows is added by Mr. Hunter'.]

About two years ago, Mrs. Planche put the foregoing narrative into my hands. If she hath written any more since that time, I know nothing of it. The last time I saw her before death was at Alnwick, when I found she had entered deep into the spirit of true religion. She seemed to be all light and devotion, and

⁵Job 13:15.

⁶Luke 22:42.

spoke to me of the deep things of God, with surprising pleasure. She possessed a simplicity not found in many, so that she received good by every means. To this was joined such sweetness of temper and manners as made her agreeable wherever she was; so that they who had no taste for religion, could not but be pleased with her.

A little after her return to Kelso, she caught a fever, and in a few days died. She had written to me some time before, believing she would die soon, and begged if I was in the country to attend her funeral, and preach a sermon on the occasion. A dear companion who attended her in her last sickness says she spoke of death with great pleasure, and expressed a strong confidence in Jesus. Her soul was all light and happiness.

Not a cloud did arise, to darken her skies.’⁷

And after nine or ten days’ sickness, on Sunday morning about eight o’clock, the twenty-second of November 1789, her happy spirit took its flight to paradise, and to join the choirs above in singing praises to God and the Lamb forever and ever.

W. Hunter

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 416–23.

⁷Cf. CW, Hymns for Believers, XVIII, st. 5, *HSP* (1749), 1:221.

From Rev. William Black Jr.

Halifax
December 2, 1789

Reverend and Dear Sir,

It is now almost twelve months since I had a line from you.¹ The multiplicity and importance of your other engagements, I know, will furnish a sufficient reason for this. Yet permit me to beg, if you have a leisure moment, it may be employed in writing me a few lines. I have need of your counsel and prayers.

It was matter of great surprise to me to find that I was nominated as the Assistant.² I would gladly have resigned the office to brother [James] Wray, but the stewards and preachers opposed it. I am far from thinking myself qualified for so important and weighty a charge, and should be glad to be succeeded from England.

At Halifax our people are lively. I think I may say they are growing in grace, as well as gradually increasing in number. Our society has swelled from about sixty to one hundred, since this time twelvemonth. At Horton they remain much as they were. At Windsor there are some additions. At Cumberland also some have been added. At Liverpool and Shelburne we have sustained some loss. I believe our aggregate number at present amounts to about five hundred. I feel much encouraged concerning Halifax. Twenty have found peace with God within the last eight months, most of whom are steady, lively, humble souls. I am much comforted among them, and see great cause for thankfulness. How has God changed the scene, since I first came hither in 1786! The society is now eight times larger, and eight times more serious and spiritual. Though I have many struggles with unbelief and an evil heart, yet my soul longs for perfect love. O that my God would speedily destroy the remains of the carnal mind! Jesus is my hope and joy—my sun and shield!

My dear—my very dear father, I remain,
Your son in the gospel,

William Black

Source: published transcription; Richey, *William Black*, 253–54.

¹JW's letter of Nov. 21, 1789 (*Works*, 31:136–37) would not yet have made it across the ocean.

²Black was named Assistant of the work in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland by the 1789 Conference (see *Works*, 10:683).

From William Ashman (autobiography)

c. 1790

I was born at Coleford, in the parish of Kilmersdon, in the county of Somerset, in the year of our Lord 1734. My father and mother were very honest people, but had no religion.¹ My mother had something of the form of godliness, and in that she trusted. But my father had neither the form nor power. He was much addicted to swearing, and paid little or no regard to the Sabbath-day, for which my mother did often reprove him; but to little purpose, till on receiving the news that his brother, a very wicked man, was killed by falling down a coal pit, he was cut to the heart. Then I saw him drop a tear, and wring his hands, saying, 'What is become of his poor soul?'

About this time providence brought the Rev. Mr. [John] Wesley into our parish to preach, and great numbers of people flocked to hear, among whom were my father and mother. I was then present with my mother, who was greatly affected with the preaching, and said to my father, 'I never saw or heard such a man before. I think there has not been such a man on the earth since the days of the apostles. I believe he is raised up for some very great work, and that the end of the world is near at hand.' My father now began to attend to what he heard, and the word made a lasting impression on his mind; so that he was quite reformed, and began to pray in his family. A society began to be formed, and a mighty outpouring of the Spirit fell on the people, so that there was a great ingathering of souls to Jesus Christ. The poor people began to build a preaching house at Coleford, though they had not a shilling in hand to do it with. One or two said, 'What are we going about? We cannot go on with it.' One said, 'Let us begin as if the king was to pay for it.' It was then agreed that every member of the society should pay one penny a week at least, and others what they thought proper. There was also a weekly collection towards the building, and the people were of one heart and one soul. As there was a great reformation from swearing, drunkenness, and Sabbath-breaking, the money that built the preaching house was saved out of the alehouses. And many uncomfortable families were made truly happy.

The first person I think that received a clear sense of the pardon of sin and, I believe, a clean heart at the same time, was the wife of Joseph Wilcocks,² at Holcombe, who died in a short time after in the full triumph of faith, her soul being filled with perfect love that casteth out all fear. Many being present at her death caught the heavenly flame, which began now to spread in all the meetings. So that in a few months many were justified and, I believe, many of them sanctified. Though they did not know what justification or sanctification meant, only they expressed themselves thus, 'I am very happy. I love God with all my heart, and with all my soul. And I know God loves me, and that Jesus Christ died for me, and that all my sins are forgiven.' This was not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance, as was evident in their lives—for the lions became lambs.

Among this number was my father, who became a new creature in Christ Jesus. All old things were done away, and all things became new. I have heard him say that for many years together he did not lose a comfortable sense of the presence of God; and that it was his meat and drink to do the will of God, and his whole delight was to give his heart to God, and to set his affections on things above. In his lying down and in his rising up his heart was full of prayer and praise to God. He continued a very useful and faithful member of society above forty years; and always paid threepence a week to his class, which he never failed to meet during all that time. He always gave a shilling a quarter when he received his ticket, which he never once failed to receive, and also gave freely at every other collection. He thought he never could do too much for so good a cause. And as he lived, so he died in the full assurance of faith, leaving a clear testimony that he was a sincere Christian. Some of his last words to my brother, and those that were

¹His parents were Israel Ashman (c. 1706–83) and Eleanor Denning (c. 1694–1780), who married in 1731.

²Joseph Wilcox married Caterina James in Holcombe in 1751.

then present were, 'Weep not for me, for I am going to heaven.' And just as he departed, my brother perceived a very bright light shine on the bed, which far exceeded all the light that was in the room. And he was so overwhelmed with the divine presence that he sunk down on his knees by the bedside, where he remained filled with such a sense of the presence of God that he was not able to speak or move for some time, and then broke out in a flood of tears, giving praise to God.

My mother died three or four years before my father in the 86th year of her age. She had not so great a degree of faith as my father. Yet she feared the Lord and wrought righteousness, was diligent in all the means of grace, and was a sincere lover of all the preachers and all good people; was a good wife, a tender mother, a good neighbour, and a sincere friend. The Lord favoured her with a very easy death. She rose as usual and walked about the room, and finding herself faint sat down in her chair. My brother being present took her in his arms, when she said, 'Into thy hand I commend my spirit, O thou God of my salvation. Come Lord Jesus', and spake no more. She always rose early, never used tea, had five children, was diligent in business, and it never cost her twenty shillings for medicines in her whole life.

I well remember the Lord was striving with me ever since I was four or five years old, inclining me to love good persons and good things. I thought all ministers were good men and were sure of going to heaven, therefore I had a desire in my heart to be a minister, that I might go to heaven. Now the Lord began to pour out his Spirit on the children, and a great number of different ages were truly convinced of sin, and many found the pardon of sin, and could rejoice in God, amongst whom I was one. There were prayer-meetings almost every night in the week, and many were justified in those meetings. It was in one of those meetings that the Lord was pleased to cut me to the heart, under my father's prayer, when I was between eleven and twelve years old. The work continued to increase, and many were converted daily, some under the preaching, some in private meetings, and some without any outward means. Several very wicked men were convinced while they were in the bowels of the earth, working in the coal mines. Thus the Lord was pleased to pour out his Spirit, in a wonderful manner, in public and private, on the surface of the earth, and in the bowels of it, to show his almighty power.

I have often thought if I had been taken proper care of, and put to a Christian school, I might have been far more useful than I am. I went to school to the dissenting minister in Coleford, who was a Welshman, and exceeding warm in his temper. I think he meant to do good, for he studied very hard to make sermons, and preached twice on Sundays, morning and afternoon, for near two hours together. But to very little purpose, for there were very few if any in the congregation that had the fear of God; and not one boy in the school, except myself, that had any desire to love and serve God. This was a very great hurt to me. Mrs. — took notice of me, and desired to know what was the matter, and why she did not see me playing with the boys? She said, 'I hear you go to the Methodist meetings, and hold a meeting with the children, and that you pray with them. I am afraid you will hurt your mind, if you study too much about such deep things.'

Some time after, my master said, 'So William, I am told that your father is converted, and that he prays in public, and that you pray also.' I was as much afraid as if I had stole something, and trembled greatly. But recovering myself a little, I said, 'Yes, sir, and don't you pray with us every morning?' He said, 'Yes, I do. But how can you pray?' I said, 'When I kneel down, I speak what God puts into my mind.' He said, 'What! Are you inspired then?' I said, 'I don't know what you mean. I know that I love God, and that God loves me.' He said 'What is God?' I said, 'I love to read the Bible, and other good books.' He said, 'What good books have you?' I said, 'Some of Mr. Wesley's.' On his desiring to see one of them, I lent it, which he read. And when he came to those words, 'He that is born of God sinneth not',³ he smiled and said to Mrs. —, 'You see, my dear, what an error!' Mrs. — said, 'Error, my dear, I think St. John makes use of the same words in his Epistle.' She took the Bible and found it so. They then read, and compared what they read with the Bible. And soon after they both attended the preaching, and continued so to do while they continued at Coleford. For, soon after, he began to alter his manner of preaching, and then some of the heads of the meeting were displeased, therefore he left them, and I heard they both died

³Cf. 1 John 5:18.

in the true Christian faith.

From the time I was convinced, under my father's prayer, I began to seek the Lord in all the means of grace, and found it very comfortable to my soul. Sometimes four or five of us boys met together in the corner of some field to sing and pray, and sometimes in a stable, barn, or hayloft. And it was my meat and drink to do the will of God. In this state I continued till I was fourteen years old, and then went into a family that were professed Methodists, to learn the stocking business. The family consisted of a master and mistress, and a young man three or four years older than myself. But their deportment was very unbecoming the gospel. Sometimes they were full of levity and at other times full of evil tempers, and often made use of very unbecoming words. This grieved me very much, and for a time it hurt my mind. But after a while I was determined to live more close to God than ever and to make a good use of bad example, which the Lord was pleased to enable me to do, and my soul was truly alive to God.

When I was about sixteen, I was truly and deeply convinced of inbred sin, the evil of my heart, and how offensive it was to God; and saw the necessity of a clean heart, and a right spirit, and had a very great desire to be wholly renewed after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness. Under the burden of my evil nature I groaned for some time. But having no one that understood my case, I did not make so proper a use of the blessing which God was pleased to confer upon me, and which he would have conferred more abundantly if I had retained what he had given me. I continued in this family about three years, and soon after I left it, my master failed in business, left the country, went into the army, and farther and farther from God. But as he died abroad, I do not know what end he made. The young man I spoke of married, went into business, and soon failed also. He left the country, went into the army, and died abroad, so I am equally ignorant of the manner of his death. But there were many circumstances in their short lives too shocking to mention. I am a witness that they were triflers with God, and with their own souls, and the means of grace. Let this be a caution to all those who have tasted the good word of God, and have felt the powers of the world to come, to take care how they draw back in their hearts from God. 'Be not deceived, God will not be mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.'⁴ Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.'⁵

From the time I was eighteen till I was twenty, I lost ground in my soul. But when I was about twenty-one, being then married to my present wife,⁶ I began to seek the Lord again with all my heart, and with all my strength. And I soon found him as good as his word; for he filled my soul with perfect love that casteth out all slavish fear. I then entered into a solemn covenant with God that I would be his and serve him all the days of my life. My wife willingly joined with me, and we set out for the kingdom of heaven with all our hearts. And I soon found power to love God with all my heart, and with all my soul, and with all my strength. My body and soul were wholly given up to God, and I think no common man ever enjoyed more sweet and close union and communion with God than I did. I hated sin with a perfect hatred, and loved God and holiness with a perfect heart. I can truly say I lived a life all devoted to God, and it was my delight to give God all my heart. It was my element to love God and delight in him, and to do his will. And as I loved him, so I feared to offend him. Indeed I felt no inclination to offend the God I loved. At this time I went into business, and the Lord was pleased to bless me in all I set my hands unto.

From twenty-one until I was thirty, I was leader of two, and sometimes three classes, and a band, and steward of the society, and general steward of the circuit. I often met the people in public, and read Mr. Wesley's *Notes on the New Testament* over and over, and his sermons in public and private. The Lord was with me and blessed me in all I did, gave me favour in the eyes of the people, and made my weak endeavours useful to many. My sister was justified under my prayer, and died very happy soon after. When I was about thirty-one, the Lord inclined and constrained me to speak in public. Nothing but the mighty power of God could cause me to do this, for I am naturally of a fearful, bashful, and shy

⁴Cf. Gal. 6:7.

⁵Rev. 2:10.

⁶William Ashman married Alice Robins in Coleford, Dec. 25, 1758.

disposition. Indeed it is a miracle that I ever faced a congregation. But there is nothing too hard for God, who can out of the stones raise up children to Abraham. I was a local preacher about three years, during which time the Lord pleased to bless the word, which he enabled me to deliver, to the conviction and conversion of many; and to the encouragement of seekers, and the building up of believers in their most holy faith. Many declared on their deathbed that at such a time, while I was preaching, the word took such hold of them as never to leave them afterwards.

When I was thirty-four years old, I wrote to Mr. Wesley to let him know that I had a mind to give up myself more fully to the work of God; when he was pleased to accept of me weak and unworthy as I was. This was not done because I could not live at home, or for any temporal advantage. For I had a good house of my own, and good business, by which I cleared fifty pounds a year with half the labour I have had since I left home. I had also a kind father, a tender mother, a loving wife, and many friends. But I took up my cross, and a great one it was to me and my wife. We went, according to appointment, into the east of Cornwall, and with great difficulty I could get a place for her to live in. At last I agreed with Mr. Holmes, near Tavistock, to board her for so much a week. He had three daughters and a son, all very kind and loving. They spent the year very comfortably together, and were made a blessing to each other. From that time to the present, which is twenty-one years, I have always gone where I was appointed without the least objection. And as I had no other motive in leaving my business and country but to do good to the souls of my fellow creatures, I have made it my study to be as useful as possible in the holiness of my life, and setting a good example before all, in every circuit where I have gone. And the Lord has been pleased to favour me with the affections of all good people.

With respect to my wife, from the time we entered into a solemn covenant with the Lord, to serve him all the days of our lives, she has never repented of it, but has held fast the engagement. She loves God, and her blessed Saviour, with an upright heart, and serves him with a willing mind. She is a sincere lover of the doctrine and discipline of the Methodists, loves all the preachers, and esteems a connexion with them above any people on earth. With regard to myself, the Lord has made me an instrument in his hand in every circuit where I have laboured, for the conviction, and conversion of many souls. And I have never spent one year without seeing more or less fruit of my labour, and some happy deaths.

I believe the preachers called Methodists to be one of the most useful body of men in these kingdoms; and the plan hitherto followed by them to be the best that ever was laid down since the apostles' days. I pray God it may ever continue, and that each of us who are in connexion may labour to be more and more useful. I believe there is more real religion among the Methodists than among any other body of people in these kingdoms. But there is not half enough, considering the means they enjoy. This is the fourth year I have spent in this country,⁷ and I observe many things that hinder vital religion; viz., smuggling, drinking to excess, lewdness, and a worldly spirit. It is no wonder that real religion is at a low ebb; whilst the more of this world's goods many people have, the closer they hold them, and are less useful and less alive to God than when they were worth far less. What a pity that three or four thousand pounds should make men less useful and less happy. Yet this is too often seen and known by sad experience, and will be a great hurt to the Methodist cause.

The following is my creed. I believe that God created man in his own image, able to stand, but liable to fall. And that he gave him a law for the trial of his obedience, as a free agent, which law man broke, and thereby lost the image of his Creator, and was driven out of paradise. That in Adam all died, the consequence of which is, we are all born in sin, with an evil heart of unbelief departing from the living God. This evil nature deserves God's wrath, and in this state lay the whole human race, when the Lion of the tribe of Judah undertook to open the book, and to unloose the seals thereof. Then it was that God came to our first parents, and preached the gospel to them, and in so doing he preached the gospel to every soul of man; so that the free gift is come upon all men to justification of life. The happy consequence of this is, all that die in a state of infancy, and all that never had the use of reason, are received into the kingdom of heaven without any condition to be fulfilled on their part. But the rest of

⁷I.e., Devon and Cornwall.

mankind are required to walk agreeable to the light which God is pleased to give them. For Christ is the true light which lighteneth every man that cometh into the world, and by the grace of God he tasted death for every man. God is loving to every man, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved.

With regard to my preaching, I have always made it a rule, but more abundantly of late, to deliver every discourse as if it was to be my last, and to desire the people to hear, and to receive it in the same manner. In my doctrine I never forget to point out to man the state and condition he is in by nature, and likewise what he has brought on himself by evil practice, with the danger of continuing in an impenitent state, and the great misery that will be consequent upon living and dying without true repentance, the pardon of sin, and holiness of heart. Then I hold forth Jesus Christ as a present and willing Saviour, to every soul that will forsake their sins and come to him in a proper manner. I encourage all that labour and are heavy laden to come to the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, according to the words of our blessed Saviour, 'Whosoever cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast him out.'⁸

I tell the people that they ought not to rest without the knowledge of salvation by the remission of their sins; that this blessing is received by faith, and that it is free for all who feel their need of it. To those who know they have redemption in the blood of Christ, the forgiveness of sin, I preach that the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin, and that there are as many promises in the word of God that he will sanctify, as there are that he will justify us. I believe Jesus Christ has purchased as much holiness for us, as Adam lost; and that God is willing to restore us to his image, and to stamp it on our hearts. We are justified by faith, and we are sanctified by faith. 'Be it unto thee according to thy faith.'⁹ If thou canst believe, thou shalt see the salvation of God.¹⁰ Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,¹¹ from the guilt, from the power, and from the inbeing of sin. 'He that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life.'¹² Perfect love casteth out all fear.¹³ If I can but touch the hem of his garment, I shall be made whole.¹⁴ As many as touched him were made perfectly whole.¹⁵ Fear not, only believe, and thou shalt be made whole.¹⁶

I have seen the kind hand of providence over me all the days of my life in general, and likewise in many particular instances. When I was between five and six years old I had a very bad fever. I have heard my mother say that she expected every breath to be my last, for some days and nights together. Many times horses have fallen with me, and left me senseless. When I was between fifteen and sixteen, as I was walking by myself in a field, a strong young man coming behind me gave me a violent blow on my back, which left me breathless for some time. When I came to myself, I found him assisting me by rubbing my face, etc. When I was able to speak, I asked, why he did so? He assigned no reason, but begged I would not tell it, and made me promise that I never would while he lived, which was but a few years, and then he died a very miserable death. Two or three times, as I was learning to swim, going too far out of my depth, I was within a hair's breadth of being drowned.

When I was about twenty-nine years of age, I had a fever which confined me to my bed and room eight weeks. My life was despaired of, and had not my wife put clarified honey into my mouth, which

⁸Cf. John 6:37.

⁹Cf. Matt. 9:29.

¹⁰Cf. John 11:40.

¹¹Acts 16:31.

¹²Cf. John 3:36.

¹³Cf. 1 John 4:18.

¹⁴Cf. Matt. 9:21.

¹⁵Cf. Matt. 14:36.

¹⁶Cf. Luke 8:50.

found its way down my throat, I must have died, for my mouth and tongue were very black, and nothing would pass. Since I have travelled as a preacher I have been in great danger of losing my life in deep snow. Once between Sarum and Shaston being quite out of my road, and in very great distress, I cried unto the Lord to direct me, for I was utterly at a loss which way to go. My strength failing and night coming on, and being many miles from any town, I could see no house or place of shelter. And the snow falling very fast, so that it filled up my tracks after me, whilst a very strong, sharp, piercing northeast wind blew, I thought it was of no use to go any farther. Therefore I stood still, and rested myself by leaning on the horse's neck. I then said, 'Lord, what shall I do? Must I die here, or must I go to the right hand or to the left?' It came into my mind to go to the right. I found some comfort with the impression, and my strength was renewed.

I had not walked above a quarter of an hour before I saw a smoke arise, and gladly made towards it. It proved to be a small cottage, where the woman had just put some wet straw on the fire, which caused a very great smoke. She told me I might come in, but said she had no place for my horse, nor anything for him to eat. She said there was a farm house about two miles off, and gave me the best directions she could. I set out in the strength of the Lord, trusting in him to bring me thither, and I do not think I went a quarter of a mile out of the direct road, though I could see nothing but snow. The farmer gave me and my horse some refreshment, and sent a guide with me to put me in the way to Shaston. If providence had not brought me to this poor woman's house, it is likely I should have died on the plain, which is called Salisbury Plain, as many did that winter.

At another time as I was riding very slow step by step, in a deep hollow road, a man that was out shooting was behind the right hand hedge, and fired his gun across the road. Some of the shot came about my horse's ears, and some about my face and hat. The main body passed between my head and that of the horse. Had I been one step farther forward, it is likely I should have received the whole body in my neck or side of my face, which must have killed me on the spot. About two or three years ago, the horse I was riding on fell with me twice, and left me on the ground senseless, of which I did not get the better for some months. And last year my horse fell with me twice, and hurt me, so that it is not likely I shall ever get the better of it. This year my horse was taken very ill, and the horse that was lent me being too small, fell with me and threw me on my head and left me senseless on the ground; by which I have received such a hurt in my neck, shoulders, breast and back, that I do not think I shall ever be quite free from it. But I am in the Lord's hand. Let him do with me as seemeth him best. O that the remainder of my strength, and my few days may be all devoted to him, and spent in his service!

William Ashman

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 404–08, 460–64, 517–21.¹⁷

¹⁷This account is reproduced in Jackson, *EMP*, 5:296–311; along with a short description of Ashman's death.

From an Unidentified Correspondent¹

[Sunderland]
c. 1790

Mrs. Longridge received the Scriptures as a divine revelation, given by the Father of spirits to his immortal offspring; and saw that her information, both respecting her duty and happiness, must be derived from them. At an early period of life she learned that the human race are not now in that state of holiness and happiness in which they were originally created; that, as the first great cause is infinite in wisdom, power, and goodness, whatever immediately proceeds from him, especially every rational intelligent being, must, in its sphere, be perfectly good and happy. But she saw sin, with all its fatal attendants, now triumphant at large over the world; immoralities of every kind, guilt, and a sad variety of miseries, were universally prevalent; and, with all the amiable qualities she possessed, she felt the disease had reached even her; that she was not such a creature, as infinite wisdom and goodness had originally formed, but had entered this world in a lapsed state.

The enquiries which perplex philosophical minds when they consider this subject were easily surmounted by her, when she observed the great subjects of revelation proceeded on this principle—when she considered that the great design of revelation was, first, to point out to mankind the nature of their fall; secondly, to show how they might be delivered.

Admitting that we are accountable creatures, and that obedience to the divine will is the great rule by which our actions must be tried, it was easy to infer that any disobedience to that will must involve us in guilt. Therefore, when she considered the importance of that eternity which she must soon enter into, she was frequently much afraid of being mistaken, and had a constant jealousy over herself, lest she should be unprepared when death called. And though in general her mind was serene, and sometimes (especially in some of her greatest sufferings) she possessed such a tranquillity of mind, and felt such a degree of that 'peace, which passeth understanding',²

The soul's calm sunshine, and the heart-felt joy,
Which nothing earthly gives, or can destroy,³

as rendered her not only patient, but cheerful in the most extreme pain. Yet never, till the last awful scene of her life, did she manifest such unshaken confidence in God, her Saviour. Then, indeed, her light shone! Her steadfast faith, her patient hope, her amazing resignation, resplendently shone, amidst the obscurity of affliction with which she was surrounded. Then the views which she had been so long influenced by, discovered their powerful energy in her whole deportment.

She laboured under accumulated trials, both from her husband [Michael]'s absence, the illness of three children, and her own disorders. Yet she retained a remarkable serenity, and said she could perfectly resign herself, and all her concerns, to that God who cannot err, and whose goodness will not permit him to afflict those who trust in him above what they are able to bear. Her husband having returned a few days preceding her death, and tenderly enquiring if she thought herself likely to recover from her present complaint, she said, 'I have no particular apprehensions of dying. But from the weak state I am in, death

¹Titled: 'A Short Account of the Death of Mrs. Longridge, of Sunderland'. Elizabeth Bewick (1761–89) married Michael Longridge (1757–1815) in Sunderland in Dec. 1782. Michael, a draper, was one of the most distinguished local preachers and pillars of the Methodist society there; see *MM* 38 (1815): 481–86.

²Cf. Phil. 4:7.

³Cf. Alexander Pope, *An Essay on Man*, Essay IV, ll. 106–07; included by JW in *MSP* (1744), 1:339 (the two lines are inverted here).

is most likely.' Then varying the subject, she said,

I have often been afraid, during my health, lest I should deceive myself, and that I should not meet death with comfort. But my fears are removed. I have had many refreshing moments. My mind is kept in entire peace. I feel myself perfectly resigned to the will of God. Let him do with me what seemeth him good. I hope my peace is not false, for he knows I come to him as a poor, helpless, guilty creature, and simply depend on that Saviour, whom I see so suitable for me. In this I think I cannot be deceived, and yet I hope he will more abundantly bless me, and help me, before I am taken hence to bear a full testimony to his loving kindness.

