

## Transcribed conversion testimonies arranged in chronological order

These transcripts of approximately one third of the collection are kindly made available by Tom Albin, who worked on the material as part of a research project. It is intended that this collection will be added to as more testimonies are transcribed by students and volunteers.

Reference EMV:41

Date: 1738 July 24

Addressees: Martha Claggett to Charles Wesley

Annotation: "July 24, 1738. Blessed Mrs. Claggett, one of the First Witnesses."

Note: Mrs. Claggett, along with her daughters Sukey and Betsey, was converted under CW's ministry in June and July of 1738. He saw them regularly during this time and JW visited them regularly after his return from Germany [CWJ.1:121-150; JWJ.2:77, 83, 95-100d, 118-147d]. She later married Mr. Clifford and remained with the Moravians. All references to the family stop after 1739.

In my infancy from the time of my having learned to read, which I believe as very early, the Scriptures were so much my delight that I was seldom prevailed upon to leave that pleasure to play with my sisters, or take any other diversion. My father was so pleased with me on this account that he procured [for] me a folio Bible with cuts, which I was so taken with and found to be of such use that I soon got so much of it by heart and could give such an memorized large portions of Scripture as a child account where every remarkable passage was to be found that I was always called for by my father whenever he had any company come to visit him that liked such things, to surprise them with what I had learned. My mother had often told me what I had myself forgot, being so very young when it happened; that at a time when she was big with child; and very disconsolate, and in pain, both of body and mind, and sitting very pensive; I went to her with my Bible and desired her to read; and pointed out to her these words of our Lord, "Oh thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" Which gave her immediate ease and removed all her doubts. I continued some years in this happy way though under great disadvantages, having no one to improve this disposition. I was almost left to myself, my parents being greatly engaged in worldly affairs. The devil (provoked my growth in grace) made use of an uncle of mine to

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persuade them that if they let me thus alone it would certainly be attended with fatal consequences such as ill health or despair, advising them to employ and divert me some other way. They did so, and from this time I seldom had the comfort of my Bible but by stealth. I was sent abroad into the world to boarding schools (the place of my birth being but a mean little village) to learn to dance and some other things which did me great harm. I began to love the pleasures and vanities of the world and to grow cold to religious exercises and as the former increased, the latter decreased. Thus they took me from my Eden, but such was the continued mercies of God to me that in order to call me back from this dangerous condition, He was pleased (about the 13<sup>th</sup> year of my age) to visit me with a disease which continued on me about 2 years. After all the likely means had been used and having had advice of the most eminent people without any success, it brought me again into a serious way of thinking, I considered myself an ungrateful wicked wretch that could be negligent in my duty to so kind and gracious a God. I begged most earnestly that he would again receive me to mercy ~~and found~~. It came to my mind that if it was his pleasure (unworthy as I was) he could immediately remove this complaint, particularly my Saviour's

words, "And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer believing ye shall receive." Being persuaded he who cured the ten lepers could restore me, also often [caused me to] crying out, "Lord I believe, help thou my unbelief"; for I saw no obstacle but the weakness of my faith. Nevertheless, I believed that God would grant me this thing also. I continued instant in prayer till at length God had respect to my importunity. He granted me my heart's

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desire and fulfilled all my mind. I had left off medicines, but my distemper immediately abated, and in a short time I was perfectly recovered. But alas, I was of those who did not return to give glory to God. I was then sent to London to improve in vanity. My lot fell among the careless, lukewarm, or as the world terms it, good sort of people. In the 22nd year of my age, I married, and plunged myself into the cares of the world. A large acquaintance, and innumerable perplexities, took entire possession of me. I had uncommon sufferings in child-bearing, which kept me in continual fear. The enemy took advantage of my weakness and when I had conceived of my 5th child, tempted [me] to use some means to disappoint God's providence in bringing it to perfection, and [in] that way free myself from the pain I so much dreaded. Sometimes I thought it would be murder. He answered, "No, that as yet there was no life." He also poured temptations on me of other kinds. He thrust sore at me that I might fall, but the Lord was my helper. He had now almost made an end of me upon earth, and if the Lord had not helped me, it had not failed but my soul had been put to silence. But how shall I express God's mercy in giving this child, whose singular goodness not many of her years have attained too, as she far exceeded any other I ever had. Her sweetness of temper and compassionate disposition was such that from her cradle, she took all opportunities of making peace and doing good, and at about 13 [she] seemed utterly to have renounced the world and gave herself wholly to God. I now see what before I had no notion of, how far she has been made instrumental to the bringing about my own salvation. She every day watched for opportunities of showing me the danger I was in by being too anxious about temporal things, whilst I neglected the only thing needful, telling me that she desired not to be rich or

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great at the hazard of my eternal happiness, desiring me to leave her to God who was sufficient to sustain her. My great love to her gave force to her arguments and made me endure these unwelcome truths which I should not have excused from any other. I trust her prayers and labours have not been in vain. But how many ways should I have wronged my own soul, if God had suffered me to accomplish my sad intention. At the time when she was about a year old, I lost a brother whom I entirely loved; and, although he was a sober young man, had such fears concerning the state of his soul as threw me into a deep melancholy. I applied myself to reading the Scriptures and South's *Sermons* but received no comfort from them considering everything against myself. [note: Rev. Robert South, D.D. By this time at least five volumes of his sermons were in the sixth edition (12 different sermons in each volume)]. This was another of the devil's strategies. He perplexed me about my brother's salvation till I despaired of my own.

After this, I had a violent fever on my spirits, but my physician told me my case was out of his sphere, that my distemper was out of the reach of medicines. He enquired into the state of my mind (which the minister who attended me forgot to do) but could get no answer from me during this time. The devil tormented me with the most horrid illusions and blasphemous suggestions, particularly the words of Job's wife. I often attempted saying the Lord's Prayer but found it impossible. The only thing that occurred to me which any way resembled prayer was, "whither shall I fly from thy presence." My fever was at length removed, which was beyond expectation. I still went mourning all the day long. I was seldom able to give a reasoned answer to anything that was said to me. After some months I began to

pray and said, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me,"

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and in the anguish ~~of my~~ of my soul, entreated the Almighty that this thing might depart from me, though I deserved punishment. Still more intolerable, nor, was my prayers wholly ineffectual. I had a succession of fevers. They were attended with many terrors and gloomy suggestions from the powers of darkness, though less than the former. I had 6 more children. My sufferings in bearing these were more remarkably grievous than before. My cares and disappointments, which also increased, gave me a strong propensity to anger and impatience, which was the sin that did so easily beset me. I practiced some outward duties, and now and then heard the word gladly, but it fell among thorns. I was still sore bound in misery and iron. I knew not what to do, having none to guide me till God sent Mr. Whitefield amongst us. He told me of original sin and man's fallen estate. This, by sorrowful experience, I had proved to be true. [note: GW first preached on the new birth in London during August of 1736, GWJ p. 77.] He talked of a new birth and change of nature which I thought I had understood, but since find I did not. I was pleased with his conversation, and was delighted with singing hymns, when I was sure no one heard me; and persuaded myself that I was becoming a new creature. I had a sort of peace and some joy and began to think I was alive indeed; but, quickly found myself sadly mistaken. My sins, which for some time lay concealed, attacked me again with greater force than ever. I prayed, resolved, strove, but all in vain. The impetuous torrent soon prevailed, notwithstanding my feeble resistance. I renewed my endeavours, the enemy his assaults, till wearied

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with constant defeats [I] owned myself vanquished and sin to be irresistible. These conflicts greatly impaired my health. My two eldest daughters began to talk to me of free grace, [note: This is clearly a reflection of the Wesleys' preaching in 1738] of faith in Christ, which alone could justify us and deliver us from the power of sin, and make us partakers of the divine nature. They had lived a great while in constant use of all the means of grace, but now declared they had not this faith. I gave some heed to what they said [and] owned it was agreeable to Scripture. The devil, greatly alarmed at these proceedings, employed a friend of mine to dissuade me from such dangerous doctrine. He told me, as floods of tears would permit, that my daughters were entangled with a lot of enthusiasts; which, if not speedily prevented, would put them out of that good way; which he knew they had so long been in; and greatly hazard their salvation. I took his advice [and] began mightily to oppose the only thing whereby I might be saved. I took all possible pains to restrain my daughters, who still persisted in what they first alleged. The younger affirmed that now she knew her sins were forgiven through the satisfaction of Jesus Christ. I told her I feared she deceived herself. Notwithstanding this; God, who saw me while I was yet a great way off, would not suffer me any longer to resist his mercy. Accordingly, on St. Peter's day, he sent the Reverend Mr. Wesley to my aide; who, [note: This would be \*\*, 1738. (Sat. Sept. 30?; JWJ.2:79f)] presented Christ in a new way and offered salvation now at this very moment. like the apostle's good angel, opened the prison door, bid me arise up quickly, and told me that Christ loved me and gave himself for me. That if I would only believe, I might that moment receive the atonement. I heard him with great attention, but having hitherto had Christ represented as a lawgiver and severe judge, I ignorantly imagined I could not receive it then because I was unworthy, not considering I must infallibly remain so till his righteousness was made over to me. We spent [a] great part

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of the afternoon in prayer and singing. After Mr. Wesley left me, my surprising cure through [the] prayer of faith came strongly into my mind, which I had almost forgot, having till then wholly neglected

giving Glory to God by declaring it. In a few days Mr. Wesley made me another visit. His prayers and discourse affected me more than before. I thought Christ smiled upon me, as I could then say, "My Lord and my God." My happiness increased all that evening and I went to bed in great tranquillity. The next morning, between the hours of 3 and 4, [I awoke] in such joy as I never felt before. My heart overflowed with the love of God, the Spirit also bearing witness that I was a child of God, and could not help joining the immortal choir in their "hallalujahs."

[No closing salutation or signature]

Reference EMV:10

Date: 1738 September 20

Addressees: Mrs Platt to Charles Wesley

Place from: Oxford

Annotation: CW's note, "Mrs. Plat's Justif[icatio]n 1740."

Note: Mrs. Platt referred to in CWJ.1:129 (31 Aug. 1738) and in JWJ.2:107d, 325, 349d, 472d. She was converted under CW's sermon at the Castle (31 Aug. 1738) and appears to have remained a member of the society to the end. A manuscript letter from Mrs. Eliz. Holmes to JW (20 Jan. 1742) indicated that Mrs. Platt of Oxford had died recently

September 20th. 1735. I received a present from a dear friend which was a book called *The Great Importance of Religious Life*, [note: *The great importance of a religious life, and the continual pleasure thereof consider'd. To which are added some morning and evening prayers* by William Melmoth (Dublin, 1735 3<sup>rd</sup> ed)] which when I came to open I found these words written, "Be faithful unto death and I will give thee the crown of life. When I had considered with myself my past life and the state I was in, then it made me cry out with the trembling jailor, 'What must I do to be saved? Oh who can dwell with everlasting burnings?' At which, I was astonished to think what I had been doing, for I saw nothing but the sight of hell before mine eyes which brought me almost into despair. My friends being called from me by the will of our heavenly Father to preach unto the unconverted, I was left in a melancholy state; not considering that I had a gracious Saviour that had spared me in all my sins and hath promised to forgive me if I would but forsake my wicked ways and turn unto my Saviour. Which made me to consider what Solomon says, "that the curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked and that evil pursueth sinners." How can anything but misery attend me

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who had drunk iniquity like water and gone on in [the] deadly course of sin. And I, having no power in myself to turn from my evil ways, feel it pleased my heavenly Father who had compassion on me and opened my eyes and let me see that all the threatenings in the Scriptures was due unto me; so that I looked for nothing but the wrath of the Almighty to fall upon me. I continued in that state of life till Thursday, August the 31st, 1738.

I went to hear a sermon at the Castle preached by the Reverend Mr. Charles Wesley, Master Servant of Christ Church, Oxon; which struck me with such amazing thoughts of the judgment to come, when I considered how I should appear before my maker knowing I was condemned here already; which made my very bones and flesh to tremble and my heart to sink within me. I had such despairing thoughts upon me at that time so that the enemy told me it was in vain for [me] to go any more to hear their preaching or reading, for I knew very well that I was lost. Though you strove to comfort me, yet the enemy assaulted me in this manner so

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that I wandered from place to place seeking rest but finding none. And while I was thus musing in time of divine service, it was said unto me that if I could but touch but the hem of his garment I should be whole; but to trust in human flesh would stand me in no stead, for the Saviour of the world, that good samaritan who can forgive me all, I willingly obeyed and went after him, not knowing whither I went. And still it was in my heart part of the day if I could but touch the hem of his garment I should be whole for I can give no other account than this how I came there. It was his heavenly will I should go to Mr. Mearse's house, though I was all most beside myself for the enemy told me that you did not desire me to come and your looking cold upon me gave me room to entertain those evil thoughts. For when Mr.

Wesley came to read, he took no notice of me, which troubled me very much and made me think that all that the enemy said unto me to be true. For he presented nothing before mine eyes but the pit of hell, nor nothing could I behold but an angry God whom I had justly offended. Yet he was pleased to manifest himself unto me that night, the unworthiest of all creatures, for I saw not many minutes before that I hanged as it were

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by a thread over hell and that I saw myself in a damned state and did not but expect to be in hell. That night the room where I was, appeared so dark and dismal that bore witness with my conscience where I must have been, had not my dear Saviour snatch[ed] me from the brink of the pit that moment I had utterly perished everlastingly. For which all praise, all glory be unto thee, O blessed Saviour, now and henceforth for evermore. Amen.

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I joined in prayer with them, but nothing I can remember of the prayer. For while I was praying, my senses were taken away from me for some time, so that I thought nothing of God or my Saviour. Then did my Saviour manifest himself to me; for I felt such power came into my heart that I thought it would have rent my heart in sunder. I, not being sick at all, thought it was hard to "be born." I gladly received it, not knowing at first what it might be for the space of fifteen minutes. Then was it replied unto me that it was the hand of the Lord that pierced into my heart and that it was the Holy Ghost that was upon me, wherein I have a sure pardon of my sins. It is heart work to be born again. Oh the

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pangs of the new birth, who can express it but those that are born again. Last was this wicked enemy to leave me. But when my blessed Saviour came and demanded my heart he could not keep possession any longer, for he said, "Come out of her, thou unclean spirit, for she is mine." O thou dearest Saviour, what return can I render unto thee for all those great and manifold blessings thou hast bestowed upon me; this in particular, thy free gift. Grant that I may walk humble before thee, ever fearing to offend thee either in thought, word or deed. And when I do fall, may I know thou art near to help me. Oh what tongue can express what my soul do[es] feel. Now I am in Christ, there are joys flowing continually from a good and gracious Father, though bestowed upon the most unworthy of all living. Yet is he so good and gracious to give me all things and assurance of his being reconciled to me for which my heart burns with love towards him and my spirit rejoiceth in the Lord. O dearest Saviour, make me humble, meek and lowly in thy sight, that I may be a pattern to all my followers that are in Christ.-----

[no signature]

Reference EMV:55

Date: 1739 September 4

Addressees: John Edmonds to Charles Wesley

Place from: London

Note: John Edmonds (1710-1803) a founding member of the Fetter Lane Society, London, stayed with the Moravians when the Wesleys left. When he and his wife, Mary, celebrated their 51st wedding anniversary 22 Feb. 1781, he was one of the three oldest male members of the society at that time.

Reverend Sir,

London Sept. 4, 1739

My dear brother in Christ. The love I now feel in my heart for you moves me to take pen in hand. Oh may our hearts burn with this fire and that continually. Amen.

My dear brother, what shall I tell you but what my Lord have done for my soul? Before you left us, and over till almost this time; nay, for two months, hath my soul walked in thick clouds and darkness. But my feet hath the Lord taken out of the deep waters. O my dear friend, we must follow our dear Lord and Master, who was crucified in weakness, but raised in power. It is he, it is he, with his own right hand that giveth the victory. He has put a new song in my mouth, even a thanksgiving unto our God. "Sing unto our God above, praise eternal as his love."

Now my dear dear brother, the trials and temptations I underwent were many and very great ones. But the Lord Jehovah is our everlasting strength. Now many of our dear brothers are, I find, under some of the trials I, through my Lord, got the victory over. I was tempted to slight the Church, the means of grace, and such like temptations beset me much. Nay, so strong the conviction that my Lord would teach me himself; that all the arguments [and] the reasons my brethren used were so frivolous and vain to me that I slighted them much. Now I observe I was carried on by degrees for a long while; all public worship was deadness, pain, and uneasy. Now I had given way, as being in much doubt whether it was the dictates of my enemy, or the impressions of the Spirit of God. I say; had I given way to this temptation, and not have flown to my Lord as blind and weak, ignorant and helpless, which condition moved his great compassion; I find it would have been a false joy that would have deceived me. For when I gave way to, and reasoned with, the temptation, I could perceive joy to arise. This false joy deceiveth, I fear, many. O pray, pray for us, for the enemy desireth to sift us as wheat. But I doubt not we shall be now the conqueror; through our suffering, conquering Lord, who loveth us and gave himself for us. Now as I mention love, the knowledge of which none hath; no, nor ever know, but the soul that is first born of love. The natural man, the pharisee, the legalist, those; those have not tasted, nor found out this Christ of ten thousand. The predestinarian beholdeth not the full glory and eternity of it; who ascribe to one attribute (his infinite knowledge) but rob our glorious, and gracious, and merciful, and loving, and just Lord, of what he most delighteth in, his own mercy and eternal love.

O my dear friend, the subject of predestination does my soul abhor. Was we to ask our dear Lord concerning it, would not he give us this answer, which is, What is that to thee, follow thou me." Now what fruit does it bring forth but variance, strifes, contentions, and this among the children of one Lord and King. I observed that in writing, as well as talking, it robs us of better things. Oh that I could never never hear it mentioned more. Amen.

Is not the subject of love more praiseworthy. Behold this is as extensive as our infinite, loving, dying, dear Lord's arms on the cross; extended to every creature [of] man; to all that will come with the power given; or, our Lord makes his creatures; I say, to all that will come to Jesus Christ that they might have

life. Oh let us drink of this fountain, this fountain of love, which can never be drawn dry. Drink, O my dear friend, drink abundantly.

O my dear friend cry aloud, tell the peoples; yea, tell all the people to come to this fountain of our dear Master's blood: quickening, cleansing, healing, life giving blood; freely poured flushing out of Jesus for every creature.

O my friend, proclaim abroad glad tidings of great joy to all the cursed race of Adam. Speak of the new world that grace will make in their hearts. Oh may your words be mighty, through the power of Jesus. Amen.