She then broke out into prayer, in which she discovered a great composure of mind, although she expressed a strong desire that the Lord would be pleased to give her still further assurances that he would receive her to himself.

Soon after this, she began to observe how Mrs. W[right] had been supported during her illness with bright prospects of a better world, and to reflect upon the glory she had entered into.⁴ She then addressed herself to a lady present and said, 'O madam, if you earnestly seek the favour of God, he will support you in a dying hour! What a blessing will it be if you and your children, and I and mine, meet together in the kingdom of heaven! You have indeed taken a parent's part for them, in the concerns of this life. May you be a mother in Israel to them! May you teach them the fear of the Lord! I have long felt an interest in the welfare of your family, and now I sincerely wish they may make religion the business of their lives!'

Supposing her mother was present, she expressed a wish that she would resign her up to God, and not murmur at her sufferings or death. But understanding her mother was not then in the room, she afterwards renewed the request when, extending one arm to her parent and the other to her husband, she said, 'I have often been afraid I had deceived myself, in supposing I was in the way to heaven, and that my peace would vanish on a deathbed. But thanks be to God, I have not been mistaken! I am not left in misery! No; he is my God, and I am his! He is my Saviour! My Jesus! I have had but a little faith, but he will perfect what is lacking. Why should I doubt! my hope is in him.' After some silence, she repeated

My soul shall leave this heavy clay,
At that transporting word;
Run up with joy the shining way,
To see and praise my Lord.⁵

'Yes, I cannot doubt it! Why, shall not I stand among the thousands of Israel! Shall not I sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God! Yes, thou art my God, and I am thine!'

She then lay some time in prayer, the purport of which was 'that the friend of sinners would guard and own her; and that he would keep back the powers of darkness from molesting a weak and helpless worm'. Soon after, she exclaimed, 'O what a Saviour! What a glorious Saviour! Sure,

If all the world my Saviour knew,
Then all the world would love him too!⁶

⁴Dorothy (Taylor) Wright, the wife of Duncan Wright, the Assistant for the Sunderland circuit. See Duncan's account of her death in his letter to JW, c. May 20, 1789.

⁵Cf. Isaac Watts, 'God our Light in Darkness', st. 4, in JW, *CPH* (1738), 36.

⁶Cf. Isaac Watts, 'The Description of Christ the Beloved', st. 10, *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, 2nd edn. (London: John Lawrence, 1709), 60.

As she was repeating the name of Jesus, an intimate friend, entering the room, said to her, 'Can you call that Jesus yours?' She firmly replied, 'Yes, he is my Jesus! My Saviour! And I am his!' As her strength declined fast, she spoke but little afterward. Though on the Saturday forenoon, when asked if her mind was kept in peace, she gave no immediate answer; but in a few minutes repeated this text, Isaiah 26:3, 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee.' And added, 'I feel my mind wholly stayed on God.'

That evening Mr. [Duncan] W[right] was a few minutes with her! And though she was very weak, and not able to say more than yes or no, yet she expressed the same settled confidence. On the Sabbath morning, about 7:00, she requested all in the room except the nurse to withdraw, as she inclined to rest. In about half an hour they were called in, to see her last agonies. Her pulse was gone, and her arm quite cold. Yet she appeared sensible. They then knelt by her bedside, committing her departing spirit to God, its Creator and Redeemer.

At a few minutes past 8:00 a sudden rapture of joy diffused new life over her dying countenance. Her eyes beamed with unusual vivacity and pleasure. She strongly attempted to express the sentiments of admiration and bliss, which she appeared to feel; but her exertions were in vain. The silver cord was loosed, the golden bowl broken, the vapour of life vanishing away! In a moment the effort was over! She calmly closed her eyes, gave a slight struggle, and the spring of life stood still!

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 79–83.

Duncan Wright to JW on Making Wills

[Sunderland]
January 13, 1790

Reverend and Dear Sir,

One of our friends has given us an useful book on the nature of *wills*. But is there not something still wanting on the importance of so disposing of a man's property at his death that he may meet the approbation of the great Lord and Proprietor of all things in the great day? As so many are

Smit with the rage canine of dying rich.¹

I hope sir you, or some one of leisure and abilities, will give us some day your thoughts on this very important subject.²

For can it be want of attention, ignorance, or unbelief, that causes the infatuation of leaving so much of their Lord's goods in the hands of the ungodly, or to those who did not want anything? What! They did not attend to it, that they must give an awful account of every talent! They will not know that the earth is the Lord's, and the money, and the cattle upon a thousand hills! Or, they will not believe that they must give an account, not only how they disposed of their great Master's goods, while they lived, but how and with whom they left his property when they could be no longer stewards! O that something could be wrote that would prevent one in a thousand at least from the infatuation of so disposing of their Lord's property at their deaths that they shall meet with his frown, instead of his saying, 'Well done good and faithful servant'!³

I have been led, sir, into these thoughts both by a recent instance of one who made his will so as to leave it in the power of another to give or leave all his property to the ungodly, who do not want it; and also by the painful recollection of other instances of some with whom I was acquainted. One of these used to attend our preaching, and gave me a night's lodging occasionally. He left ten thousand pounds to a rich nephew, and not a shilling, that ever I heard of, to any charitable purpose.

Another of whom I hoped better things, in the same town, was applied to when our society was building a new preaching house, for something to help them. But he had a number of scruples and gave them nothing. And dying soon after, [he] made no scruple of leaving a rich woman a thousand pounds; no scruple of leaving his poor relations very little; no scruple of leaving the poor, and his poor old servant nothing!

A third was raised from nothing to riches. Yet, when sick, sent for one and said to him, 'You want money?' 'No', said the other, 'I do not', and really did not. Yet the dying man left him all!

A fourth, who used to call me his spiritual father, by not making or securing his will lost, I believe, not less than twenty thousand pounds, by leaving it behind him!

What strange infatuation must it be that blinds the minds of some religious men, that they will, if they can, leave all their posterity [to] gentlemen that is idle! Can they do them a greater mischief?

I remain, dear sir,

Your most affectionate,

D. W.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 265–67.

¹Cf. Edward Young, *Night Thoughts*, Night 4, l., 107; included by JW in *MSP* (1744), 2:264.

²JW fulfilled this request by publishing Wright's letter in *AM* shortly after receiving it. See also this emphasis in JW, *Journal*, Sept. 23, 1779 (*Works*, 23:149); Dec. 9, 1779 (23:157); and Dec. 31, 1786 (23:428). Cf. Sermon 50, 'The Use of Money', II.6–8 (*Works*, 2:275–76); and Sermon 87, 'The Danger of Riches', I.4 (3:231).

³Matt. 25:23.

From John Francis Valton

[Bristol]
c. January 15, 1790

Elizabeth Flook was born on the 26th of December 1769.¹ From her infancy she was remarkable for meekness and patience. Her dutifulness to and tender sympathy with her mother, in all her trials, were eminent. She was very diligent, and active in all the worldly concerns in which she was engaged, and gave promising tokens of being an ornament of her sex in her station of life.

Near two years ago, it pleased the Lord to bless a sermon to her that I preached from these words, 'I am the bread of life, he that cometh unto me shall never hunger' (John 6:35). She was then convinced that she had not that bread, and that if she died in that state she must perish everlastingly.

From this time she began most earnestly, and seriously, to seek the Lord. She set up family prayer with her mother and sisters, and performed that duty with astonishing propriety and solemnity. She now began most sorely to bewail the depravity of nature. And though her whole life had been modest and moral, yet she was convinced that without the pardon of sins, and a renewal of the soul in holiness, she could not dwell in the presence of God. She gave herself up to prayer and fasting, making opportunities in the daytime to retire and pour out her soul to him that seeth in secret. The Lord regarded the lowliness of his handmaid, and in a few months turned her captivity, and filled her mouth with praise.

From the time that the Sun of righteousness arose upon her with healing in his wings, she walked in the light of his countenance, and enjoyed continual peace. She told her mother that if that ecstasy of joy which she felt the two first weeks after she found favour with the Lord had continued, she could not have attended to any worldly business. The gracious Lord having given her the bread of eternal life, she could not eat her morsel alone, but endeavoured at every opportunity to warn and invite, in the most affectionate manner, her relations and friends to seek for salvation. Her feeling heart and tender expressions have drawn floods of tears from their eyes, and gained her the grateful affection of all the family.

She continued as the priest of the house, fervently offering them up to God in prayer and supplication. Nor did she rest in her present attainments, being clearly sensible of the necessity of purity of heart before she could be admitted into the presence of that God, who is glorious in holiness and of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. She very fervently desired and earnestly sought this blessing, in much prayer and fasting. This latter duty she was at length obliged to decline, as being highly improper for her delicate constitution.

About nine or ten months ago the frame of nature began to relax and a weakness seized her, that continued and increased till she became immortal. Having served her apprenticeship, she returned home at Whitsuntide, and was seldom able to get out afterwards. Sometimes she used the help of a horse, which her affectionate parent bought for her. But she told her mother that she was convinced this illness would be unto death, and could bless the Lord for it, as the king of terrors had nothing dreadful, because he was not an enemy to her, but a kind messenger sent from God.

At the beginning of her affliction, as she was returning one Sunday from the preaching, she felt such weakness and weariness that she could scarce proceed on her way. This was attended with a degree of murmuring and repining, thinking her lot was hard, considering her youth. But she was entirely delivered from this, by the application of that scripture, 'Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding, and eternal weight of glory.'² From this time she gave herself up most willingly and patiently, to suffer as the Lord should see good, and never afterwards had the least thought of living.

¹Elizabeth Flook (1769–90), the daughter of Stephen and Martha (Lewis) Flook, was buried in Bristol on Jan. 9, 1790.

²Cf. 2 Cor. 4:17.

Under grievous pains, she enjoyed the most serene and resigned submission to God, waiting with pleasure, but not anxious expectation, for her soul's release. One day after a severe trial through want of breath, she blessed God for what she had felt, and said with joy in her countenance, 'I shall never have this to go through any more. And whatever is yet to come, I leave to my God, for he has promised me that "as my day is, so shall my strength be"'.³

Once, when her pain had been very excruciating, she cried unto the Lord as soon as it subsided to preserve her from grieving him. He answered her, 'My grace is sufficient for thee.'⁴ She replied, 'Then welcome, Lord, ease or pain.' On seeing her parent distressed when she was in an agony, she said, 'Never mind it mother, joy is annexed to the pain. I shall reap by and by.' In this calm frame of mind she continued until death, waiting for that happy moment which would remove her from all sufferings, and give her into the arms of a precious Redeemer.

A few nights before she died, some composing drops having given her relief, she said, 'The Lord has not only given me these, but he provides everything for me that I want.' Immediately it seemed as if a voice said under her pillow, 'Yes, and he will give thee heaven soon.' Two nights before she died, her mother said, 'O my child, what have you suffered this night!' 'Ah mother', said she, 'what have I enjoyed this night!' It seemed a matter of indifference whether she had easy or painful nights, for she said, 'It matters not, it is passed away, and I shall undergo it no more.' The night before she died, she said, 'If some persons suffered what I feel in my breast (her stomach seeming to be all on fire), who had not the grace of God, they must be raving mad. But God has told me his grace is sufficient for me, therefore I cannot complain.'

In the morning she addressed her mother thus: 'O mother, what have I enjoyed, as well as suffered this night!' And then broke out in singing with a weak, trembling voice, the following verse:

The holy to the holiest leads,
With joy our spirits rise;
And he that in thy statutes treads
Shall meet thee in the skies.⁵

Early the last morning of her life, she prayed that the Lord would give her a little rest of body, and strength for the last conflict. He granted this request, and threw her into a sweet slumber, in which she continued for some time. About two hours before she died, a friend discoursing on immortality, she was filled with such transporting joy as reanimated her dying countenance. She said, with inexpressible sweetness, 'My bodily pain is great, but my joys are beyond expression.' She was then seized with a most violent fit of coughing, but when it was over, she smilingly said, 'My God supports me, or it would be intolerable. And I know he will never leave me, nor forsake me. I have lived in Christ, and in Christ I shall die. It was for this I was born.'

About an hour before she died, I visited her and found her soul stayed upon God. As she did not appear to be so near death, and being very languid, I commended her in prayer to God and left her calmly reclining her weary head upon the pillow, and her ready soul on the bosom of her gracious Lord. Soon after I was gone, she expressed a desire to see me, but I was too far to be recalled. She then desired to be put into a chair. When she was in her mother's arms, she lifted up her eyes and hands, and cried out, 'Now Lord, I am coming. Meet me half way!' When she was set in the chair, she said, 'Tell my sisters, tell all my friends, it is a great thing to die.' She then called for her sister, and said, 'Nancy, this is dying! This is dying! This is going home!' Then spreading out her arms, like a person swimming, cried out, 'Wings! Wings! Wings!' She was then put into bed, and on seeing an acquaintance by the bedside, with

³Cf. Deut. 33:25.

⁴2 Cor. 12:9.

⁵Cf. CW, Hymn 96, st. 4, *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* (1745), 84.

her mother, she said with her expiring breath and uplifted eyes, 'O what a blessed sight I shall presently see!' and immediately launched into the blaze of endless day.

J. V.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 580–84.

From an Unidentified Correspondent¹

January 19, 1790

Reverend and Dear Sir,

It pains me to be so long silent to you. Since I last saw you, the Lord has so enlarged my spiritual borders that I must believe he will, in all things needful to know, fully instruct a soul he has so closely united to himself. Of late I have had a severe and tedious conflict with the combined powers of darkness, wherein all my grace was called into action, and would have proved by far too little to bring me off victorious without the remarkable interposition of omnipotent power. While wrestling with principalities and powers I proved more than ever the great value of faith, and was clearly convinced it is the only successful weapon wherewith to fight the battles of the Lord.

When the din of war ceased, a delightful calm ensued, and very soon after the first person of the glorious Trinity drew nigh, and so united me to himself in holy fellowship as passes the power of expression. The day after, when commemorating the dying love of Christ, I felt the overwhelming power of saving grace. The curtain of mortality was drawn aside to give me a view of future glory, of heaven, and the blessed inhabitants of it. I felt not only joined in spirit to the general assembly of the first born, but got amongst them, while the divine music of the glorious place seemed to sound in my ears. When this amazing prospect was shut up, immediately the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost encamped about me. I felt surrounded with deity, in all a plenitude of love and power, lost in wonder, love, and praise: swallowed up, I would almost say, in the beatific vision. Its is certain, for a time faith seemed lost in sight, and hope in fruition.

The day after, in the house of God, I had again a fresh manifestation of the ever blessed Trinity; and since then, which is now some time, I have dwelt in the suburbs of heaven. My fellowship has been in a peculiar manner with God the Father. I cannot help remarking, when my intercourse is more immediately with him, there is a grandeur, a dignity, a certain inexpressible solemnity and majesty that indicates the presence of Jehovah himself, that fills my soul with holy reverence and awe. Yet so tempered with love as to exclude all dread. I understand now better than ever De Renty's language when he says, 'He carries about with him an experimental verity and plenitude of the holy Trinity.'² But I find the deeper I sink into God, the fewer understand me. And still fewer are disposed to walk with me. I tread a lonely, but pleasant path. Does Mr. Wesley think there is anything unscriptural in the above experience? O that these heavenly visitations may prove of an assimilating nature!

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 13 (1790): 247–48.

¹The printer titled this as from 'Mr. —'. But it might be the letter JW mentioned receiving recently from 'one of our sisters in Scotland' in his letter to Jeanne (Le Gros Bisson) Cock, Feb. 13, 1790, *Works*, 31:166–67.

²See JW, *Extract of the Life of De Renty* (1741), 5.

From the Rev. Dr. Thomas Coke

January 25, 1790

Honoured and Very Dear Sir,

Permit me to lay at your feet the first publication of any magnitude that I have ventured to offer to the public eye. In you I have, for *thirteen* years, found a father and a friend; and feel a peculiar happiness on every opportunity afforded me of expressing my obligations to you. I know you hate flattery, and therefore I must avoid all panegyric. To say but little of you would derogate from your due; and to do you justice would offend you. I must, therefore, only subscribe myself, with great respect, dar sir,

Your dutiful, affectionate, and most obliged son,

Thomas Coke

Source: published transcription; Thomas Coke, *Extracts of the Journals of the Rev. Dr. Coke's three visits to America* (London: New Chapel, 1790), iii–iv.

From David Lander

[London]
c. February 1790

Mr. Robert Windsor, late of the Minories, London, was born in February 1704. He feared God, and loved the Holy Scriptures even from his childhood. He told me that when he was a child, and heard any person reading, he wished it was the Bible, because he esteemed that to be the best book.

This fear of God, even at that time, will appear in a true light by the following circumstance. His mother was accustomed to take the Lord's name in vain, using it in a light and trifling manner, which greatly grieved him. But he had not courage to tell her the evil of it. Yet when he was coming away from her to a distant part, as he thought he might never see her again (which he never did), he was determined to tell her what grieved him. She set him a little way on his journey, and when she was going to return, he fell down on his knees, and asked her blessing, which she gave him. Then summoning all his courage, he said, 'My dear and honoured mother, I have often observed you take the Lord's name in vain, which has been a great grief to me. I beg you will, for the future, ask of God to give you grace to honour his holy name.' The reproof was so blessed to her that when she came to die, she praised the name of the Lord, who had given her a son to be the happy instrument of her conversion by that solemn reproof; and added, 'I am now going to that God, whom I loved.'

But though he thus feared God, and worked righteousness according to the light he then had, yet he was totally ignorant of the plan of salvation through Christ—which will appear from the high opinion he had of his sanctity and knowledge in divine things. For when Mr. [John] Wesley came to preach in Moorfields, one of his neighbours saying to him, 'There is a clergyman come to preach in Moorfields, I think you would like him, if you would go and hear him', he did not care to displease his friend, but thought, 'Neither you nor the clergyman can tell me more of religion than I know already.' However, to oblige his neighbour, he went to the Foundry, which was then but a desolate place. He thought, if the preacher was like the place, he should admire neither. However, he stayed to hear Mr. Wesley, and God worked upon him in so powerful and effectual a manner as he had never felt before. When they came out, his neighbour said, 'Well, sir, what do you think of this preacher?' 'Think of him?' said he. 'I never heard such a preacher before! He is more fit to stand before kings, and teach them, than to stand before and teach these old women.'

His neighbour had no need to invite him to go afterwards. He ran at every opportunity for above forty years. He was zealous and active, and a lover of all good men. He had a fervency and fluency in prayer, to which few men attain. His speech was weighty, powerful, and edifying, and many times blessed to me and others; which made me often lament the loss of so useful a leader when he was ill and could not meet us. He was very tender and compassionate to the poor, whom he visited and relieved according to his power—yea, and beyond his power. He used to say, God was a good paymaster; that we never lost by giving for his cause, and to the poor, provided we gave it with a single eye and a loving heart. When I have represented any distressing case to him, he thanked me for the information. And if he could not go himself, he sent relief by me.

One circumstance among many I will relate. I was at class one evening when a friend was waiting in Mr. Windsor's shop, for me to go with him to get the clothes of a poor man out of pawn, who could not come to the chapel for want of them. I was somewhat embarrassed to procure the money, when he bade me stop and gave me half a guinea, which more than supplied the present want. I wondered at the good providence of God, who knew what I wanted, though Mr. Windsor knew nothing of what I was then going about. Though this may seem a small matter to some people, it shows the good providence of God, who ever watches over us with a tender care.

He was a lover of those with whom he was nearly connected, and never went a sermon hunting. For he used to say to me that he preferred one of our own honest simple preachers to any of those who made so much noise to little purpose. His conversation was pleasing and profitable, and tended to the best

purposes. He loved his king and country, and none prayed more heartily or fervently for His Majesty's health, or praised God more earnestly when it was restored.

But while I am describing this amiable character, who adorned his profession for so many years, I would not be so understood as to rate him above human nature. No; he had his fears and faintings as other men have. And the only alloy in his character was a hasty spirit, and an aptness to be out of humour on trifling occasions. Whereas, in more trying circumstances he stood firm as a rock. This was his besetting sin, so far as I could perceive. And though he lamented it, and used many days of fasting and prayer to be delivered from it, yet was he not delivered wholly till near the close of his life. This made him reprove sharply, and sometimes with a degree of severity. But as it was chiefly the effect of his zeal for God, I have often found it salutary, as balm that would not break my head.

He enjoyed a degree of cheerfulness that few men retain at so advanced an age; and would say it was not all labour and sorrow. Difficulty of breathing was his chief complaint. He was rarely in violent pain, and used often to praise God on that account. He retained his understanding in a very great degree to the last. But, through the infirmities of old age and the buffeting of Satan, he often had sore conflicts with the powers of darkness. Sometimes in the night he was sore tossed. He would get up and wrap his nightgown about him, and wrestle with God in mighty prayer. Nor would he get off his knees till he had obtained his Father's blessing. Satan cannot long withstand the breath of fervent prayer.

When he found himself very ill in the country, he came to town (as he said) to die among his brethren. When he was so ill that everyone thought he was dying, I sat up with him two nights. The first night was a night of sorrow to him and me. I prayed often for him and myself, and could get no access to the throne. But the second night we could praise God with joyful lips, and had a near view of the New Jerusalem. Whenever he was awake, he was blessing and praising God, and sometimes so loud that I thought the family would hear him, if they were awake. He said to me, 'You will not be angry with me for praising God aloud. I think I never spent a more comfortable night.' He mentioned the sore conflicts he had gone through. I said, 'Those fears and struggles into life are common to the best of men.' He added, 'You would wonder, if you knew how thick a cloud of darkness Satan had covered me with, darkness that might be felt.' I replied, 'I did not wonder at anything that he does to us poor worms of earth, since he tempted our Lord himself.' He often repeated part of that hymn,

How do thy mercies close me round,
Forever be thy name adored:
I blush, in all things to abound;
The servant is above his Lord:
Inured to poverty and pain,
A suffering life my Master led;
The Son of God, the Son of man,
He had not where to lay his head!¹

O how desirable a sight to men and angels, and worthy the notice of God, is a poor mortal worn out with age, gasping for breath, struggling with pain, and conflicting with death; and yet more than conqueror through him that loved him, and triumphing over all, through divine mercy! This is a demonstration of the powers of the world to come. I said to him, 'You are now triumphing over trouble and death.' He replied, 'Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, and good will towards men.'² Though he seemed so near death, it was the will of God to continue him a little longer in this world, that he might make him perfect through suffering.

¹CW, 'At Lying Down', st. 1–2, *HSP* (1740), 129.

²Cf. Luke 2:14.

From this time he was much tried with inward conflicts, and outward trials; some of which he mentioned to me. I told him that all these things are permitted by the wise providence of God, to teach us patience and to stir us up to pray. He observed to me some time ago that he now understood that scripture where St. James says, 'My brethren count it all joy, when ye fall into divers temptations'³ in a manner he had never done before. From this time I could perceive that he was ripening apace for the glorious inheritance. About a fortnight before his death he said to me, 'I am now ready, when it pleases God to take me.' I was exceedingly pleased to hear him say so much, for he was ever less than the least of saints in his own eyes. When any of the band had prayed for him, and begged grace to follow him, as he had followed Christ, he would say, 'O my brethren, do not propose me as an example. Christ is the only example. He is all in all.'

The Friday before he died, Satan was permitted to make his last assault. When I went to see him, and asked him how he did, he said, 'I am covered with a thick cloud.' I said, 'Let us look unto him, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, and despised the shame, lest we be weary and faint in our minds.' I told him I had drank deep of the same cup lately, and had felt the energy of the powers of darkness in a greater degree than I had ever done before; but I found gracious fruit arise out of that bitter cup, for it had stirred me up to cry to God in fervent prayer that I might be delivered from all I felt or feared. 'Let us wrestle on then', said I, 'till the break of eternal day.' He seemed much comforted, and thanked me for my company. This was the last time I met in band with him. For the next Friday he was speechless, when we came to meet. The tenement of clay now began to go swiftly to ruin, and he was delivered from all fear of that awful scene that was so near.

On Thursday night, when he was pulling off his clothes, he said, 'O Lord, if it pleases thee, let it be the last time that I put them off.' And so it was. His blessed soul seemed now weary of its earthly load, and panted for the house from heaven. In the night he often repeated, 'Lord let me die on Friday about one o'clock.' He changed for death about 8:00. I came to meet the band, not knowing he was so ill and almost speechless. He could only say, 'Pray, pray.' But seemed quite sensible. We kneeled down, and spent some time in prayer with him. I purposed to stay with him all night. He continued breathing like one in a sweet sleep till about twenty minutes before 11:00; when, without the least struggle or groan, he fell asleep, January the 29th 1790, having just completed his eighty-sixth year.

David Lander

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 73–79.

³James 1:2.

From J. S.¹

c. March 1790

Having been a member of the Methodist society twenty-six years, I have had in the course of that time frequent occasion to make remarks upon their singing. There have always been a few among us that could sing correctly. And while these kept together, and the congregation attended to them as a guide, we had good singing. But when we had no guide, we lost our way, and generally went wrong both in time and tune. And these being so essential to good singing, we may justly pronounce that bad which is deficient in either.

I shall take notice of the deviations which I have heard in our congregation; and I believe the same defects will be found in most other places of public worship.

First, of time in three particulars.

1. Time in the bar.
2. Time in the piece of music.
3. Time in the body of voices.

N. B. The breach of one of these is a breach of all. Yet for the sake of order, it will be necessary to consider them distinctly.

First, deviation from time in the bar is not giving to individual notes their just length. This breach of time is more frequent than is generally observed, and is owing chiefly to persons introducing tunes into congregations without a strict regard to time. And it is pity it should be so, as it is much easier to sing in good than bad time, and far more difficult to unlearn what is wrong than to learn what is right at first.

Secondly, deviations from time in the piece of music has been constantly practised among the Methodists. I mean that of pausing while the preacher gives out the hymn, either in one or two lines at a time. This is certainly a breach of time in the piece of music; but this being the least disagreeable, it is dispensed with. Especially as it answers a good purpose, to let those hear the words that have not books.

Thirdly, deviations from time in the body of voices happen when one part of the congregation sing before the other. This is a breach of time, and is frequently occasioned by hastening the time of a tune after it is begun, without apprising the congregation of such intention. This has a direct tendency to make a breach of time in the body of voices.

Note. Time and tune are so connected in public singing that a breach of time always produces a breach of tune; but not vice versa, a breach of tune doth not produce a breach of time.

Secondly, of tune in three particulars.

1. Singing wrong musical intervals.
2. Singing wrong notes.
3. Singing more notes than are required.

First, deviations from true musical intervals, happening chiefly, if not entirely, among those who have not musical ears. And I know no remedy for this, as all people claim a right to join in public singing, perhaps we ought not to forbid them. Yet it is as great an absurdity to expect good singing from those, as to expect good music from an instrument out of tune.

Secondly, deviations from right notes, or singing one note for another, as A for B, etc., frequently happen by many learning the tunes in different ways; and by others, who suppose they have the tune perfectly, when they are very deficient. This is the worst kind of singing out of tune. I have wondered sometimes that any would intentionally sing contrary to the body of voices, as it can only make a

¹Titled: 'Remarks on Public Singing. By J— S—, Organist'.

disagreeable noise in the ears of those that are near them. For my own part, I have chosen to sing with the body of voices, though I varied a note or two from the original tune rather than wilfully make a discord. I have frequently known an individual make the attempt, by his single voice, against four hundred, to alter two or three notes in a tune from an established method of singing it. But it will always prove a vain attempt, without apprising the congregation of his intention.

Thirdly, deviations from tune by singing more notes than are required happen by some persons attempting to ornament or grace the tunes by additions of their own, some rising two or three notes, while others are falling. This is a great impropriety in public singing, because if such persons do not rise and fall together they will of course be out of tune. Gracing or ornamenting tunes may do very well for a single voice (if done with judgment) but is by no means proper in a congregation. On this account it has been, and will be found best to use plain tunes in all places of public worship, without any embellishments, but such as may be easily and naturally sung together.

It is necessary, in public singing, to have some respect to pronunciation, as in the following cases, (i.e.) when a word of two syllables is abbreviated or made one syllable, as *heav'n*, *giv'n*, and has only one note to it. If it is pronounced as two syllables, *hea-ven*, *gi-ven*, then two notes will be heard, where only one is intended.

N. B. When a word is to be pronounced that requires you to close your mouth, as *come*, you ought not to pronounce the word entirely out at the beginning of the note, especially if it be a long note; otherwise you will sing a great part of the note with your mouth close, which is an impropriety.

Every word of two syllables that end with Y should in general be pronounced as E.

It may be necessary to mention another particular belonging to singing (viz.). If a preacher gives out a line of a hymn, and doth not intend to raise the tune himself, it is absolutely necessary to name the measure, or read the first verse of the hymn. But as we have not a name for every measure used among us, reading the verse is the best way to avoid a wrong tune. Besides, it would give a little more time to suit, not only the tune to the measure but also to the subject, which is seldom properly attended to in the space of three seconds, and not well understood by hearing one line.

J— S—

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 101–04.

Mrs. Martha Ward¹

[Cork]
c. March 1790

Andrew Laffan was left an orphan and destitute at a very early age.² When a lad, he applied to Dr. Lowther, then master of Lisinore school, to be instructed by him, on condition he should take care of his garden. His industry and application to learning gained him the favour of his master—and several of his pupils, who through life have preserved a friendship for him, so that they much assisted him by dealing with him.

He left Dr. Lowther, and was put apprentice to Mr. Miller, gardener to a leading family in the county of Cork. His master's wife was a Methodist, and often spoke to him, advising him to go and hear preaching. But he did not much regard her advice till one day coming to Cork, and passing by where Mr. [George] Whitefield was preaching, he stopped and was attentive to the sermon till it was ended. He thought much on what he heard and went again, when the Lord applied the word with power to his conscience. And shortly after he found peace with God.

He was no sooner set at liberty, than the love of God constrained him to love those immortal souls which Jesus had purchased with his own blood. He spoke to the servants, the workmen, and the children of the lady with whose gardener he lived. His unwearied zeal for the good of souls, and the glory of his God, was not in vain. The family heard him gladly. The Lord also gave him favour in the sight of the lady, who was well pleased with his service. So that she would not permit him to live with his master but kept him in her house, and called him her gardener. She likewise assigned him an apartment, where he daily called the family to prayer. He was among them, instant in season and out of season, and the Lord touched the hearts of the people and of the lady's three sons, some of whom witnessed a good confession. Two of the young gentlemen in particular were converted to God, and one of them died in peace.

It is a pity that some journals which he kept were lost, as they would throw much light on his experience. His widow says that after her marriage, having met with them in a chest, God so blessed the reading of them to her soul that they became in his hand instrumental to her conversion. Mr. Laffan, though deeply devoted to God, though walking unblameably before men, though the love of God made him desire to spend and be spent in the work of faith and labour of love, was assaulted with deep and severe temptations, and then obtained glorious and remarkable deliverances.

His abstinence and mortification were so severe that he has been two whole days without taking nourishment, by which means he much injured his constitution. Satan soon began to exercise him by stirring up Lady J— against him, about the time of the persecution in Cork. For the young gentlemen (her sons) grew so serious that they would not go into company, nor give way to the spirit of the world, and wished to live to God. This was looked on as so intolerable a degree of preciseness, that she began to look on her gardener as a dangerous person, and he was dismissed her service.

Mr. Laffan took a piece of ground for the nursery business, where the Lord blessed his labours. He soon after married, and the Lord blessed this union, by making him and his partner of one heart and mind and true yokefellows to each other. At Christmas in the year 1771, they were present at the love-feast. The Lord made this a time of healing. Sister Laffan was washed in the fountain open for sin and uncleanness, and felt the promises for sanctification applied to her soul. And her husband felt the Spirit of the Almighty sit on his soul as a refiner's fire, and a purifier of silver; and in a few days after the efficacy of that promise that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin was sealed on his conscience. In consequence of an influenza that prevailed universally in 1775, he contracted nervous distempers,

¹Titled: 'An Account of Andrew Laffan. By Mrs. M. Ward'.

²Andrew Laffan (c. 1724–90), a gardener who had been converted by Whitefield in 1751, became a central figure in the Wesleyan society in Cork in his later years; see Crookshank, *Ireland*, 83, 429.

which have since afflicted him. And he was also much tried in his mind. But he still preserved his uprightness, his devotedness to God, and his love to souls, so that he continued a leader of a class for forty years.

As to his conduct in temporal concerns, he never trusted in man, but in God. To him he applied, and from him he expected and had direction, protection, and deliverance.

He always delighted in a strict observation of the Sabbath. He counted it a delight, honourable, a day set apart for more intimate union and communion with his God. When gentlemen's gardeners would flock to him on that day, he would not appear to them. And when it was sometimes urged that he would offend his customers, he replied that he was in God's way, and left these things to him. But that if even he suffered in business, one morsel of bread with his blessing was better than thousands of gold and silver.

His humility made him always little and vile in his own eyes. And while he was rich in the grace of the Lord Jesus, it was still to him who is the giver of every good gift that he ascribed praise and thanksgiving, and always remembered he was a sinner saved by grace.

His impaired state of health, the pressure of worldly affairs, the temptations of Satan, and his reasoning with the adversary, made him walk rather in a cloudy state. So that he in a degree lost his evidence of sanctification a few years before his death. Yet still he held fast his integrity. His heart did not depart from God. And while he endeavoured to render unto all their due, he still gave God the glory due unto his name, and his spirit cleaved to him alone.

Mr. Laffan was struck with a paralytic stroke in the beginning of the summer of 1788. He never recovered the use of his right side afterwards, and his life was rather a living death. His distemper affected his brain so much that he complained of want of memory, and that his thoughts were much scattered. Yet he daily had hours when the powers of his mind were restored, and these opportunities were spent with God. He had often that cry in his mouth, 'Make me a clean heart, O God, and renew an upright spirit in me!'³ All fear that had torment was gone, and he was so entirely swallowed up in full assurance that in his whole sickness he never expressed a doubt of his acceptance. The world and the things of it vanished from his mind long before his dissolution. And at every moment of liberty from the numbness and delirium that attended his distemper, his soul was continually lifted up to God.

Some weeks before his death, his tongue was so much affected that he could hardly speak. His understanding was clouded by reason of his delirium, and he lay in a melancholy situation. Two sisters agreed with sister Laffan and me to set apart Wednesday the 17th of February for fasting and prayer; when the Lord enabled us to bear him in the arms of faith and prayer before the throne of grace, fully believing that he could make him still a living witness of his power to save to the uttermost, before he took him hence. Sister Laffan on the Sunday morning following retired and wrestled with God, beseeching him to visit him on his own day, to comfort and refresh his soul and to enable him to declare his praise. The Lord looked on the affliction of his servant and handmaid. He removed the stupor of his mind, and loosened his tongue to declare the mercy and goodness of his Saviour. The whole day was spent by him with heart and eyes lifted up, and in declaring the fulness of his joy and conversation; and then broke out, 'Oh! Oh! An earnest of heaven! I have an earnest of heaven!' And many other short sentences: 'Sweet Jesus! Precious Redeemer!' His countenance, his whole demeanour was changed. His whole soul breathed love and unspeakable happiness till his spirit returned to God, on Sunday evening about ten o'clock the 28th of February 1790, in the 65th year of his age.

M. W.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 299–302.

³Cf. Ps. 51:10.

Thomas Windsor¹

[London]
c. March 1790

Reverend and Dear Sir,

It is unnecessary for me to give you a prolix account of my late venerable and ever dear uncle, seeing that you were acquainted with his piety and usefulness before I was born. You, sir, can bear witness to his steady, uniform, consistent character through a series of fifty years; for the greater part of which time he served the society as steward, leader, etc., and was a shining ornament to his profession. His very strong attachment to your person, through an intimate acquaintance of half a century, made him frequently praise God, who had preserved you steadily to pursue the design you set out with in the beginning of the present revival of the work of God; and rejoiced in declaring that you had not varied in doctrine or practice from the beginning.

I shall just mention one anecdote or two which strongly mark his character, and then confine myself to the four last years of his life. He was a man of unshaken fortitude and great resolution; so that, when called to take upon him the office of churchwarden in the parish of St. Botolph, Aldgate, he served this office in an unusual way. He called a vestry, in which he informed the parishioners of his determination to act conformable to the oath he had taken, and to what he believed to be his duty—which was entirely to suppress Sabbath-breaking, and to root out the numerous houses of ill fame which at that time disgraced the parish. He caused extracts from the Acts of William and Mary to be printed upon a large sheet of paper, and stuck upon the church doors, and in the most conspicuous parts of the parish.

He likewise three times warned the offenders, before they were convicted, of his determination to put those laws into execution. The fruit sellers, butchers, publicans, and other traders, on conviction and paying the penalties, were content that their shops should be shut. But the houses of ill fame gave him much trouble. He frequently hazarded his life in this design of extirpating them; and, being generally armed, compelled the beadles, constables, etc., to assist him. He took them from their houses at all hours of the night, and lodged them in a cage (which he caused to be built for the purpose) till the next day, when they were carried before a magistrate. Sailors and others rose in large bodies to rescue the women from the civil power. At one time a captain's guard of soldiers was not sufficient to oppose the mob. It would form a small history, were I to relate the difficulties and dangers he encountered to accomplish his design; which, by unabating assiduity and perseverance, he fully effected. The parishioners, who in the beginning thought him a Don Quixote, were so fully convinced of the good he had done that, with high encomiums on his spirit and conduct, they solicited him to stand a third year. This he wished to decline, but the arguments and entreaties of the elder inhabitants prevailed on him to continue, and thereby more fully to establish the good he had wrought.

It was his constant practice, ever since I knew him, to reprove sin wherever he found it. For which purpose he always carried in his pocket printed papers against Sabbath-breaking, drunkenness, and particularly swearing, which he gave to all ranks of people in the streets or houses who were guilty of that vice; generally adding rebukes, or persuasives, as he judged most proper. A West India captain whom he had reproved and given a paper to, called on him three years after to thank him for the admonition, and the paper he had received; at the same time declaring he was so convinced of the folly and wickedness of swearing, that he had discontinued it from that time.

He was a man of strong passions, which caused him at times to use abstinence from food, particularly on Friday, when he never ate anything till he had tea in the afternoon. To this he joined strong wrestlings, and long continuance in most fervent prayer, in which I have frequently heard him employed as I passed his chamber door. His faith in the providence, and confidence in the promises of God very far exceed what I ever observed in any other. Calm and unruffled in the most trying circumstances, he cast himself on his almighty friend and benefactor. When I have been frightened at seeming impending evils that

¹Thomas Windsor is identified as 'my nephew now living with me' in Robert Windsor's will.

were coming on, and mentioned my apprehension with some degree of emotion, he would gently turn to me, smile, and say that he had made his case known to God; that he trusted in his faithfulness, and although all was dark, yet he was confident of deliverance; and would conclude exulting in the love that God always bore to them that confided in him. He would often sing these lines, in the hundred and thirty-fourth psalm, new version,

O make but trial of his love,
Experience will decide
How bless'd they are, and only they,
Who in his truth confide.

Fear him, ye saints, and ye will then
Have nothing else to fear;
Make ye his service your delight,
He'll make your wants his care.²

He certainly had just reason for his confidence, and was never deceived, and never foretold that which did not happen. I recollect once almost losing my temper at his indifference to an evil, which concerned us both and which appeared to be at the door. It is not to be supposed that a man of his good understanding and seriousness should show any degree of levity at the appearance of evils. No, his behaviour on these occasions was manly, firm, serene. With great feeling and tenderness he would combat my fears, by showing me (what I did not sufficiently understand) how secure they are who live by faith, and who (to use his own words) 'honour God by believing him'. It appeared to me at times as if he was suffered to be brought into difficulties that something like miracles might be wrought for his deliverance. And this at various times, in the course of many years, has apparently been the case. Were I to recite the many difficulties and deliverances that are on my mind, I should scarcely be credited. They were so visible and so direct, at the critical moment, beyond all contradiction, that had I been doubtful of a particular providence governing the affairs of individuals, I must have been cured of my infidelity.

The four last years of his life he spent in retirement from the world, and an entire devotedness to God. In April 1785, his most amiable wife, who was severely afflicted with the gout for many years, lay dying.³ He was the only person in the house that was insensible of it. She herself perceived it, and about an hour before her departure, with great cheerfulness said, 'My dear husband don't know that I am dying.' As she had been sitting up in the bed all the morning, when her change came, she gently dropped back on the pillow, and in about three minutes expired. This being the first intimation he had of her dying, he instantly kneeled down to commend her spirit into the hands of that God, whom she long loved and worshipped. He continued in this exercise till the nurse told him she ceased to breathe. His loss was not a small one. He had been married to Mrs. Windsor forty-eight years. She was one of the most amiable women of her day, always cheerful, never out of temper, always the same. Her care, attention, and love for her husband showed itself in all her actions. He bore this severe stroke with great fortitude, though I feared, as his health was impaired and his strength much decayed, it might shorten his days.

In the summer following he went into the country, where he endeavoured to do good among his neighbours. Besides giving books to the poor, and lending treatises to the rich, he introduced himself to their houses, and explained to them the way of salvation through Christ. As he had a fine presence, a most pleasing address, and was very polite in his behaviour, he always obtained a respectful hearing. He was nothing discouraged at seeing no fruits of his labour, for he had, in the course of a long life, seen so many

²I.e., Psalm 34, st. 8–9, in Nahum Tate and Nicholas Brady, *A New Version of the Psalms of David, fitted to the Tunes Used in the Churches* (London: M. Clark, 1696), 63.

³Robert married Mary Walmsley (1701–85) in 1736.

instances of fruit appearing years after the seed was sown, that he would often say, 'Cast thy bread upon the waters, and thou shalt find it after many days.'⁴

During the last three winters of his life he was confined to his chamber. His mornings were generally spent in reading the Scriptures and prayer. In the afternoon his cheerful, sensible conversation frequently brought him companions; many of whom were refreshed, and many affected by the strength and energy, with which in a weak decayed body he spoke of the deep things of God. When his friends would notice the goodness of his spirits, he would say, 'Although I am turned of fourscore years, and feel great weakness; yet (adored be my Redeemer!) my life is neither labour nor sorrow.'

Although he was confined, his time was not unimproved. He took great pains with the maid servants. Indeed he had practised this for more than forty years back, and was the instrument by which numbers of them were converted—many of whom are married and scattered over the kingdom, blessing the day they ever came under his roof. My children likewise became his pupils, whom he wisely instructed according to their years. Having them singly, he would ask them questions. If they understood him he gave them encouragement. If not, he would explain and make his matter clear to a girl not four years old. He ended by praying with and for them. The last winter, after instructing and praying with the three eldest, he would remain on his knees, desiring them to pray for him; and as they had not courage to speak aloud, yet to continue on their knees, begging God to bless him, etc. Whether this proceeded from that deep humility that he possessed in an eminent degree as he drew near to glory, or whether to fix the attention of the children by requiring them to pray extempore, I know not. But it has a happy effect on the eldest boy to this day.

About a week before his death he seemed weaker and more feeble, but exceeding cheerful and conversable. He now took his refreshments in very small quantities. In vain did I endeavour to persuade him to take a little weak rum and water, which he had been accustomed to drink in an evening. He said his head would not bear it, and that it interrupted the sweet peace and communion which he enjoyed with God.

The day before his death he rose to breakfast, and continued pleasant the whole day. In the evening the family, as usual, were called together into his chamber to prayer. As he was very weak, I read the chapter for him, that he might reserve his strength for prayer. When I came to that part where St. Paul says, 'Eye hath not seen; nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, ...'⁵ he stopped me short, was quite enraptured, talked in a most triumphant strain, and shed tears of joy. He continued in prayer afterwards till, his breath failing, he paused to recover; and then broke out afresh, exulting and praising God. After a second pause for breath, he most solemnly and affectionately commended us to God, and continued till he could not utter a word, or rise from his knees.

He then went to bed about 10:00, his usual hour, and as the servant was assisting in undressing him, he prayed, if it were the will of God, that he might never put those clothes on again. In this he was answered. He had no sleep all night, for Satan was permitted to make his last onset. In the morning when I visited him, he told me of his having had a sharp conflict, and said he would continue in bed for a few hours to gain rest. I went to his chamber again and conversed a short time with him on business, when he gave me instructions which I afterwards executed. Neither myself nor the doctor who attended him was in the least apprehensive of his being so near death, till, on my return from the city about two o'clock, I perceived a visible alteration. In the afternoon death made rapid advances, so that when Doctor [Thomas] Coke visited him at five o'clock, all he could utter, and that with difficulty, was that he felt Jesus precious to him. After the Doctor had prayed with, and most solemnly commended him to God, they took a most affectionate and feeling leave of each other. My uncle, with all the strength he had, squeezed the Doctor's hand, and putting it to his mouth, twice kissed it.

⁴Cf. Eccles. 11:1.

⁵Cf. 1 Cor. 2:9.

At eight o'clock, a few of his most intimate and pious friends (his band) surrounded his bed, prayed with him, and praised God for his servant's near approach to everlasting bliss. His voice was reduced to a low whisper, in which he uttered many amens during their prayers. One of his band, Mr. [David] Lander, who had met with him for more than thirty years, intending to sit up to see the last of his old friend, was at prayer when he perceived an alteration in his breathing; on which I hastened to the bedside, and found he had ceased to breath. Thus without a sigh, or groan, or struggle, did this blessed man enter into his eternal rest.

I am, sir, with the greatest respect,
Yours,

T. W.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 125–32.

From Nicholas Lowes¹

c. May 15, 1790

Elizabeth the only daughter of John and Mary Lowes, was born August 26, 1764, near Hexham, in the county of Northumberland, where her parents continued till the 12th year of her age. During that time they gave her an education agreeable to their circumstances, and at the same time instructed her in the fear of God, according to the light they then had. They were members of the Church of England, and brought up their children in that profession.

There was something remarkable in Elizabeth from a child. She was of a mild and gentle disposition. She never dared on any account to profane the Lord's day; the heinousness of which she had learned, partly from the instructions of her parents, and partly from reading the fourth commandment. She delighted in reading the Scriptures and other religious books. Yet still she had not seen herself a fallen, lost sinner. Nor had she ever heard that gospel, which is the power of God to salvation, preached in its purity and simplicity. Her parents removed into another parish, where she had the opportunity of hearing the Rev. Dr. Scott, and often found under his sermons a great love to religious things.

When she was about fourteen years of age, it pleased God to convince and convert her elder brother then at Dublin,² who immediately wrote to his parents, giving them an account of God's dealings with his soul. They were not a little surprised at the strange account which he gave. But it made little impression upon their minds, and soon wore off. Yet his sister wished to know a little more respecting the matter. In his next letter he informed them that he had found this blessed change among the people called Methodists. This account rather offended his parents, as they had heard so many false reports of that despised people. It also seemed strange to his sister at first; although she heard with attention when he mentioned what God had done for his soul. It also made her enquire further respecting this people, for she thought they could not be the people that the world represented them to be.

About a year after this, her brother returned from Dublin to see his parents, and by his visit they were a little more reconciled to the accounts which he had sent them. He then went to reside at Hexham, from whence he often wrote to them, giving them serious advice. This had a good effect upon them, and especially upon his sister, in preparing her mind for the reception of the gospel. In a little time, he with another serious young man came to visit his father's family, and found them more ready to receive the truth than they had been. They had a good deal of conversation with them, advised them to use family prayer, and rather than neglect it they wrote a form of prayer and left it with them.

Soon after this a local preacher went to preach near them. As soon as they heard of it, they went to hear for themselves. After hearing this sermon, their daughter was fully convinced that she did not love the Lord Jesus Christ, and from that time was determined to become a real Christian. She now read the Scriptures and other religious books more than ever. And the next sermon she heard gave her to feel still more the want she had of real religion.

By every sermon she heard, she was stirred up to seek the Lord with greater diligence. Though at this time she would gladly have brought something to recommend herself to the favour of God, but found this in vain, and that nothing would do but the acceptance of mercy as a sinner. She therefore attended upon all the means of grace when she conveniently could. She saw more and more into the plan of salvation, and had greater confidence that God for Christ's sake would show compassion on her. This hope increased her diligence, and encouraged her in the way of the Lord.

Many of her acquaintance were surprised that a person whom they thought so religious before should make so much ado respecting the salvation of her soul. But when they mentioned anything of this kind, she frankly acknowledged that she never had experimental religion, and blessed God that he had

¹Titled: 'A Short Account of Elizabeth Lowes. By Nicholas Lowes'.

²Apparently Joseph Lowes, bap. 1762.

now given her to feel the want of it. Her desires increased, and she was determined never to rest till she knew the Lord for her portion.

About seven months after being first convinced of sin she was enabled to lay hold of Christ and his benefits, and could then say, 'My beloved is mine and I am his.'³ This gift of remission she received at a prayer meeting. Her soul was overwhelmed with a sense of redeeming grace and dying love, and her confidence was so strong in her Saviour that she could say, 'Now I have found him whom my soul loveth.'⁴ Not many hours after this the prince of darkness assaulted her, by which she gave up her confidence, and was brought once more into darkness and distress. Yet that same night, between eleven and twelve o'clock, while she was wrestling with God in prayer, the Lord applied that promise to her soul, 'Fear not, behold I am become thy salvation.'⁵ She could say now once more, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth I desire in comparison of thee.'⁶ Her soul was filled with peace and joy through believing, and for some time 'Jesus all the day long, was her joy and her song.'⁷

She was not ashamed now to tell what God had done for her soul. And from that night, till God took her to himself, she never lost a sense of his favour and presence. She was sixteen years of age when God gave her to know his pardoning mercy. Her parents removed within a mile of Hexham, where she immediately joined the society, and never repented of it. She never omitted her class, when she was able to attend, for the space of ten years. She adorned the gospel for that time in every good word and work, often, according to her ability, relieving the necessitous and visiting the sick, and doing them offices of kindness. Her parents being old and unable to provide for themselves, she by her industry provided mostly for them as well as for herself.

In the last year of her life she was seized with a consumption, which in the space of fifteen weeks proved mortal. During all this time the Lord wonderfully supported her soul. In a few weeks she was confined to her bed, soon after which the enemy was permitted to assault her. But looking up to Jesus by faith, she found her evidence clearer and stronger than ever. Being asked what she thought of sanctification, she said, 'I believe it is the loving God with all the soul, strength, and heart, and that it is the privilege of every child of God.' She blessed God, who had given her to experience it for eight weeks past. She had no more fear of dying than of sleeping, and found her mind quite resigned to God's will in all things.

After it pleased God to afflict her for some time, the enemy assaulted her, saying she was not fit to die. She then cried mightily to God for deliverance, who heard and spoke full redemption unto her soul—from which hour all her trouble, care, sorrow, and pain were gone, and she enjoyed that freedom from inward evils which she had long felt the want of. When any friends grieved on her account, she begged they would not do so, because thereby they would offend God.

She frequently exhorted those who came to see her to seek full redemption in the blood of Christ, which God had given her to partake and be a witness of. A few minutes before her departure, being desired to give a sign if she found Jesus precious, and her soul happy in God, she said, 'Jesus is still precious, and I love him.' She then fell asleep in the Lord on May 1, 1790 in the 26th year of her age.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 356–59.

³Song of Sol. 2:16.