Now my friend, how can we speak good of sufferings in Jesus? Many excellent things might be spoken of the[m]. It was by this our Lord learned obedience, and if we will reign with him, we must also suffer with him. May we look for no other way to glory. Now my Lord hath learnt me not to look

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at what I feel of love or joy, humility or weakness, or any other graces in my soul, but what my Lord has made unto me of God. Though I change, yet doth not he. By this I experimentally see what Saint Paul meant, "having nothing I possess all things." For when I am cold and dead, he is my life; weakness, my strength; darkness, my light; poor, my riches. Oh the Lord is become the strength of my song and my salvation. Oh let our talking be of his wonderous work. Our dear, dear, brother John is now, by the guidance and blessing of God, once more among us. Oh may he prove a great blessing unto us. Amen.

His beginning was prosperous. At our women's lovefeast, our Lord wrought wonders among us. The fire of love was kindled among us, the hard rocks brought forth living streams of comfort, our mouths were filled with laughter and our tongues with joy. Your brother's countenance was most pleasant unto us. Our prayers were heard. The promise of our Master was fulfilled upon us; the light of his blessed countenance shown upon us. Oh sing praise, sing praises to our God. Sing praises, sing praises to our King. Amen. Hallalujah. Hallalujah.

Dear Brother Charles, I love you. I love you. I esteem you highly for your works' sake. May the spirit of our Master be plentifully poured upon you. Amen. May he teach you wisdom secretly. Oh may your thoughts, words and works tend only to his eternal glory. Amen. May you see [the end] of the travail of your labour and be satisfied. May our Lord's work forever prosper in your hands. Amen. May you wax bold and valiant for your dying Master. Oh may you increase stronger and stronger in the Lord; and, in the power of his might, tread down all opposition. Amen.

May you know your Lord's will, and have power faithfully to fulfil the same. Amen. May the Lord reveal the knowledge of himself more and more to your soul. May you be filled, filled, filled with love, and clothed \with humility\  
\Amen\  
\Amen\  
\Amen\  
\.

From your poor, poor, weak, blind, sinful, brother in Christ,

John Edmonds

P.S. Oh fail not to pray; pray for, and if worthy favour with, a line or [two]. Grace mercy, peace, love and joy be multiplied on all that love our Lord Jesus. Amen.



Reference EMV:125

Date: 1739

Addressees: Joseph Saunders to Charles Wesley

Annotation: "Jos. Saunder's / a Dissenter's Approbation / 1739"

Note: No other information, he is a Dissenter who approves of the Wesleys preaching, had "experienced the love of God in his own soul" through their ministry, and hopes for a revival of true religion.

Sir,

One that is a dissenter from your Church (in outward forms) came to hear you expound, and having received and experienced the love of God in his own soul, cannot but rejoice to see that love shed abroad in the hearts of others; especially when he sees that the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the head of the Church, is exalted above all and that gospel spirit reviving again in a Church that has thus long lain asleep and depended so greatly on its own righteousness which is and ever will be by filthy rags.

I also know that whoever speaks in the cause of God to show man his hell deserving state by nature, and his inability to get out of it without the righteousness of another, (which is the Lord Jesus Christ), these people that do thus exalt the Lord shall have many enemies, both in the world and from it. But, lest they should be discouraged, God says, he that is for us is stronger than he that is against us (and so is Jesus) for all power is in his hand. And I, being a child of God's, rejoice with you to think that our Father is reviving his own work in this our day. O may this Spirit of God's be increasing more and more abundantly in every heart, especially yours, and all that love our Lord Jehovah in sincerity and truth.

And may every one of you that expound God's word be blessed with a double portion of his Spirit, to strengthen you to go on in that good work God has called you too. And that you may be still more strengthened

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and comforted to go through your labor with patience, pleasure, and delight, the Almighty, which directs all our actions, guided my heart to let you know that he hears and answers all your prayers. And I doubt not but many sheep[?] will be brought home. But this I am assured on and have experienced, that many are comforted and refreshed by your Societies and the kind behaviour and disposition that is amongst you. And may the God of love increase his love and spirit in every one of your souls. And as it is every Christian's duty to do what good he can in the world according to his ability, I send these tokens of my love to you and your brother and all the children of God; and humbly pray that the spirit of love and meekness may reign more and more in every one of our hearts. And that every soul may be comforted and refreshed with these lines, is the earnest prayer, design, and desire of your unknown friend, but loving brother through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Jos[eph] Sanders

Brethren Pray for me and my family.

God says out of the mouths of babes  
and sucklings I will perfect praise.  
O that it may be so here.

Reference EMV:11

Date: 1740 April 12

Addressees: Elizabeth Bristow to Charles Wesley

Reverend sir,

Saturday, April 12, 1740

My friend in Christ, I cannot help letting you know the comfortable work the Lord began, he carries on. He hath showed me you are a minister of his own sending. He hath taken the scales off my eyes. I was lame, he hath made me walk. I was bound with chains of darkness, but he hath broken my bonds asunder. He hath plucked me as a fire brand out of hell. And shall I dare to hide this? Shall I not declare what the Lord hath done for me? God forbid. I am not ashamed to say, I sat by the wayside begging and as Jesus passed by I received my sight. I am not afraid to say a servant of Christ uncovered the roof and Jesus saw me brought unto him, poor and helpless. He looked on me and said, "Thy sins are forgiven thee, thy faith hath made thee whole." Oh this small grain is of matchless value. "Thy sins are forgiven thee." Oh that word was Christ. Christ was the word that spoke it. Oh behold a miracle indeed, a greater one than if a dead body had been raised out of the earth. I was dead in trespasses and sin, and Jesus raised me. He brought me from the pit of hell into the kingdom of light.

Flesh and blood hath not revealed this to me but the spirit of God that dwelleth in me. O Jesus, make this light a continual spring of life, ever springing more and more. The Lord comforted the words to me you delivered on Friday concerning Satan's devices. I thought much on them; that he wants no better force than to come in by way of ponderous thoughts. But the Lord is with me, he regards the low estate of his handmaid. I have some striving, but the Lord keepeth me. He that keepeth me, neither slumbereth nor sleepeth. I now know, I have no strength. He is my only support. I lean on him. I am as a new born babe. He gently leads me on. My Lord hath brought me into his banqueting house and his banner over me is love.

I would not have taken this liberty but I am sure you will rejoice

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with me. Oh may the Lord bless the world by your ministry and may there never be a want, but a constant supply of faithful labourers in his vineyard, is the humble petition of me, who am, with the sincerest thanks to the Giver of every good gift for the benefits I have received from Christ through your ministry;

Yours in Christ, Elz. Bristow

Sir, I beg your prayer for me that the Lord would send support to me, and that the Holy Spirit may dwell with me always--even to the end. I trust in the Lord, to have conversation with you, good sir, my chief friend in Christ. But I know you are always engaged in the work of the Lord.

Reference EMV:12

Date: 1740 May 8

Addressees: Price, Mariah to Charles Wesley

Place from: London

Annotation: "Maria Price's Experience, May 8, 1740."

My dear father in God, I now declare unto you with a joyful heart, as well as I can remember, how the Lord worked in my soul by you, my own Father.

I came to [you] about the beginning of last March was a year [1739], by the desire of a friend as dead as myself. The morning we came, it rained very hard and as soon as I had got out of [the] door I said it is not the will of God that we should go, if it were it would hold up. We went in again. But we had no sooner got in but it stopped raining till we had been with you and came home again. Then it rained the whole day. I think it never ceased.

Dear sir, I came to you as dark as a blind man from his birth that never had no thought of sight and if he heard that there was such a thing, he did not believe it because he had it not himself. I had been a partaker of the bread and wine for some months but not of the body and blood of my loving Saviour. I did exhort men to lead a good life, as to the body, but as to the spirit, I had heard of such a thing but I never felt that I had got one for it was dead. I did not know that it was ever to live in this world.

Dear sir, my heart longs for words to tell how good my dear Saviour is to save such a dark, dead, stony-hearted, damned, unbelieving Pharisee as I. I did often repent for one sin and did not know I had any more. But I had no sooner repented for it than I committed it again and was twofold more a child of hell than before. Thus was I mourning and sinning and wondering that I could not overcome it myself (that one sin was passion). I told you how I did weary myself with it and said I, "God knows my weakness and what I can do. Why does he try me so?" You answered me [that] God did it to let me know what I could do. That word was of much comfort to me. Your discourse and your prayer give me so much comfort that when I came home I said to the same purpose, "this is the day of salvation."

You bid me read the seventh [chapter] to the Romans. You said that was my state. I did read it and found much comfort insomuch that I began at the first chapter, in order to read them through, to see what was in them. But as I was reading, I think it was the sixth chapter, I was forced to lift my eyes off the book and look about me like a person that was born blind and that moment received sight. I wondered I so often read and never understood before.

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I was almost lost with wonder at my new eyes. I saw myself as an unbeliever and was greatly ashamed of my past life and came to the words where the apostle says, "what fruit had you there, in those things whereof you are now ashamed." That increased my wonder a great deal more to think it so suited me and at that moment when I received such sight as I never had before. I as plainly felt a burden taken off my heart as I could feel one took off my back. It was done in a moment. It was such a work, so plainly felt and so wonderfully wrought, that I almost lost my senses to explain it and cannot do it. Neither all this time I had not the forgiveness of my sins but soon after you expounded at Fetter Lane. I was at that time and ever since, filled with joy and peace in believing I received the forgiveness of sins and the witness of the spirit and a dominion over sin at that very time. I said to you in the midst of the people how if I had ten thousand souls, I could trust them all in the hands of God. I trembled so with joy and cried that I did

not know how to bear myself. You asked me if I found that peace that passed understanding. I said, "Yes, indeed, I have and it doth pass understanding." Dear sir, these two talents has gained [an]other two. God hath, to me that had little, given more and I trust will increase me daily.

Dear sir, I am your own daughter in God.

Mariah Price.

Reference: EMV:1 zzzzz

Date: 1740 May 19

Addressees: Margaret Austen to Charles Wesley

Place from: London

Reverend Sir,

This, as far as the Lord enables me, is to show you the state of my soul. As far back as I can remember (which before I was married) I was exceeding proud and had a great idol which was my reputation. That I cherished and hugged; but marrying very young, [and] having a cruel husband, that brought down my pride very much. But that was but forced away by the cruel usage of an unkind husband; and in that time of my affliction, I had crowds of temptations, though the Lord would all that time have directed and led me. But I find now that I would not let him lead me. But yet he was merciful unto me; yea, abundantly merciful. And seventeen months ago my husband left me with two children [March 1739].

Then the Lord called me to hear the Reverend Mr. Whitefield. His subject was Zaccheus, and then [he] brought in the rich man of the Gospel, how he had laid up treasures on earth but none in heaven. And there I found I was that person, though as to worldly treasure, I had none. But I had a great deal of desire. But the Lord was pleased to press the words home to me that very first time, for though I went to church as often as I could, I never was struck in such a manner as then. And the next time I heard him was the second time he preached in Moorfields. His subject was on Saul's persecuting the saints. There again I was much affected with the word, finding myself to be the very person, and so continued to follow him wherever I could. And indeed, the Lord, by his ministry, did awaken me and I saw myself to be [a] lost, undone sinner.

When the Lord saw fit to let me see myself, [it] was by Mr. John [Wesley] at Wapping. He was explaining the sin of [against] the Holy Ghost. There I was struck, [Note: GW had been there occasionally since April, 1739; JW went to the Society at Wapping first on Fri, June 15, 1739, but his text on that date does not match the subject Austin heard JWJ.2:221] though Satan had not power to make me believe that I had committed that sin.

The Friday following, I heard you, sir, and there I plainly saw my Saviour bleeding on the cross, and the soldiers piercing his precious side, and the blood falling to the ground. Oh, thought I, that I had but one drop of that blood to wash away my sins. But [I] could not apply it to my heart, [though I] was under great convictions. [Note: While she heard CW here for the first time, it would not appear from the narrative that she actually experienced justification until she heard CW on Good Friday, April 4. However, this is a good caution, for according to CW's Journal she dated her justification from the earlier date: "Margaret Austen tells me, she has longed for my coming as a child for the breast. "I was justified," she said, "the first Friday you was at Wapping, with those many others; saw my Saviour bringing me a pardon written in his blood. But their telling me I had no faith if I had any doubt, brought me again into darkness. I have been in an agony ever since; but last night my Saviour returned. I received your words as coming from his mouth; and with the eye of faith I again saw my pardon, written in his blood." April 6, 1740]. Then I heard

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Mr. Whitefield at Bexley on the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and I saw I was really half a beast and half a devil. Then he preached on the blind man being restored to his sight. Then I found I had received some light. And the last time I heard him was, "Know ye not that Christ is in you, except you be

reprobates." Oh, thought I, Christ is surely in me. I am no reprobate. From that time I become dead to the world.

I heard Mr. Delamotte next after Mr. Whitefield was gone. He was expounding on the sower that went out to sow, and there I found my heart was that stony ground, for while I was hearing the words, my thoughts were filled with other things, but the Lord enabled me, and I went to the Lord's table. When I went to kneel down, I had such joy that I thought heaven was within me. Really I cannot express the joy, for it is inexpressible.

Then I heard Mr. Delamotte as often as possible, as his words were very penetrating to me; in so much that I was in great agonies grieving over my stony heart, and the people would pity me. But I thought I had rather they had beat me, for I deserved no pity.

After that, I came to Sister Robinson, and she saw me in such conviction. She bestowed much pity on me, prayed, and comforted me very much. I told her my state, and she told me how she had received faith under the ministry, and by the prayers of you, sir. She also bade me go to Mr. John and tell him. I told her I could not. So, she wrote a note and sent me with it. But he said nothing to me nor took no notice of it, which gave Satan great advantage over me. He persuaded me I was so bad that there was no mercy for me. Afterwards, I went to church, and the text was the Lord's visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and the fourth generation. Then I thought there was nothing but hell and damnation for me, for I knew I had sin enough to damn me without the sins of my parents. And here I was in despair of finding mercy. Satan bid me be quiet and give it all up for I should never be saved. But then again in the midst of temptation, the Lord spoke to me, and it gave me comfort. The words came fresh into my memory "he that perseveres unto the end shall be saved." Then I heard Mr. John at Fetter Lane. There he told us of our unfaithfulness to God, by which we lost what we had received. Then I found I had been unfaithful, and Satan would have had me gone from the place and hear no more.

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But then again I thought, "Oh, must I go to be damned? No, I will stay and hear the word." So the Lord enabled me to stay, but still I was very much tempted, and I prayed for your coming up, for I thought I should receive something by your ministry.

Then I heard the Reverend Mr. Rogers, by whom I received much comfort. Then I heard Mr. Brown. He said that if we read, the devil read with us; and likewise, if we prayed, he prayed with us; and when we went to church for sacrament, the devil went with us. Mr. Bell said if we had any doubts or fears, then we had no faith; so that I neither prayed or went to the sacrament.

But after some time, the Lord spoken to me by that text of scripture to Peter when Christ said to him, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren"; by which, I went again to the sacrament. As I took the cup, Satan told me I should be damned for all that. But when we had done receiving and the minister was covering the cup, I saw Christ lay with his open side, and I thought I could see his heart bleeding for me. Afterward, I had a strong desire to get into the bands. I went to the Reverend Mr. John Wesley and he admitted me. [Note: Joined band March or April 1740]

The first night we met, hearing the others tell the state of their souls, it was of much strength to me to speak the state of mine. One morning I went to Sister Robinson, and she sang, and prayed, and I was convicted stronger than ever before, for I had such a sight of my heart as I was frightened at. I saw I was leper, and was sick from head to foot. In the evening I was reading, and I saw the devil in my soul; so that I cried out, "O Christ, do not let me go." But then the happy minute came when you came, and

on Good Friday, the words which you spoke in your sermon concerning the creditor and the debtor (if a man owed another a sum of money, and another paid it for him, he could in no wise ask him for it again) [set my soul at liberty]. There I saw I was free, and that Christ had paid the debt, so I came away with great joy. And at night your text was, "Who hath believed our report, or to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed."

Then I had such joy that I could scarce forbear speaking. I came to you, the next day being Saturday, and told you. You told me I was justified at Wapping. I found your prayer very helpful that morning; and, on Sunday morning, one of my sisters in band told me that my coming to you was self; and that did me much harm; for then I thought all that I did, or all the joy I had, was self. Yet, I went to the Lord's table, and as I went, still I thought I was as the prodigal returned. But at night, while you preached, Satan pressed the word self to me [so] that I thought self had brought me there, insomuch that I wished the ground would open and swallow me up. But then I knew Christ would find me at the last, so I found I must press forward to find Christ. And the Lord was pleased to let the comfort return, so that I found I was clear before God by the blood of his Son. Then, when you were reading your journal and said, "the same spirit that raised Jesus from the dead shall quicken thy dead body"; then I felt that Christ would finish what he had begun.

The Monday following we heard another of your journals, and that day two year[s before], you said you had received remission of sins. [Note: CW has written a MS journal account of his conversion May 21, 1738 that is being read to other in home meetings.]

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And in your prayers I found great comfort. The next morning [Tue., May 22], as I was arising, the voice of the Lord said to me, "Thy sins are forgiven" twice over. I heard it a third time, "Daughter, be of good cheer. Thy sins are forgiven thee." Then I felt old things passing away and all things becoming new. Still, Satan began to reason with me to make me doubt whether it was so or not. But still the Lord enabled me to withstand him, and I bid him go and ask Christ, and then you said all fear was of the Devil. That strengthened me again, for I found that very true. Then I prayed to the Lord to show me my heart, and I found I was [a] brand plucked from the fire.

Last Friday, when you were at prayer, I found myself to be the person that crucified Christ; that I wished my flesh accursed for Christ sake. The Wednesday before that, I saw so much of the love of God for me, and saw myself so unworthy, that I was melted down in tears. And last Sunday, hearing Mr. Hall, I found myself to be a Judas. So that, if I was to see myself as I am seen of God, I could not bear myself. But while this was writing, it was the pleasure of God to manifest himself to me, and his voice told me that what he did was for his own sake. I see there is a great work to [be] wrought still in my soul. But he that has begun this work will surely finish. He that is the author will be the finisher.

Pray, sir, remembering me in your prayers.

Reverend father in Christ, I beg leave to subscribe myself, your young babe in Christ,

Margerit Austin

Awakened by the Reverend Mr. Whitefield: Convicted by the Reverend Mr. John Wesley:  
Converted by the Reverend Mr. Charles [Wesley]: for the truth of whole doctrine, in the strength of the Lord, I am ready to lay down my life.

Reference EMV:8

Date: 1740 May 23

Addressees: Mrs S. Ibson to Charles Wesley

Place from: London

Annotation: "S. Ibson's Exp[erience] May 1740"

This is what God hath done for my soul. I went some time since to Kennington Common [Note: CWJ "Sun., May 18th. I preached to near ten thousand at the [Kennington] Common, for 1 Cor. vi. 9, etc."] to hear Mr. Charles Wesley preach and he preached out of the First Cor[inthians] the sixth [chapter], ninth and tenth [verses]. But I cannot tell anybody what a great sinner I was for no tongue can express the grief of my soul. I thought that he had spoke it all to me, for I saw all that I had ever thought or done in my life so that I was the greatest sinner that ever lived and had not my husband been there I should [have] told all the people so. But it came into my soul, "What will my husband think that I have been some vile woman." Alas, it was always what my soul abhorred; no it was my wicked heart that I saw now and I never saw it before. For before this day I was well. I thought I was very good because they would call me so; but alas, I had broken all his commands.

It was now that I wanted a Saviour. I said: "Oh, what shall I do to be saved?" I am sure that this I spoke from my very soul, for before he had done praying, my joy was as as great as my sorrow. There was something that told me my sins were forgiven and that I might go to the sacrament, for I had never been. I thought that I was not holy enough, and I always had a great desire to go. But something fell out that I never went, for I was for making myself holy. But now I was resolved to go. So I went, and when I came into the church I could not hold a bone of me still. I was so afraid and I began to doubt whatsoever this was but a fancy that came into my head, "Can my sins be forgiven here?". For I was a stranger to the doctrine, for I never had anything like this in my soul before. I was amazed at myself. Well, nevertheless, notwithstanding all my doubts and fears I received it and I was filled with love as well as joy. I prayed for all for I can say that I loved every soul. Well, I thought, I will never sin any more as long as I live.

I began to wonder what was come to me. I was not acquainted with any that I could tell my mind to, but I was all changed to what I was before. But I began to reason with myself and I fell into doubt and I fell into a passion at a trifling thing. But when I came to myself my soul was as black as hell, for I thought there was something told me in my soul: "Well, now you have broken your promise, you need not go to church any more nor hear Mr. Wesley preach." Now did my grief return and my soul was in hell. I could not rest day nor night. I was worse than ever. I prayed for a new heart day and night although I do not remember that I ever read it to take notice of it.

Well I was resolved to go again to hear them preach so I heard Mr. John, and he, in his sermon, told me that I wanted a new heart, for I thought that it was all spoken to me. So I was glad that I had prayed aright.

So I begin to look into my Bible and then I saw that what he had told me was true. Oh what grief was I in for a long time and under great temptation. But still I prayed always and hoped and I was sorry that I did not see every one weep for I thought if their souls were as black as mine we should all cry. And then I could freely tell them all my grief. But as I sat in Fetter Lane by myself in great sorrow, for my soul was in hell, there came in such joy into my soul and all my grief was gone.

I lay at my dear Saviour's feet and I prayed that he would bless me. And I am sure that he did for I had no condemnation in my soul and how did I love



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my dear loving Saviour and all people. Now could I pray indeed to my dear Saviour that he had called me who was such a worthless worm. Now did I hope indeed with joy. Now I began to pray for the two Mr. Wesleys but \more for that dear soul Mr. Charles\ \for he had preached my soul out of hell and I am sure\ \I can not forget him so long as I live. I can as\ \soon forget myself. Can any be so vile and ungrateful\ \as forget the person that leads the way to so good a\ \Saviour\. This love that I have is not such a love as the world knows anything of, neither can have, but those that hath received it.

When I was on Friday at prayers [May 23, 1740] I was in such joy that I can not express it. You spoke something of the holy sacrament. It came with such power into my soul that I prayed, "Oh that I might but receive it from your hands, then I should be free indeed." For I knew I had received so many gifts from my dear Saviour by your preaching and prayers; although I at the same time knew not which way that I ever should, but when I had done praying, and all the rest of the people, you called me and told me that I should go with you to receive the sacrament for you were going to a sick woman.

I wondered at the love of my dear Saviour and then I was amazed how you came to know what was in my soul for I had not spoken with you. So I was sure that the Lord heard me and that he told you to call me from all the rest and I prayed all the way and thought what a good Saviour we have. Oh that all the world but knew him; how good he is!

But when we came to the house, you told us that you would not give it

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[to] her if she had not forgiveness of sins, which was a surprise to me. But I thought, well, if she has not, the Lord will hear his prayers for her and forgive her. So he did; all the glory be to God who heareth them that put their trust in him. So we received it and I was filled with love as well as joy, so that I prayed for all and I wept to see so many dead people in the streets. I could hardly get home without telling them so.

But alas, I began to think what a deceitful heart I had and that it was past finding out and that I must put a door before my lips and watch over my deceitful heart for I am sure that I abhor myself when I see what a good Saviour I have.

When I was at Mr. Hall's I was taken so full of love that I thought I would get him to pray to my dear Saviour, that he would keep [me] always in that state. But I did not, for it came into my soul: "What am I going to do! Who knows what the Lord will give me if I wait upon him as a poor sinner". I desire to be led as a little child and that I may ever watch over myself for now I cannot see anything in any. I find that I have done my soul [a] great deal of harm by speaking too much; but since it is my dear Saviour that has told me so, I hope I shall never forget him. No, I cannot. Oh that I might keep him ever before me. If I do not I am sure that I shall fall. Oh that I might not let go my hold but press forward for that great salvation.

Pray for me I beg of you and that you will not forget me.

Reference EMV:5

Date: 1740 May 25

Addressees: Sarah Middleton to Charles Wesley

Annotation: "Sarah Middleton's Experience, May 25, 1740."

I write these lines to let you know what a pharisee I was. I went to church and sacrament constantly and I thought I did very well for I was a strict pharisee. I would not be in anyone's company that said an hl[=evil?] word nor would I go a pleasuring as others did for fear of sin. If I did [sin] at any time and miss my church I thought some judgment would follow me. So if anyone had asked what hope I had of my salvation, I should presently have said, "I never did any harm for I always did to others as I would they should do unto me," and I thought I was very sincere, so I could not fear but God would accept me.

That is the most account I could give of myself then. But thanks be to God for his unspeakable mercy in bringing me by his free grace out of darkness in which I sat. I thought myself a Christian, but I found myself mistaken when it pleased God to reveal his dear Son in me and to show me the way of salvation. As for the Articles of our church, the doctrine of the Spirit of God, of regeneration and of justification by faith, I was a stranger to them all, nor do I remember to have heard any of them preached or explained by our clergy. Indeed I went to church and said my prayers and had a form of profession but knew nothing of the power. I had no oil in my lamp, no inward principle of holiness in my heart, what was I but a whited sepulchre, the harlots and publicans would have entered into the kingdom of heaven before me.

How shall I sufficiently praise the Lord for first drawing me to hear Mr. Whitefield, but Satan would fain kept me from hearing him, but the Lord drew me with the cords of his love so that I could not keep from hearing him wherever he went. But when I had heard him say that every person born into this world deserves God's damnation and though we went to church and did all the outward things we were but baptized heathens, these words used to sink deep into my heart. I had a great deal of sorrow under his preaching but when it pleased God to call him away, I went to hear Mr. John Wesley. His words were sharper to me than a two-edged sword and I cannot but always honour him as an instrument in God's hands [for] showing me the true way of salvation by Jesus Christ.

[Note: 1739.09.10 as JW preached from Acts 16:30, "What must I do to be saved?"] September 10th, 1739, I heard Mr. Wesley take the sixteenth chapter of Acts, verse thirty, the words as follows: "What must I do to be saved." Then he explained the ten commandments which wounded me so much that I was hardly able to stand under him for I thought I had kept them as touching the law blameless from my youth up

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but hearing them explained I felt I had broken all of them, so that I could take no rest night or day by reason that load of sin which I felt within me. For I felt a hell within me, so that I often cried out in the agony of my soul, "what must I do [to be] saved," for my soul was like the troubled sea so that it weighed my body down, so that my mother and others thought I should hardly overcome it. They would have me taken many things, but I knew it was for sin, so that I refused all outward comfort. It is used to press much upon me that the power of the Lord was present to heal me so that I had hope against hope for I could plead with my dear Saviour, O Lord, thou hast said, "come unto me, all you that are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest." I felt myself so vile that I thought hell was ready to swallow me up.

But I found Christ['s] everlasting arms were under me the fourteenth of September when I was in the greatest agony of soul. I heard a voice say unto me, "Daughter, be of good cheer, thy sins be

forgiven thee." At the same time I felt so much love in my heart that I could hardly contain myself, for I wanted the whole world to feel what I did and I was at the same time restored to my bodily health as well as ever I was in my life.

But I was much tempted to keep it to myself and not to tell Mr. Wesley what the Lord had done for me. But that saying of our Lord pressed much upon me that, "there were ten cleansed but where are the nine, there is none that is returned to give thanks save this stranger." So that gave me courage to go to him and let him know how gracious the Lord had been to me, for I was caught as a firebrand out of the fire.

I was full of pride and passion and everything that was evil, but did not know it for I never remember our teachers to speak against it. For I was alive without the law once, but when it came in a spiritual meaning, sin revived and I died. But thanks be to God for his free grace, for showing mercy to the chief of sinners, for it is not of him that willeth nor him that runneth but God that showeth mercy.

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Blessed be the name that set me free, the name that sure salvation brings, the sun of righteousness [a]rose on me with healing in his wings. Blessed be God.

Now I can say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. Thee I can love and thee alone with holy peace and inward bliss, to find thou takest me for thy own, Oh what happiness is this." [\*hymn by CW?] Glory be to the Lord, I feel a continual peace and love springing up in my heart day by day. I know I do not commit sin for my soul is always hungering and thirsting after righteousness and I know I shall be filled. I used to rest in going to church and sacrament but now I do not rest upon them but upon Christ Jesus my Lord and my God. But I find it a glorious liberty to use the means of grace and not abuse them. Glory be to thee, O Christ.

I find I gather strength daily for I used to be afraid to speak to my carnal relations what God had done for my soul. But now I find I am constrained to speak though I know they will cast me out as a byword and a proverb of reproach. When I was of the world, the world loved its own but now Christ has chosen me out of the world, therefore the world hates me. But this I rejoice in for it only sets a mark upon me to show what master I belong to. I am,

Dear sir,  
your affectionate but unworthy sister in Christ,  
Sarah Middleton

Reference EMV:2b

Date: 1740 May

Addressees: Elizabeth Hinsom to Charles Wesley

Annotation: "Eliz[abeth] Hinsom's Case 1740"

I was a Pharisee, but God was pleased to convince me by hearing Mr. Whitefield's sermon, that I may know him and the power of his resurrection. But now further it pleased God to send your dear brother, to whom I am bound in duty to pray for so long as I live.

It pleased God that I went to Mr. Parker's [Note: JW was at Mr. Parker's around 7 p.m. for "singing, etc., for three successive Friday evenings, Feb. 9, 16, 23, and March 2.] and he [J. Wesley] was upon the thirteenth chapter of Corinthians, and there I knew myself a damned sinner. I came home and I thought I was then sinking into hell. This was in March, I think, but it did not please God to reveal himself in me till last September, the fourth day. I went to Mr. Croche's with a desire to stay, [Note: Mr. Crouch of London mentioned in JW's diary as early as April 27, 1738, when JW had tea and religious conversation there JWW(B)18:577 and CW met with a Methodist society in his home (Mar. 27, 1739) CWJ(T)226f.] but the crowd was [so] very great that I could hardly get in. But God would not suffer me to come away. I got in but could hardly stay for fear I should be killed. Satan raged within and I have reason to bless my God for he instilled the ungodly in me. Your brother expounded the twelfth chapter of Saint John and the Lord work[ed] mystically in me and I felt a strong conviction and would have hid it but my Lord, who loves sinners, still carried on his work and brought all my sins to my remembrance. And then I trembled and should have fell down but the people held me up and I was out of my senses. But the Lord awakened me with "peace be unto you. Your sins are forgiving you." I went home full of joy not knowing what was to become [of] myself. So I continued all next day and then my joy left me. Satan came in and told me I had lost Christ and I might as well hang myself. But God, who is rich in mercy towards all, delivered me from the evil of this temptation. I was in darkness and knew not God and was ready

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to cry out with many, "they have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid him." But the Lord came comfortable into my soul with a promise: "I will heal thy backsliding and will love thee freely." This gave me much comfort. And then it was impressed on my mind that when you came that I should be delivered and set at liberty by your ministry. According[ly], on Wednesday, as you was at prayers the Lord came again into my soul with power. I was filled with love to all mankind. I felt uncommon power in my soul and could hardly contain myself. I was so filled I could hardly work, and so I continued. I thought I was a new creature.

This continued a week and then Satan buffeted me with unclean thoughts one day for three hours. That terrified me much, and now and then a wicked catch[?]. I prayed to the Lord and then I was filled again. I see so much of my own unworthiness that I am lost in wonder when I see what God has done for my soul. I have now peace with God and I know that my redeemer liveth to make intercession for me. I can now look up and say, "Christ is full of grace for me." I have gracious visits from God, and I trust I shall not rest till I find Christ, the hope of glory, formed within me. I wait upon God in the ordinances.

Reference EMV:7

Date: 1740 May

Addressees: Sarah Barber to Charles Wesley

Annotated: "Sarah Barber's Experience, May 1740."

Reverend sir:

At your request I here, as far as the Lord gives me knowledge to see and know my conversion; which before I heard the Reverend Mr. Whitefield, I was a publican living in the world as if there was no God. But I did not know it because I was not a notorious open offender. I therefore thought myself a very good person. But the Lord was pleased to call me first by the ministry of Mr. Whitefield [Note: The first time Whitefield preached in Moorefields was Sun. April 29.] I went the first time that he preached in Moorfields but could not hear him; wherefore, my curiosity was the stronger to return. So I went the next Sunday and the subject he was upon was Saul's persecution of the saints; and therein the Lord was pleased to show me I was that very Saul and from that time I was under conviction. For some time I saw nothing but hell and damnation before me and that humbled me at that time. So I had stronger desires, but I rested there, and thought those desires was the thing itself; insomuch that I got into spiritual pride, and not being convinced of my heart of unbelief insomuch that I thought I need not pray for faith. But the Lord saw me in my sins, though I did not, and by the ministry of Mr. John [Wesley], on a time when the Lord saw fit, (his subject was on the woman that stood behind our blessed Saviour when he was at meat in the Pharisee's house, th[en] she poured the box of ointment on him) there the Lord showed me I had no faith though before I thought I had. Yet, I was very uneasy knowing I wanted something but knew not what till then; nor then neither, for then I thought I had faith though not such strong faith.

And at that time I went to Sister Robinson's to get into the bands but could not be admitted then. I told her my case but she told me I had no faith which indeed was true. Then the Lord showed me more and more my unworthiness and the want of a Saviour. Then I saw the Saviour was not mine, for I was not saved from sin, neither could I call the Saviour mine. Then I walked on in a deep spirit of bondage. Afterward, I was admitted upon trial and then I was most time in great doubts. But then hearing the Lord justifieth the ungodly, then I knew I was ungodly.

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But then Satan would drag it away again and would make me believe it was not for me though Sister Robinson would often bid me not believe him. Then I hoped and found comfort and indeed the band was of great service to me for I never went away without some comforts.

[Note: CW returned to London July 4 after delivering his University sermon in Oxford, July 1, 1739.] Then, when the Lord sent you to town, I thought the Lord had something in store for me which should be revealed unto me by your ministry. Sister Robinson told me you gave her leave to bring us to hear your journals, for which I have reason to praise God, for in you prayers I saw my Saviour bleeding on the cross. And the Lord showed me my unworthiness in it so that I was astonished and stood amazed to think it was for me. I heard the voice saying: "This I do for my own sake." But Satan put me to doubt of [it] in such a manner that I had no power to speak of it to any. But at night when we met again, in your prayers the Lord was pleased to give me the second gift of faith, to believe that Jesus was my Lord. I was going to speak of it but Satan stopped my mouth because there were several sisters [who] had received the same gift. When they spoke of it I was going to speak but was stopped for [I] thought if I spoke it would only seem as if I wanted to be like them insomuch that I did not speak.

But in coming home I told Sister Robinson and she glorified God and said I was justified but was sorry that I did not speak that we might have praised God together to the shame of your enemies. So I went on till the Tuesday following in great calmness and in such peace that I never felt before. But then I went to Sister Robinson and told her I was afraid that I was going into that stillness that was talked of. But she told me it was the peace of God, that my sins were pardoned and that I had peace and was in a very safe state.

On the Wednesday I found it true for I found the pardon written in my heart. Blessed be the Almighty for what he hath done. But I find there is still a great deal more to do in his good time for there is great corruptions still in me and I doubt not but he that is the author will be the finisher of my faith. Indeed, before I was justified, Satan threw his daughter at me to keep me from the ordinance. But the Lord gave me power to go and when I was at the table, the voice of the Lord said unto me, "This is the way, walk ye in it." And the Lord enabled me to go on, not trusting in them but in him alone.

Reverend father in the Lord, I beg that you would remember me among the rest of your spiritual children in your prayers. I beg leave to subscribe myself your young babe in Christ,

Sarah Barber

Reference EMV:3

Date: 1 June 1740

Addressees: Martha Jones to Charles Wesley

Annotation: "Martha Joan's Experience. June 1, 1740. Now with God!"

Additional: This is one of two documents written to CW. Martha Jones (1722-45) mentioned in JW's diary three times before her death.

Reverend sir,

I should have been very glad if I had been excused from this task and was in hopes you would forget to ask me for it again. I knew it was my duty to obey you as my spiritual pastor but in this I thought I could not indeed. It was a secret pride in my heart which made me so unwilling. I knew my incapacity to write anything of this kind as it ought and was loath to have my ignorance discovered. Oh pray for me that all self may be utterly rooted out; that I may become as a little child in all things; and now, according to the ability God shall give me, I will proceed.

I was brought up in all the outward duties of religion. At the age of fourteen [1736] I was confirmed and solicited by my parents to receive the holy sacrament. My father had taken care to provide me books of instruction, the authors of which were, as he called them, sound churchmen. Thus I went on for some time and thought I should be saved for these things. But this shadow of goodness cast aside the form of godliness. Instead of the church, the playhouse was my greatest delight. Thus I sought death in the error of my ways and grieved the Holy Spirit. But God, out of his tender love, hedged up my way with thorns to stop me in my sinful course and embittered all my pleasures by continual crosses and disappointments in all my affairs. I sought after creature happiness but it pleased him to deny me in what went nearest my heart. I could find no rest in anything; yet, still I would not come to him in whom only true rest is to be found.

And now behold the amazing mercy of my offended Lord. He would not let me escape him but let his terrors surround me that my sins might not destroy me. The arrows of the Almighty stuck fast in me and his hand pressed me sore. A horrible dread overwhelmed me, my sins were set in array before me and now I felt I was a damned sinner. I strove all I could to stifle these convictions but neither company nor my beloved amusements, seeing and reading plays, would not do. The fire of God's wrath was kindled in my soul and I could not put it out. I thought every moment the hand of God was upon me to slay me and send me down to hell. My heart was so hard I could not pray.