⁴Cf. Song of Sol. 3:4.

⁵Cf. Isa. 12:2.

⁶Cf. Ps. 73:25.

⁷Cf. CW, Hymns of One Fallen From Grace, XV, st. 4, *HSP* (1749), 1:124.

Matthew Lumb

Kingstown, St. Vincent
July 15, 1790

I was born in the parish of Halifax in Yorkshire, in October 1761. My parents went to hear the Independents, and took their children with them; but at that time they were content with hearing only.

When I was between three and four years old I was sent to school, but did not continue there long for the winter soon came on (which happened to be a very severe one), which not only hindered me from going to school but robbed me of my father, who being out in a stormy night upon a desolate moor, perished and was not found for four or five days. I was then about four years old, but can very well remember the awful scene, and particularly the distress my mother was in both then and for a considerable time after his interment. I well remember that the Spirit of the Lord was striving with me ever since I was six or seven years of age. But like Samuel, I did not know his voice!

My mother was one day talking to me about being a good boy, and telling me if I was I should go to heaven, and she said there is no pain nor death. This affected me very much, so that I went out into the fields and fixed my eyes on heaven and said, 'Oh that I was there, where there is no pain nor death!' But my greatest trouble was I did not know how to get thither. From that time, till I was about eleven years of age, I had an awful sense of something resting upon my mind. But what it was I did not know, so that I dare not lie, nor swear, as many others did. But I was uncommonly volatile, and fond of pleasure, because I thought it would banish those uneasy sensations which I felt in my mind. At eleven years of age I began to be more dissatisfied, and constantly felt such a sense of the misery of the world as made me often wish I was out of it, or that I was any person or thing but myself. And this inward misery increased almost daily. I sought ease in company, but scarce could find any who would be so much the merry-andrew as I wanted to be. I felt most of this heartfelt sorrow on the Sabbath-days, because I was then most alone. And then I felt in me the worm that dieth not. In this state I often ran from the house to the fields, where I saw my companions at a distance and said within myself, 'You are happy and satisfied with your pleasure, but I, a dissatisfied creature, am happy nowhere.' In this state I sometimes ran to them with a full determination to make myself as happy as they appeared to be. And in order to effect this I was often very near killed, by running and tossing myself like a mad creature! At other times I looked at the beasts of the field and wished I had been one of them—particularly at my father's horse. I thought 'He does his work on the weekdays and now he rests with pleasure, but I on this day am the most miserable of all beings.'

In this disconsolate state I often thought I would run away, where I should neither know any person nor be known by them. I often fixed the time of doing this at three, sometimes two, and once at one month distance; but always put it off for the present. All this time I was so miserable that I could not wish a dog to feel what I felt. Yet I did not tell my case to anyone, but thought a strange country, people, and employment would make me happy. So foolish was I to think that mortal things would satisfy an immortal spirit!

At times I found unspeakable satisfaction in reading Dr. [Isaac] Watts's hymns, particularly those on the shortness of time and the awfulness of eternity.

At Christmas 1775 I first heard the Methodists. I took a particular liking to their singing and their prayer-meetings, and there the Lord in mercy caught me in the gospel net. I went one Sabbath evening with many more of my companions in a very thoughtless manner. But when an old man who was there gave a few words of exhortation, and mentioned the brittle thread of life, the nearness of eternity, and the danger sinners were in of dropping into hell, his words went to my heart. For I saw that I was the miserable wretch who was hanging there, supported only by this thread. I trembled and inwardly said, 'Now I see what it is that makes me such a restless, unhappy being. For I am a sinner, and under the condemnation of my sins!' I went home, and that night for the first time began to pray to God. I went into my chamber and kneeled down. I had nothing to say but 'Lord have mercy upon me.' I had not been upon my knees above two minutes, before I began to be ashamed of the posture in which I lay. The enemy said,

‘Think on thy past life, and how young thou art.’ I was an entire stranger to these temptations; and did not know whether they came from a friend or an enemy. Therefore I made all the haste I could to get to bed. But this did not quiet my guilty conscience. I saw and felt myself in such a state that I could not rest. The next morning I did not know how to appear in public, for I thought all the family knew what state I was in and how I had attempted to pray. Yet I did not lose my convictions, but began to leave off sin and to pray to God. I was entirely ignorant of the steps I ought to take, and had none to speak to. Oh had anyone then taken me by the hand, I might perhaps have been delivered from many distressing months which I afterwards passed through! I was so ashamed that if I came near a Methodist, I was afraid lest he should ask me any questions. Yet I neglected no opportunity to hear preaching, and sometimes as I returned, followed the people as near as I could, to hear what they said, but dare not join myself to their company. One Sabbath morning as I was going to hear preaching I met with the old man under whom I was convinced. I was glad to see him, but much afraid lest he should speak to me about my soul. For I thought if he did, I could not refrain from telling him my state, and if I do, he can only laugh at me, for he never heard of any being like me. He talked a good deal, but I kept all my misery to myself, and thus suffered the enemy to deceive me for the present. When the preacher described the torment of the damned, his words left a great impression on my heart. I thought I was the person who was going to be so tormented, and prayed earnestly that God might deliver me.

A few days after, it being a holy day, I did not know what to do with myself. But having two companions who were much dearer to me than all the rest, I went to see them—but with this resolution, not to play with them as before. But oh how dangerous it is to attempt to meet Satan on his own ground! For I found them and about forty more playing at football, and I, like Lot’s wife, stood to look at them and leaned upon a stone wall. They came up and said, ‘What is the matter with him, he used to be the first?’ I felt much reluctance for a while. But it was soon gone, and that afternoon I was more like a fiend than a human creature. My heels were repeatedly tripped up, and I pitched with my head upon the frozen ground. But I was insensible to all pain both of body and mind. At night I returned home, but oh the racking torment I felt in my breast! The devil immediately suggested that I should pray no more. And I thought if I did, it would only increase my guilt, and make me more fit for hell. It happened to be the preaching night, and I was sorely tempted not to go. However after many struggles I did go, and was truly miserable indeed. I thought everyone looked at me, and said in his heart, ‘We know what thou hast been doing today.’ Yet no person in the place then knew that I had a desire to save my soul. I now began to despair of mercy, and of conquering my sins and the many enemies I saw in the way. I spent many hours both by day and night in the fields, and barns, or anywhere that I might mourn, and wished that I had been anything but a human creature. The heart knoweth its own bitterness. Yet God in tender compassion did not suffer the blind to go out of the way. For he continued my desires, and in a few weeks my mother was convinced and joined the society immediately. This gave me great satisfaction. Yet I did not make my mind known to her. But she observing an alteration in me, began to talk to me, and then advised me to go to class meeting. After some time I went, but was so much ashamed that the sweat ran down, and I thought they all laughed at seeing me there. Yet I found a great love for them, because I thought they were the people of God. I did not go again for a long time, but I still continued to fly from sin, and to buy up every opportunity I could for hearing preaching.

One Sabbath-day I went to Halifax, when there happened to be a love-feast. What it was I did not know, but heard that only the society were to go in. Therefore I made no attempt to get in, but stood at the door till the society were gone in and all the rest went away. Then I thought, ‘So it will be at the last day. I shall see them all go into heaven, but I shall be left without.’ This increased my distress. Yet I continued to stand till they began to sing, which increased my agony more and more. Then I attempted to go home, but how to get thither I could not tell. I thought I was a burden to the earth on which I trod. And it appeared so miserable to me that nothing could attract my eyes, or affect my heart only with sorrow and distress. I had not walked above two hundred yards before I met a preacher riding fast to the love-feast. I fixed my eyes upon him as if I would have pierced him through, but had not courage to speak to him. I stood and looked at him till I could see him no more. Then I turned again towards home. But my distress increased abundantly, and I smote upon my breast again and again, and wished that I had never been

born. I said to myself; 'I have lived almost fifteen years, and seven of them I have been miserable in every state. And now I begin to suffer a hell upon earth. Oh that I could fall into nothing; or fly away and leave myself behind!' When I got home, I went and mourned by myself, but could not pray. And I thought it was almost, if not altogether needless. I increased my misery very much, by thinking no one was ever in the same state before. Oh who can explain the time of Jacob's trouble!

Thus I continued till the spring of 1777. Then I concluded that I never could be a real Christian amongst my old companions. Although I had given up all outward sin, I knew nothing of taking up the cross and confessing Christ. I looked at the littleness of my own strength, instead of making use of it. At length I resolved to go from home, and accordingly set off for Bradford in company with the old man under whom I was convinced, who was going to a love-feast there. Here providence was very kind, and cast my lot in a family where there was a class meeting, and the master of the house was a local preacher. I was now determined to serve God with my whole heart, and said within myself, 'Here none knows me, and I shall have no companions to hinder, or to laugh at me.' The first Sabbath night the mistress of the house talked with me about my soul, and asked me if I would rather go to class meeting than to play? I told her I had much rather go to class. She asked me several more questions, and gave me great encouragement; for, although I had been convinced and in some measure seeking God for fifteen months, yet I had never felt freedom to say so much before.

Soon after I joined the society, and was much delighted in hearing them talk of the love of God being shed abroad in their hearts and the temptations they met with. I was far from understanding what they meant by his love being shed abroad in their hearts. But I thought I knew something of the temptations they mentioned, by the many struggles I had felt in myself. And I thought, 'What they say of his love is the very thing that will remove that misery which I have felt so long.' I dare not disbelieve what they said, but was convinced if I did not obtain the very same blessings, I should be miserable forever. I began now to use every means of grace that could do me good. And I daily felt that God was carrying on his work in me, and had a faint hope that he would in mercy shine upon my poor benighted soul. I was told both in public and private that I was to receive the blessing by faith. But I thought it was as impossible for me to believe as it was to touch the sun with my hand. I was so much ashamed that I could not tell my foolish thoughts, not even when I was asked. And in almost every means of grace, I made myself miserable by thinking the people looked upon me as an intruder. Sometimes I was almost ready to give up all hopes. At other times I thought, if I cannot believe now, yet if I continue to watch and pray, and fly from sin, God for the sake of Christ will some time have mercy upon me.

In October 1777 I was walking in the fields, and thinking of my state, and I judged myself to be in a worse condition than ever. I said, 'My heart is more hard, and my mind more blind, and I shall never find him whom I seek.' I went home in the most dejected condition. When I got thither, I found two persons standing before the door of the house talking about religion. One had known God's pardoning love for many years, and said to the other, 'Oh, when you experience this change, everything, yea the creation itself will appear new to you!' I stood at a distance and heard these words, and said in my heart, 'If this change is to be seen, and happiness to be felt, I am determined by the grace of God never to rest till I know it to be my experience.' I went immediately to a private place, to pour out the anguish of my heart to God. I wrestled with the Lord a long time in earnest prayer, and felt myself more determined not to rest till I could rejoice in God my Saviour. Oh what a view had I at that time of the misery of living, and the horror of dying without an interest in the blood of the Lamb!

Before I left the place, I felt the power to say, 'Lord, I do believe, help thou my unbelief.'¹ My soul was immediately relieved, and I went away with much ease in my mind. Yet I did not think that the Lord had forgiven my sins. Soon after I went to meet in a class, and while the people were speaking the state of their minds, the Lord in tender mercy cleared up my evidence. Every doubt and scruple fled away in a moment, and joy unspeakable filled my heart. My darkness was changed to spiritual light, heaviness into gladness, bondage into liberty; and the hell I had felt in my breast, into a heaven of joy. Then I truly

¹Cf. Mark 9:24.

began to live and enjoy happy days, and could bless God that ever I was born to know and enjoy his love. I was in some of the means of grace every day, and the Lord made them all as a river of broad waters to my soul. In the spring I left Bradford, and after some time, went unto another family, who were very kind to me, and to whom I was so united that I called the master and mistress father and mother as long as I stayed there.

While I was thus in possession of everything that might help me forward towards heaven, and whilst I used all the means of grace, I was made more sensible of my corrupt nature and the many enemies which still had their root in my heart. I did not properly understand them. Only I felt that they kept me from rejoicing in the Lord, and sometimes brought me into heaviness. I felt the root of anger that was ready to take fire at every contradiction; of pride that was not willing to be anything, or nothing for Christ's sake; and the root of unbelief which hindered me from relying steadily upon the promises of God, both for temporals and spirituals. These often caused me to feel slavish fear and apprehensions of things which never came upon me. But I prayed earnestly and watched constantly, that I might not be overcome by my enemies. I had many opportunities of meeting in class and band with those who loved God with their whole hearts, and others who felt their want of it. At first I did not know what to do, for I thought this blessing was out of my reach, and I must be many years older before I could enjoy it. But by labouring to keep my inward enemies in subjection, I felt a desire to have my heart filled with the love of God and man. I enjoyed as much of this blessing as made me happy in general. But this did not suffice. I wanted to be his, and his alone. The more I prayed, read, and heard, the more I loved him—and the more I wanted to love him. I resolved not to rest till God had filled me with himself. I sought him day and night, and began to expect him every day. I sung the following verse almost all day long,

Oh! love divine, how sweet thou art,
When shall I find my willing heart
All taken up by thee!
I thirst, I faint, I die to prove
The greatness of redeeming love,
The love of Christ to me.²

Thus my heart did truly pant after God, as the hart panteth after the water brooks, till the tenth of October 1778,³ in the evening; when being earnest with the Lord in prayer, he manifested himself to me in such a manner as he had never done before.

He laid the rough paths of peevish nature even,
And open'd in my breast a little heaven.⁴

I had not the least doubt, but he had taken out of my heart everything contrary to love. And I have never doubted of it to this day. But I have not made that progress which I might have done. I soon found that to love God with my whole heart was not to be delivered from temptation. The next Sabbath, at a love-feast, I was tempted not to tell what God had done for me. But I was so happy I could not contain, and after I had done, my soul was much more happy. Oh how I longed to leave the body, and all things here; and be with Jesus which is far better!

As we were returning home, whilst some were speaking of the love-feast and one mentioned something that I had said, an old man (who had been in society, but had backslidden from God, and was just then returning) said, 'Oh, Matthew is young! But let him be tried twelve years, as I have been, and

²Cf. CW, 'Desiring to Love, V', st. 1, *HSP* (1749), 1:58.

³Orig., '1788'; a misprint.

⁴Cf. Matthew Prior, 'Charity', ll. 25–26, included by JW in *MSP* (1744), 1:88.

then he will be as low as I am.' The day after, when I heard this, the following words passed through my mind, 'The devil has set me twelve years to fall. But I do not know that I shall live twelve hours. Therefore I have nothing to do, but to live for the present moment.' I continued to cleave to God, that he might give me more strength—for I found the more I was determined to live to God, the more Satan was determined to hinder me. I was very ignorant both of the snares of the world, and the devil. But I made it my constant business to flee to God by prayer. And by so doing, I found the Lord not only giving me strength according to my day, but wisdom to understand the devices of Satan.

In the winter following I began to pray a little in public, and sometimes to give a word of exhortation. In this employment the Lord blest my soul, and his work prospered. We had prayer-meetings almost every night. It is impossible to describe the power and presence of the Lord which was felt at many of those meetings. I often thought my giving a word of exhortation was nothing but temptation. Yet when an opportunity offered, I could not let it slip. In the following spring I was appointed to serve in the militia, which at first gave me much concern, when I considered how I should be daily exposed to the most abominable company in the world. This made me cry mightily to God that he would either deliver me or give me power to stand. While I thus laid my case before him, he blest me in a wonderful manner. I saw he had the hearts of all men in his hand. And I firmly believed he would either deliver me, or give me power to stand. Many of my friends were much concerned for me, and I believe prayed night and day for my deliverance. When the day of assembling came, I gave myself to God by prayer. But being called for and measured, I was not the proper height; and besides, I was not eighteen years of age, therefore was immediately discharged.

From that time I was more employed in public prayer-meetings, and was encouraged by my band companions to give a word of exhortation.

The thoughts of preaching sometimes crossed my mind. But I still supposed they came from the enemy, and gave myself to fasting and prayer, that God might deliver me. Yet the more I prayed, the more was my mind drawn to it. Sometimes I was stopped in the midst of prayer, as if someone had said, 'Thou art praying against the will of God.' Then I said to myself, 'How can I preach, for I am a fool! I do not know how to speak from one text in the Bible.' I thought every child of ten years old had as much sense of preaching as I had. Yet at other times I recollected these words: 'The Lord calleth the foolish things of this world to confound the wise; and things which are not, to bring to nought the things which are.'⁵ Then I prayed that God might do with me what he saw best. Yet still I had an inward unwillingness to preach, and was determined never to take one step towards it, till I was in some measure satisfied it was of God. The trials of a preacher appeared in such a manner to me that I felt a desire rather to die than to enter into them without a clear conviction that God had sent me. I struggled in this state till Christmas 1780, when I began to speak a little. And though I was heartily ashamed of what I had said, yet I dare not refrain. I was more earnest for help in the time of need, and it pleased God to fill my soul with his love. At the same time sinners were convinced, and mourners converted. So that in the town where I lived, in two years the society increased from twenty to seventy; and many of them were made happy in God. This gave me great satisfaction, for it was the desire of my heart to see the kingdom of Jesus flourish. I soon began to preach three times on a Sabbath; and to walk ten, and sometimes twenty miles. For two years and a half, I laboured so hard, both on the Sabbath and weekdays, that many times I could hardly get upstairs at night. My friends often told me I would kill myself. But I did not mind what I suffered in the cause of so good a Master, who had made me happy all the day long. Yet I felt many temptations. But the words of St. James were a comfort to me: 'Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive a crown of life.'⁶

In the beginning of 1783 my mind began to be deeply impressed with the thoughts of travelling. Yet I had an inward backwardness to it, having no desire to see strange places and people. I had also a

⁵Cf. 1 Cor. 1:27–28.

⁶Cf. James 1:12.

circuit of my own which extended about ten miles round my home. But still the thoughts of travelling would recur. I wrestled and prayed against it, and often said to myself, 'I am no more fit to be a travelling preacher than I am to be king.' I spent many hours in secret prayer, often rose long before day, and continued in prayer till I could see to work that God might not suffer me to be deceived by the devil in such an important point. I considered all the trials of an itinerant life over and over. But none gave me such concern as the thought, 'If any of the souls who hear me should perish by my ignorance, or carelessness, or unfaithfulness, they will be required at my hands.'

At the Conference I was appointed to go into the Dales circuit. I found Mr. John Peacock a very kind assistant indeed. But I had not been many hours at Barnard Castle before my soul was overwhelmed with the thoughts of what I was entering upon, so that I could neither pray nor preach for the first twenty-four hours. Mr. Peacock encouraged me much, and at length with a heavy heart I felt a desire to do as well as I could. The circuit was very long, and we had very wet weather, so that I was wet to the skin almost every day for three weeks. This, with the dreary mountains over which I had to pass, served to bring my dear friends and comfortable home to my remembrance, so that I was much tried in my mind. But on the second Sabbath morning, as I was preaching at Weardale, I had such a view of Christ's love to his disciples and to the world in general, that my heart was melted within me, and I burst into a flood of tears, till I wept my sorrow into joy and my heaviness into gladness! Yet still I was followed by my old temptation concerning my unfitness for the work. And in general I gave way to it, so that I could hardly read, pray, or meditate, but used to mourn before the Lord. That winter was very hard, so that it was many times impossible to cross the mountains with a horse. Therefore at three different times I walked in my boots and great coat, about one hundred and fifty miles, and yet did not catch cold.

Thrice I was very near being lost in the snow on the mountains. I crept over the drifts of snow upon my hands, whilst the snow fell so fast that I could not see many yards before me. And I was out of the road, and had no one to guide me. At the conclusion of the year I was happy and thankful when I reflected on the goodness of God in casting my lot amongst such people, who not only bore with my weakness, but encouraged me to go forward in the good way.

From Barnard Castle I went to the Leeds Conference, where I was taken into full connection, and appointed for Inverness in Scotland. On my way thither my afflictions were rather increased by the accounts I got of Scotland from some of the preachers; so that I suffered a perpetual anguish of mind. Yet in the midst of it all, I had not one doubt of God's love to me. Nor did I desire to shun any place he might send me to. I only feared myself. These trials continued not only till I got into my circuit, but till the December following.

After being in deep distress I dreamed that the Bible was opened to me, and every spiritual text laid before me in such a manner that I thought I saw more than I could say as long as I should live. I told this to brother [Duncan] M'Allum, who bade me look upon it as an encouragement to think that God would always help me. I spent my time in Elgin and Inverness till December. Then I returned to labour in the country between Elgin and Aberdeen, where I found everything disagreeable to flesh and blood, except the kindness of the people. But it was here that God finally lifted my head above the waters.

We had no horses, and I left Elgin four days before Christmas on foot, in a great snow and hard frost. The first day the frost so affected my heel that it became a bad sore. The next morning I was very lame, and thought I could not walk a quarter of a mile. Yet before night I walked as well as I could twelve miles, through very deep snow. I got to Banff on the Sabbath night, but was so lame that I stood upon one leg while I preached. Here I stopped four days, and being much better, I set out on my next journey to Fraserburgh, twenty-one miles. By the time I had walked ten miles the sun was set, at which time a man came up and walked with me three miles. I asked him if he thought I could get a lodging anywhere near? He replied in the negative. I then ventured to ask if he could let me sleep in a corner of his house, and I would gladly pay him for it, but he answered, 'No'. So I bade him good night. It was now very dark, and no fence to direct me in the road. When I had walked about half a mile further, I came to a hut, but was long before I could find the door. I knocked and a woman bade me come in, but I found the hut was full of smoke. I asked her how far I was from a public house. She told me, but said she thought they could not lodge a stranger! In half a mile more I came to another hut, where the good woman gave

me a bed and a little refreshment, and I slept very comfortably. In the morning after prayers, I asked her what I had to pay? She refused to take anything, but I pressed something upon her little daughter. When I left her house, my leg and sore heel were so stiff that I could scarcely stand. However I struggled on to Fraserburgh, and at night stood upon one leg and leaned upon the back of a chair while I preached. In the following week I walked through the snow and preached at three or four places, and at length arrived at Aberdeen, which after the above hardships I found to be a Goshen indeed.

In these journeys I enjoyed more happiness than in all my labours before. Nothing was a trial to me, for I had no time to think about my weakness and unworthiness, but to do all I could to keep myself from being lost. Had I been earlier in such a situation, perhaps I might have been a conqueror sooner.

After this my days passed pleasantly away, although I had much labour. At the end of the year, in looking over my accounts, I found I had walked seven hundred and thirty-eight Scotch miles, which are nearly one thousand one hundred English. I was ordered to stay another year, and spent it very happily. The labour was nearly the same, but I grew stronger both in body and mind, and could walk from Banff to Aberdeen in one day, which is thirty Scotch, or forty-five English miles. In many parts of the circuit we had the happiness of seeing good done, particularly in Aberdeen. And at the conclusion, I felt a thankful heart that ever I saw the north.

From thence I came to Berwick-upon-Tweed, where I had plenty of preaching but not much labour, only riding a good horse about three hundred miles every six weeks. In that circuit my days passed away with much delight till January 11, 1787, when I was taken with a spotted putrid fever. I stayed in Berwick circuit a second year, and had much satisfaction, for my soul rejoiced all the day long. I rode to and preached in several new places during this year, and saw some fruit of my labours.

In July 1788 I left Scotland, and came to the Conference at London, where I was appointed for the West Indies. On the 25th of October we embarked at Gravesend, and on the 29th, took our last view and farewell of the Lizard Point.⁷ My heart felt a sensation not to be described at losing sight of the last part of British land—that place of liberty and religion! But the comfortable thoughts of having nothing in view but the good of the poor Negroes still supported my spirits. Thursday the 30th, we entered into the Bay of Biscay, where the mountainous waves caused us to lift our poor hearts to God. The captain was very kind, and nursed us as if we had been his children; and the sailors were very peaceable, and always willing to attend prayers. These things made us comfortable even in the Bay of Biscay. From the Bay we were favoured with a fair wind to Barbados, where we landed December the 4th, and there parted with our kind captain and his agreeable company, I believe with much concern on both sides. The 5th, brother [Robert] Gamble and I landed in St. Vincent's, and were very kindly received by our friends. There I left him, and having visited Dominica, I went from thence to Antigua, where I spent one year. In January last, I landed in this island [St. Vincent], where I have been about six months, and have plenty of work. I generally preach twelve, and sometimes fourteen times in the week; besides riding and talking much with the poor Negroes. I thank God, I enjoy very good health in this hot climate. It is not the place which kills the Europeans here, but their good living and ease! I often walk four or five miles, and leave my horse standing in the stable, and I find it does me good.

With regard to my opinion: I never had a doubt but that by nature man is in a fallen state, so far as to be void of all good and possessed of all evil. Neither did I ever doubt of Christ tasting death for every man. I likewise firmly believe that he is able and willing to cleanse the hearts of all who give themselves to him, so that they may rejoice evermore. And so long as they believe, love, and obey God, I believe they are as sure of heaven as if they were there already. But so soon as they give way, they will be overcome by sin, either outwardly or inwardly.

I thank God who still continues to impress my mind with the awfulness of his work. I feel I must watch and pray, for constant power to cast myself upon him. I often tremble when I think of my weakness, and the dangers that surround me. Oh may the goodwill of him who dwelt in the bush be with me; to comfort and defend me! How much, or how long I may be tossed on the ocean of time I know not.

⁷Lumb was sailing with Thomas Coke, Robert Gamble, and Benjamin Pearce for the West Indies.

But may Jesus be my pilot, and at last direct me safe into that quiet haven,

Where all the ship's company meet,
Who sail with their Saviour beneath.⁸

M. L.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 461–65, 516–22, 554–56, 609–13.

⁸Cf. CW, Hymn II, st. 3, *Funeral Hymns* (1746), 3.