I continued in this terrible condition some months, when on my birthday, [Note: Internal evidence suggests the year would be 1735.] as I was thinking on my miserable state and wishing I had never been born and despairing of mercy, on a sudden, I was strongly moved to pray. I immediately retired, cast myself on the ground and cried for mercy. My dear Saviour heard my prayer and comforted my heart. My terrors ceased and every fear was gone and I thought my sins were forgiven;

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though then I had never heard of any such thing.

Now I began to work and amend my life and sought righteousness by the works of the law, being ignorant of the righteousness which is of God through faith in his Son, Jesus Christ. I went on in this dead way upward of two years, at last I hear of Mr. Whit[e]field a little before he went to Georgia. [Note: GW first went to Georgia in Dec. of 1737.] I heard him preach four times, but the account I had of his life had much more effect upon me than his sermons. The piety of the young preacher made a deep

impression and I had a glimpse how far I was from being a Christian. I now grew very uneasy. The preaching in the churches afforded me no comfort.

Then I was told of Mr. Broughton, but found his doctrine the same with what I had all along heard. The people praised him but I found no benefit. However, I went of a Tuesday night to hear him and happy was it for me for there I first saw and heard your dear brother, but was little the better. The next night at Basingshaw I heard him and felt he was a teacher sent by God, my heart was knit to him and I thought I could follow him over the world. I heard him whenever he preached and receive the word with gladness and was much comforted and instructed thereby.

The Holy Scriptures, which were before but as a dead letter to me, were now spirit and life. I prayed day and night for faith to believe in those precious promises and God gave me to believe they should all be accomplished in me in his due time. Your brother's departure to Germany [Note: JW visit to the Moravians in Herrnhut, Germany (June 13-Sept. 16, 1738)] grieved me very much, but I was not a little comforted when you came amongst us. Then I blessed my dear Lord, who out of his tender love did not in this sense leave us comfortless. Your sermon of the threefold state which [Note: CW first preached this sermon from 1 John 3:14 on "The Threefold State" July 16, 1738 from a shorthand manuscript that was first published by Oliver Beckerlegge and Tom Albin in 1987] I often heard with tears showed me I was one of those that was seeking God but as yet had not found him. I went on my way sorrowing, waiting, till Jesus should reveal himself unto me.

I have already mentioned how I was delivered three years before from fear of punishment and could not be brought under bondage to fear again. This may seem strange to some, but known to God are all his works. It pleased him as I was sitting at home one night to give me to believe my sins were forgiven, that Christ died for me and his righteousness was imputed to me. This came with such power into my soul as I cannot express. I was filled with joy and wanted to declare it. Brother Thompson came to see me soon after and I told him, he rejoiced with me and said he would tell Mr. Wesley. The next Sunday night when your brother had done expounding at Mr. Sims, they said I must stay for Mr. Wesley was coming to me. When I heard this I was so terrified by Satan that I trembled exceedingly and began to doubt. I thought I heard the devil say, "Do not dare to tell this lie, your were not justified." Mr. Wesley

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was now come. I told him as well as I could what God had done for my soul and was much strengthened by what he said. After this the devil left me and my faith increased. I walked for some time in the light of God's countenance and was at peace.

But the Lord began to show me my heart and I was much cast down. Many temptations surrounded me and fear was on every side. But my dear Saviour succoured me in all my sorrows, that I did not utterly faint. Indeed it pleased God always greatly to comfort me by your ministry, so that I could not help being greatly troubled at your departure from London. You and your brother gone we were left as sheep without a shepherd. Those who were left to guide us, led us into strange paths. I was brought into great confusion; then I cried unto the Lord to help me, for vain was the help of man. But he hid his face from me and I was sore troubled. Satan vexed me with all his storms and said, "Where is now thy God?" Thus I was distressed on every side. It would be endless to recount every temptation that beset me and conflict which I endured by which my soul was brought nigh unto hell and I almost despaired of seeing this great salvation; yet, I was enabled to say unto the Lord, "Though thou slay me yet will I trust in thee."



Though I much doubted of my justification because I did not always feel it so strongly as the first, yet I could not but think--nay, I could not but believe I was. Indeed, I was confounded when so many of our sisters gave it up who were so much stronger than I and thought it was presumption in me; yet I dare not say I was not, I was not justified. I poured out my complaints to my dear Redeemer in tears and groans, for otherwise I could not pray. But he was as one that heareth not. I would not consent to leave the ordinances though they said we should not go to church nor pray nor receive the sacrament. These things shocked me, not that I trusted in any of these things, God by your ministry had taught me better. It was Jesus Christ I wanted and him only I sought in them. But indeed I feared these men were bringing another schism into our church. This grieves me very much and I earnestly pray and doubt not but you will join with me that God would preserve her and restore her to her primitive purity, which I trust he will do since he hath raised two or three faithful ministers and has made them instruments in his hand to carry on this great work.

I continued in great perplexities and had almost given up my hope when God sent you to us again and on Easter Sunday I heard you preach and the Lord strengthened and confirmed my faith. [Note: CW preached Easter Sunday, April 6, 1740, at the Foundery both morning and evening]. My doubts and fears vanished and the Lord made his way plain before my face and now I believe I shall see his full salvation. Oh praise the Lord on my behalf and let his name be glorified for all his great and undeserved mercies to me. Dear sir, accept this imperfect account, which in obedience to you, I have wr[itte]n much against my will. From your weak sister in Christ,

Martha Jones

Reference EMV:13

Date: 4 June 1740

Addressees: Mary Ramsay to Charles Wesley

Annotation: "Mary Ramsay's Experience June 4, 1740."

Additional: Miss Mary Jane Ramsey (1717-62) was a member of "the French Church" who first heard GW, then JW and CW. CW admitted her to the single women's band meeting in 1740; Stevenson, City Road Chapel, 35; JWJ.4:490.

June the 4th 1740

Sir:

With the woman of Samaria I may say, "Come see a man that told me all that ever I did in my life." For the man Christ has turned my eyes back to the tender years of my childhood wherein are set before me many sins that I had quite forgotten. I shall mention some particulars that the Lord has set before me and how graciously he has from time [to time] delivered me from some of them.

The first [sin] was passion; which I brought into the world with me and as I have heard my parents say, I was very passionate in my infancy. But when I grew to the age of two years my parents began to check those evil tempers. From four years of age I can remember many things, particularly the death of my brother who was twelve months old when he died. I was then four years of age. I was very inquisitive to know where he would go and what must become of him. My mother talked to me as my tender age could then bear, telling me he was gone to God. But I said he was here still. "He lays in the coffin," said I. She then told me his soul was gone into the Golden City but what must be done with him now when we go to the burying. They told me he must be put in a hole in the churchyard. Then I cried, but they pacified me by telling me he was to be fetched out by angels. But when we returned from the grave and I saw not the angels came, then again I vision sadly. But they told me the angels did not came while the people stood there. But still I was very much concerned, and I thought I could willingly go to the Golden City also.

I was soon after sent to school where my parents took great care to keep constant. There among the other children I did not fail to observe pride and would not go to school without [being certain] I was dressed clean and in such and such a dress as such and such other children had. I cannot but observe how natural these things come into the world with us and how soon the old dragon tempts us. From about the age of six or seven years, one morning as I was going to school it was very cold, and my mother gave me a pair of gloves and I did not like them. But she bade me put them on and charged me to go with them. Away went I in a passion but did not dare let her know. I murmured and contrived [what] I should do, for I was resolved not to go quite to the school with them on. "Well," said I as I went along, "where shall I pull them off?" Not in this street, thought I, for several people that live in this street know me and if they see me they will tell my mother. At last I appointed that I would pull them off when I came to the corner of such a street. And Satan came in and caused me to know he should have me if I did not pull them off just at the place. Well after that, as [I] walked along, my anger began to abate, so that when I came to the place, I forgot the vow and passed the place and went directly to school with the gloves on. But when I came to the door I could not go in for some time, for it came fresh into my memory what a bargain I had made with the devil, and I trembled very greatly to think he had cheated me. So which way to turn I could not tell. Well then there came a thought,

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"go back to the place and pull them off and then you'll be secure." So I was going back, but again I remembered that I not only said I would pull them off there but also that I would not go so far as the school door with [them on]. I was quite confused and knew not what to do but thought the devil would have me. At last I said, "Lord, don't let him have me." And so trembling I went in with my gloves. But God's preventing grace from that time prevented me ever calling to the devil in that manner.

Some [time] after he tempted me to keep from school for as I was going, he suggested such evil thoughts against my mistress, telling me she had beat me in the morning, "Don't go to her again. Don't you see what a cross old creature she is! What [causes her to] be so cross to [you is] that [you] are her sister's daughter!" (for she was my aunt). So I was already puffed up with pride. Oh, thought I, she ought to be very good to me, better than to the rest of her scholars but instead of that she is worse to me. So I went not that afternoon but walked about the street for I did not dare go home till the school was done. All my school fellows were at school so that I did not know where to go but thought I would walk about the door to watch when the children came out, that I might go home at the usual hour. But mark how the devil cheated me again for there were two or three children that came out together. So I thought to be sure the school was over, so away ran I home. But when I came home it was an hour too soon and my mother began to question me how I came home so soon and withal bade me sure to tell her the truth, telling me she would go and see if I had been or not. But if I would tell her the truth she would forgive me for that time. So that time I came off without being beat[en].

Well after that I took a great dislike of the school and became a tell-tale. Sometimes my mother would rebuke me and sometimes she would hearken unto me. Then I thought I had got [to] the day when she did but say, "Well, I will speak to her. The child shall not be abused."

When about ten years of age I began not to be so obedient as before but would stay a great while at an errand and play by the way so that my parents was daily grieved at me. Well sometimes I would sit and think and consider and found that I did not do right. But still after I had promised to myself to do better, and so I did for a day or two, but then I forgot again and began again. Oh the infinite goodness of God, now I can look back and consider his great mercy towards such a young devil as I, for by a particular dream, I was startled to amend and in a great fright I told the dream.

Another time I thought I saw the devil standing upon the bed with great claws over me, ready to take me and with the fright I shrieked. My mother asked me what was the matter. I told her and she bid me pray to God and she would pray God for me too. So these things left a great terror upon me for some time.

But at thirteen I began again, getting acquainted with a neighbour's daughter, a polite young lady. Oh good Lord, how dangerous is evil company, especially to youth for then had it not been for the preventing grace of God through the care of my parents, I had doubtless run into all manner of vice for I was puffed up with pride to excess and was ready to go anywhere with Miss Polly. They would send their servant for me to go with her to see plays but glory be to God, my parents would not give me leave. But then I thought they were very cruel not to let me go. Many tears would I shed for this. [There is] a devilish nature in youth, [we] cry when we are kept from going to the devil.

Oh amazing Love of God that shows me how his mercy has always been over me. Now I can admire the goodness of God towards me and can say, "Praise the Lord, Oh my soul!" For the poor soul [of] this young gentlewoman ran quickly to destruction and was cut off in her youth in the midst of her sins. But my dear

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tender mother kept me from her long before she run so fast to destruction. And I, much about that time, began to think what a wicked creature I was. I had a great sting of many disobedient acts towards my parents though I had scarce ever been two hours at once from the sight of my parents. But the devil don't want a great while to act his part. For I very well remember I was very proud and wanted to climb higher and to follow the fashions as nigh as I could. But when I went to lay me down to rest at night then I was frightened lest I should never awake. I felt the pangs of hell and misery very plain. But then I would forget it and divert myself from it in the day. But at night the pangs would return. I said nothing to no one. I told nobody of it but I became a little more thoughtful and prayed God to forgive me and I would do better.

I forgot to make mention what a young pharisee I was all this while, for I would not go to bed at night nor forget when I was up to pray. [I did] [Note: The original has "but hold" instead of the inserted words here.] not pray, but say my prayers as I called it, for I could say as many prayers by heart as any one of my age.

But I remember one particular thing which was thus, my parents were in great grief and I being left alone in a room, I looked up to God and thought he could help us. I threw myself on my knees and prayed, I think for almost an hour, and certainly I did not want words. The Lord opened my mouth. I prayed and praised the name of the Lord and the Lord heard me and at that time, wonderfully granted the request. Yet sometimes afterwards I began to doubt whether there was a God or not and to reason how God could be from all eternity without beginning or end, especially without beginning. I stumbled insomuch that I would study on that till I was not able to stir nor move.

About fifteen years of age, I was taken into the number of the communicants in the French church. Before this I began to be very uneasy and desirous to go to the Lord's table. But when I had been there I thought I was safe and that I had done something very well and I here declare that I have received this eight years, being not a weak believer for I was no believer at all, and yet the Lord has been pleased to manifest himself greatly to me lately. I believed something, so far.  
[Note: This "eight years" from when she was 15 would suggest that her age in 1740 was 23 and her date of birth would have been 1717.]

The first time I heard Mr. Whitefield was the second of June last. [Note: GWJ.277, confirms that GW preached at Hackney in the evening to about 10,000] His text was out of the Gospel of Saint John, the seventeenth chapter, the third verse, "this is life eternal to know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." I thought the doctrine to be very true, nay I was assured it was. I agreed to everything he spoke but did not apply it to myself. Yet I believed all he said. Then I heard him the Monday following, at Blackheath, the text was, "watch for ye know not the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh." I liked the discourse exceeding well, but applied it to myself so well that I scold at a young gentleman that was a scoffer. He called somebody that was by him Whitefield's disciple and laughed and scoffed and I told him he was the devil's disciple. Still while I was looking at another, I forgot to look at myself for Mr. Whitefield was speaking of what the world called Christians, that they would go to plays, games, public houses and such and all manner of what is called harmless diversion. Still I could find nothing for me because I did not do just this; in effect, [I] still did not see the evil that was in me. But coming home, I hushed every one that offered to speak one word against him.

I did not hear him for some time after, but I went on as usual to church every Sunday, to the sacrament every month, preparing myself the whole week

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before, using much the preparation books else I thought it was not right to go to the preparation sermon. [Note: There are a number of these books available in the 18th century. It would also indicate that she was attending an Established Church congregation.] So I came with a whole weeks righteousness or rather a whole weeks pharisaical hypocrisies, yet I had a longing desire to hear Mr. Whitefield again and was very sorry that I had not gone to hear him before I did.

Well, when Mr. Whitefield came to town again, which was July twenty-first on Saturday evening, I went to Kensington. [Note: GWJ.311, confirms that he preached in the evening on Kennington Common] His subject was from the third chapter of Genesis, the nineteenth verse and he there showed us our sinful nature and our fall. Well I agreed to everything he said but still was unconcerned. I went the next day to that same place and hear him on the thirty-seventh, thirty-eighth, part of the thirty-ninth verses of the ninth chapter of St. John's Gospel, where he showed that believers had the indwelling of the Holy Spirit now as well as formerly. And there I was sadly stumbled in that he said we might have the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost [Note: Probably the seven gifts mentioned in the service for the ordination of clergy] but if we had not its sanctifying graces, we might go to hell at last.

The next day I went to Hackney. His text was, "what think you of Christ," but that time I heard little of his sermon, being full of the devil but knew it not for there was a fine dressed up gentleman and his spouse in the place where I stood that mocked every word he said and much interrupted those that stood by them. And I, thinking myself much better than them, I scolded them all the while and was so angry that when he had done preaching, I called them infidels, but knew not that I was then one myself.

The Thursday following, being the twenty-sixth of July, I went again to Hackney and he was then on Abraham's faith in offering up his son Isaac. I hearkened and began to have, as I thought, to have some comfort more than usual but my comfort was thus: there was that day a horse race a little distance from us and his soul was moved much towards them and was rejoiced to see that I was one of them that he called God's children that came to hear the words rather than go to see those poor souls that were labouring to serve their master. There I thanked God I was not as other men, especially those.

The next day I went to Kensington again. The text was out of St. Matthew the [Note: GWJ.316, Friday, July 27] twenty-seventh Chapter [and] the thirty-eighth verse, when the whole city of the Gadarenes came out to meet Jesus and when they saw him they besought him that he would depart out of their courts and there he showed how we were in a worse condition than the two men possessed of devils, for though they were bodily possessed, they knew it; but we had the devil in our hearts and souls and knew it not. Well, But I thought I had not the devil in me because I did not those gross outward sins.

The Sunday following I heard him again. His text was "be not righteous overmuch." [Note: GWJ.316, July 29, 1739] in the evening. Well, there I was very joyful and began to think he spoke very much to my purpose. Well, thought I, surely there must be some change wrought in me for he speaks nothing but Scripture. But from that time I rested very easy, thinking that the Lord was able to work this change. Then I did not hear him for a fortnight, after which was Thursday, August the second. His text was "old things are past away and behold all things are become new." There he showed how we must be renewed in this life, but I was much startled at that. He said the soul, when it departed, carried the faculties with it. Well, thought I, "What must I do now?", for I began to find I had many bad faculties in my soul.

The Sunday following I was at Bexley. [Note: GWJ.323, Aug. 4, 1739, "Read prayers and administering the Sacrament to several hundred Communicants at Bexley Church. Preached in the afternoon to about fifteen hundred, in Justice Delamotte's yard..." He expounded in the morning, part of the sixth chapter of St. Mark from the thirty-fourth verse to the end of the chapter. There indeed the words was more

impressed upon me than ever they had been before. I received the blessed sacrament that day at Bexley Church and heard him again in [the] afternoon, on Abraham's faith. In all I heard him thirteen times, but

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all that while I did not apply anything to myself, but was very glad and thought of how he gives it home to you all, especially to his adversaries but thought it did not belong so much to his followers. However, I was willing to be one and very much admired him and was exceeding glad to hear of so many converts. But [I] thought I did not want so much conversion as those outward notorious sinners. But the Lord has shown me since that I was worse than any one of them all, for indeed I do perceive that no one had such a stony, hard heart as I; for though in that time I would go home in a great hurry with a great deal of the sermons in my head so that I could repeat half or sometimes three-quarters of the discourse, but, O Lord, how gracious is thy goodness in keeping me and leaving me out of hell. For though I had that memory, how did I look on those relenting souls that wept and were in strong conviction. Them I called hypocrites, every one that I saw weeping, and thought I: "you are an hypocrite to be sure, for anyone can be as much affected without all that." But since, I have often wished that the Lord would be pleased to work so in my soul. But he has shown me that his time is not ours nor his ways ours.

I forgot to mention when Mr. Whitefield told us we were by nature half beast and half devil there was something in that heart of mine that showed me it was very true. Though it was such a hard heart, those words made some impression that I was really convinced that I was inwardly very wicked; and another thing that worked in me was some word of that hymn called "Christ the Friend of Sinners." These words: "his bleeding heart will make you room, his open side shall take you in," remain with me so close that I believe there has never been a day since, nor scarcely an hour, but those words were with me. But to return to his [statement that] I was half a beast and half a devil. Well, thought I, how can I help it if I am so by nature. But after he was gone I set about to help it and would read nothing but good books and would pray more. Instead of going to the sacrament once a month I went every Lord's day and was very religious to be taken notice of that. I was a constant communicant and also I entered into a society.

But alas I was just where I was before or rather worse; so I went on until Mr. John Wesley came up, which was the fourth of September. At Dowgate Hill [Note: JWJ.2:268-271 (Sept. 4) This was a society here that met in the home of Mr. & Mrs. Crouch. The Wesley brothers both visited and preached here.] he expounded the sixteenth chapter of the Gospel of St. John, beginning at the sixteenth verse. And there indeed I was shown my state and my wants, both spiritual and temporal, in that he said we should have sorrow in the world and the world would rejoice. Every word spoken that night did much concern me for I found a trial was coming on, for before that, as soon as my neighbours and acquaintances knew that I went to hear the field-preachers, they began to persecute and took their children from me and put them to other schools. [Note: She was a school teacher.]

But I admire how the Lord works everything for the best, for the words

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have all come to pass that were spoken that night and the remembrance of them has been a great comfort to me continually in the midst of many troubles. But many temptations came inbetween, [Satan] whispered in my ear and bade me, "Leave off, then you will get in business again as before." But the Lord would tell me on the other hand, "Think you that my blessing will sooner attend thee if thou leave off and go away." But then the deceiver would tell me: "You have heard a great deal. Keep close to what you heard." But then I found the soul wanting food as the body craves temporal food. So I went on. As often as possible I would come and hear the word.

The second time I heard Mr. John was on the twelfth chapter of the second book of Samuel. The Lord, [at] that time, plainly showed me I was the person guilty of all those crimes that I had disdainfully looked on others for. I could not creep out no manner of way; there was no room. I stood as if I had been outwardly guilty of all notorious crimes, insomuch that I was ashamed to look back and see how I had set myself at a great distance from such.

The thirtieth of September I heard him again in Moorfields. The text was the eleventh chapter of St. Matthew, the twenty-eighth verse. And till then I always brought home great pieces of the discourses that I was very proud and was much admired by some; but that time I stood till Mr. Wesley had done collecting. [I] got in talk with somebody and afterwards must go [was obliged to] see him as far as the coach, so that, when I returned I began to consider how I should talk of the comfortable sermon. I had forgot every word, text and all. I believe if [I] must have been condemned to die or tell three words, I must have died, for I did not remember one. Ah, thought [I], what is come to me? Well the Lord has justly punished me. And from that time I became very dead to the world, though I began to feel it went deeper. So I continued under the word and heard Mr. Hall, Mr. Rogers and was the more calm, expecting something of the Lord but I knew not what, nor what to ask for. I found I had many evil tempers which had dominion over me and could not tell how to get rid of them. They began to be a great burden to me, but hearing the word often and reading some of Mr. Whitefield's sermons [gave some relief].

In February last I was meditating on what I had heard and saw I wanted the remission of my sins. And the Lord spoke unto me saying, "I am nigh that justified. Thou art justified. Believe and thou shall be saved." Then I said, "Lord I will believe" and then I found myself quite another. I was as I thought, passed from death to life. I thought I was in another world. But my ungratefulness unto God was very great and also the temptations very strong. The devil would have persuaded me it was a delusion. The twenty-first of February I heard your dear Brother [JW] again on the seventh chapter of the Romans and there he described my very temper. And the devil told me, "here are you justified, you that have so many evil tempers? No, surely you are not well." But I said, "I believe I am" and I began to reason with him saying, "Well, but I have not all those evil tempers now. Sometimes there is something stirs but it does not reign in me." So that I did not quite let go, for the Lord answered me several times telling me [it] was not a delusion. But I told him my heart was hard. But the Lord bade me believe, and I should have a heart of flesh.

[ms page break]

But I found my heart was still harder. [I] saw one weeping and another in strong convictions, [an]other would rejoice in the Lord for what he had done for them, so that on either side the Lord worked in some soul.

Now I did not call them hypocrites as formerly I had, but desired that the Lord would work in me. But still I was the same, hard as a stone, so that when I was alone I could not so much as sing a hymn. There was one that I indeed used to sing, that hymn called "The method." That I thought suited me very well. But at last I could sing none, except when I was among some of the brethren or hearing the word. But when I was at home by myself I could not sing at all. If I offered to sing I could not tell what to sing; there was nothing I could see that was fit for me. Sometimes I could not open my mouth, I was just as if I had been asleep.

I continued still constant in coming to hear the word and on Thursday, the twenty-eighth of February, Mr. John's text was out of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the fourth chapter, the twenty-fifth verse. In that sermon I was very much comforted, but the Saturday and Sunday following, I was again as dark as ever

but was in great expectation that the Lord had still something in store for me. I continued to go to the Foundery Sundays and Thursdays and to the Society in Brick Lane.

There was great division in the Society, that grieved me very much and I knew not what to do. I was very loath to leave them, and staying with them, there was disputes and animosities. I was very much troubled and I came away from them.

At last the Lord sent you, reverend sir. I can but admire the wisdom of God in seeing how he sends out the labourers one after another, that what one has planted the other waters and the Almighty gives the increase. I had never heard you before but had been desirous of a long time to hear you. [Note: CW took over after JW left for Bristol and the end of Feb. 1739.] The Thursday that you came I heard you and received much comfort and also the Friday and Sunday following I had great comforts. But still when I was at home I could not raise my heart to God and began to be also very dead in prayer. Then again when I heard the word I was a little comforted and so I went on mourning that I could not mourn more. And about a fortnight after you were come, I fell into such mourning that my heart was ready to break. I came on Monday morning to speak with you but when I came I could not speak. You asked me if [I] was justified. I said yes, but I could not tell when nor do I know what you said to me after, for I was quite stupid, and so continued for some time. Then you admitted me into the Society. I was much rejoiced at that and then, when your dear brother came up, I received much comfort by him again.

But the Sunday before Ascension Day I was frightened and saw myself in such a manner that I loathed myself. Your subject was then on the forty-third chapter of Isaiah beginning at the twenty-second verse. There you showed that in our best we had eaten and drunk damnation and that we were but moral devils. This frightened me and I saw myself so black that I thought I must not go to the Lord table any more. And the devil suggested such thoughts that I had eat[en] and drunk damnation enough. So that I had a great mind not to go, though I had purposed to go. This was the first time that even I had a mind to keep away, but I thought there was as much danger in staying away. So the Lord permitted me to go, black and devilish as he had shown me I was. And I received much comfort in the evening by Mr. Hall.

[ms page break]

And the Thursday following, being Ascension Day, I had so much joy when you were preaching, that I thought my soul seemed as if it was ascending into heaven. Indeed the joy began in the morning when Mr. Harris was preaching on the words "Thy Kingdom Come" and it so increased in the evening while you were preaching that methought I saw my Saviour in glory, and so continued or rather increased, for in the society the soul seemed as if it was out of the body.

I cannot utter the joy I felt: words can not express it. Indeed, after I was first justified, I several times had joy and manifestations. Sometimes I thought when I was at the sacrament that I did not dare lift my eyes for I stood as if Christ was just there on the cross and his blood [was] descending into my heart. Particularly about five weeks ago, [late April 1740] my father was then sick. He sent for the minister to administer the sacrament to him; and while the minister was giving him the bread and wine, the blood of Christ dropped into my heart. I burst out into tears, and wept for joy. My father thought I cried because he was sick. He would have comforted me, but I could not speak. But I knew it was not for the cry that he thought and many such joys I have had, but none like that of Ascension Day and since there remains a small still joy that in all events it springs up and comforts me against all the temptations of the world and the devil.

I also find much comfort in the meetings at Sisters Robinson's. And the state I now feel myself in, I



cannot describe for some times I feel my heart hard as a stone yet there is no anger. I don't find any anger at all arise but could embrace any one that speaks all manner of evil against me, even taking my bread away, for that they do daily. Yet I could willingly do them good and am in nowise angry with any. But truly there is not much room for any, for self fills up every corner; it follows me everywhere and stirs up in almost everything that I do [so] that sometimes I am frightened to see the corruptions of my filthy heart; the Lord shows it me more and more.

O dear sir, reverend father in Christ, remember me in your prayers. Pray that the Lord would cleanse my heart by the inspirations of his Holy Spirit and that the Lord will be pleased to carry out the work that is began in me, for Satan is very busy and would persuade me that all this is presumption. Indeed I do fear presumption insomuch that I dare not speak sometimes for I know that is a dreadful sin. But the Lord I hope will keep me from that and all sin. O pray for me that I may never fall away. Cry unto the Lord for me. Pray unto your God and my God, to our Lord Jesus Christ for me, a corrupted wretch. Oh admirable goodness of God that has sent such faithful labourers into his vineyard to deliver and bring his people out of the Egyptian darkness. I know not how to conclude for at present methinks my spirit is spread among all the brethren and a hearty desire to the Bristol brethren. I am often present with them in spirit though absent in body.

Reverend Sir--

I beg leave to subscribe myself one  
of your young babes in Christ,

Mary Jane Ramsey.

Reference EMV: 6

Date: 1740

Addressees: Katherine Gilbert to Charles Wesley

Annotation: " CW's note, "Cath. Gilbert, 1740, converted."

Rev[eren]d sir,

With humility I make bold to write these lines unto you, it being my grief of heart which is the real cause, upon the account of your leaving us in this place, your great work which the Lord Jesus has done for me and in me through the operations of the Holy Spirit under your ministry, that I am constrained through love to acknowledge what the Lord hath done for my soul, for I am plucked as a firebrand out of the fire.

God [had] convinced me of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, before the Lord sent you and your worthy brother amongst us. I thought myself something but I can now see what I am by nature and deserve nothing but damnation. I knew nothing of faith alone in Christ, nor the operations of the Holy Ghost, nor what it was to be born of God and to become as a little child, a new creature in Christ Jesus. I was ignorantly led and taught.

My soul longth to become more and more in purity of heart and to receive greater measure of the love of God shed abroad in my heart. I humbly desire your prayers at the throne of grace that God in Christ would perfect and complete my salvation. I am not left without reproaches or threatenings by the children of the world for the word's sake. But I hope I am, through Christ, overcoming this world. I am not moved at their doings towards me, as [to] the contempt cast upon God's word and Children.

May the Lord our God even Christ Jesus fill you more and more with his Spirit and crown your ministry wherever you go with thousands of seals in the conversion of my guilty brethren. So continually prayeth, your handmaid in the Lord, Katharine Gilbert.

Reference EMV: 4

Date: 1740

Addressees: Ann Martin to Charles Wesley

Note: This is the first spiritual autobiography to include CW's religious verse to express spiritual experience. See below of extracts from \Hymns and Sacred Poems\ published this very year (1740).

Annotation: CW's note, "Ann Martin's Experience 1740."

Ambassador of Christ and well beloved in the Lord, please to accept these from the simplicity of my heart, as a little child begging to speak plain. The Lord is very gracious to me. Oh I feel the fire of his love in my heart. Oh Lord how shall I express thy goodness who am unworthy of the least of thy mercies, but through the Son of thy love. Oh dear sir, join with me in prayers to praise the lamb that sits upon the throne for ever and ever. Oh my dear Saviour, thou art now pleading to thy Father for me, thou art presenting my soul before thy Father. Oh glory be to thee, O God of love, who has brought me out of Egypt and led me through the wilderness to thy promised land.

I begin to taste the fruits and rejoice in the hope of that glory which shall be revealed when Christ, which is my life, shall appear, when I shall behold the glory of thy Father. Oh thou art in the Father and the Father in thee. O holy Father, glorify thy Son for thou hast searched my heart and tried my spirit. Here in me thy Spirit cries. O Lord and heavenly Father, in me perform thy will, for in thee is my trust, dear Saviour.

The Lord was pleased to use Mr. Whitefield as the first instrument in drawing me to the Son of his love, but you I must own as my spiritual father. I was begott[en] to a lively hope in Christ Jesus my Lord before you first went to Bristol. First I was drawn to use the ordinances but I was afraid, I thought I was not fit. I came to ask your advice, you told I might expect to receive faith. I thought it was strange talk to me for I thought I loved religion better than ever. I went away from you very heavy and soon began to grieve that I grieved no more. I was reading when my heart was filled with joy, but soon I found it was deceitful, fearing I should deny the Lord and be worse than I was before. But the Lord gave me power to cry out, "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy upon me." Sometimes I was dead and cold in prayer. I thought I could only lay before the Lord till he gave me power. Oh Lord make us all as clay in thy hands. Satan was nigh but Christ was nigher. I felt his Spirit interceeding with groanings that cannot be uttered. Oh it is a good but painful fight. I was ready to say, "Father if this cup might pass from me, but thy will be done." In prayer I received the Spirit of adoption crying, "Abba, Father."

I had not yet seen the Lord the last time I heard you at Mr. Bray's, but I had a greater gift, more than any before. The power of the most highest overshadowed me; I thought for some time I stood still and was the same, but glory be to the Lord, I feel I am grown in grace and feel the Lord always in my heart, waiting till faith to sight be changed, and I behold thy glory. O holy Father, as in a glass I seem to see the glimpse. Oh the Son of righteousness is risen with healings in his wings. Oh King of Glory shine with full heat. He that shall come will come when patience has had his perfect work.

Our Sister Mary Frances joins with me in duty to you and love to all our brothers and sisters in the Lord for ever and ever. Amen. The Lord has brought her out of darkness into the marvellous light and out of the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God, "Sing we now to God above, praise eternal as his love."

Dear sir, we should be glad to hear from you if you will please to write to us. Though absent in body, yet present in spirit I trust, for ever and ever. Amen. The Lord strengthen you and your dear brother in the inner man and fill you with the fullness of God and assist you with that wisdom which cometh from

above and give you the discernment of spirit as far as is needful. Lord, take all evil from amongst us and grant that we may be all knit together in one spirit as Thou and thy Father art one.

Now to him that is able to give more than we can ask or think, be all honour, praise, might, majesty both now and for ever. Amen.

From your unworthy sister in Christ.

Ann Martin.

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[Note: Written on the reverse side in the same hand is the following]

My dear brothers and sisters let me beseech you by the mercies of God in Christ Jesus that you hold fast that you have attained to. Still forgetting the things behind, press forwards towards the mark of your high calling which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. What he said unto one he said to all, "watch and pray lest you enter into temptation." Take care of evil speaking and judging one another, but look unto Jesus the author and finisher of your# faith whose fan is in his hand and he will thoroughly purge his people. Amen.

[Note: These next two lines from Hymns and Sacred Poems (1740) pp. 182-3 "The Love-Feast" Part II, verse 3, lines 1-2.]

Let the fruits of grace abound,  
Let in us thy bowels sound,

[Note: These lines not identified]

Mutual love the token be,  
That we Oh Christ belong to thee.

[Note: The following four lines from HSP (1740) pp. 181-2 "The Love-Feast" Part I, verse 3, lines 5-8.]

We for Christ our master stand,  
Lights in a benighted land,  
We our dying Lord confess,  
We are Jesus witnesses.

Reference EMV: 50

Date: 2 February 1741

Addressees: William Dallaway to Charles Wesley

Note: A clothier, probably from Bristol, converted by means of CW. He is on a journey that will keep him on the road for a month. Desires a spiritual friend and also to lead others to Christ. No other information.

Annotation: CW's note misdated and misspelled, "W. Dealway, Feb. 2, 1742."

Dear Sir,

Oxford

Feb. 2nd 1741

I designed to have written to you Saturday but was prevented. I'm now on a journey which will detain me from home near a month. I'm pursuing my lawful calling in which God, I hope, will preserve me, that I stumble not to destruction. For ever blessed be the Holy Spirit that instituted you an instrument to my salvation. For ever be adored, that gracious Saviour who stretched forth his hand, after so few hours seeking to raise me up and bring me to the knowledge of his divine truths. May his mighty arm still hold me, may his heavenly Spirit still guide me, that I may persevere unto the end. And that which he has begun in grace may he perpetuate in everlasting glory.

Your faith was strong, may heaven increase it. May he long preserve you in this world to administer the Gospel truths unto the lost house of Israel. May your virtues still flourish and abound in the souls of all those who are happy in your ministry. And may the eternal power spread abroad to all people, that light which shineth in darkness.

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No sooner had I felt the divine influence in my soul, but the love of God was shed abroad in my heart and I went home in that peace of mind which passeth all understanding. My Saviour manifested himself within me. All was calmness. Freed from fear or guilt, the sting of death is removed, for my Saviour hath redeemed me and I'm assured through his blood he will sanctify me and cleanse my soul from the bondage of corruption before I go hence; for his enlightening Spirit hath greatly enlarged me and taught me the mysterious truths of his Gospel. I have felt his gentle breathings of instruction, and he hath showed me the wonder of his almighty love. O my Saviour! do thou still teach me that I err not in the ways of righteousness.

I expect much tribulation in the flesh. Satan has begun in my own \family\ and is greatly enraged against me. He attacks me in the tenderest part and like a roaring lion seeketh to devour me. But God is my strength and my Redeemer. I have need of the

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whole armour of Christ to support me under his cross. I desire, therefore, your prayers, and that God will give me a spiritual \brother to assist me\ in my own house, for I fear others will be denied me, and that I may still be supported to rejoice (as I do now) under the cross which God for my good hath appointed me to bear.

Remember me to dear Mrs. Norman and Miss----- for my soul loveth them. I desire their prayers. They have mine that God may preserve them, I hope and trust that God will make me an \instrument to bring\ some to Christ and doubt not but the rage the devil is leveling at me will awaken some to truth, and that his infernal envy will be undermined by the all blessed Spirit of eternal grace.

If you write to me directed as under it will be comfort to my soul, and I hope your time will permit it as it may strengthen your faithful brother, (though but a child in Christ) and in the flesh your assured,

Friend and servant,

W[illia]m Dallaway

Direct to me a clothier to be left till called for at the Post Office in Norwich. I shall be there about the 10<sup>th</sup> or 11th ins[tant] and not stay longer than 12th.