‘Humanitas’ to the Editor of the *General Evening Post*

Ulverstone¹
July 26 [1790]

Sir,

Being a constant reader of your very candid paper, I was much concerned to see so unfeeling a production as a letter signed ‘John Wesley’ find its way into the *General Evening* of the 24th.²

This gentleman would, in his zeal to prevent suicide, have the body of every unhappy person who puts an end to his existence ‘hung in chains’. It is not a century ago since the zealots of another church prescribed the faggot as a remedy for heresy.³ Both remedies would be alike efficacious for the diseases they affect to prevent. What effect would such empty terrors have upon the mind of one labouring under the settled gloom, or mental derangement, that induced him to commit so dreadful a deed as to put a period to that life which the Author of our nature has made it the first object of every animal, in *its perfect senses*, to preserve? The argument is absurd, because it supposes the person to whom it is addressed capable of sound reasoning and provident for futurity, whereas the act itself indicates an insane mind. And if the unhappy object is not influenced by an *hereafter*, and the fear of meeting a justly-offended Creator in another world, will he regard any idle vengeance a fellow creature may be weak enough to inflict upon such an inanimate piece of clay as his dead body?⁴

I shall conclude by mentioning two cases directly in point—and both, I hope, conclusive against his opinion. [1.] A neighbour of mine had four daughters, whose persons were as amiable as their manners were irreproachable. The second, about twenty, and whose spirits were naturally low, when on a visit to a friend in Yorkshire happened to attend the preachment of an itinerant Methodist. The subject was (as is I believe usually the case) upon eternal damnation to the regenerate and *non-elect*.⁵ The poor girl took it into her head that she was one who was predestinated to be damned hereafter. No arguments of her friends could have any effect, though assisted by divines (of the Church of England) and the faculty, in removing this unhappy idea. One morning she was missing and was at length found drowned in a neighbouring pond, into which she had thrown herself. The agony of her surviving friends, of her distressed father and mother, and of her sympathizing sisters may be better imagined than described. But John Wesley, far from melting at this scene of woe, would have torn the dead body from the disconsolate relations, almost weighed to earth by the bitterness of grief. And instead of comforting the distressed sufferers, he would have added insult to grief and *hung the body* of the miserable but innocent victim to religious fanaticism in chains before the door of her heart-broken relations. Is this religion? Is this Christianity? Is it human nature? I hope for the honour of all three that it is neither.

[2.] He says that no person has ever been found by a jury guilty of *felo de se*.⁶ And he dates his letter with this address from Liverpool. This information is as erroneous in point of fact as his wishes are destitute of humanity. I will correct his text by giving him an instance in the place he writes from. Some years ago a person of the name of Lowe projected an hospital for blind persons. And as an appearance of external severity was necessary to carry his purpose with the generality of mankind, he affected as much outward sanctity and commonplace piety in his conversation as any other imposter ever did. Many

¹Apparently Ulverston, Lancashire.

²JW’s letter of Apr. 8, 1790; in *General Evening Post* (July 22–24, 1790), p. 3; *Works*, 15:.

³I.e., burning a person at the stake.

⁴Most of this paragraph was reprinted in the *Derby Mercury*, Aug. 26, 1790, p. 2; with the lead-in: ‘The Rev. Mr. Wesley makes few proselytes to his doctrine on the prevention of suicide. A writer on this subject says ...’.

⁵This was apparently a *Calvinist* Methodist preacher.

⁶‘Felon of oneself’.

charitable and well-disposed persons did he take in for subscription to this charity. At length, to bring his scheme to the intended point, he hired the smallpox hospital near London for the purpose of a hospital for blind persons, to which he was the treasurer. He then insured the goods for (I think) £5,000, and it was soon burnt to the ground. Strong suspicions falling upon him as the author of the fire (in order to defraud the insurers), he was pursued and apprehended by Sir John Fielding's men at Liverpool. The circumstances were convincing against him. But the morning he was removed, a strong dose of poison which he had taken deprived him of life and anticipated the vengeance of the laws of his country. A jury sat upon his body, brought in their verdict [of] *felo de se*, and it was buried in a crossroad—with a stake driven through it, and all the concomitant marks of ignominy which the law denounces against persons guilty of the offence in question.

Is Mr. John Wesley the modern Draco, that would punish all offences with the same measure of punishment?⁷ Is there no distinction betwixt suicide committed by the hand of one whom the Almighty had previously deprived of reason and the deliberate act of a guilty wretch to avoid the ignominy of certain public punishment?

Humanitas

[The editors add a note: 'A regard to that moderation which has always been the most prominent feature of the *General Evening Post* has obliged us to expunge a few lines and omit an epithet that fell from the pen of our correspondent in the warmth of honest indignation.']

Source: published transcription; *General Evening Post* (July 29–31, 1790), p. 2.

⁷Draco (fl. c. 7th century BC) was the first recorded legislator of Athens. He was invited by the Athenian citizens to replace the prevailing system of oral law and blood feud by a written code to be enforced only by a court of law. But the laws which Draco established were extremely harsh in nature, giving rise to the term 'draconian'.

From Charles Kyte¹

c. August 1790

Mrs. J—s of Winchelsea had been much afflicted for many years with a continual inward pain of body, yet applied to none but the great and wise Physician of body and soul. She laid her case before him in prayer. [She] sincerely entreated him to deliver her from the dark veil she had been under for some time respecting her soul; to forgive her sins, and take her to himself. But, if it was his blessed will she should be here a little longer, to heal and restore her to her former strength for the sake of the gospel, her husband, and children.

On July 29, 1790, as she was lying in bed, fervently praying to God for pardoning mercy, and likewise for a blessing on the preachers in Conference, particularly for our aged and honoured father, Mr. [John] Wesley, the Lord broke in upon her soul in a wonderful manner. At the same time she saw her Saviour stand at her bed's feet, and thought she was going to him; and was willing to leave this world, her husband, children, and all.

Her hands and feet were cold and stiff. She then prayed to the Lord, if he had forgiven her sins, to give a proof of it in healing her side. When immediately her hands and feet grew warm. She could use them. Her side was healed, and her pain gone. She rejoiced in God her Saviour, and sung part of that hymn,

Rejoice evermore, with angels above,
In Jesus's power, in Jesus's love;
With glad exultation your triumph proclaim,
Ascribing salvation to God and the Lamb.

Thou, Lord, our relief, in trouble hast been,
Hast sav'd us from grief, hast sav'd us from sin;
The power of thy Spirit, hath set our hearts free;
And now we inherit all fulness in thee.²

She sent for her husband, and told him what the Lord had done for her, that he had not only forgiven her sins but healed her side. Then they rejoiced together. She got out of bed and came downstairs, to the astonishment of the people who saw her. Since that time she has been better in health than for many years past, and also walked in the light of God's countenance ever since.

She desires that the above may be made public, for the glory of God and for the encouragement of all persons who may be in similar circumstances.

Charles Kyte

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 468–69.

¹Titled: 'A Sudden Cure'. Charles Kyte (d. 1802) was admitted 'on trial' as an itinerant at Conference in 1784 (see *Works*, 10:553). He was currently assigned to the Kent circuit. He would die and be buried in Canterbury in Dec. 1802. See *Minutes* (post-Wesley, 1803), 2:167–68.

²CW, Hymn XXIII, st. 1–2, *Redemption Hymns* (1747), 31–32.

From Thomas Wride

Barnard Castle
August 10–26, 1790

Reverend Sir,

I hope you will excuse the trouble I hereby give you, as it is not out of my choice but necessity.

I have waited until now for intelligence from Conference, but none has come to me. Some letters are in Barnard Castle, but none that I hear of says anything to me. Yet one says that I am appointed to Bideford [Devonshire], above 300 miles from Barnard Castle (or words to that purpose).¹ Upon the map it appears to be near four hundred miles off from Barnard Castle. If the account above be true, it is past a doubt with me that you, sir, are quite uninformed of the state of sickness that my wife [Jane] and I labour under. I have been often ill since I have been here—I suppose partly by the journeys being above my strength, but chiefly by the cold, moist air of many parts of the circuit. And permit me, sir, to add what some may not think but my teaching will show and I am constrained to feel a great decay of my powers, both animal and mental.

I have lately been dangerously ill. On the 29th of June and from thence (at intervals) unto the evening of July the 3rd, I had the intermitting pulse which by some is looked upon as a certain symptom of approaching death. I am still weak and feverish. My wife is very ill, owing to an injury she got by a stone floor. She is troubled with a falling of the fundament, not only at every stool but frequently when she only goes to make water. She is also troubled with a diarrhea to such a degree that she has not dared to attend for preaching this three weeks past, for she cannot contain long enough to get out to a convenient place to answer nature's call.

Now, reverend sir, if it be true that you have appointed me to so great a distance, I hope you will be so kind as to alter it. My weakness is so great it will take a long time for me to reach it. I think I shall not be able constantly to hold above the rate of twenty miles in a day.

I know not that it is possible to get my wife there at all, without the manifest danger of death. My horse is good, but far too small for such a journey double. It will easily appear that she is not fit for a carriage for so long a journey, for the reasons above mentioned, without mentioning the great expense that will attend it.

I hope, sir, you will take our conditions into your consideration and be at the trouble to make such alteration in my favour as to your wisdom shall seem meet. And your speedy answer will oblige, reverend sir,

Your dutiful son,

Tho. Wride

Reverend Sir,

The above is an exact copy of one that was posted on the 10th and directed 'at the New Chapel, London'. But I have yet had no letter from any quarter.

I have since got a copy of one of the letters above alluded unto, in which the writer (Thomas Gill²) says (I copy him in typography and orthography) 'Mr. Wride is to go to Biddiford, above 300 miles from B-d Castle. I am ordered not to write to him. Dr. Cok will writ and let him know the reason whi he is sent so far off.' Indeed, sir, this affair is a mystery to me. Thomas Gill is ordered not to write, and yet

¹The 1789 *Minutes* list Wride as appointed to the Dales circuit, where Thomas Gill was appointed Assistant; see *Works*, 10:681. Apparently his appointment was changed.

²Thomas Gill (c. 1758–1828) had been admitted 'on trial' as an itinerant in 1786 (see *Works*, 10:596). JW officiated at Gill's marriage to Elizabeth Robinson, a servant in the Ritchie home in Otley on May 8, 1788 (see *Journal*, *Works*, 24:82n). Gill continued active until infirmity required him to settle in 1823. See *Minutes* (post-Wesley, 1829), 6:447–48.

none else writes. I hope sir, if this comes to you, you will be pleased to grant my request and an immediate answer. I have stayed so long here that the preachers are come, and I am now an incumbrance. I am really weary. Therefore [I] shall endeavour to go with my wife into Yorkshire, to wait for your answer. I really doubt whether I am able to bear the journey. Brother [George] Holder has given me three guineas for travelling expenses, but I verily believe that I cannot get my wife to Bideford for less than twelve guineas. And I have not so much money in hand. Neither know I which way to get it, without considerable time. I have much more owed me, but my bills are not current [i.e., currency] in inns and on turnpike roads.

I unwillingly trouble you with so long a letter, yet take the liberty to entreat you, sir, to dispose of me according to your own judgment. And your directions shall be obeyed (to the best of my strength), as soon as they are received by, reverend sir,

Your dutiful son,

Tho. Wride
Barnard Castle
August 26, 1790

Be please to direct: 'With Charles Harrison, at Welburn, near Castle Howard, Yorkshire'.

Source: Wride's manuscript draft; Duke, Rubenstein, Frank Baker Collection of Wesleyana, Box CO9, Thomas Wride papers.

‘Veritas’ to the Editor of the *General Evening Post*¹

Penzance
August 12, 1790

Sir,

As constant a reader as ‘Humanitas’, and as great an admirer of the candour of the *General Evening*, I request the insertion of the following observations.

Unhappily, ‘Humanitas’ either misapprehends or misrepresents the meaning of Mr. Wesley’s letter.² Could it be supposed that anyone would wish to increase the miseries of the insane? That anyone would be so barbarous as to insult the affliction, or add more bitterness to the anguish of the surviving friends and relations of such unhappy persons? This was never Mr. Wesley’s design or character. His purpose was to disgrace suicide as a crime, not as a misfortune. Every law existing against the various crimes of men allows insanity to escape the stroke of justice, and it is right it should be so. But then that insanity is first nicely examined and fully proved by the testimony of preceding acts or tokens of madness. Let suicide be so treated, and then give it every indulgence it deserves.

The arguments of ‘Humanitas’ indeed may all be refuted by one short and plain remark. The method proposed by Mr. Wesley was to prevent. And if the crime be prevented by it, what has ‘Humanitas’ to say? *Sublatâ causâ, tollitur effectus*—the cause being removed or lessened, so is the effect of it. Besides, what he alleges might also be urged against the punishment of every other crime. And I dare think he will allow this to be a crime, the magnitude of which calls for the greatest exertion of human policy, since the voice of reason and religion is exerted in vain to check and control it. ‘Humanitas’ might as well plead for the feelings of the friends of the forger or murderer against the sentence of the law. They are equally distressing and poignant no doubt; nay, more. Every good man laments the suffering of such offender. But necessity, he knows, requires the amputation of a corrupt member for the general safety of the body. He is satisfied that punishment (however grievous or ignominious to the few, whom he sincerely pities) is inflicted for the best purposes—for the good of the state, and that others may not come into the same condemnation. It was found that this, or something like it, succeeded among the Romans when all other means had failed. Are we less sensible of infamy than pagans?

And as to the considerations of another world, the crime is generally committed by those whose affections are ardently and entirely set on this—as much as any pagans whatsoever. The trouble, the terror, or contempt of which they cannot bear better than pagans, and fly from it in hopes there is no other existence. *Cowardice* and *pride* are the chief causes of it; both of which, particularly the latter, would possibly start and hesitate at the disgrace which must attend the dead body of the suicide, attach itself to his name forever, and draw on it the abhorrence and execrations of his family. Let ‘Humanitas’ talk as he pleases about an inanimate piece of clay. He would not be such till after the act. And such reflections are dreadful to human nature—the more so without religion—and might probably make death too horrible for the suicide to encounter. Perhaps ‘Humanitas’ would think me disposed to preach a Methodist sermon should I ask: ‘Who among the first and purest Christians, amidst all their distresses, was guilty of self-murder?’³

The two instances he has adduced are doubtless lamentable. I only wish they had been detailed with more liberality, and own it is a pity that eternal damnation (as he says) should be denounced on the regenerate.

¹‘Veritas’ may be Jonathan Crowther (1759–1824), one of Wesley’s lay preachers who was serving in Penzance 1790–91. He was replying to the letter to the editor by ‘Humanitas’, dated July 26, 1790, which appeared in the *General Evening Post* (July 29–31, 1790), p. 2.

²JW’s letter of Apr. 8, 1790; in *General Evening Post* (July 22–24, 1790), p. 3; *Works*, 31:190–91.

³The break between the first and second portion of Veritas’s response occurs here.

As to his first instance, religious melancholy has in all ages and modes of faith been capable of such fatal resolutions as he describes. But religious melancholy is not a subject for human nor (I trust) divine rigour.

With regard to the second [instance], all religions have been abused. The very best has often been used, no doubt, for a mask by hypocrites and villains. But what would 'Humanitas' infer from this? He would not surely (charity, humanity forbid!) return Mr. Wesley evil for his good intention; calumny, for his good will.

The prevailing maxim of the present age and of the law, whose intention (may it ever be so) is humanity, maintain that no man in his senses can be a suicide. The act itself is insanity. This is extremely kind and plausible. Let us examine it briefly, and it amounts to this: the crime is so unnatural, so unreasonable, so imprudent and enormous that a rational creature ought, at the risk of every other calamity, to avoid it; and if he does not, he is not in his proper senses. The very same might be said of every other great crime, as was before hinted. The commission of such is a proof of insanity. Who in his perfect senses that rightly and properly considers the consequences of them would dare to perpetrate them? Unless he was totally unprincipled, and regarding this world too much (like the suicide), thought too little of another? But as far as preferring one evil to what *he* supposes a greater, the suicide is in his senses.

It must be owned that this sin is a disgrace to this country in particular, and also that it increases. Formerly one month in the year was remarkable for it; now every one. The impatient suicide will not wait for the usual season.

With much more to say on the subject, I fear that I have already exceeded the limits of your paper. The case of Lowe is that of a villain flying to suicide in order to escape the gallows. Yet justice, very properly, loads him with every infamy it could. But I appeal to common observation and experience whether or no[t] the rich or those in the decent and creditable ranks of life, when guilty of it, are not generally reported lunatic by a coroner and his jury; while the poor, the miserable, the friendless only run the hazard of being treated as *felones de se*.⁴ And if it be so, at once the great guilt of the act is clear. The partiality and false tenderness of human justice are evident, and she is called upon to alter her conduct and to use every reasonable method—the most sharp medicine, if lenient will not do; even this prescribed by Mr. Wesley—to cure the evil. Even that of hanging in chains, if nothing else be likely to deter men from so heinous an offense against reason, manhood, and heaven.

I am sir,

Your most obedient servant,

Veritas

Source: printed transcription; Part I, *General Evening Post* (Aug. 21–24, 1790), p. 2; Part II, titled 'Observations on Suicide', *General Evening Post* (Aug. 24–26, 1790, p. 2.

⁴A 'felon of the self'.

Editorial Comment in *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*

[London]
August 21, 1790

The Rev. Mr. [John] Wesley makes few proselytes to his barbarous doctrine on the prevention of suicide.¹ The mind that loathes or despises life, and has stifled or subdued the dread of eternity, may well be supposed to reflect with contempt on all the indignities which can be offered to the miserable prison from which it longs to escape. These may outrage the feelings of those who are thankful for the blessings of life, but cannot shake the purpose of him who spurns it from him. And as persons reduced to that unhappy state of mind are evidently unfit for the purposes of society, perhaps the wisest course is to suffer them to depart unnoticed and unlamented.

It is shocking to human nature to reflect that the monster can have friends. But that there should be such audacity exhibited by him and his associates is natural enough. A mind of so much depravity cannot possibly have a sense of shame.²

Source: published transcription; *The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser* (Aug. 21, 1790), p. 2.

¹JW's letter of Apr. 8, 1790; in *General Evening Post* (July 22–24, 1790), p. 3; *Works*, 31:190–91.

²The last paragraph was omitted when this comment was reprinted in *Public Advertiser* (Aug. 23, 1790), p. 2.

‘Humanitas’ to the Editor of the *General Evening Post*

Ulverstone
September 2, 1790

Sir,

I have neither leisure nor inclination to reply to your correspondent from the Land's End who has thought it necessary to take up his pen in vindication of Mr. John Wesley's indiscriminate, ignominious treatment of the bodies of suicides¹—a doctrine to which I believe he will have as few converts as the late Rev. Mr. Madan had to that of polygamy.² The only motive that induced me to notice Mr. Wesley's letter was that it was erroneous in point of fact and destitute of that kind of feeling which it is the pride of civilized society to acknowledge the influence of. He asserted that juries never brought in their verdicts *felo de se*,³ and proposed as a remedy for the crime of suicide hanging the body in chains.

Now, sir, let us see how the law at present stands. When an unhappy creature has put a period to his own existence the coroner summons a jury from the neighbourhood who, upon *their oaths*, make enquiry into the state of mind and other concomitant circumstances of the deceased. If they find the person to have been insane, they of course bring in their verdict to that effect. But if on the other hand the crime has been committed with a sound and discerning mind, the body is denied Christian burial, flung into a hole dug for the purpose in a high road, with a stake driven through the body, and the goods and chattels which he was possessed of at the time of his death are forfeited to the king. But Mr. Wesley says this punishment is never inflicted, or (if it be) it is not sufficiently severe. I have mentioned one instance at the very place from whence he dated his letter. And since mine was inserted in the *General Evening Post*, that paper has given us another where the jury brought in their verdict *felo de se*, and where the punishment denounced by law was inflicted on the body.⁴

It is and has been long lamented that our criminal code of laws is too sanguinary. And I trust the spirit of the times is not such as would either revive the horrid punishments of racks and faggots for the living, or the hook with which Tiberius dragged the dead victims to his revenge about the streets of Rome. Or introduce the gibbet for the bodies of suicides, with which Mr. Wesley would—in a mistaken zeal—contaminate the air without influencing the progress of the [madness?⁵] he affects to prevent.

Humanitas

Source: published transcription; *General Evening Post* (Sept. 7–9, 1790), p. 2.

¹I.e., ‘Veritas’ to the editor of the *General Evening Post*, Aug. 12, 1790 (Penzance is on the peninsula known as ‘Land’s End’).

²Referring to Martin Madan’s *Thelyphthora: or, A Treatise on Female Ruin, in its Causes, Effects, Consequences, Prevention, and Remedy* (London: J. Dodsley, 1781). While Madan had loose ties to Methodism, JW rejected this book; see JW, *Journal*, Apr. 19, 1781, *Works*, 23:199. JW published an extended refutation of Madan, by Joseph Benson, in the *AM* 6 (1783)—see Benson to JW, c. February 18, 1782.

³‘Felon of himself’.

⁴For this case involving a young woman, see *General Evening Post* (Aug. 5–7, 1790), p. 4.

⁵The word is obscured by a defect in the only known surviving copy of *General Evening Post*.

‘Humanitas’ to the Editor of the *General Evening Post*

Ulverstone
September 4, 1790

Sir,

Your paper of the 31st of August is this instant come to my hands. And as it contains a letter signed ‘John Wesley’ in which my sentiments communicated in the *General Evening* of the 31st of July are entirely perverted,¹ by making me say the very things I entered my protest against, I must entreat the favour of you to allow me a few words in reply to this extraordinary production.

He says I have asserted (and he affects to quote the words I have used), ‘that all self-murderers are mad’ and ‘that the fact itself proves insanity’. If you will have the goodness to turn to my letter, and can find any such assertion or conclusion, I will bow with due shame to Mr. Wesley’s chastisement.

But guess, sir, how great was my astonishment to see the following quotation from my letter, ‘that none is ever brought in *felo de se*’,² when it is the very assertion *not* of *mine* but of *his own* letter in your paper of the 24th of July, and one of the point the truth of which I undertook to combat—and certainly successfully, because I brought him one proof to the contrary at the very place from whence he dated his letter, and your paper of the 7th of August has another from Coventry.³ Mr. Wesley may take any liberty he pleases with my signature, except making me the father of his opinions.

As for him disbelieving my account of a poor unfortunate girl’s fate in my neighbourhood, I wish her family could as easily forget the catastrophe.

I think too the name of a writer can be of little moment.⁴ If what I advance be not founded on fact and in reason, the sanction of my signature will be of little consequence. If on the contrary it hath both these requisites, the sanction even of Mr. Wesley’s opinion will not be able to maintain its ground in the contest.

I cannot conclude without entering my solemn protest against the doctrine now attempted (I hope, for the sake of that species of which I am a member, for the first and last time) to be diffused—that the bodies of such persons as, when by the visitation of Almighty God they are deprived of sense and reason, lay violent hands on themselves should be gibbeted in chains—as the most unjust, barbarous, and fanatical that a gloomy imagination ever attempted to introduce amongst a civilized people. I hope too, for the credit of our nation, that his insinuation that our juries frequently perjure themselves when they sit on the bodies of suicides is equally unfounded as the other part of his letter is destitute of Humanity.⁵

Source: published transcription; *General Evening Post* (Sept. 9–11, 1790), p. 4.

¹I.e., JW’s letter of Aug. 22, *General Evening Post* (Aug. 28–31, 1790), p. 4.

²‘Felon of himself’.

³For this case involving a young woman, Catherine Bacon, see *General Evening Post* (Aug. 5–7), p. 4.

⁴JW had questioned why ‘Humanitas’ did not sign his real name.

⁵The author lets this word stand as his name on this occasion.

From Adam Clarke

Dublin
September 5, 1790

Reverend and Very Dear Sir,

Through the tender mercy of God we have got to this city in safety.¹

Our journey by land was long and fatiguing, particularly to my dear wife [Mary] and children. Blessed be God, they are now in a measure recovered!

I came in good time, as Mr. [Thomas] Rutherford had been laid up in a severe rheumatic fever; and the people, being destitute of their spiritual director, were rather in confusion, especially in their meetings for prayer, etc.

The work which was so remarkable about the time of Conference was hardly discernible when I came—owing, as I am informed, to some extravagance and irregularity in the conduct of those who took on them the chief management during Mr. Rutherford's indisposition. However, all the times of prayer meeting were and are continued. But to an unwarrantable length, hardly ever breaking up before ten or eleven o'clock, and frequently continued to twelve and one. And in those meetings some have taken on them to give exhortations of half an hour, and sometimes forty-five minutes, in length. This had a tendency to weary out the people.

I have advised them to shorten their prayer-meetings at Whitefriar's on Sabbath evenings after preaching, as I find the families of many are shockingly neglected. For how can there be family religion, especially on the Lord's day, which you know is here *filled up* with ordinances, if prayer-meetings are continued, as they are *here*, to ten or eleven o'clock at night?

But in these things I would take no decisive steps but as you, my dear sir, should be pleased to direct me. Indeed I am led to be the more cautious in this respect, as I find that those who were made particularly useful in the beginning of this work are possessed of a very jealous spirit; which (when anything is attempted to be done, in order to regulate or help them) leads them to think and say, 'This is in opposition to us, and is intended to destroy the work.' Thoughts of this kind are uncharitable, and corresponding speeches are horrid. But this I hope will not spread far, as it is now confined to a few. I am fully convinced that we can hardly expect a revival of the work of God without irregularities and stumbling blocks. But my heart joins fully with one of the last prayers I heard my reverend father pray in Bristol: 'Lord, if possible, give us this work without the stumbling blocks. But if this cannot be, give us stumbling blocks and all, rather than not have thy work.' My whole soul says, Amen!

We are now visiting the classes. When this is finished, I hope to transmit you an in<structiv>e² account of the good which has been done. As far as I can discern it, I trust this has been considerable.

I wait, reverend sir, for any directions you may be pleased to give me. I humbly trust I shall strive to be faithful to God, and the trust you repose in me. I hope the good God continues to bless you with bodily health and strength. If my feeble petitions be of any avail, not *one* of heaven's choicest blessings shall be lacking to you.

My dear wife [Mary] joins in affectionate duty to you. May the Lord Jesus fill you with his fulness! I am, reverend and dear sir,

Your deeply obliged and affectionate sone in the gospel.

Adam Clarke

Address: 'The Revd. J. Wesley / at his Chapel / Horse-fair / Bristol / to be forwarded with speed'.

Postmark: 'SE/6'.

Endorsement: by JW, 'Sept. 5. 1790 / a[nswere]d 9'.

Source: holograph; MARC, WCB, D6/1/118; Dunn, *Clarke*, 77–79.

¹Clarke had been assigned to the Dublin circuit at the 1789 Conference.

²A small portion is torn away, affecting one line.

‘A Friend to Society’ in the *General Evening Post*

Liverpool
September 9, 1790

Sir,

If you shall be of [the] opinion that this letter may possibly answer any useful purpose by inserting it in your excellent paper, you will oblige

A Constant Reader

On Suicide

Instances of this rash and most fatal act have of late been so frequent in this country, and the vices which give rise to it spread with such alarming rapidity through every rank in society that they have excited a general solicitude in the minds of all thinking persons.

Amongst the expedients which have been pointed out for the prevention of this crime, that of exposing the body of every person who destroys himself on a gallows has excited the greatest degree of attention. It must be allowed that this would not be an act of cruelty but of mercy, if it would tend (as doubtless it would be found to do) to prevent even one human being from striking the arrow of death into his own bosom and rushing into eternity with all his sins unrepented on his head. For the objection that has been raised against this expedient—namely, that the sane and insane would be thus subject to the like indignities—loses much of its force from the well-known fact that lunatics are rarely known to offer violence to their lives. In the great asylum for these unhappy beings in the metropolis¹ (it has been justly remarked) there are no instances of voluntary death, nor could the caution there observed always prevent a catastrophe of which the walls, the floor, the chains in which they are bound might be the fatal instruments.

It may however be justly alleged that the laws against self-murder are already sufficiently severe. But the misfortune is that the rule laid down by juries ‘that every person who puts a period to his existence must of necessity be a lunatic, as they cannot suppose that anyone would destroy himself who was in full possession of his senses’ wholly takes away their good effect. And (as the sanity of the victim to despondency is often manifested) involves them in the guilt of perjury.

The confiscation of the personal property of the deceased, if pronounced *felo de se*,² has probably caused bribes to be given to juries on these occasions, and has contributed not a little to make this general construction be put on this desperate act. It is therefore incumbent on the Legislature to revise this law and perhaps in this instance to make it less penal, to discountenance the absurd principle by which the verdicts in these cases are now regulated, and to lay down certain rules by which the decision of juries must be directed. Then would either the ignominious mode of treating the dead body of the *felo de se* which is at present appointed (or that which I before alluded to) be found sufficiently efficacious, and the number of unnatural deaths would *decrease* more rapidly than it has unhappily *increased*.

There is another species of suicide which I beg leave here to mention—viz., that of duelling. For unquestionably every person who exposes his life in these unlawful contests is in the eye of heaven a self-murderer. This also is a growing evil. And it is the more to be lamented, as none might with greater ease be wholly repressed. A law not only consigning the man who kills his antagonist in a duel to death, but also condemning the parties (if both survive) to solitary confinement in prison for a certain term of years, and their seconds to a similar punishment for a shorter space of time, would effectually discourage a practice odious to the duellist himself and disgraceful to any civilized state, much more to a Christian country. Our polite neighbours have lately attempted to discourage duelling by loading the practice with

¹I.e., Bethlehem Hospital in London.

²‘Felon of himself’.

merited opprobrium. Let us in this instance follow their example with our usual ardour of imitation.

Deservedly will the name of that representative of his country be enrolled amidst those of its greatest benefactors who shall prepare one or more bills before the next session of Parliament to exterminate this two-headed monster, suicide, that despoils earth of its present, heaven of its future, inhabitants.

A Friend to Society

Source: published transcription; *General Evening Post* (Sept. 18–21, 1790), p. 2.

Editorial Comment in *The Morning Herald*¹

[London]
September 10, 1790

The pious John Wesley has proposed a remedy for suicide, by gibbeting the unhappy victim of despondency.² Would not a total extirpation of the gloomy and absurd tenets of Methodism be much more conducive to that purpose?

Source: published transcription; *The Morning Herald* (Sept. 10, 1790), p. [2].

¹*The Morning Herald* was a Whig paper, unsympathetic to JW. It usually ignored him, but used this occasion to take shots at him. On page [3] of the same issue, in an entry listing a set of current 'causes to set the spirit of lucre in full motion', one item in the list is: 'John Wesley has made up a form of prayer and finished a set of war hymns to sell in the north of England during hostilities.' The paper had been reflecting in previous issues on the current tension between England and Spain over resolving claims to North America, and some concern that the French (who had just had the French revolution the prior July) would join the side of Spain against England. There is no evidence that JW prepared or published anything of the kind described.

²JW's letter of Apr. 8, 1790; in *General Evening Post* (July 22–24, 1790), p. 3; *Works*, 31:190–91.

‘English Leave’ to the Editor of the *General Evening Post*

September 21, 1790

Sir,

Having read with considerable pleasure a letter of Mr. Wesley's on suicide in your paper,¹ I take the liberty of sending you an extract from Blackstone's *Commentaries* on the same subject, and should esteem it a favour in you to give it a place in your paper when convenient.

Self-murder, the pretended heroism but real cowardice of the Stoic philosophers, who destroyed themselves to avoid those ills which they had not the fortitude to endure, though the attempting of it seems to be countenanced by the civil law yet was punished with the cutting off the hand which did the desperate deed. And also the law of England wisely and religiously considers that no man hath a power to destroy life but by commission from God, the author or it. And as the suicide is guilt of a double offense—one spiritual, in invading the prerogative of the Almighty and rushing into his immediate presence uncalled for; the other temporal, against the king, who hath an interest in the preservation of all his subjects—the law has therefore ranked this among the highest crimes, making it a peculiar species of felony, a felony committed on one's self. A *felo de se* therefore is he that deliberately puts an end to his own existence. Or commits an unlawful malicious act the consequence of which is his own death—as if, attempting to kill another, he runs upon his antagonist's sword; or shooting at another, the gun bursts and kills himself. The party must be of years of discretion, and in his senses, else it is no crime. But this excuse ought not to be strained to the length to which our coroners' juries are apt to carry it; viz., that the very act of suicide is an evidence of insanity, as if every man who acts contrary to reason had no reason at all. For the same argument would prove every other criminal *non compos*,² as well as the self-murderer. The law very rationally judges that every melancholy or hypochondriac fit does not deprive a man of the capacity of discerning right from wrong, which is necessary [...] to form a legal excuse. And therefore if a real lunatic kills himself in a lucid interval, he is a *felo de se* as much as another man. Book IV, Chap. xiv.³

How so many verdicts of lunacy can be brought in for self-murderers by juries composed of men who are *compos mentis*⁴ is to me astonishing, the circumstances attending their deaths being frequently such as demonstrate that they must have been in their senses when they executed their horrid design.

There is one way in which those who are guilty of *felo de se* might be rendered useful to survivors, and that is by giving their bodies to the surgeons for dissection. <Which is but a?⁵> small punishment for so flagrant a breach of laws, both divine and human. The surgeons must and will have subjects for anatomical purposes. Were the bodies of self-murderers and malefactors devoted to their use, it might prevent that disagreeable practice of robbing the burying-grounds.

England is for this crime became a proverb with neighbouring nations; it being common in France, when a man has killed himself, to say he has taken

‘English Leave’.

Source: published transcription; *General Evening Post* (Sept. 21–23, 1790), p. 2.

¹JW's letter of Apr. 8, 1790; in *General Evening Post* (July 22–24, 1790), p. 3; *Works*, 31:190–91.

²‘Not sane.’

³William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1770), 4:189–90.

⁴‘In full control of their mental faculties.’

⁵A part of a line is obscured by a defect in the only known surviving copy of this issue.

From James M'Donald¹

Newry
October 14, 1790

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I rejoice to have an opportunity of giving you a more particular account of the work of God here than you have yet received. The first night in which it broke out particularly, five sinners were justified and one poor backslider restored; all of whom to the present are strictly pious, and very happy in God. Two of these five were not in society, but as soon as they obtained a sense of pardon, they rejoiced at the prospect of being now united to a people among whom they had found rest to their souls. The oldest members of the society did not remember a meeting in this town so remarkably blest as this was. But soon after they were witnesses of several that far exceeded it. It was a new thing here for people to continue wrestling in prayer, for four hours together, which has sometimes been the case of late.

Our congregations soon increased. A divine power attended the word, and a solemn awe appeared on almost every countenance. Few nights passed without a prayer meeting after preaching, chiefly for the mourners, whose cries might be heard at a considerable distance from the preaching house and were enough to pierce any feeling heart. Many of the careless and profane gathered about the house, wondering what was the matter, but were not admitted, lest they should disturb those who were continuing with one accord in earnest prayer. Indeed some truly pious persons, who were only acquainted with God's ordinary method of working, began to reflect a little on what seemed to them confusion in our meetings. But after seeing the blessed effects, they are now fully satisfied, and heartily bless God for stepping out of his ordinary method of working among the children of men.

September the 8th was a night much to be remembered; not only because five were set at liberty, but the spirit of prayer was poured in a wonderful manner upon the people, so that many went away under deep conviction. A man who loves God with all his heart said, as the people were going away, 'Such of you as have not received the blessing now, will assuredly receive it tomorrow night.' And it was so, for most of them were comforted the night following. Brother Grace and I having been that evening at a new society, two miles out of town.² On our return to the house, we found there was a blessed work going on. For when we entered, we saw several persons newly set at liberty, praising God and full of rapture; and others in the pangs of the new birth. We went to different parts of the house and prayed with the distressed, some of whom in different parts of the congregation soon had their sorrow turned into joy.

Brother Grace, on coming in, found a man roaring aloud for mercy, who twenty years before had turned his back on the ways of God and had given himself up to drunkenness. He prayed earnestly with him, and in a few minutes, he was taken out of the horrible pit, and is since a pattern of sobriety. On finding him happy, I went to look for his wife, who was a member of society but had for some time walked in darkness. She came running to her husband, who was now remarkably happy. They both went to a corner, kneeled down, joining their earnest prayers together, till in a few minutes her backslidings were healed, and her soul once more made happy in God. A young man who wrought with her husband was made happy about the same time. After God had removed his guilt, he continued to clap his hands and cry aloud for a considerable time, often lamenting that he had not sooner believed such a blessing attainable.

¹James M'Donald (1761–1833), a native of Enniskillen, was converted in his early teens and began to preach locally about the age of 19. He was first assigned to a circuit in Ireland in 1784 (see *Works*: 10:556). After serving in Ireland for eleven years, he was moved to assignments in England. He travelled a total of 42 years, until forced by infirmity to locate in 1831. See *Minutes* (post-Wesley, 1834), 7:341.

²John Grace (c. 1759–1812) was an Irish itinerant admitted 'on trial' in 1786 (see *Works*, 10:978). He served for 26 years, dying on his way to Conference in 1812. See *Minutes* (post-Wesley, 1812), 3:269.

The night before our quarterly meeting was a glorious time of the outpouring of the Spirit. I believe seven or eight then for the first time felt the powers of the world to come. As we prayed for and expected a gracious visitation on our quarterly day, we were not disappointed. One who had been in society more than thirty years, now for the first time was enabled to rejoice in God his Saviour. He had been in great distress for some weeks before, and often apparently brought to the birth. A few minutes before the Lord visited him with his love, one of our leaders speaking his experience, observed it was impressed on his mind if we would all pray for that brother God would set him at liberty. We then prayed for him, and all in the house soon felt the flame. About half an hour after, public thanks were returned for his conversion; and he is since very happy in God his Saviour. Some say that twelve besides him found the Lord before the love-feast was concluded.

The watch-night was also a happy season, at which time many more were justified freely. We suppose that during the love-feast and watch-night twenty at least, were brought into liberty. Three papists have joined the society of late; and two of them are brought not only from the superstitions of the Church of Rome, but from darkness into marvellous light. Upwards of a hundred have joined this society since Conference, and I believe the greater part of them know in whom they have believed. Very little, if any, wildness has appeared in this sudden work; the subjects of which have all along had the full use of their reason. And the conversion of sinners, and sanctification of believers, are the topics on which they delight to converse. Some parts of the country circuit have caught the spirit of this revival! O that it may spread through it all! Our Lord is still carrying on his work here, and we trust he will do so till all become acquainted with him.

I am, reverend sir,

Your affectionate son in the gospel,

J. McDonald

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 413–16.

Anonymous to the Editor of the *General Evening Post*

c. October 15, 1790

Sir,

Mr. Wesley's well-directed arguments against suicide and the corrupt practice of coroners and their inquests are so strongly supported by the judgment of an excellent writer on our liturgy that I am induced partly to lay it before the public in his own words. By giving it admission you will serve the cause of true humanity,¹ and oblige a constant reader.

As the coroner summons whom he pleases on the jury, and then delivers to them what charge he pleases, it is easy enough for him to influence their judgements and to instil a general supposition that self-murderers must needs be mad, since no one would kill himself unless he were out of his senses. But the jury should consider that if the case were so, it would be to no purpose for the law to appoint so formal an enquiry. For according to this supposition such enquiry must be vain and impertinent, since the fact itself would be evidence sufficient. It is true indeed there may be a *moral* madness—that is, a misapplication of the understanding—in all self murderers. But this sort of madness does not come under the cognizance of a jury, the question with them being not whether the understanding was *misapplied*, but whether there was *any* understanding at all. In short, the best rule for a jury to guide themselves in by such a case is to judge whether the signs of madness that are now pretended would avail to acquit the same person of murdering another man. If not, there is no reason why they should be urged as a plea for acquitting him of murdering himself.²

Source: published transcription; *General Evening Post* (Oct. 21–23, 1790), p. 2.

¹Recall that 'Humanitas' signed his last published letter (Sept. 4) 'Humanity'.

²Charles Wheatly, *A Rational Illustration of the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England*, 5th edn. (London: Knapton, 1728), 496–97.

From John Moon¹

[Nottingham]

October–November 1790

Reverend and Very Dear Sir,

Having received an account of the revival of the work of God at Blidworth from a friend there, I thought it proper to give you early intelligence of it.

After the preaching on Sunday evening, September 13, 1790, some friends stayed to pray with two women who were in great distress. While they were engaged in prayer a young man began to cry for mercy, as from the depth of hell, and soon after, his younger brother. The cries of the distressed were very affecting. The two women fainted beneath their load. A few friends continued in the chapel with them till ten o'clock, and then accompanied them home. One of the young men was set at liberty about half past eleven, and the other at a quarter past twelve o'clock. We believe their conviction began partly on hearing of their brother's conversion at Nottingham. We had such an out-pouring of the Spirit, that there was scarce a soul unaffected. Some of the believers were so happy in God, that they could scarcely contain themselves.

On Monday night, September 14, a few friends met a house to praise God for the blessing bestowed upon them the night before. While one was at prayer, a woman was uncommonly affected, and remained in the greatest distress imaginable, till between one and two o'clock; when the Lord set her soul at liberty. Another received the blessing as she went home, and another the same night.

On Tuesday night we had a prayer meeting, and it was a blessed time indeed. Many believers were so overwhelmed with the love of God, that they had scarce the use of their bodily powers. Wednesday, a boy, fifteen years of age, was brought into the liberty of the sons of God.

On Sunday morning, September 20, one of the local preachers preached on 'He became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich',² when one man roared out for the disquietude of his soul. In the evening Mr. A. preached an alarming discourse, on 'They made light of it'.³ When the preaching was ended some friends stayed in the chapel to pray with two or three that were greatly distressed. In a short time six more cried out from a feeling sense of their having sinned against God. They continued in prayer with them for some hours, during which time one young man found peace. On Monday a young woman could praise God, having found redemption in the blood of Christ and was happy beyond expression. And on Wednesday another man could testify that God, for Christ's sake, had forgiven him all his sins. At the same time also another young man found rest to his soul, who had been in great distress four days. He cried out in the most dreadful manner. Sometimes he thought he saw hell, and the devil ready to drag him into it, while his groans were enough to pierce the hardest heart. But he can now rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

On Friday, a boy could praise God and sing redeeming love. He came at first to mock, but was soon struck to the heart, and found no rest till he found peace through believing. Sunday 27, was a blessed day to many souls. On Monday morning, a woman found Christ, to the joy of her soul. And at night a man was set at liberty, with the application of these words 'Thy sins which were many, are all forgiven thee.'⁴ He stood amazed and wondered, when that text was

¹Moon was currently the Assistant for the Nottingham circuit.

²2 Cor. 8:9.

³Matt. 22:5.

⁴Luke 7:47.

applied to his mind, 'The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest and found thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth: so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.'⁵ But he is now more happy than can be expressed.

On Monday October 11, at a prayer meeting, a woman was in deep distress; but in a little time the Lord set her soul at liberty, when she got up and publicly declared what God had done for her. Two women and two or three boys now began to cry out for the disquietude of their souls. The cries of the distressed became so great that the voice of those who prayed could no longer be heard. It was a most awful place. Two of the boys appeared as in the agonies of death, and a woman in as great a struggle for sanctification. We continued in prayer with them till between eleven and twelve o'clock, when one of the boys appeared as dead for some time. But soon after the Lord set his soul at liberty, and he could praise God for redemption in Jesus Christ. The next morning another lad was made a partaker of the same blessing. During the time of the people's distress, one young man went out to mock, but soon asked to be admitted again. After he entered the chapel he was so struck that he was constrained to cry out, and acknowledge before God and the people his wicked intention, and how the Lord had convinced him of his error.

This, sir, is a brief account of the late work of God amongst us. I trust it will go on, and that we shall have an interest in your prayers. I am, reverend sir,

Your dutiful son and servant in the gospel,

J. M.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 307–09.

⁵John 3:8.

From the Rev. Dr. Thomas Coke

Grenada
November 28, 1790

Honoured and Most Dear Sir,

On the 16th of October we sailed from Falmouth. Sir John Orde, governor of Dominica, the captain, master, surgeon, Mr. Lyons,¹ Mr. Werrill,² and myself were the company in the cabin. The captain was very kind and attentive to us, and we had an abundance of everything we could desire to make the voyage comfortable. Every Friday we observed as a real fast. And every evening we had family-prayer with the sailors, but could not prevail to have prayer in the morning. The sailors excused themselves by saying they had not time. On each Lord's day I read prayers on deck, and one of us preached. The boatswain, we have no doubt, was under genuine conviction long before we arrived at Barbados. And on a mature and minute examination before we landed, we have great reason to hope that two more were awakened. On the 22nd instant we landed on the island of Barbados, having been five weeks and two days on our voyage. The pleasing prospect of Bridgetown and the plantations around it, with the ships and harbour, which forms one of the most beautiful prospects of the kind in the West Indies, had a very pleasing effect on the minds of the two missionaries, Messrs. Lyons and Werrill.

I preached three times in Bridgetown, and was favoured, particularly the last evening, with large congregations. The preaching-house will hold about seven hundred people, is very airy, and in every respect commodious. Mr. [Benjamin] Pearce, our missionary in this island for the two last years, has undergone very great persecutions. But the Lord at last inclined the heart of one of the magistrates towards him, who defended him with spirit, and reduced all to peace. A very extraordinary name has been fixed on the Methodists in this island: 'Hallelujah.' Even the little Negroes in the streets call them by the name of 'Hallelujah', as they pass along. On the morning after I landed, I paid a visit to Governor [David] Parry, who received me with much courtesy. A foundation for a great work, I am persuaded, has been laid here, though the society at present is very small.

Having left Mr. Lyons behind me with directions to meet me at St. Christopher's, I sailed on the 28nd, after preaching in the evening, with Mr. Werrill for Kingston, St. Vincent's; where I arrived on the day following, [in] time enough to preach in the evening to a full house. Our chapel in Kingston formerly belonged to the Roman Catholics, but has been lately purchased by us. It will hold about two hundred and twenty. The next day I set off with Mr. [John] Baxter and Mr. Werrill to visit the societies on the windward side of the island. The country is very hilly, and singularly full of picturesque scenes: the steep mountains with their sharp peaks; the cocoa trees and plantains; the grew-grew whose trunk is smaller at the bottom than the top, and which is frequently quite covered (branches, leaves and all) by a plant like the ivy; the sugar-canes planted on the gentle declivities of the mountains (vales there are none in this island, except in the Carib country); the coffee and cotton plantations; the Atlantic Ocean constantly in view, the milk-white foam of the sea between the rocks and promontories, some times covering a great expanse of water; and the burning sun exulting in his strength and gilding the strong perpetual verdure of the whole vegetable creation—form such scenes as persons unacquainted with the torrid zone have hardly any conception of. Mr. Werrill was so charmed with the prospects that he confessed he felt himself

¹James Lyons, a native of Ireland, was admitted 'on trial' as an itinerant at the Irish Conference of 1788 (see *Works*: 10:989). In 1790 he was assigned, along with Thomas Werrill, as a missionary to the West Indies (see *Works*, 10:718). He desisted from travelling at the 1792 Conference; see *Minutes* (post-Wesley, 1792), 1:258.

²Thomas Werrill (d. 1792), another Irishman, was admitted 'on trial' as an itinerant at the Irish Conference of 1789 (see *Works*, 10:675). In 1790 he accompanied James Lyons, as a missionary to the West Indies (see *Works*, 10:718), where he died in 1792. See Atmore, *Memorial*, 452–53; and *Minutes* (post-Wesley, 1792), 1:258.

perfectly reconciled to the West Indies.

We rode to the borders of the Carib land. Poor people! When Mrs. Baxter took her leave of some of them, she wept bitterly and prayed they might have another call, and might accept and not reject it as they did the late one. As we returned, a Negro woman ran up to us out of a field to shake us by the hand. 'Do you love God', said Mr. Werrill to her. 'Yes', said she, 'I do, otherwise I would not have come to you. I have felt the Redeemer's life and death in my soul.' The answer of an old Negro to his leader in Kingston a short time past contained in it all the religion of the celebrated conversation between Dr. [Johann] Tauler and the beggar. 'If your driver should lay you down and flog you, what would you do?' said the leader. 'Me should love him still', said he. 'But if you should get no meat, what would you do then?' added the leader. 'Me eat', replied he, 'me tank me fader; me no eat, me tank me fader. Me live, me tank me fader; me die, me tank me fader.' I find the converted Negroes in these islands generally speak of God under the denomination of father. There is certainly a prospect of a great flame throughout the island. Even many of the Roman Catholics themselves, of whom there are several families here, prefer our missionaries to their own priests, and have sent for Mr. Baxter to baptize their children. Mr. [Matthew] Lumb has also laboured very faithfully and successfully in this circuit.

I am, my dear sir, with very great respect,

Your most dutiful, obliged, and affectionate son,

Thomas Coke

Source: published transcription; A Journal of the Rev. Dr. Coke's Third Tour through the West Indies, in two letters to the Rev. J. Wesley (London: Paramore, 1791), 2–4.

From Ezekiel Cooper

[Baltimore]
December 1790

My Aged and Honoured Father in Christ,

I believe I should have wrote to you long ago, but for the following reason: to wit, I thought myself of too little account to intrude on your golden and precious time. But receiving a letter from Dr. [Thomas] Coke a few days ago, in which your name is so engagingly mentioned that I venture to take my pen, with due reverence, and address the man whom God has made the leading instrument of spreading his name among so many thousands, both in Europe and America. Your sons and daughters are numerous on each side [of] the Atlantic, and I am certain your distant children on this western continent most dearly love and esteem you. It is my happy lot to be numbered with your sons in the gospel, who in my feeble way am striving to win my fellow mortals to the embraces of a loving Saviour.

The Lord called me by the preaching of the word while in my youth, careless and vain. I found myself in the gall of bitterness, exposed to the wrath of a provoked deity, [and] was led to cry penitentially to God for mercy. I saw there was no help in me, but it was laid on *one* who was able to bear, through whom alone I must sue for favour. A discovery of his fulness led me confidently to cast my care upon him. [I] was enabled to believe, my burden was removed, and heaven arose in my soul. The Lord who, in the infinitude of his love, showed me mercy, gave me a call to labour in the gospel; which after a sore and weighty conflict I submitted to and have continued to obey till the present. I still know God is love, and by his grace am resolved to follow on, to know and serve him. I feel myself a poor, feeble, elementary composition, made human by the unsearchable wisdom and power of God. One of the mysteries and riddles of the world. I am amazed at myself, seeing I am wonderfully made, partaking of vegetative, sensitive, and rational life. Is not the plain certain universe, with its various properties, an unfathomable abyss to human if not angelic minds? When I contemplate the stupendous work of the great Architect of the natural and moral systems, viewing the wheels of all existence in motion from the grand luminary of heaven, and all fixed bodies on their axes periodically revolving, then the planets in their orbits unweariedly travelling on their ethereal journey through space, then down to the animate and inanimate inhabitants of this terraqueous globe, even to little unseen atoms, I am lost in the survey and greatly humbled at seeing I know nothing at all and am nothing but in God. Here I lay hold of revelation, the contents of which, if possible, a greater wonder still. I dare not reason but believe, and think nothing is more reasonable than to believe what God reveals, though unfathomable and incomprehensible to us. I set as on the brink of this unbounded ocean. I look till sight is lost, then love and adore, and hope in futurity eternally to traverse the never to be exhausted and ever-opening scene of sollicitating wonder, bliss, and glory.