Reference EMV: 43

Date: 8 March 1741

Addressees: Fanny Cowper to Charles Wesley

Note: Miss Francis Cowper (d. 1742) of Donnington Park was a personal friend and traveling companion of the Countess of Huntingdon. She is mentioned in the journals of both Wesleys and died in faith approximately 30 May 1742

Donington Park, March the 8th. 1741

Dear Sir,

I am sorry to hear you have not received the letter I wrote. I know your goodness would excuse my nonsense. But that cannot be expected from strangers. If there had been anything in it that could have been of any advantage to those who have it, I should have rejoiced. You don't know how much I am obliged to you for your kind remembrance of me, when you must have thought me so ungrateful, disobedient and idle as not to write to one of my best friends, for such I must always call you, and spiritual guide. The Lord hath inclined your heart unto me and I humbly hope he will continue this blessing to me, unworthy of all. We, all of us, join in thanks to you for the sweet hymns you have sent, which we have sung every day since we have had them and rejoiced over them waiting the second coming of the Lord when we shall be released from sin. Our busy enemy who is always haunting us. I can easily hope for this great gift, knowing that nothing is impossible with God, and that he can bring a clean thing out of an unclean. I know in me dwelleth no good thing, and that my heart is deceitfull above all things. I cannot find out its depth of iniquity.

Dear Lady \H[untingdon] continues her labour\ of love to my sister and I, by reading and explaining the Holy Word of God, singing hymns and praying with us not missing any opportunity, at which times we \all of us bear you on\ our hearts. I believe we are often joined in spirit though absent in body. I will bless the Lord of

[ms page break]

heaven, of his great goodness to me and for causing you to pray for me, a poor worm, and unworthy all those blessings I profess.

I beg, dear sir, you will continue your good prayers for me. For the prayers of the faithful pierce the sky and cannot return unanswered. I will not try your patience any longer. I now commit you to [the] care and protection of our dear Lord, and Saviour.

I am, dear sir, your affectionate but weakest daughter in the Lord,

F[anny] C[owper]

My sister desires her affectionate love to you. We desire you would remember us to Mr. G----- [George Whitefield?].

Reference EMV:42

Date: [1741]

Addressees: Fanny Cowper to Charles Wesley

Annotation: CW's note, "1741 Fanny Cowper Confessing Faith."

Dear Sir,

I heartily thank you for your pious prayers which you have offered up to Almighty God for me, a poor, distressed, miserable sinner. They have reached the ears of mercy. I have now tasted and seen how sweet the Lord is. I see in Christ all my sins forgiven, that his most precious blood [was] shed for my sins, that tender body scourged, wounded and crucified. O holy Jesus, I see thy meritorious suffering plead for me. O lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon me. Thou hast shown me thy goodness in the land of the living. O thou that boughtest heaven for me, guide me thither. O my Redeemer, may thou never leave me, but be present always, and help to overcome all temptations. Enlighten thou my soul, direct it, crown it. O Wonderful, how is it that thy mercy should thus follow me, the chief sinner? Jesus answers "for such I die." From henceforth I will rejoice that I, the chief of sinners, am, but Jesus died for me.

My heart was set upon and I rejoiced in thoughts that [I] should glorify God with you at the Foundery. But God would not permit it; but directed us to East Barnet and there to render him our sincere praise and thanksgiving. And after, my dear Lady Huntingdon carried us home with her where we again did, with her, rejoice and glorify God.

I am much obliged to you for sending me the Prayer Book. May I too, ask that I may receive all I pray for.

I am very sorry to hear that you have been overturned by malice of wicked men. May you speedily recover. May your patience and long suffering turn their hard hearts and be turned to love; that they may see your good works and glorify our Father which is in heaven. I have nothing more to add but that I am, dear spiritual guide,

your most

Affectionate sister in Christ,

I know you will pray for me which made me not ask it.

F[anny] Cowper



Reference EMV:140

Date: 8 May 1741

Addressees: Rebecca Wrench to Charles Wesley

Note: The setting is certainly Bristol, the references to "Baptist Mills" and "the Room" fix this. No other information.

Rev[eren]d Sir,

I desire to return thanks for great blessings rec[eive]d at the Sacrament last Sunday going to the college [cottage?] and a friend with me with a design to go to the Lord's table I found myself so very empty and void of all good even of God himself and all things in him belonging that I was at a stand whether I did dare to receive or not. But believing it to be an illusion of the devil, of which I have had many for some time past, God gave me at last a firm resolution to do it in despite of the devil. For as much as I knew in my own soul that I went with a desire to meet Jesus and in obedience to him with a trembling awe[?], considering my own great unworthiness and begging that Christ's merit might enrich my poverty, I approached the altar with much reverence and humility begging and beseeching of Jesus Christ that he would then and there meet with me and show me whether I was an accepted guest at his table or not.

But O when I received the bread into my mouth how was I overflowed with his heavenly presence my head, my heart, my soul, my every vein – my eyes overflowing with tears of love and joy unspeakable which cannot be uttered (as it is now at the writing[?] of it). When the wine came, as soon as ever it entered into my mouth, I was again filled full full[sic] with the same blessed Spirit and my mouth with a new song even a song of thanksgiving to our God. When I arose from the altar and going into the choir[?] and not having the convenience to kneel, I stood on my feet. My soul overflowing with joy and praise. I begged that Jesus would wash me clean in his blood, when immediately I had a whole flood provided[?] to[?] me as I had several times more, both of the Spirit and the blood, before I came out of the church.

And that portion of Scripture applied[?] 'Shall he not with him freely give thee all thing.' I have often drank deep of the cup of salvation, but never so deep as at this time. In the evening I went to Baptist Mills and from thence returned to the room [Note: The "New Room" built be the Wesleys for the Bristol society] and still found that God was there. I continued in this great joy with thanks and praises till Monday evening and was in much hope that I was delivered from my enemy. But coming to the room I found him still with me, on and in me, now he would choke[?] me for telling of him. He was so much disturbed at the reading the book of serious considerations that he threw me into doubt of the truth of the blessings I had received and to question if I did not deceive myself and almost to question if I was justified at all so that has hitherto hindered me to return thank[s] for all the great benefits that I have received--he still buffeting and tormenting me. My request is that you will pray for me that my faith fail not and that God will in his good time defeat the devil in me and deliver me out of the paw of the lion that hunteth after my soul to devour it. So with true respects I rest,

May the 8th 1741

the unwortheist of all

your sisters in Christ

Rebecah Wrench

Reference EMV:18

Date: 20 November 1741

Addressees: Samuel Webb to Charles Wesley

Annotation: On the reverse side, one finds nearly twenty lines of CW's shorthand as well as the note: "Sam. Web.'s Exp. Nov. 1741."

Dear and Most Reverend sir, by the good providence of God I had a desire to hear the Methodists so I went to Islington's Church one day about two years and a half since. It pleased God that yourself preached from our Lord's discourse with the woman of Samaria at Jacob's well; but indeed your zealous looks and forcible words caused me to think you spoke as never man spoke. When our Lord had convinced her of adultery, I then, and not till then, felt that he knows the secrets of all hearts for I thought mine would abound.

As well as I was able, I kept myself from making a disturbance till your sermon was over when I went out toward Canbery House where I plentifully poured out my soul, it being filled with joy unspeakable. I had such a sense of my own vileness and the love of Christ towards me that I was confounded and I had no inclination to go home any more, this being the first I ever heard the pure Gospel preached. Nevertheless, I date my justification from this time although I cannot but take great shame to myself when I consider the long time with the many blessed opportunities I have and do enjoy of hearing the everlasting Gospel preached without greater improvements.

After this I took all opportunities of hearing the word of Mr. Whit[e]field, your brother, or you. And when you were chiefly at Bristol I found out Fetter Lane Society where I attended the word constantly twice a week. And one thing is very remarkable, although I heard them preach their still doctrine; yet, for as much as I went with a sincere desire to honour Christ. All their warnings against the ordinances were taken by me that I must not depend on anything we did as meritorious.

About Christmas will be two years [since] I came [to be] acquainted with brother Cooper and Hage; and hearing them talk of of the forgiveness of sins, whether I had received that blessing, I began to reason. About this time you came to town, last Easter was a year, and began to preach mornings at the Foundery which rejoiced me much so I left journey work that I might have a better leisure to attend. As I was sitting one day in much doubt, I had a sense of a voice within me which gave me much comfort and I believed it the witness of the Spirit. Accordingly, I declared it to brother Cooper in band and from that time for three months (to the best of my remembrance) I had such a glowing and bigness in my breast that I thought it my duty to invite all men to seek the Lord for I had not heard of any that had a clearer manifestation of his free grace than myself.

I have generally found a desire to meditate on the things of God but commonly a backwardness to closet prayer, though I am convince[d] it is a great privilege. I have for a long [time] been surrounded with much fear and doubt, not of the faithfulness of God, but of my own deceitful heart which indeed has and does discover itself to be deceitful above all things. Yet I find the little principle of faith conquers, for I continually find those words of our Lord's true, "Look unto me and be saved." I find now a confidence that the leaven will work till the whole lump is leavened. It has pleased the Lord to show me that it is a lump of corruption that must be thoroughly purged [before] it can inherit that glorious kingdom which I pray God fully and perfectly to accomplish of his pure grace for the sake of his only begotten well beloved Son and my Saviour, Jesus Christ our Lord, amen.

Last Wednesday night you spoke as if you thought your labours would not be blessed but in America. Now I do declare that I never [illegible] had the expectation of being blessed so much under anyone's ministry [illegible] as your[s]. And ungrateful as we are, I believe many are like minded and I pray God

to make us all faithful hearers, as you are teachers; that you that sow and we that reap may rejoice together. Grant this, O Father, for the honour of Jesus Christ our Lord. from your unworthy hearer Sam[ue]l Webb

[Note: A small P.S. squeezed into the corner of the page is illegible due to smeared ink and worn paper.]

Reference EMV: ??

Date: 27 November 1741

Addressees: Taverner Wallis to Charles Wesley

Reverend sir,

Having had from my youth up great drawings of the Father and flights of religion at some times, and at others, chasing the pleasures of sin for a season, but at last being convinced that there was no peace to the wicked, I said, "I will return to my Father." And this was about Aug[ust] 1738, when I began to read Io:plus[?] which gave me great encouragement and I seemed between whiles, ready to do anything to be saved.

Nevertheless, the sins which did so easily beset me had still dominion for I did but dissemble. I now used the blessed sacrament for the first time with shame and confusion of face and some tears resolving for the future to amend my life. And to this end set about going to church and sacrament and giving to the poor. But after struggling some months in this way, found I could not come up to what I ought and to what I must to be saved. Sometimes this would discourage me, and tempt me to give up all hopes, at least for the present, till I had better opportunities to put in practice what I had learned. The fear of man and unwillingness to forsake all was at the bottom and was what hindered the work of God on my soul. However, I had got so far as to watch over sin and had dominion. And likewise, by being grave, my former acquaintance soon avoided me as I did them.

All this time I had no one to speak my mind to. And having strove to repent but in vain, finding my heart not contrite as it ought, and being recommended to get acquainted with good men if I would be so myself, I thought it was quite right. And having heard talk of the Methodists at Oxford some years ago, how religious they were, I made it my business to renew my acquaintance with one so called. But to my great disappointment found him of another opinion. But it was by him I was first informed of the society in Fetter Lane. And after I had been there several times and found great satisfaction knowing it was good for me to be there, I proposed to Mr. Bray to be one of the Society. But it was answered it was contrary to the rules to accept any person without they were known by some of their members. I went there afterwards but seldom, and having heard Mr. Viney speak against the means, my nature being pleased therewith, took the bait and by that means threw me back again into the world and into sin, which I had dominion over till then. And by those things being convinced this way could not be right, and having the burden of sin on me and [the] fear of death, about April 1740 as I was going down in the stage coach to my father, it pleased God to give me an opportunity of being acquainted with Mrs. Jason who was going to Denmoor. After she had resolved me in a few questions concerning the way she was in, I desired her to bring me acquainted with the Mr. Wesley, which she did by letter.

Determined now to set my hand indeed to the plow, I went to the Foundery and having heard an excellent sermon by Mr. John, it made me say to myself, "What must I do to be saved." I went, very much moved with the commendatory letter, and he recommended me to the acquaintance of Br[other] Thornton which

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was of much service in building me up. And now, by attending constantly on the word, I was soon convinced of the doctrine, and that it was different from that preached in the churches. I was in some months time convinced of unbelief and in Feb. last I found I had forgiveness through the blood of Christ, but after three days (having had a book recommended me to read) and though my conscience told me not to read it, yet through fear of man I took the contrary way which threw me into great darkness so that I went mourning for a whole day to find him whom my soul loved. It was not long before I found him and

thought I knew what it was to love God with all my heart etc., about a month after this I fell again, occasioned by taking too much care of my health and studying physic and being absent from under the word, so that I thought the kingdom of heaven consisted in meats and drinks and trusted much in the means.

But God, when once my soul asked counsel of him, convinced me of my error. I found once (since I was justified) guilt for speaking unadvisedly with my lips; but found afterwards I had an advocate with the Father and I was again restored to his favour. I once turned back in my heart to Egypt in a time of tribulation and temptation. After this the Lord showed me from whence I was fallen (as the hymn "when I was a little child" describes) but this lasted but some few hours.

I have lately seen my salvation more clear, though in great deadness still and void of the love of God. I am persuaded I have been fighting in my own strength and have not waited patiently on the Lord to work in me to will and to do of his good pleasure. Therefore, [I] have found no comfort or satisfaction in devotion as formerly, being as I take it, fed with strong meal. I have been quit dead to the world till lately, as likewise to the flesh, having had no temptation to abide with me till now. I find I am carried away with lustful thoughts and likewise with the desire of being rich. But I find, blessed be God, I am more than conqueror, finding that those things work experience etc. I have had temptation to take up with other things rather than Christ, but hope through the grace of God to be willing to lose my natural life to be his disciple. I think of late that I am grown lukewarm because I can't rise of a morning as I used to, and that my love to the brethren is grown faint. Nevertheless, in general I have a hunger and thirst after righteousness and doubt not but that I shall be filled, though at present I am all unclean, thinking myself the chief of sinners. I still remain unthankful for this glorious means of salvation and for what the Lord has done for me already and want to have the love of God in my heart.

I am willing now of late to let the Lord teach me and show me all things and have found now the Lord is going to show me my heart (which he did in part formerly but that soon I forgot). I am convinced I have been fighting in my own strength and lay more now like clay in the hand of potter. What has been a means of bringing me into darkness and temptation is the having not took counsel of God but followed my own inclinations and having in my heart turned back into Egypt.

I now see more of my heart and want to be jealous over myself lest I should fall away, which thing till of late (I always fancying myself so strong) could see no sign of. The Lord convinced me but last night and showed me that I had depended on [self?] for more gifts. What I seem

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to stand in need of is self-denial, to take up my cross daily, and not be ashamed to confess Christ, to watch and pray against temptations, to become a little child, to see more of my heart and to cease from my own works and took unto Christ the finisher of my faith, to have more of the knowledge and love of God and a settled peace (though I don't find the guilt of sin on my heart)—in short--unbelief. I want to be rooted out and every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted; and to have a new, a loving heart: Christ in me the hope of glory.

Sometimes, after I was justified, I found a great sorrow and contrition for my sins and great mourning looking unto him whom I had pierced. Once I saw that every thought of man's heart by nature was only evil continually and could give glory to God for all the good. But now I seem to have strength of my own and so don't rely on God to teach me, etc. I thought I was the men [sic] that crucified the Lord and [had] a very deep contrition# thereon. But now these things seem to be forgotten and I seem ignorant that so it is, I seem quite blind to what I was formerly.

I lately have plucked out a right eye and now I know of no idol that I desire to keep. The sin of ingratitude to you, sir, and your brother for your pains, I am afraid lies at my door. I am Rev[eren]d sir, your much obliged humble servant in Christ

Taverner Wallis

New Inn, 24 November 1741

I beg you prayers for me.

To the Reverend Mr. Charles Wesley

Reference EMV: 17

Date: November 1741

Addressees: Joseph Carter to Charles Wesley

Note: A London wainscoater [finish carpenter] who was praying, attending a religious society and hearing Dr. Heylin preach before a lad who came to beg shavings told him about "new religion" of "salvation through faith only" being taught by the Wesleys and the society that met in the home of Mr. Bray, the Brazier. No other external information on Carter.

Dear Brother in the Lord Jesus,

According to your desire and by the assistance of him who made me and likewise of his own free grace and mercy hath redeemed me from the guilt and I trust will deliver me from the power of all sin, I shall give you some account of what God hath done and is doing in my soul.

About four years ago [1737] I was induced very much to pray to God for his grace and Holy Spirit. My wife told me that her mother taught her so to pray. I had reasonings about it, that I did not know what it was, and how could I pray heartily for it. However I went to prayer and it was to that effect and I found a deal of satisfaction in it; so that I was moved to pray again and again and many times repeated, and I could not tell how to be said nay, although I knew not what I prayed for at the time; no more than a stock or a stone. But I had continuously comfort in that prayer and great drawing to it.

One Saturday night being in a barber's shop, the barber said he had been to hear a sermon preached before all the religious societies in London. He surprised me. I asked him if there was ever one there. I told him, by the behaviour of the people there was little sign of it. He mentioned several. He belonged to one that [meet] in Miles Lane. I was glad to hear it and desired to be introduced into it, and seeing their orders, accordingly by him I was.

I found some comfort the first two or three times of meeting; but at length I began to see things in them which I did not like, [such] as particular persons speaking at pleasure and dictating in their way as they thought fit and could not bear contradiction. They were the old ones and great ones of the world. At that time I went to hear Dr. Heylin and I was powerfully convinced through him that religion was not anything outward but that it was a thorough change of the the heart. This I strongly insisted on amongst the socitey and they would not hear but answered that we were to do as we were commanded and that was enough. I told them that I could keep none of them, but that I was inclined to all evil and could do no otherwise for my life; however, we were to do what we could and God would do the rest. However, I did not much like them and soon after left them. Mr. Seward and his brother were then belonging to them.

I still went to hear Dr. Heylin and I was still more and more convinced of the spirituality of religion but could not find it in myself. At last, being at work wainscoating of a house in Little Britain, it being now the White Horse Alehouse, there comes in a boy to beg some shavings which I gave him leave to take. I took particular notice of him, that he took nothing else, which was uncommon for those that come for them take as many chips as they can with them, which made me ask him who he belonged to. He told me Mr. Bray, a brasier hard by. I told him further that I had heard he was a very good man, and he was welcome to some [chips] at any time. He asked me if I knew him. I told him no, I never saw him in my life to know him; but, I knew two young men that used a society at his house on Tuesday night. He farther asked me if I had any notion of this new religion?

"What new religion," replied I.

"Why salvation through faith only."

"No," I told him, "I had heard nothing of it."

"What, did you never hear Mr. Wesleys?" said he.

"No, I never heard them."

"Mr. Charles is in town, and he will preach Sunday at this church."

"Well I think to go to hear him."

"Mr. John is coming from abroad, and he is a very fine man, likewise," said he.

"But I will tell you my belief," said I--pharisee like with my arms folded together, swaggering as it were--"I believe in all the Articles of the Religion" (and I believe at that time I never had read them all over nor hardly knew what was in them). "Likewise I believe in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, in all the Creeds, etc." He asked me if my belief influenced all my life and actions? I told him no, I did not find that it did. He told me then that my faith was that of the head and not of the heart. I answered I thought so too. Then he began to prove it by Scripture. He said, "If Christ hath made you free then are you free indeed; and, we have not received the Spirit of bondage unto fear, but we have received the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

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He struck me all of a heap. I could not tell what to say. He advised me to buy a little book called \A Choice Drop Of Honey From The Rock\ \Christ\ and bid me consider it and bid me good bye.

As soon as he was gone I began to consider of the texts of Scripture and concluded in myself if I misbelieved these, I must misbelieve all the rest. And so I assented to them well knowing that I was not in that state of freedom there spoken of. Then immediately came into my mind all my notorious sins that I had committed and especially my reigning sin of adultery, which I had so often made promises and vows that I should never more commit. Nay, the last time that I had made a vow against it was on this condition, that I did not desire to enter into the kingdom of heaven if I broke it. This made so deep an impression upon my soul that I thought all hope [was] past, reasoning thus: "What signifies your talking of religions and the kingdom of heaven. You have forfeited it by your own conditions and have fell from them. How can you expect anything but hell?" These terrors followed me hard and close, even almost to desperation. But I strove to get rid of them by amusing myself at my work, and working harder and harder, and striving to get them out of my head as I had done for three years before, the last time I fell into that sin. But all would not do. I must be damned at last. I had a little allay [relief] by considering that I prayed heartily for the grace of God that I might not fall and reasoning that if he did not give me his grace how could I keep it. But it was a question to me whether I had his grace or not.

Then was I at as great a lose about that, that I could find no comfort for about an hour or an hour and [a] half. At last there came into my inmost soul a voice [which said] that through the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, my sins were forgiven me. I burst out crying, and laughing, and dancing and jumping about the room; [so] that anyone, if they had seen me, would have thought me crazy. I then knew that God was my Father and I could cry, "Dear Father, my Father, Abba Father!" I then saw that he had mercy upon me purely and only for the sake of Jesus Christ my Saviour. Then did I plainly see my own vileness, my own nothingness, and I saw nothing upon the face of the earth so vile as myself, and in particular I saw myself worse than the dirt I trod on--and for this reason Jesus Christ died.

Then I cried out, "O my dear Saviour, have I all my lifetime been running over so many books to find salvation and at last have found it in this blessed Jesus. Glory be to thy holy name for it." Then did I see the insignificance of all things else but Jesus Christ only. In him I had all things and it came strongly into my mind that I need not read any more books nor go to church any more, for I had Jesus Christ and I had all in him. I doubted in relation to going to church and a voice said, "\frequent divine



ordinances\" twice or three times, and from thence I concluded to do as I was commanded. By and by came in William, Mr. Bray's apprentice. I immediately told him that I had no occasion for the book he recommended for I had Jesus Christ and in him I had all things. He was very earnest and particular in enquiring of me the account I had to give of it, which I did in broken language through the ecstasy of love and joy. He mourned much because he had not received it, but together we had a glorious intercourse; I rejoicing in the mercy and love of God with a full belief that he also would visit \him\ with his salvation. Then he parted with me for that time, but at all opportunities he visited me and was very much drawn out in love towards me continually.

The first person I saw that I thought had any notion of religion I communicated to them my experience, which was my master. And he rejected it all as folly and predestination and hated me for it and at a convenient opportunity turned me from my business. But the Lord immediately took me up and brought me unto one where I had the full liberty to speak all my mind and they could rejoice with me.

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In this full assurance of faith and love of God I went on for about six months; in which time I never had any occasion to pray for anything, but only rejoicing in him and continually giving him thanks for his great love and mercy. I laid down in full assurance of faith and rose the same, and whatsoever I thought said or did was to the glorification of his name. I could not bare to hear of any care or forecast for the morrow; it was so contrary to the entire dependence upon God. I had at this time a call into the country to my sick mother and I communicated unto her and to all wherever I came the glad tidings of salvation unto every one [in margin "Mark!"] of them by the blood of Christ \by my own experience\ and that it was out of mere mercy and love. For I myself had done nothing for it and w[as] nothing but only believing in the Lord Jesus; which pressingly I exhorted them all to do.

At last my mother died. I was not there with her but the person that was afterwards told me through ill will, that I had, through what I had said to her, given her great uneasiness all her sickness. She continually [was] crying out to God that she might know that her sins were forgiven her and that her pardon was sealed in heaven through the blood of Christ. He told me she could not die in peace [because of] me. He said he read by her and endeavoured all he could to comfort her by her good life but that would not do any good. He then told me he read to her in Dr. Hammond's \Practical Catechism\ and the Lord gave her to lay hold of these words, "Know you not that Jesus Christ is in you except you be reprobates?" She cried out that she was not reprobate, that she was in Jesus Christ, and soon died. This was the reproach he cast upon me for troubling my mother on her death bed. Glorious reproach, would our Lord make me such an instrument to call all dead souls out of their dreadful darkness, to cry out continuously unto him that they may have life.

My mother dying, she left me a small matter of money that after I had it I was strongly impre[ssed] to pay it to some of my wife's dealers [for debts] which she had contracted some years before and contrary to my knowledge. I then began to reason: First, I never had any dealings with them and likewise that they never had asked me for money. But that would not do, for every time I went to prayer this was uppermost, "owe no man anything." Then I would get up with resolution to pay it away to them and by that means I should give great glory to God; and I was to tell them that that was the effect of the doctrine of the enthusiast.

Then I consulted flesh and blood. I told my wife of my design, not acting simply in obedience to the command which saith "whatsoever thine hand findeth to do, to do it quickly with all thy might." Consulting her, she opposed it with all her might and began to scold and rave in a most terrible manner.

I still insisted upon it and the good Spirit within continually prompted me to it. I was forever resolving and never performing, fearing her continual noise.

And the flesh tempted me another way by my wife's being near her time, and that I should by so doing leave her destitute of the comforts and necessaries which are called for at the time. However, all this did not satisfy me. I still was persuaded that I was to owe no man anything and I continually endeavoured to persuade my wife to consent, but all in vain. The nearer I was to the doing of it, the farther she was from it. In this trial I was for about three or four months, but continually the love of God [was] with me and still rejoicing in the doing of this, being glad to do anything to his glory. At length, my wife's time drawing very near, I thought I should stay till that was over and then do it. But when the time was accomplished, she was as far off consenting as before and as many calls for the money. But I still resolved to pay then what I had and continually told her so.

At last she broke open my chest and took a good part out. In a little time God visited one of my children with the small pox and not long after with death. I then went in great hurry to perform my resolution with what there was left without saying anything to anybody, and in [the] doing of it I had as much satisfaction and comfort as though I had paid the whole. Blessed be the Lord for his goodness towards me, though undeserving.

From this time the storms began to arise from within and without. My wife's crying out against me to everyone of my starving and perishing my family by giving that away which was sent by God for the nourishment and support of them. In relation to my child's death, [she?] told me that I was the instrument of it by not being diligent enough in the use of the means. All the trials brought me into a great darkness, such as might be felt, which I continued in for about a week. When I went mourning all the day I could not taste the word. I then had no love. Nay, I was, as it were, stripped of all for the time. But at last the Lord appeared to me again as before by the means of reading of the trial and temptation of the children of God. When I saw that those that would live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution and that those whom God loveth he chasteneth and scourgeth ever son whom he receiveth and that those afflictions and troubles that I had lately gone through was for my disobedience to him in not directly following the dictates of his Holy Spirit when he enjoined me. Lord, grant that I may in all things simply obey thy will when thou commendest, not consulting flesh and blood, come life come death. This is what I continually pressed in my band, being a standing monument of his mercy though continually disobedient to him. In all these trials I had no affection for sin but hated and abhorred it in all its shapes. That which was the most reigning one as above, I was entirely dead to; so that not having conversation at home as assail, it raised jealousies, hatred and heart burnings towards me from my wife. But that never hurt me but [rather] caused me to keep still closer to my Saviour.

When I was in my first love, I then could say, and did, that in Christ I was a new creature; that in me all old things were passed away and that all things were become new; and that I was one of the saints on earth, and that I had communion with the Father and the Son continually, and that I had fellowship with the saints that were in light. Oh that I could as incessantly say so now as then! O Lord come into my soul and take up thy abode there forever. It is thy will, O Lord.

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Oh make it mine for thine own mercies sake and remove all the hindrances thereto.

The present state I am in is this, that I have no doubt or fear of my salvation nor have not had from the beginning (blessed be the Lord for it) because he very often giveth me fresh assurance of his continual love towards me and of my acceptance in the blood of the lamb. But I have not that constant love, that

continual love, that everflowing faith as usual, but only enough as it were to keep me from sinking. Not but that now I could sometimes lay down my life for the brethren. Even \now\ I feel I could do it by his assistance. I plainly see that all the work that hath been done already hath been done \for\ me, but now I am fully persuaded that it must be wrought \in\ me by the same almighty power, even he that hath begun the good work will also finish it. I find that in me there is placed a monitor strictly to watch over and examine all my thoughts, words, and actions, that nothing should come from either of them but what is to the glory of God. And I do find that Satan would [destroy me] if my Lord permitted him, which he cannot for he will not forsake those that trust in him. I say the devil hath set himself against all my endeavours, which are according to his will and would spoil them all. If I spoke to his praise and glory, if out of pure love, \he tempts me to be proud of it\; if ardently and sincerely, he tempts me to be angry; he would willingly have all my thoughts--which he cannot. Then he would vitiate or poison them by causing me to judge my neighbour or to think of myself more highly than I ought, but this is very rare. My Lord does keep me very low. He [Satan] oftener gets power to make me believe that I have not received what I have. Nay, in short, there is not one good property in me (although given me by the Spirit of God) but this devil of devils would, if he had power, poison and make it turn to his own advantage. Oh Lord, enable me to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil, and with a pure heart and mind to follow thee the only God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Oh my dear brother, do you pray unto the Lord that I may hold out unto the end; that I many not be weary nor faint in my mind but that I may press forward for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus; that I may go on from strength to strength; that I may be made holy as he who hath called me is holy in all manner of conversation and godliness; that I many never rest until I rest wholly in the arms of Jesus, until I am made one with him and he in me, and we are all perfected in one? Oh Lord Jesus Christ, thou hast died for us. Oh do thou make all our bodies, souls, and spirits fit habitations for thy Holy Spirit to reside in for ever! Oh do thou come and take possession of our souls and rule and reign there, who only hath the right unto them, and put all thine enemies under thy feet. Unto thee, Oh Lord, be all the praise and glory for what thou hast done and still art doing in us and for us now, henceforth, and for ever more. Amen!

From your ever loving brother in the Lord Jesus [name "Joseph Carter" blotted out and written in shorthand] [in another hand] I doubt not, but you allow the writer admission into the class band. I have \no\ doubt.

Reference EMV: 14

Date: [before November 1741]

Addressees: James Flewitt to Charles Wesley

Note: Internal evidence shows Flewitt (circa 1706-1741) was a Londoner and CW's note indicates his death in November 1741. This account had to be written before then. It is significant because it shows the value of Whitefield's preaching and the subsequent care of the Wesleys for one already converted around 1729. Flewitt struggled to maintain his faith and practice until his contact with the Methodists. Annotation: CW's note, "Jam. Flewitt Experience. Nov. 1741. Departed in the Lord."

Hon[oure]d sir, In compliance with y[ou]r request I have sent you the following account [of] how the Lord in his mercy has dealt with my soul.

It is now about fourteen years ago [1727/21 yrs. old] when God in a most wonderful manner revealed himself unto me; yea, even when I was in my sins and in my blood he said unto me "Live." I was near one and twenty years old before I had any solid thought of God or religion. I has disobedient to all the commands of God, and what commands I obeyed of man was more in fear than for duty. I have violated every command of God in the gross sense, accepting murder, and that in the spiritual sense a thousand times. Sure I am that there is not a greater sinner out of hell than I am. And if anyone cries out distinguishing grace, I more, yet I believe God is loving to every man and his mercy is over all his works.

The manner God worked with me was as follows; a little before I was flung into convictions I had a very solid frame of temper come upon me, and often thought if I should die in the state I was in, I should go to hell, which gave me some uneasiness. Much about the same time [1729/21 yrs.] I took to reading a little book upon the new birth, written by a Dissenter. His text was, "expect a man be born again" etc. This seemed very strange to me and Nicodemus like. [I] thought, how can this thing be? But the Lord who blessed the reading of that book to my soul soon showed me. I was ready to cry out, "what must I do to be saved." But God soon showed me it was to have something done in me and for me which could not be done by me. This let me upon [a] strict search to know what means to use to have this done for me. Oh thought I, if I could but pray to God I am sure he would hear me. This indeed seemed a strange work for I do

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not know know that ever I prayed before, but blessed be God I did then or more properly his spirit within me. My prayer I know was heard, for, from that time I found no rest to my soul by reason of my sin.

Much about that time I dreamed I led my own apparition which the devil and carnal people told me was a sure sign of my death and in one sense so it was, for that dream being sanctified to me was once more of my dying to sin. But this was but the beginning of sorrows. Soon after this, just after I got into bed one night, I was all of a sudden struck to all appearance with sudden death. Oh who can tell, but them that ha[ve] felt the same horror and confusion that I was in. Death, I thought, set hovering upon my cold sins and hell opened ready to receive me. The terrors of the Lord was set in array against me and in this agony I lay for some time in a manner speechless. At last the Lord gave the utterance and I said the Lord's Prayer. I prayed earnestly for Christ's sake that I might not die. Then I promised obedience to all his commands; how I would keep his Sabbaths and walk in his ordinances. I thought I never would offend him in thought, word or deed any more. All this I promised in my own strength so ignorant was I of the ways of God. This fit a little abated and I lay till morning but the fear of death a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, for I immediately went to work to save my soul as it were by the deeds of the law. I thought I

would redeem all lost time by being more diligent for the future. Accordingly, I went to church three and sometimes four times

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a day. I attended the church prayers the week days. Very frequent I went to the sacrament very constant and if I neglected any duty, I immediately thought I was damned. Indeed most of my outward sins were broken off, as swearing and lying in a great measure was done away. I don't know that ever I swore three oaths for this fourteen years, though before I don't know that I spent one day without blasphemy, cursing and swearing.

I went on in a constant round of duties and all this while under deep convictions. To use your own words, it is a good but painful fight. Many times was I ready to wish that I had never set myself about the duties of religion, not considering that it was God that had set me about it. Often times did I wish that I had never been born or had been as a brute beast that has no understanding. I, often times, could have been willing to die but the thoughts of judgment startled me. With sorrow, do I speak it; I being of the Church of England, I was at a great loss to find a spiritual friend that could give me any spiritual comfort. What ministers I liked in the church, I found their lives was so contrary to their doctrine that Satan would have often tempted me to believe that all religion was priest craft. Often times he tempted me to deny the being of a God and at other times

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he would tell me, if there was a God he would not concern himself with me. With many more atheistical and blasphemous notions, did he torment me. He drove me at last almost to despair. I thought God had forsaken me. Where to fly for comfort, I knew not. All my relations was strangers to the work of God. All my acquaintance[s] were surprised to see this alteration but had never known anything of the work of God themselves. The Book of Psalms was my greatest comfort. There I see the man after God's own heart. In my state, I often could cry out, "My God, my God, Why hast thou forsaken me?" But very seldom, "praise the Lord oh my soul," etc. I abhorred all company and loved to be in lonesome places by myself. My tears have been my meat, day and night. For near two years was I tried, as it were, with fire and had there been nothing but my own strength, I must have sunk under the burden of guilt. Often did I wish to see the days I now see, that is, for men to live as they preach, as I believe you and your dear brothers do. What little spark of faith I had, was almost extinguished with doubts. That kept me from applying the promise of God to my soul. It would be too tedious, sir, to tell if I could [re]collect all the various ways the Lord has dealt with me, whilst I was under this conflict.

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After two year's deep convictions, God rebuked the stormy wind and tempest and there was a great clam and fear was in a great measure done away and I had sure trust and confidence that God for Christ's sake, had forgiven me. Indeed I had joy and peace in the Holy Ghost. I tasted that peace of God which passeth all the understanding of the natural man.

I remained in this sweet state some time; but the Christian warfare admits of no standing still, and they that do not go forward, must needs go backward. So I found, to my sorrow that Satan got an advantage over me. He persuaded me that I was too religious and that I saw hardly anybody, so strict as I was and that two sermons a day was better than three or four. With many such like suggestions which I soon adhered to. Indeed I fell into a lukewarm state presently and if I did anything contrary to the command

of God, Satan told me I could not fall away finally or to the same sense though I knew nothing of predestination doctrine.

The next thing [was that] I began to grow spiritually proud. I despised others that had never gone through what I had and began to reason whether they

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would be saved or not, and I know by experience that spiritual pride is the foundation of predestination.

But God who had begun a good work would carry it on and he. Oh how did I rejoice when Mr. Whitefield came about to preach. Oh how was that spark blown up that was just dying away.

But after all this I never saw the hundredth part of my own wicked deceitful heart till you and your dear brother, as instruments in the hands of God, has in great measure shown it [to] me. I had stopped a great way this side of Jordan. But now I see clearly the necessity of being a new creature. Many things are done away since I sat under your doctrine, which once I never expected I would; glory be to God.

The same pride and anger is at present the sin that most easily beset me. Dear sir, pray for me that I never rest till I fully rest in Christ. The length of time and the treachery of my memory make it impossible to set down every particular. So I remain your dutiful servant and brother in Christ,

James Flewitt

Reference EMV: 89

Date: [3 December 1741]

Addressees: Joseph Humphreys to Charles Wesley

Note: Joseph Humphreys (1720-85) was the son of a Dissenting minister and attended the Deptford Academy (1733-9) with the intention of becoming a pastor. Convinced of his need for God through the sermons and example of GW in 1739 and converted that same year while singing a hymn in the Academy's chapel. He formed a Methodist society in Deptford and was expelled from the Academy (Dec. 25, 1739). He preached at the Foundery in London Sept. 1, 1740, and JW tried to recruit him for their connection. Humphreys declined and denounced JW's doctrines of "universal grace" and "perfection" in April of 1741, siding with Whitefield and Cennick. \An Account of...the Work of Grace Upon His Heart\ was published by Felix Farley in Bristol, 1742 [but after 1762 he made light of it]. He was a founding member of the Welsh Calvinistic Association in Waterford on 5-6 Jan. 1743. By 15 Aug. 1744, Richard Viney's Diary showed his separation from Whitefield and Cennick: "trying to form a Baptist congregation for himself." Subsequently he was ordained a Presbyterian and in 1751 took deacon's orders in the Church of England. In 1756, Humphreys was appointed to a curacy in Bath and from 1762 to 1785 was the Rector of North Stoke in Somerset [see Clergy of the Church of England database and Howell Harris Journal for 2 Nov. 1762].