The great work of God is still going on in America. As it slackens in one place [it] revives in another; then again rerevives in the same places. I apprehend you frequently have accounts from the different parts of our union how the work goes on. At present in Baltimore and Annapolis, and the adjacent circuits, there is nothing very extraordinary, yet there is a gaining. [In] some parts of Maryland there is a great power attending the word. And generally from north to south, from east to west, through the different states the work bears a pleasing report. I give you here an extract of a letter lying before me from the New Jersey presiding elder:

We have a considerable work in most of our circuits in this state. I lately attended quarterly meeting in this circuit (Salem). Such a time I never saw before. (He was not among the work in Virginia and Maryland¹). Six or seven sermons were preached to the same congregation and [I] think not less than a hundred converted. From thence about 12 miles I preached five sermons, where a hundred more were converted. At nine places I preached upward of twenty

¹These parenthetic comments are by Cooper.

sermons and it is thought 350 were converted. Our meetings [are] frequently held from 2:00 [in the] afternoon till [the] next morning, and 20, 30, etc., converted.

This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. We have good news from other parts also. God is doing great things in America.

Our superintendent Francis Asbury is a most worthy man for his station. His concern is great and he is very faithful in discharge of his duty. If you were to write and send over in print an epistle or circular letter to your sons in Christ, it might be of use. I know their hearts are warm in love and esteem toward you as their father in the gospel. It would yield me great satisfaction to receive a line from you.

I am, honoured father in Christ,

Yours, etc.

Ezekiel Cooper

Address: 'The Revd. John Wesley / London'.

Source: holograph; Garrett-Evangelical, Methodist Manuscripts Collection.

From William Simpson¹

[Hull]

December 1, 1790

Honoured and Dear Sir,

According to your desire, I have sent you an account of my dear child.² She was born at Sheffield, May the second 1784. Her mother³ and I soon discovered two things in her (before she was capable of learning them by example), which were self-will and passion. We were very sensible there would be great need of all our wisdom, prudence, and courage in order to train her up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. We asked assistance from above, and the Lord soon gave us to see that her will must be broken, or she would be ruined. Therefore we set about this work before she was a year old. Sometimes it was a very painful work, and our feelings were so tender that we were not able to perform our duty, especially when she was poorly. But if ever we were slack in discipline, her tempers convinced us of the impropriety of our conduct, which obliged us to act with more strictness and severity afterward. We not only presented her to the Lord in baptism, but as she was capable, we endeavoured to train her up in the knowledge and fear of God.

We saw that our instructions would avail but little unless they were seconded by good examples, and therefore we laboured to set before her the copies of those virtues which we wished her to imitate. And as she grew up, we had the pleasure of seeing that our prayer, instructions, corrections, and examples were not in vain. Blessed by God, she knew, in a good degree by experience, the truth of these lines,

Spirit of meek, and godly fear,
The children taught of thee revere,
And do their heavenly Father's will;
Pierc'd with an humble filial awe,
They love to keep his blessed law,
And all his kind commands fulfil.⁴

Yes, the Lord had planted his fear in her heart. I never knew her to tell a willful lie, and if ever she was overtaken in a fault, she would weep bitterly, ask our pardon, and then wished to know whether the Lord would forgive her.

She attended all our meetings constantly. And after she had heard a sermon, either her mother or I frequently rehearsed to her the substance of what was delivered, and then endeavoured to apply what was said to her mind, striving to make her more and more sensible that sin is an evil and a bitter thing, and that the Almighty requires us to give him our hearts. We also pointed out to her the many obligations we are under to God, and considered what the happy consequences would be if we served him in sincerity and with all our hearts. She heard what was spoken with great attention, treasured in her memory and in her heart those grand truths, and the good effects appeared by her hatred to sin, trembling at the thoughts of grieving God, and constant subjection, and obedience to her parents—which proceeded from a higher principle than fear of punishment.

¹William Simpson (d. 1804) was admitted 'on trial' as an itinerant at the 1779 Conference; see *Works*, 10:484. Simpson continued as an itinerant for 22 years, settling in Leeds when he could travel no longer. See *Minutes* (post-Wesley, 1804), 2:221.

²Anne Simpson (1784–90).

³William Simpson married Anne Crosby of Ellerton by Bubwith, Yorkshire, on July 6, 1783.

⁴CW, Hymn XXX, st. 7, *Hymns of Petition and Thanksgiving for the Promise of the Father* (Bristol: Farley, 1746), 34.

She well knew that her father and mother were God's representatives, and that to displease us was to grieve the Lord. Her love to God appeared also by praying to him statedly, every morning and evening, which she did of her own accord. She likewise used to sequester herself in a private room, and there poured out her heart to God in prayer, which she did not only from a sense of her duty, but found a pleasure therein.

When she was among children who told lies, or said any bad words, she constantly reproved them; and in a very serious manner would tell them the consequences of such a behaviour. Whenever I conversed with any person in her presence who had spoken in a foolish, or sinful manner, she would ask me concerning it, and when I informed her wherein the folly and sin appeared, then she was satisfied.

One morning, when she came to talk with my father's children, she said to the eldest of them, 'Aby, you must be a good boy. Pray to God, and repent of your sins.' He answered, 'But how must I repent of my sins, Nancy?' She said, 'You must be sorry for what you have done, and do so no more. But however good you might be, if Jesus Christ had not come into the world and died for you, you could not go to heaven.' She would frequently ask her mother and me such questions about the fall of man, his recovery through the Redeemer, death, judgment, heaven, and hell, as were truly astonishing. Indeed, she was wise far above her years.

Last New Year's Day, at the renewing of the covenant in Hull, the glory of the Lord filled the chapel. In reading the covenant I was obliged frequently to stop, and the whole congregation (consisting of at least a thousand persons) were absorbed in tears. I believe that season will not soon be forgotten. After the meeting was over, my dear child came to me weeping. I asked her, 'Nancy, why do you weep?' She then raised her hand gently to her heart and said, 'It is what I feel *there*, father. It is there.' She had been renewing her covenant with the Lord in the best manner she could, and he had increased his holy fear and heavenly love in her heart.

For many months we observed an inexpressible sweetness and serenity about her. In the latter end of August, and the beginning of September, she began to be poorly in her stomach, which soon terminated in a fever. Whilst she was ill, I asked her, 'Nancy, whether would you rather die, and go to heaven, or stay with your father and mother?' She answered, 'Just as God pleases.' Another time, when her mother said, 'My dear your head is very bad', she replied, 'Yes, mother, but you know my sufferings are nothing when compared with the sufferings of Jesus Christ; whose hands and feet were nailed to the cross, and he was scourged for me.'

One day, when her mother was weeping by her bedside, she said, 'Do not weep for me, mother. For if I die, I shall go to heaven, and you will follow me.'

She spake but seldom, the complaint having brought her very low. But I observed her frequently lifting up her little hands and eyes to heaven, and her lips moving in earnest prayer. She had a severe conflict with death, for a considerable time. The doctor came when she was in sore agonies, and said she might remain in that situation for several hours. When we heard that, it was too much for our feelings. We saw her sufferings were inexpressible, therefore we applied to the throne of grace, beseeching the Lord (if it pleased him) to release her from her misery, and to take her to himself. We had no sooner prayed, but he heard and answered us, and her happy spirit took its flight to Jesus, whom her soul loved!

The last words she was heard to utter, were, 'Gracious Lord! Gracious Lord!'

My wife and I feel the stroke very severely. Especially as she was our *only child*, having buried a lovely boy, somewhat more than a year ago. But however nature may mourn, we dare not, we will not repine, because it is the will of our infinitely wise and loving Father.

It is certainly a severe trial to resign two lovely blooming creatures, sprung from our loins, to the gloomy recesses of corruption after having been dandled upon our knees, and united to our affections by a thousand ties of tenderness. To have these torn from our bosoms, and consigned to the tomb, must doubtless be like a dagger in our hearts. I presume religion was never designed to destroy our feelings. Jesus wept for his friend Lazarus. But I have no doubt that genuine Christianity will refine and regulate our passions. When I think of my precious children, I suppose the Supreme Disposer of all events foresaw some inevitable snare of temptation forming, or some dreadful storm of adversity impending. Therefore we will not be dissatisfied with that kind hand, which housed our pleasant plants, and moved into shelter

our tender flowers, before the lightning flew; before the tempest poured its rage. They are now safely lodged, where storms shall beat and winter pierce no more, but one unbounded spring for ever, ever bloom. Even 'in his presence, where there is fullness of joy, and at whose right-hand there are pleasures for evermore.'⁵

I am honoured and dear sir,

Your most affectionate, and obedient son and servant,

William Simpson

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 303–07.

⁵Cf. Ps. 16:11.

Unidentified Correspondent to *Bury and Norwich Post*

c. December 5, 1790

The following was really written by a person who had formed the foolish and melancholy resolution of retiring from life, but was happily prevented. And I am persuaded, if you can find room for it, many of your constant readers, to whom he is well known, and by who he will be recognized, will feel themselves obliged to you.

Suicide

From the frequent occurrence of suicide, it has lately become the common topic of conversation and writing. And in both these instances the characters of the dead, and the feelings of surviving friends, have too often been treated with the most unrelenting asperity. In particular, one of the oldest and most venerable preachers (Mr. [John] Wesley) this country can boast has on this occasion stood forth the champion of a cold and harsh system of policy; but which, severe as it is, will ever prove ineffectual to prevent that desperate act which all the friends of humanity must unite to deplore. He contends that suicide is not in itself a proof of insanity, and that were the laws against self-murder steadily executed in every case where no other instance of mental derangement could be adduced, these victims of discontent, or of despair, would become less numerous.

The first assertion is readily admitted. For the innocence of such a measure is a constituent form of some men's creed. And many think that in a variety of circumstances wisdom and prudence join to recommend it. If a man sees nothing terrible in the grave, nothing criminal in the steps that conduct to it; if from the contumely of the rich, or the oppression of the proud, he feels in life a burden which he is either unable or unwilling to support; we may brand him with folly, we may stigmatize him with cowardice, but we must not call him mad if he chooses not to wait till the summons of his Maker arrives.

But the latter assertion is most strenuously denied. A man who is a suicide upon principle, who flatters himself that he has nicely balanced the ills against the enjoyments of life, and has deliberately resolved to quit it, will ridicule the idea of being turned from his purpose by the vain terrors of a stake or an unhallowed burial place! And permit me to add, if these be the circumstances which principally affect his relatives and friends, their loss is not much to be regretted, though it must be allowed they are ingredients in the cup of their affliction which render it more bitter. And upon that more unhappy, because twice guilty, wretch who condemns the act he is about to perpetrate, who is impatient to known the worst that can befall him, human laws will have as little efficacy. To sublunary disgrace, to the tears, to the agony of his friends, he must be insensible. For lost to every sensation but that of misery, he rushes to the tribunal of God and braves the terrors of a 'judgment to come'.

What then is the best remedy for an evil so dreadful? What mound can be raised against the sea of troubles, that the waves should not pass, and the child of sorrow be overwhelmed? You cannot reason with a tempest, or argue with a whirlwind. Men at ease amuse themselves with such reflections as these. The school of affliction is the seminary of virtue. The blackest clouds, though prognostics of a storm, are also the harbingers of serenity. When the rains have descended, when the thunders have roared, you will behold a bright and cheerful sky. Happy were it could these reflections be indulged by men ill at ease! Is there then no cure? It is hoped there is. Certainly there is a sure preventive of the mischief. It consists in the cultivation of good principles, as the best foundation for virtuous conduct. Fear God, keep his commands, and you will then at least wait patiently all the days of your appointed time till your change come.¹

Source: published transcription; *Bury and Norwich Post*, Dec. 8, 1790, p. 4.

¹Note in original: 'The writer thinks himself under the greatest obligation to the invaluable work of Petit Pierre on the Divine Goodness.'

From the Rev. John Pawson¹

c. December 25, 1790

There was something very remarkable in her when an infant. Her mother then frequently took her to the preaching, where in general she was as serious and attentive as any grown person; and was very soon much delighted with the singing. As she grew in years, she learned a great variety of hymns and tunes, and had a most charming voice and an excellent ear for music, and exceedingly delighted in singing the praises of God to the day of her death.

Through the blessing of God, upon the pious instructions of her parents, and by constantly attending the means of grace, she was serious and thoughtful respecting the salvation of her soul from her childhood. She was deeply awakened, and soon after found a clear sense of the love of God under her father's preaching when she was twelve years of age. For some years she continued lively and happy in the enjoyment of communion with the Redeemer. But afterwards, although she continued to walk very circumspectly, and was constant in attending all the ordinances of God, yet she did not enjoy the comforts of religion in so high a degree as she had done; which she greatly lamented.

About two years ago she was married to a serious young man, with whom she lived exceedingly happy. But [she] fell into a very languishing state of health. About six weeks ago she was taken exceeding ill; at which time I went to see her, and was greatly satisfied with the account she gave me. She was entirely resigned to the will of God, patient in the highest degree under her affliction, and had a full confidence in God that he would finish his work in her soul before he called her hence.

A little after this, one night she said to her sister, 'I feel no pain at all. It seems to me that I shall be quite well in the morning. She then desired her sister to get up and read to her a little. She accordingly read for some time in Mrs. Rowe's *Devout Exercises*.² But she said, 'That book does not suit me. Take the Bible and read the 15, 16, 17 of John; they are beautiful chapters.' Her sister did as she desired. But still she was not satisfied, and said, 'I do not feel the word in my heart. Pray give me the book and let me read it myself.' She then read one of the chapters twice over, but still complained that she did not feel the word as she could wish. She then desired her sister to call her father, that he might pray with her. He came and spent some time in prayer, and she then appeared to be comfortable and well satisfied.

After this, another night, not being able to lay in bed for want of breath, she desired her sister to help her up and place her in a chair; when on a sudden her countenance changed, and the glory of God seemed to shine in her face. With smiles of triumphant joy, she lifted up her eyes to heaven, and in a holy ecstasy cried aloud, 'See, see, see, I am going to Jesus! O I long to be with him! I could fly to Jesus this moment! See, see, see!' As if heaven itself was already open to her happy soul. She then desired her sister to call all the family up, that they might see how happy she was; and fervently prayed that the Lord would be pleased to prolong her life till they all came, so that she might bid them farewell.

When they had got into the room, she feared the Lord was displeased with her for desiring to live till the family came, and a kind of cloud came over her mind. She then broke out into earnest prayer, and said, 'O come, come, come, dear Lord Jesus. Do come! O do come, Lord Jesus!' She then said, 'He will come speedily.' And soon after, 'He is come.' She was then filled with unspeakable consolation. All present saw her countenance shine as it were with divine glory and heavenly brightness. And in a most astonishing manner, she cried out, 'See! See! See! I believe I am dying! But can this be dying? Did you ever see any die in this manner? O let me go, let me go. I fear that you hold me back by your prayers. Pray let me go to Jesus. Pray let me go willingly.' And to her affectionate, and deeply affected husband,

¹Titled: 'An Account of the Death of Grace Maltby'. Grace Pawson (1768–90), the daughter of Marmaduke and Elizabeth (Farrer) Pawson, married William Maltby in May 1788 in Thorner, Yorkshire.

²Elizabeth Singer Rowe, *Devout Exercises of the Heart, in Meditation, Soliloquy, Prayer, and Praise* (London: R. Hett, 1738).

‘O Willy, let me go! Do give me up, and let me go to Jesus.’ She then bade them all most affectionately farewell. The room seemed filled with the presence and glory of God. And all present were most amazingly affected. It was almost too much for human nature to bear.

She continued in this holy ecstasy about half an hour, and then sunk into a most sweet and heavenly calm, and said, ‘The Lord has sent me back to stay a little longer with you.’ When this was over, it appeared so exceedingly glorious that she did not know what to think of it, and could not tell how it was; but thought it appeared something like a vision. The next night the Lord visited her soul in a most extraordinary manner. She was inconceivably happy, and said to her mother, ‘Tell my father that the Lord has perfectly set my soul at liberty.’ And in a most triumphant manner she repeated the whole of the twelfth chapter of Isaiah, and said, ‘The Lord has applied every word of it to my heart, and made it all my own.’ But the fourth verse she repeated over and over. ‘Praise the Lord, call upon his name, declare his doing among the people, make mention that his name is exalted.’ And added, ‘O yes, tell it to all the world. O that all mankind might know it!’

On Sunday (the day before she died) my brother [Marmaduke] stayed at home with her during the preaching, and had abundant satisfaction in conversation and prayer with her. She continued all day in a sweet heavenly state of mind, and in the evening seemed much delighted while her husband played, and her sister sung ‘Vital spark of heavenly flame, ...’.³

She spent the forenoon on Monday cheerfully in reading Mr. Charles Wesley’s scripture cards, with which she was always much delighted, and always preferred these to any others that have been printed.⁴ She told her father she had read them all, but three. One day she drew one for herself, which was, ‘My breath is corrupt, my days are extinct, the graves are ready for me.’⁵ At the same time her husband drew another for her, which was, ‘There is but a step between me and death.’⁶ Her sister then drew a third for her, which was, ‘And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed and yielded up the ghost.’⁷

In this sweet, calm, and truly delightful state of mind, she continued till past one o’clock in the afternoon, and then without a sigh, groan, or the least struggle, she sweetly fell asleep, and her happy spirit took its everlasting flight to the regions of unclouded day, December 20, 1790, in the 23d year of her age.

J. P.

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 14 (1791): 189–92.

³Alexander Pope, ‘Adriani morientis ad Animam; or The Christian to his Departing Soul’, included by JW in *MSP* (1744), 2:185.

⁴Small cards which had a text of Scripture on one side and a stanza of a poem on that scripture by CW on the other. Cf. Frank Baker, ‘Charles Wesley’s Scripture Playing Cards’, *WHS* 29 (1954): 136–38.

⁵Job 17:1.

⁶1 Sam. 20:3.

⁷Gen. 49:33.

From the Rev. Dr. Thomas Coke

St. Vincent's
December 27, 1790

Honoured and Most Dear Sir,

On the 27th of Nov. 1790, I sailed with Mr. [John] Baxter for the island of Grenada, where we arrived on the next day about eleven o'clock. We first called on Mr. Lynch of the town of St. George, who formerly lived in Antigua, and was then an acquaintance of Mr. Baxter. At his house we found a very comfortable lodging. Being the Lord's-day, we went to church as soon as we had dressed ourselves. The minister, Mr. [Samuel] Dent, was in the midst of his sermon. After the sermon was over, we waited on him in the vestry-room, where he received us with true Christian kindness, and introduced us to several serious coloured people who were then with him in the vestry-room.

Mr. Dent was curate of Bridgetown, in Barbados, when I visited that island two years ago. He is the only clergyman in these islands that has shown any regard for the Methodists. He defended us in every company, till he himself began to fall into reproach—when that amiable, that admirable man, General Matthews, the Governor of Grenada and Commander-in-Chief of the Forces in the Caribbean Islands,¹ singled him out, and gave him the living of St. George's, Grenada.

Soon after we left Mr. Dent, we waited on the general. He honoured us with about an hour's conversation concerning the design of our visit, and begged we would send missionaries to the inland. 'For', said he, 'I wish that the Negroes may be fully instructed, and there will be work enough for you and the clergy of the island.' I thought I could not but promise him a missionary, which I accordingly did. We dined with him. Among the company at dinner, were the President of the Council, the Speaker of the Assembly, etc.² The Speaker, during the conversation, expressed a strong desire that I would visit him at his seat in the country, offered to supply me and my friend with horses, to ride with us through the island, and to introduce me to most of the gentlemen in it. But my plan would not admit of it.

In the evening I preached in a large room to a numerous and deeply attentive congregation. About the middle of the discourse two or three young men at the door were very noisy for a minute or two. But on my observing to them that there were magistrates in that island who would do us justice, they thought proper to withdraw. After preaching I found that a society of about twenty seeking souls had been formed by one Paynter, a free Mulatto, and sometime a member of our society in Antigua.³ The following morning at six o'clock Mr. Baxter preached, and the room was nearly filled. In preaching he found his soul so moved towards the people, that he promised them he would himself return as their pastor, if no one else could be nominated at the Conference.

A Negro called on me to inform me that Mr. Baxter had nearly finished his discourse (as I stayed at home to write, but was desirous of taking my leave of the people) and the poor man observed to me that a little time ago he dreamed that two ministers came to the island for the benefit of the blacks. He added that as soon as he saw Mr. Baxter and me enter the church, he knew us immediately to be the very same persons who had been represented to him in his dream. I went and gave the people a short exhortation. After which a very genteel black woman, who was free and of some property, came up and taking brother Painter by the hand said, 'Sir, this good man has kindled a spark among us, and I hope you will send us assistance that it may be preserved and increased.' We breakfasted with Mr. Dent, and afterwards made a visit to Mr. Williams, Comptroller of the Customs, and Member for the town of St. George. Mr. Williams has heard the gospel in England and, I believe, loves it. He gave us great encouragement, expressed his desire that we would visit him at his country-house, and assured us that he would be glad to open the way of any missionary we should send, as far as he could.

¹I.e., Edward Mathew (1729–1805).

²Samuel Mitchell (1750–1805) was President; Alexander Campbell (1739–95), Speaker.

³Orig., 'Painter'. See Samuel Paynter to JW, c. 1789.

About 11:00 in the morning we set off on a journey of about thirty miles over the highest hills in the island. On the top of the highest we could wear our great coats buttoned. On this hill there is one of the best inns I have met with in the West Indies, for the kindness of the people and the reasonableness of their charges. It is also very commodious. It is called Grand Etang from a great lake which is near it. This lake is very deep, and supplies (I am informed) by subterraneous passages the twelve rivers (brooks we should call them) which water the island. The lake is surrounded by large peaks covered with wood. If I was to turn hermit, I think I should fix on this place, where I would make circular walks, and fix an observatory on one of the peaks, and spend my time in communion with God and in the study of astronomy and botany. At the tavern we met with a servant of the gentleman (John Rae, Esq.⁴) whom we were going to visit, who brought us by the nearest but a wretched way to his master's house, about 9:00 at night. The gentleman of the house, who is the agent of two principal West India merchants in London, from one of whom I brought him a recommendatory letter, treated us with every attention and kindness, and informed us that he had nine hundred Negroes under his direction; and that they were (as far as his influence went) open to the instruction, and his house to the entertainment of any missionary I should recommend. We shall have some difficulty with those Negroes, as the Romish priests have too great a footing among them.

The next day we rode to a town called Guave,⁵ where we took shipping again. And after touching at St. Vincent's and taking up Mr. [Matthew] Lumb and Mr. [Thomas] Werrill, arrived in Antigua on the 5th of December.

Here I indeed found myself at home, and spent four comfortable days in this island. At the baptism of three adults we had a memorable time. One of them was so overcome, that she fell into a swoon, and all she said for some time, but with an enraptured countenance, was, 'Heaven! Heaven! Come! Come!' On the last evening, after I had preached, three drunken gentlemen (so called) attacked Mr. Baxter in a most rude manner at the door of the chapel. He made some reply, on which they seized him. And one of them cried out, 'I'll murder thee, Baxter, I'll murder thee.' Mrs. Baxter, hearing the horrid expressions, seemed to be almost distracted. And many of the Negroes cried, 'Mr. Baxter, our own Mr. Baxter is murdered.' Many who were in their own houses, and did not distinctly understand the cry, apprehended there was a fire. So that soon the whole town was in an uproar. Two magistrates however, with great spirit and discretion, at last reduced everything to order and sent to Mr. Baxter to inform him that if he would lodge an information in the morning the rioters should be severely punished. We returned our thanks by letter in the most courteous and grateful manner we were able, but informed them that we took greater pleasure in forgiving than in prosecuting, and therefore begged leave to drop our information.

The work of God deepens in this island, and the converted Negroes give a more pointed and more scriptural account of their experience than they used to do. On Wednesday the eighth, at 11:00 at night we set sail for St. Christopher's, and after touching at Montserrat (where I trust we shall soon have a mission), we landed on St. Kitt's on the ninth at 10:00 at night.

Three of the preachers being not yet arrived, I set off with Mr. Baxter to visit St. Eustatius on the tenth. Landing late in the evening we delayed our visit to the new governor (who has been lately sent out from Holland) till the morning.⁶ When we waited on him, he received us with very great rudeness indeed. Finding from inquiry that the truly serious had liberty to meet together without molestation, we judged it best to leave the island as quietly as possible. However we called on our kind friend Mr. Lindsey, who had received me and my brethren with so much love and hospitality two years ago. But alas, we found him and left him in the depth of despair! The only reason he gave us for his deplorable situation was that the Lord had very powerfully called him time after time to preach, and that he had as often resisted the

⁴John Rae Esq. (1740–1823).

⁵I.e., Gouyave.

⁶Pieter Anthony Godin (b. 1726) had been appointed governor in 1788.

call; till at last he entirely lost a sense of the favour of God. He seemed to have no hope left. We endeavoured to raise his drooping head, but all in vain. By this time our arrival on the island was well known. And while we were at breakfast in the inn, one of the brethren, a white man of the name of Ryley called on us, and informed us that upwards of two hundred met regularly in class under their respective leaders. That the Lord had raised eight exhorters among them, of whom he was one. That they all looked on themselves as Methodists, and that if I would correspond with them from time to time by the way of St. Kitt's, they would punctually perform all the directions that should be given them concerning the management of the society. He also informed me that a considerable number of the brethren and sisters that were free Negroes intended being at St. Kitt's on Christmas day, in order to enjoy the ordinances with one of our ministers. I promised to correspond with them, and desired them to refer all their difficulties to the advice and decision of our Assistant minister in St. Christopher's.⁷ The above-mentioned brother Ryley was awakened about four years ago by poor black Harry, of whom I can hear no tidings.⁸ We afterwards set sail for the island of Nevis, where we arrived in the evening.

My old hospitable friend Mr. Ward, the Judge of the Admiralty,⁹ received me with every kindness and civility. On Sunday the 12th I preached twice, and Mr. Baxter once, in our chapel in Charlestown, the only town in this island. In the course of the day we held a love-feast, where I enjoyed much satisfaction in the accounts given by some of our brethren concerning their experience. One young black man particularly, who spoke better English than the rest, gave us a very pleasing detail of the circumstances of his conviction and conversion—how he was drawn (to use his own words) out of the dark shades, and from the power of Satan, into glorious liberty. The next day we paid short visits to several of our friends in the country, particularly Mr. Richard Nisbet,¹⁰ the most pious white man I believe I have ever met with in the West Indies, the missionaries themselves perhaps excepted. He has met with many misfortunes in life, but he is truly crucified to the world, and the world to him. He is not ashamed to assist us in instructing and exhorting the numerous bodies of Negroes on the several estates of his first cousin Mr. Walter Nisbet, on one of which he resides.¹¹ From his house, and with him, we went to dine with Walter Nisbet, Esq., who has, concentrated in him, everything that can constitute the man of honour and the gentleman. I never knew, till my present visit to this island, that the sensitive plant is a native of the West Indies. And now, for the first instance, I found time to examine the whole process of sugar-making.

In the evening I preached and lodged in the house of Mr. Kane, a planter and a friend, where that dear man Mr. Richard Nisbet concluded the day with us, and promised to make us a visit at St. Kitt's, which he accordingly performed. The next morning we returned to St. Christopher's, and our absent brethren soon after arriving, we began our Conference on Wednesday the fifteenth of December. It continued for two days and part of a third, and was conducted and concluded in great peace.¹²

I am, my dear sir, with very great respect,

Your most dutiful, obliged, and affectionate son,

Thomas Coke

Source: published transcription; *A Journal of the Rev. Dr. Coke's Third Tour through the West Indies, in two letters to the Rev. J. Wesley* (London: Paramore, 1791), 5–12.

⁷Robert Gamble was the current Assistant of the St. Christopher circuit.

⁸See Coke to JW, July 31, 1787.

⁹John Abel Ward (c. 1733–1815).

¹⁰Orig., 'Nesbitt'. Author of *The Capacity of Negroes for Religious and Moral Improvement Considered. ... By Richard Nisbet, of the Island of Nevis* (London: James Phillips, 1789).

¹¹Orig., 'Nesbitt'. Walter Nisbet (1745–97) of Nevis.

¹²Coke next lists the stations of the preachers and the numbers of members in each society.

From the Rev. Dr. Thomas Coke

at sea, near Cape Florida
January 4[–26], 1791

Honoured and Most Dear Sir,

On the 18th of December I sailed for the island of St. Vincent, as I could hear of no vessel bound for Jamaica in any island leeward. The time would not allow me to visit any of the Virgin Islands. I was obliged to overlook even Tortola itself, though our testimony for the Lord Jesus has been more blessed for the time in that island than in any other. A remarkable circumstance which lately happened in this place deserves to be noticed. Mrs. Lilly, a Quaker lady in whose house at Santa Croix I preached about two years ago,¹ came over to Tortola on a visit. At that time the missionaries were under a warm persecution. And Mrs. Lilly, who is well known and respected in the island, went from house to house among the principal inhabitants of Road Town, testifying against their conduct, and declaring her full persuasion that the missionaries were men of God. 'But are not you a Quaker, Mrs. Lilly', said several of them. 'I am', said she, 'both a Quaker and a Methodist; and I tell you, you are injuring both yourselves and your community by your opposition to those holy men.' Her testimony had a very good effect on many.

I spent my Christmas very comfortably and profitably to myself, and I trust to others, in that romantic island, St. Vincent's. On Monday the 27th, I went with Mr. [Thomas] Werrill on board the ship *Jamaica* bound for Montego Bay, the third town in the island of Jamaica. Our company were Captain Sherry and his agreeable wife, (who is my country woman, from Wales) and three other agreeable ladies. The ship was lately built in Bristol, is very large, and has the best accommodations of any ship I ever sailed in. After a very agreeable passage, we landed at Montego Bay on the 5th of January.

This town probably contains about five thousand inhabitants. And the trees and plantations are so interspersed as to give it the most rural appearance of any town, I think, I ever saw. But we were without a friend or single acquaintance. And to those who are endued with the tenderest social feelings this is no small trial; though I do know in the general, to the glory of the grace of God be it acknowledged, that the Lord is a sufficient consolation in every place. I had however a strong persuasion that there was work for us to do in this town. We therefore went to a lodging house, where we were very kindly treated. A recommendatory letter which I brought with me from a friend in Cork, to a principal gentleman in the neighbourhood, procured for us an elegant dinner, but no advice or help as to our main design. I walked about the streets, peeping and inquiring, but could hear of no place in which I could preach; and to preach out of doors is almost impracticable in this burning clime. Besides, the Negroes in general are not able to attend till the evening, when the heavy dews would render it in a high degree imprudent and dangerous to preach abroad. In this dilemma we should have set off as soon as possible for Kingston, if I could have got our boxes out of the ship, and sent off my heaviest things to Charleston before me. But this we could not bring to bear for three or four days.

While we were dining on the following day at an ordinary, I simply told the company of the business on which I was come, and complained of my hard lot in being prevented of the opportunity of preaching to the inhabitants of the town for want of a place. One of them observed that the large assembly room which was frequently used as a playhouse, and was formerly the church where divine service was performed on Sundays, would be very commodious. Immediately after dinner we waited on the proprietor of the assembly room, whose name is Brown—a private gentleman, who has a large family and small property, but whom I shall ever remember with gratitude and esteem. He very generously gave me the use of the room, which has two small galleries, and will contain about five or six hundred people, gratis, and also lighted it at his own expense. The first evening I had most of the principal people of the town to hear me; who attended invariably during the four evenings I preached there. But hardly any of the coloured people attended that evening, the man whom I sent round the town calling only at the houses of the

¹See Coke to JW, Feb. 3, 1789.

whites. But every evening afterwards the blacks attended, and their numbers increased beyond expectation. Each evening the congregation in general heard with deep attention. A few rakes only clapped their hands and cried out, 'Encore, encore', the first and second evenings after I had concluded. But [they] were from that time prevented by the interference of two or three gentlemen. On the Sunday morning we went to church. But a little rain falling, the congregation consisted only of half a dozen or thereabouts at the exact time of beginning, on which the minister walked out. If he had condescended to have waited ten minutes longer, we should have been, I believe, about twenty. The Sunday before also there had been no service. In some of the parishes of this island there is no church, nor any divine service performed except the burial of the dead, and christenings, and weddings in private houses, though the livings are very lucrative. But I will write no more on this subject, lest I should grow indignant. The church in this town is small, but peculiarly elegant. It has been newly built at the expense of about twelve thousand pounds sterling.²

In the evening I had about five hundred hearers. After as faithful a sermon as I was able to give them on the necessity of the new birth, I informed them that Mr. [William] Hammet, I believed, would soon visit them—whom I strongly recommended, nor did they seem displeased. Two or three poor blacks embraced an opportunity of squeezing my hand, and dropped some words which convinced me they had been much affected with what they had heard.

Having now settled all matters in respect to my boxes; and opened, I trust, a little door for the gospel at Montego Bay; I set off with Mr. Werrill for Kingston on the 10th of January. Finding that we could not hire horses for this journey under £18 sterling or thereabouts, I purchased two poor, weak horses to carry us and our saddlebags. It is so extraordinary, so perfectly new, in this country for anyone to ride with saddlebags that we were stared at while we jogged along on our poor little creatures, as two phenomena in nature. O how sweet it is to drink of the cup of Christ! The distance from Montego Bay to Kingston is one hundred and twenty-six miles, which is a very long journey in that burning climate, especially as the roads were very deep in the plains, through the vast quantity of rain which had lately fallen, and we had two mountains to cross.

In the course of the first day we met two Negroes, one of whom was crying for the loss of his hat, which a sailor had stolen from him a little before. I proposed to Mr. Werrill to return and overtake the sailor, which we accordingly did. He had a companion with him, and both of them were very strong, and might soon have conquered us and our pitiful horses. But providence restrained them, though I spoke many keen things to the thief. At last a gentleman came up in his carriage, to whom I applied for help. But he drove away unconcerned. I then was obliged to keep the sailors at bay till two gentlemen came up on horseback, with whose assistance I recovered the hat to the great joy of the poor sufferer and his black companion. But they wist not how much I had their spiritual interests at heart. We lay the first night in a little town called Martha Brae.³ A company adjoining the room in which we sat were uncommonly rude. One of them sung as obscene and blasphemous a song as language perhaps could afford. I imagine it was full as bad as the *Essay on Woman*.⁴ O what a wicked country is this!

The next day we rode through the parish of St. Anne, which exhibits a delightful prospect. Though not so picturesque as some of the prospects in St. Vincent's, it was incomparably more noble. The high mountains on the right, the placid ocean on the left, and the fine plain betwixt them, crowded with rich, green plantations of sugar canes, yielded a grandeur of appearance superior to any thing I had before seen in this archipelago. The plain is more like the vale of Glamorgan, in Wales, than any other place I can recollect.

²This would be St. James church.

³Orig., 'Martha-Bray'.

⁴John Wilkes, *An Essay on Woman* (London: for the author, 1763); an obscene parody of Alexander Pope's *Essay on Man*.

At the tavern where we dined, we met with a poor Negro woman who was brought here from South Carolina, and evidently possessed the fear of God. She seemed to seek for opportunities to wait upon us, and drank in every word concerning religion with the utmost greediness.

We began to ascend the mountains on the 12th. Upon the top of one of them we found an abundance of orange trees, of the species which we call Seville. They looked exceedingly beautiful, and their beneficent Creator seemed to say to us in the trees, 'Come, ye weary travellers, and quench your thirst.'

About 4:00 in the afternoon we arrived at the foot of a great mountain called by no other name than Mount Diablo, of which we had received from various persons most dreadful accounts. The landlord of the tavern at the foot of the mountain where we dined told us of the dreadful precipices, and of the fall of many over them who were never after heard of, etc. After dining, and resting our wearied horses for a couple of hours, we set off by the light of the moon in order to conquer this tremendous hill at the earnest importunity of my companion, though I acknowledge my great imprudence in yielding to him. The precipices far exceeded my expectations in the awfulness and horror of their appearance. Nor is it at all improbable that many have been lost through intoxication, or unruly horses. Even my miserable pony wanted much to crop a fine tuft of grass on the very edge of one of them. However, with much labour and patience, and the aid of a gracious providence, we arrived at a tavern on the other side of the mountain about 11:00 at night. In the last day's journey we saw an abundance of very fine pasturage, and a great quantity of cattle. The Guinea grass (a native of Africa,) which grows in the long days to six feet in height, and in manured ground will seed six or eight times in the year (if cut down to the ground each time after feeding), is the chief food of the cattle in the hilly parts.

We had the solemn pleasure on the next day of riding through a part of the country which contains the greatest curiosity in Jamaica, within about thirteen miles of Spanish Town. Of a sudden, one seems to be locked up among the hills without any passage forwards: till in a moment, a narrow crooked pass between two immense rocks, hid from the view of the traveller till he comes fully upon it, opens to him. Between these two vast rocks we rode about a mile or two with a beautiful purling river on our right. I think Dover cliffs are inferior to these rocks in height. Penmaenmawr in north Wales is higher. But the scene has superior advantages here, from the rocks being on each hand, and almost equally high and perfectly perpendicular.

In the afternoon as we drew near Spanish Town, the seat of government and the second town in the island, our horses could hardly move through fatigue. So that Mr. Werrill was obliged to lead his beast for three miles; and to keep up his spirits, which I thought began to droop, I dismounted and walked with him. From the violent flush I observed in his countenance, I was very apprehensive he would be attacked with a fever.

Soon after our arrival in Spanish Town we waited on Dr. Tittford of that place,⁵ whose brother I have the pleasure of being acquainted with in London.⁶ I brought to the doctor a gold medal from the Society of Arts and Commerce, for his improvements in the preparing and exporting of cashew gum. The doctor did indeed, both that day and on my return, show me and my friends many marks of kindness and attention. I now found a strong desire of opening a work of God, with the divine blessing, in this place; and for that purpose made various applications in vain for a room to preach in, till at last a tavern keeper told me that his long room was at my service. It was now too late to send notice round the town, so I deferred my attempt till another opportunity.

The next morning (January 14th) we set off for Kingston, which is distant thirteen miles from Spanish Town; to which place our poor weary horses, after being rested once at a tavern, and twice on the road where there happened to be a large spot of grass, brought us with great difficulty about dinner time. Notwithstanding our various trials—the novelty, beauty, and grandeur of the different prospects we met

⁵I.e., Isaac Titford (1760–1834), a surgeon and apothecary, who later returned to England.

⁶William Titford (1752–1824), a silk weaver in London.

with on the way, and perhaps a peculiar turn of mind which the Lord has blessed me with of extracting out of these innocent, transitory things all the sweetness they are capable of yielding, together with the approving smile of heaven, made the journey very agreeable. In this island the rivers are comparatively large. In the other islands there were hardly any singing-birds; but here we had many. Their notes indeed are far from being so melodious as those of our birds at home, though their plumage is far more beautiful.

I might enter into a description of the many very curious trees of different species and wonderful make, which we met with on our way—a subject which would, I believe, be very entertaining and profitable to some, but tedious to others.

These are thy glorious works, Parent of good!
Almighty! thine this universal frame,
Thus wondrous fair; thy self how wondrous then!
Unspeakable! who sitt'st above these heavens,
To us invisible, or dimly seen
In these thy lowest works. Yet these declare
Thy goodness beyond thought, and pow'r divine.⁷

The most valuable of all the trees is the plantain, which answers to the bread-tree of the islands in the Pacific Ocean, so celebrated by Captain Cook. The fruit is cylindrical, from eight to eighteen inches long, and an inch and a half or two inches in diameter. When drawn before they are ripe, split and roasted, they are, I think to my taste, equal to bread. And I am certain I should soon be able to bring myself to prefer them to any bread. The Negroes in general give them the preference. When buttered they eat very well with tea and coffee. The ripe fruit is exactly like mellow apples, and would answer the same end in pies. I think the planters in this island are not sufficiently attentive to the raising of this blessed tree, which I believe will grow almost in every soil, but best in the little gullies between the mountains; and would secure the Negroes from any danger of a famine, unless after a violent hurricane, which these trees are not able to withstand. The island of St. Vincent abounds with plantations of these trees which make the year smile with the abundance of plenty.

Our chapel in Kingston is situated on a very beautiful spot, called the parade. It commands from the balcony a prospect of part of the town, of the harbour, and of the fields, which I could have admired for an hour.⁸ But the persecution which has been experienced in this place far, very far, exceeds all the persecutions we have met with in the other islands unitedly considered. Mr. Hammet's life has been frequently endangered. Mr. Bull, whom I have mentioned in a former journal,⁹ and who continues our steady friend, has several times narrowly escaped being stoned to death. Particularly one night, when he eluded the vigilance of the rioters by being disguised in a suit of regimentals. Often our most active friends were obliged to guard the chapel, lest the outrageous mob might pull it down to the ground. The refraining from preaching by candle light, which perhaps was a measure necessary for the occasion, was a

⁷Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book 5, ll. 153–59.

⁸Note in published booklet, likely not in letter: 'It is eighty feet in length, and forty in breadth, and will contain about one thousand five hundred people. It has galleries on three sides, and is built exactly on the plan of our chapel at Halifax in Yorkshire, known to and admired by numbers of our friends in England. The only difference is that our chapel in Kingston is above stairs, the other on the ground. Underneath we have a hall (which is absolutely necessary in this very hot country), four chambers, and a large school-room, where one of our friends, brother Fosbrook, whose mother is a member of our society near Castle Donington, Leicestershire, keeps school (under this condition, that the resident preacher shall nominate one child out of ten, who shall be instructed gratis).

⁹This portion, covering Jan. 14–July 9, 1789, was not sent to JW as a letter; so it is not included above.

means of abating the persecution. At last, the rioters rose one night between eleven and twelve o'clock, and broke down the gates of the court leading to the chapel. On which four of the magistrates interfered, through the strong remonstrances of a gentleman of influence in Kingston who esteems us, though he is not in our society. They accordingly published an advertisement which kept the rioters from that time within tolerable bounds. But the newspapers were full for several months of letters for and against us. Many stood up in our defence under feigned signatures, two of whom were masterly writers. Everything that was bad was said of Mr. Hammet; every name that was disgraceful was given to him. In respect to me they published an anecdote of my being tried in England for horse-stealing, and flying to America to escape justice. Some of the rioters were prosecuted, and the jury acquitted them against the clearest evidences. Nay, the grand jury gave it as their public opinion that both Mr. Hammet and the chapel ought to be prosecuted as nuisances. Some of the persecutors were going one night to beat, if not murder, a young man whom they met in one of the streets and took for Mr. Hammet, but happily the mistake was discovered in time.

On the first evening of my arrival I ventured to open the chapel again for preaching by candle light, and had a numerous audience. But some of them were very rude. However, I thought it most prudent to pass them by unnoticed. My dear friend Mr. Hammet lay dangerously ill of a fever and ague, and a violent inflammation in one of his eyes, and was worn almost to a skeleton with opposition and fatigue. He had not been able to preach for near a month. His enemies had often killed him in report, and even insinuated that he had been buried by his friends in a clandestine manner. They were now waiting for the joyful moment when they might triumph in his decease and, as they apprehended, the extinction of the work. I had a private interview with his physician, Dr. Harris, a man of great honour as well as great skill, who assured me that there was not the least hope of his recovery but by his removal for some time to a colder climate. As I was persuaded nothing should be omitted that might any way contribute to save so valuable a life, I determined to take him with me through North America; after which he might, if restored, return to Jamaica and settle a mission in Montego Bay and its neighbourhood, through the blessing of God. He has been employed in the most arduous undertakings during the time he has been in these islands. The two most flourishing societies in the West Indies (Antigua excepted), those of St. Kitt's and Tortola, were raised by the means of his indefatigable labours in the midst of much opposition. And there are but few in the world with whom I have been acquainted that possess the proper apostolic spirit in an equal degree with him. This testimony I feel myself obliged to bear concerning him, because he is worthy of it.

Mr. [William] Brazier, our other missionary appointed for the Kingston circuit, arriving there a few days before me, I took him with me to Spanish Town on Monday the 17th, leaving Mr. Werrill to preach in Kingston. In the evening I appeared in the long room of the tavern according to the before-mentioned permission, having previously sent notice round the town. When I entered the room I found it nearly filled by the young bucks and bloods of the town (as we used to term the debauchees at Oxford), and not a single lady was present. Soon afterwards many of the coloured people of both sexes came and filled the vacant places. During my sermon the bucks behaved so rude that I observed before I concluded that if any housekeeper would lend me a hall, I would preach again the next evening. Otherwise I should probably be obliged to leave the place. 'Farewell, sir', said one. 'Good luck to you, sir', says another. And thus they went on till I withdrew.

When Mr. Brazier and I consulted together on the subject, we were fully persuaded from the countenances and behaviour of the coloured people that the Redeemer's kingdom might be enlarged by the preaching of the gospel in this place *to them*; and that we ought not to give up the point. Before bedtime two gentlemen came to me at my lodgings, and offered me their halls to preach in. But alas, when I called on them the next morning, they had been, I suppose, frightened by their friends, and both of them retracted their promises! We were then determined to move on the true gospel-plan, 'from the least unto the greatest'.¹⁰ Accordingly we hired a poor cheap house (if it might be called by so lofty a name) in

¹⁰Jer. 6:13.

the outskirts of the town, of a Mulatto, from month to month. Here I preached in the evening to a considerable number of coloured people; and notwithstanding the poverty of the place, some of the bucks attended and were ruder if possible than the night before. During the height of the noise I felt a spirit which I think I never felt before, at least in the same manner. I believe it was a spark of the proper spirit of martyrdom. At the conclusion therefore of a pointed, though short address to the rioters, I told them I was willing, yea, desirous to suffer martyrdom. And my words seemed to have a considerable effect on their minds. I then published myself for the Thursday evening following. And in the morning, after giving directions about the making of some wooden candlesticks to be fastened against the wooden walls, we returned to Kingston.

In the evening I had a large congregation and, I believe, a considerable part of our enemies present. My sermon was partly addressed to the deists, partly to the Socinians, and partly to the Arians. At first they began according to their custom to be noisy. But I was happy enough to command their deep attention during at least three-fourths of the discourse. On the next day (Thursday) I returned to Spanish Town, and had a considerable number of the coloured people to hear me in the evening, and some of the bucks, whose attendance I could have excused. They were not near so noisy as they had been before. After sermon I plainly told them of our full determination of going forward, and of applying for justice to the legal powers of the country, if perseveringly insulted and abused. I also observed that if no justice was to be found in Jamaica, we were sure of obtaining it completely at home. Early in the morning, after preaching, I enlarged on the nature of our discipline as far as I thought it prudent to speak of it in so early a stage of the work, to about thirty attentive coloured people. Afterwards I bought some boards to be made into benches for the preaching-house, and leaving Mr. Werrill behind me for the three following days, I returned to Kingston, my poor horse falling down with me on the way out of mere weakness. When I arrived, I desired that the two horses might run in some pasture for a month or two, and then be sold, the money to be applied for the supporting of the work in Spanish Town.

On Sunday the 23rd, I held a love-feast in Kingston after morning-preaching, and was highly satisfied with the testimony which many bore to the glory of the grace of God. The number in society in this town is about one hundred and fifty; in the whole circuit two hundred and thirty-four—which is an increase of eighty-four since the last accounts I received before my arrival.

A little occurrence may perhaps be of use to some if it be noted here. I tried an experiment on a poor Negro, servant of my friend Mr. Bull, who was nearly blind and had been declared incurable by two physicians. I got his hair shaved off on the crown of his head, about the bigness of a crownpiece or more, and applied a poultice made of the yolk (only) of an egg, beat up with salt to a proper consistence, to the part that was shaved. On the second day another poultice was made in the same manner, and applied over the first. On the third day a third poultice was made as before, and applied over the other two. On the fourth day the whole was taken off, and the part dressed after the manner of a blister. And from this remedy in a few days, under the blessing of God, the Negro recovered his sight.

Mr. Hammet had two or three interviews before his illness with a young African prince, a son of the King of Mundingo. This is the second tour which the young prince has voluntarily taken with the captain of the ship in which he sailed from Africa. He had lost a sister many years ago who, as the family supposed, was stolen away. And to his great surprise he found her in Kingston. She had been stolen as her family conjectured, and is now a member of our society, as is her husband, who is a free black, and also a leader of a class, and an exhorter. The prince promised Mr. Hammet that he would send two slaves from home, as the purchase of his sister, that she might return to her native country and bring her husband along with her.

On the Sunday afternoon I went to Port Royal, to be ready for the brig in which I had taken a passage for myself and Mr. Hammet to Charleston, and preached in the evening to a considerable congregation in the house of Mr. Fisher, the first friend I met with in Jamaica on my former visit two years ago, who has been raised to the office of master shipwright, the second in the harbour, from that of master caulker. There had been some persecution in this place, many of the outrageous in Kingston having agreed to assassinate Mr. Hammet here. But the magistrates behaved with such spirit and intrepidity that the persecutors were glad to hide their heads.

On Tuesday evening, the 25th of January, we went on board the big *Success*, John Maziere, Master, and sailed the next morning. Our captain was at St. Vincent's when I was there, and for some time after I left it. He informed me that soon after my sailing for Jamaica some rioters broke into our chapel by night, injured the benches and other things, and afterwards seized on the Bible, took it to the public gallows, and hanged it on the gallows; where it was found hanging the next morning. The magistrates of St. Vincent's very nobly advertised a hundred pounds reward for the discovery of any of the perpetrators of this audacious villainy. What a comfort it is that Jesus Christ, the God of heaven and earth, is the King of the church!

The day before I sailed, Mr. Werrill came from Spanish Town to take leave of me, and brought me the reviving tidings that for the three days he successively preached there he had peaceable, attentive congregations of coloured people; and had begun to form a class of catechumens *among them*. Glory be to God in the highest!

I am, dear sir, with great respect,

Your most dutiful, affectionate, and obliged son,

Thomas Coke

Source: published transcription; *A Continuation of the Rev. Dr. Coke's Third Tour through the West Indies, in a letter to the Rev. J. Wesley* (London: Paramore, 1791), 2–16.

Susanna Knapp¹

Worcester
February 16, 1791

Reverend and Dear Sir,

We are sorry to find, by your last,² that your strength so visibly fails you; and that we are put off this year, like the last, with one night only. We shall certainly be very sorry to propose anything that would disconcert your plans, or that would seem like an intrusion upon yourself. But if we could hope for a second night, we are sure it would give great pleasure to those who are 'without', as well as to your own people, and we trust be a blessing to both. Your kindness in answering me before gives me some reason to hope you will again favour me with a few lines, and I trust in favour of our request.

Father and mother join with me in love, and will be exceeding happy to see you, but not more so than your humble petitioner. Pardon, dear sir, this intrusion on your time, and permit me to subscribe myself

Your affectionate, though most unworthy, friend and servant,

Susanna Knapp

Source: published transcription; Rowley, *Knapp*, 7.

¹Susanna Knapp (1770–1856) was a daughter of John and Ann (Turner) Knapp. Her parents hosted JW when he was in Worcester, so Susanna came to know and correspond with him. Susanna never married, but became friends with Elizabeth Ritchie, Ann Bolton, and other Methodist women. See Edith Rowley, *Fruits of Righteousness in the Life of Susanna Knapp* (London: Hamilton, Adams & Co., 1866).

²JW's prior letter is not known to survive; but he replied to this one on Feb. 19, 1791.