Bristol.

Dec[ember] 3. 1741

Dear sir,

I believe nothing moves me to write to you but a spirit of love. When I think of that inexpressible union with God, and that glorious discovery of Emmanuel which my soul had under your ministry, gratitude obliges me to love and respect you. I had tasted of the grace of our Lord before but never so clearly saw his face till then. Surely I then walked in the light and the candle of the Lord shone upon my soul. Christ in all his fullness was then revealed unto me and my Saviour was indeed precious. He gave me also his good spirit, and my habitation was the land of uprightness.

I then found the pearl of great price; having a full assurance that Jesus and all in him was mine. Thus my time was a time of love and God entered into a covenant with me and sealed me with that promise, "In hopes of eternal life which \God that cannot lie promised before\ \the world began\". There I saw that I was in the arms of God's everlasting love. He had loved me from eternity, and would love me to eternity. I evidently saw that all my salvation was secured in Christ Jesus; that he was my living head, and that my all was treasured up in him. All this was the Lord's doing

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but your ministry was the instrument. Glory be to God for ever and ever, Amen.

If I should ever hear anyone call you a devil, I would say, "Your words then were not the words of one who had a devil: could a devil open the eyes of the blind?"

My dear brother, since then I have had returns of darkness in my soul, neither have I in many particulars been faithful to my God. Nevertheless he is so gracious as to be my God still. He remembers his holy covenant, the shepherd of Israel who neither slumbers nor sleeps, watches over my soul continually for good. I am fallen into the hands of a good Saviour.

At present, through grace, I have wonderful manifestations of his love and favour. He has multiplied to pardon. In me dwells no good thing. But I have a fountain ever open to me. The blood of Jesus cleanseth

from all sin. The night before last, whether dreaming, or between sleep and waking, I know not; but I had a full sense of a promise of God upon my soul, that he would cause his comfort to flow into me as a continual river of water. I am sure my soul thirsteth for God; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. And does not your heart thus far agree with mine? If so, then let us wait till God shall reveal all other things

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unto us, [illegible, perhaps "and makes"] entirely of one mind. At present let us go on simply declaring to others what the Lord hath done for our souls. Let us not stretch ourselves beyond our line. Let us long for a union in the Lord. Let every one that is without be astonished at our patience with and mildness towards one another. Above all let us take heed of rash expressions. Let all our words flow out of that fullness of love which dwells in our hearts. Let us do nothing towards each other which may occasion repentance upon a deathbed. Let us admire the love of God in Christ towards poor lost sinners and preach this unweariedly and love one another unfeignedly. So doing, we shall do well.

My sincere love to the flock under your charge. I ask God and them pardon for not loving them so tenderly, nor praying for them so fervently, as I ought. Accept this as a token of my love and respect to you. I wish all possible blessings to rest upon you, in time, and to all eternity. If you find freedom to write, I should be glad if you would favour me with a letter. The Lord be with your spirit, and bring us both safe to heaven for Christ's sake. So prays Your unworthy brother and the chief of sinners,

Joseph Humphreys

P.S. I beseech you not to forget to send me the paper of my experience.



Reference EMV: 20

Date: [1741]

Addressees: William Barber to Charles Wesley

Note: He wrote to CW again from London, 27 Dec. 1762, to report on his spiritual condition at that time. It is of interest to see how a workmate, Thomas Cooper, talked about his spiritual life as they worked together. Barber joined Cooper at the Fetter Lane Society [c 1739] and at the parish church. Barber declined the the sacrament because he felt the need to prepare for it and to include his wife, even though he had never received before. After his conversion he and his wife joined the bands. When he completed the period on trial, Mr. Edmund made him a band leader.

Annotation: CW's note, "W. Barber's Exp[er]ience 1741."

Rev[erend]d sir, according to your request I shall give you as plain and as simple accounts as I can of my state, how I set out to seek Christ.

The first instrument under God of bringing my soul out darkness into the marvellous light, was our Brother [Thomas] Cooper, for he happily coming to work where I was and having opportunity had begun to tell me what the Lord had done for his soul, I readily received his saying and told him I did intend through Christ to pursue the same way. Accordingly he engaged me to go along with him to Fetter Lane Society where you w[ere] expounding the Scriptures, but upon what point I cannot so well remember for this is about three years ago. But I seemed to like it well, to God be all the glory. He likewise asked me to go with him on the Sunday morning following to St. Lawrence Church [Note: St Lawrence Jewry Church on Gresham Street, London, next to the Guildhall] which accordingly I did. He asked me to stay to the sacrament. I told him no, not then, for I thought, having never been, there must be something of a preparation before I should go. I told him, please God, on the Sunday following I would go and my wife, having never been, we did intend to go together and accordingly we began on the Monday to prepare our souls by reading over a form which we had in the house. And so we went on all the week till Sunday morning. And though the enemy of our souls began to set himself in array against us by endeavouring to keep us from going, for something being amiss with my stockings I was to put on, words arose between us, the enemy did not get his way of us for we disappointed him of his hope. For in the name of the Lord we went, God being our helper. I believed it to be the enemy because the Lord gave me eyes then clearly to see it was one of his doings to keep us from going because he knows it is the overthrow of his kingdom. And I trust in the Lord I shall always keep in his own appointed way. But to return, I did not find much satisfaction in going. But I thought it was my duty to go and to let no opportunity slip of both hearing the word preached and receiving the sacrament as soon as convenience offered.

I heard that our brother, John Wesley, was to preach that same day at St. Giles-in-the-Fields [Note: St Giles High Street, West End of London] and accordingly I went to hear him and he preached from those words, "Ho every one that thirsteth, come you to the waters and he that hath no money, come you, buy and drink. Come and buy wine and milk without money and without price." [I] found something of a strong alteration in my soul under the word such as I never found before for I could not refrain from tears most of the time of his preaching. The word came with power and I began to see the necessity of a Saviour.

I went on mourning for some time. But I found great comfort often under your word at Islington Church, but I had not found that pearl of great price. Not long after going to Islington to church and after sacrament, some of us went down to the house for to spend some time together in prayer and singing. And while one of our brethren was at prayer, then it was that the Lord revealed himself unto me. I found redemption in the blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of my sins. I flowed in tears and at the same time

was transported into joy. I went on rejoicing for some time till the enemy came and tempted [me] to think I did deceive myself. But after I had acknowledged what the Lord had done for me I durst not doubt it for whenever the temptation came, I always found something greater than my own evil heart. There was a secret hope and a sure trust and confidence in God that for Christ sake my sins were forgiven.

But how soon did I forget the lovingkindness of the Lord by proving unfaithful to grace given, for I went into the country to see some friends, not to do the Lord's will but my own, for I did not confess the Lord before them

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nor did I declare what the Lord had done for my soul and hereby grieved the Holy Spirit and caused the Lord to withdraw himself from me, and the Lord grant it may be laid to my charge. I went on in darkness and heaviness for some time till by repentance the Lord was pleased to return to me again.

About this time I was put upon the trial band; and, in the time appointed, I was admitted into the bands. I was put into our Brother Edmund's band. We went on very well for some time together but it was not long before Mr. Molther came over and he used to attend our band almost every time we met. I remember for the first time he came amongst us, there was nothing done but he telling us his own experience. Another time we met, because Mr. Molther did not come, we could do nothing among ourselves as to what we came upon but fell into lightness and vain talking and so we parted. I thought these things should not be so, but I found it very agreeable to nature to come away as we went, for the enemy laboured hard to keep me away from my band and so often I yielded to the temptation.

My wife was then in band and coming home from Fetter Lane on Sunday night she told me that Mr. Molther or some of them had given out that the sacrament was only for such as was in such a state as she described to me. I was surprised at this for I knew myself not to be in that states, which gave me great uneasiness for I never had heard him express himself in such a manner. But I did intend, please God I did live till Monday night when our band did meet, to ask him the question whether or not such a one as me should go to the sacrament. He told me it was only for them that had attained to the liberty of the Gospel. I remember very well there w[ere] two or three in band that readily received his saying and said they could as well stay away as go, it was equally the same to them. These sayings gave me great uneasiness in soul, for I fell into great doubts and reasoning concerning it, for I looked unto man more than unto God. I was halting between two opinions, for sometimes I found a desire to go to the sacrament, but oftener I stayed away. I found no peace in going nor none in staying away but I was like the troubled sea. At last I did not go at all and the reason I gave was when any one asked me [was] that I could not go without trusting in the means.

Now the devil had got his desire of me, now I did fall into sin. My Saviour was hid from me, I was as a sheep having no shepherd. I had no peace to my soul by reason of my sins for I had lost all the ordinances of God. This was a snare the enemy had laid for me, for I never approved of their ways but I was staggering between [the] two. And so I went on for some time till the Lord was pleased to bring me back again in a manner he knows best for me, for I believe all things did work together, for my good. For now the Lord began to show me the corruptions and evil abominations that was in my heart. Now I had such a sight of my heart that the spirit which he had made was ready to fail before him, for I could not go along the street but my desires would be almost to everything I saw. Evil thoughts would arise, unclean desires would proceed, I could not pray nor my desires w[ere] but cold by reason of unbelief. Now the devil tempted me [to] reason with self from whence the deity first proceeded which was the greatest trial

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I ever met with.

But he who has promised that we shall not be tempted above what we are able to bear, he did support me under this trial and to this day when I meditate upon the goodness of the Lord and what he has done for me, then the enemy assaults me with this temptation. But [God] be praised, he cannot approach to hurt me, for he only drives me the nearer to my Saviour. I told my mind to my old friend our Brother Cooper and he advised me to keep close to the ordinances which by the grace of God I did thoroughly. I found my Lord again for I know he is to be found in the ordinances for I have had many sweet and precious promises brought to me in the sacrament. But I find such a depth of unbelief in my heart, that I cannot lay hold of them. But this I can lay hold of and am sure that he that has begun a good work in my soul, he will also carry it on unto the end. But I have been unfaithful to the grace given, I have grieved the Holy Spirit of my Lord by a thousand falls and have caused the Lord to withdraw his Spirit from me and so I have fallen into darkness. But by repentance and looking him in his own appointed ways, the Lord has restored to me again. I find the Spirit of the Lord present with me at all times for there is nothing I say or do that is not to his glory but immediately I am convinced of it. Oh that I might never sin against him more, but that I may continually wait upon the Lord till he has fulfilled all his promises in my soul. And this is my hope, that if [I] confess my sins he his faithful and just to forgive me my sins and to cleanse me from all unrighteousness.

Now the Lord bless, preserve and keep you and Mr. John and grant that you may be fathers of many generations. And that it may be your crown of rejoicing that when you give up your account you may give them up with joy and not with sorrow.

W[illia]m Barber

Reference EMV: 16

Date: [1741]

Addressees: Thomas Cooper/Cowper to Charles Wesley

Note: Little known, born in Staffordshire and moved to London after his apprenticeship with a religious family. He fell into sin and was deeply troubled. Attempts to stop sinning futile until a friend joined with him. Together they attended worship at St. Lawrence's Church. Went to the Aldersgate Society in August of 1738 and joined the Fetter Lane Society that same year. He was a leader and a catalyst for the conversion of William Barber (above) This account is significant for several reasons: it contains references to three different London societies, all frequented by the Wesleys; it also records in detail his conversion taking holy communion and the method of questioning by German quietists; contains much jargon; spiritual advice from JW for dealing with temptation and he "showed me my state better than I could express in myself"

Annotation: CW's note, "T. Cowper's Exp[er]ienc[e] 1741."

Reverend sir, according to your desire and by God's help I will let you know how the Lord hath wrought his work in my soul.

The first of his drawings was when I was about 12 years of age, when I first went to [ap]prentice. My master and Mrs. kept me to church and reading the Holy Scriptures on the Sabbath days, and I heard sermons that used to take great effect on me and went to prayers often alone and wept much; especially when I read of the sufferings of our Saviour and thought the people were very hard hearted. I did not think I had done the deed and then I felt the love of God in my heart but could not tell what it was.

I went on in this way till within two of the last years I had to serve of my [ap]prenticeship. The boys and young people of that place used to make game on me because I would not game and keep company and do as they did. Now the Tempter came to me, but I knew him not, and told me if I would do as other people did, they would like me very well and not to make myself so particular from the rest of the world. I took the devil's advice and went into company and did as they did and then my company was accepted. And in three years after I came to London I [had] a good deal of acquaintances and spent a deal of time in whoring, drinking, and dancing, plays and such vice as youth is prone to. But often when I have been gratifying my fleshly desires, my conscience used to accuse me. Then I would make resolutions never to do so no more, but when I came into company again my good resolution were all broken. Then I would be ready to tear myself to pieces.

Then to avoid my companions, I went to Staffordshire to settle there and it was all the same there. Then I came to town again but resolved not to keep much company but live a sober life. I came but I fell into sin worse than before. One night I was sitting in a public house with one of my acquaintance, he began to tell me how his conscience troubled him and this way of life would not do for he intended to leave his companions that drove him into wickedness and go to church all opportunities. I agreed to this and so we went on for some time. Then we heard there was a sermon at St. Lawrence's church every Sunday morning at six o'clock. We went there and when I used to go I was so ashamed of myself, to think how I had spent my time in sitting up all Saturday nights and laying in bed all Sunday morning which force me to weep often.

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Now by the providence of the Almighty my friend heard of a religious society in Aldersgate Street, I think in the month of August 1738. We went there and one night the Lord brought you and Mr. James

Hutton. You began to speak on justification by faith alone and told them, they must feel their sins forgiven in this life or they never would in the life to come. I remember they used you ill and some were for putting you out of the room, but at last they suffered you to read a Homily upon "faith." I thought it comfortable doctrine but strange doctrine to me for I never heard such before. The Lord did not suffer me to speak against it but he led me to see they were not right by their behaviour towards you. So I went home to prayer and prayed to God, if it must be so that our sins must be forgiven in this life, I prayed I might experience and feel mine forgiven. But I was almost afraid to ask him for I thought I should speak blasphemy if I should say my sins were forgiven me. I went to search the Scriptures. I saw the words you spoke were in the book of God and something told me I must believe the the Scriptures for they were the words of Jesus (and he was God and could not lie) and of his apostles; and, if I would be saved I must believe them. But something whispered as it were in me and told me the Scriptures were not true. This frightened me and I began to reason with myself whether they were or not. So I prayed to God to direct me and give me faith to believe them if it was his word. Something again told me it was his word and I must believe it. For some time I was struggling between these two spirits, not knowing it was the Spirit of God and the devil striving in me. But at last the Lord gave me to believe it was his word and I saw by it I had not that faith which would save me. And what to do for it, I knew not, but I kept to church and went on in using prayer [at] all opportunities. Then I heard of the Saviour Society, there I heard Mr. John Wesley. Such a minister I never heard before, for by the grace of God he spoke to me as never man spake. I found myself condemned under his word. I found by sins I had committed I deserved to be damned. I thought I was the person he made his discourse upon for he told me all that every I did. I had a desire to speak to him but was so ashamed of myself I did not, and then I went mourning all the day long, and could find no rest in my soul by reason of sin.

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Now the Lord put in my mind to go to the Lord's Table but I was afraid I was not fit. And how to prepare myself, I knew not. But I got a book on the weekly preparation for that purpose and used that and searched the Scriptures and saw there if we forgive our enemies, God for Christ sake would forgive us. I prayed that he would give me a hearty and sincere repentance and bring all my sins to me more and more. I found he did in a little time, for when I have been at prayers my sins came fresh in my mind that I had committed some years before and never thought them sinful but now by the commandment I saw sin to be exceedingly sinful. I desired him to give a heart to forgive all my enemies. I found he did in a little time, so I went to the blessed sacrament and pleaded his own promise, but I took the bread and wine with a trembling hand and found myself much afraid. And now I believe I was called to that holy ordinance by God himself, for I have seen it in others. I do not press upon any to go till they have a desire and are convinced in their own hearts they should use that ordinance.

The day after I had been there I found stronger convictions than before, then the devil came and suggested mixed and blasphemous thoughts in me as I sat at my work, which made me often burst into tears; it was to curse God and our Lord Jesus. But I could not tell for what and the more I strove against those thoughts, the stronger they were pressed on me to do it. I wept and prayed and cried to the Lord that he would take them from me for if I should do this I thought I should be damned to be sure.

Then I found I could answer with St. Paul, for I found a warning in my soul against the mind that I had in me, for with my mind I would serve the Lord. But I found when I would do good, evil was present with me. The devil at last so suggested in me to curse God that he made me believe I had in my heart done it. This indeed drove me to Christ as a sinner for now I had nothing to plead before God.

I went to our Saviour and told him what I had done and if he could have mercy on such a sinner as I was, I desired he would. It came often to me like a small still voice, "Christ died for sinners." This used

to give me some hopes still; and called them that were heavy laden with their sins and these precious promises gave me great comfort sometimes.

Now the devil tempted me to go and hang myself for I was such a sinner I could not be saved. But the grace of God was with me and the Lord did not suffer me but took the temptation from me. But I went on in deep mourning, praying and crying to the Lord. I used to go often by myself into the field and get under hedges or anywhere to be in private that no one would see me

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for now nothing would satisfy me but this faith that I had not or remission of my sins.

And now I felt another temptation which beset me. The devil told me I did not call upon the right God, I was in a delusion. And as I was walking one day in the fields alone I prayed [that] if I called upon the God that made heaven and earth, the beast of the fields and all things that I then saw with my bodily eyes, he would show me by some token, for I desired to serve the living and true God. It came to me I was right. So, I resisted the devil and he fled from me. So in that hour I was delivered from that temptation and found great joy such as I never felt before and often felt it under the word when I was at the society. I asked of God what this meant. It came to me it was the drawing of the Father. Now I began to tell my brothers and sisters and my old acquaintance what comfort I felt now [compared] to what I felt when I lived in the pleasures of the world. Some told me I should drive myself mad and go to bed, some others told me I need not take so much pains for I was good enough, but I had often these words: "come to me, you cannot serve God and mammon" and "if you love this world, you are an enemy to God." This came to me with great power to press me forwards and not to give heed to my acquaintance for if I thought of turning back I saw nothing but hell and destruction for me.

So I took up my cross and followed my Master. But still I wanted to know my sins forgiven and now I was determined not to let Jesus go till he had spoken peace to my soul. For I believe he had power on earth to forgive sins and he never turned any away in the days of his flesh and I had a hope he would not turn me away for I was a sinner.

One Saturday night I went into my room and began to examine myself by the commandments and found there I had broken them all in the spiritual sense and felt I deserved to be damned. Now I had nothing to trust to but the blood of Jesus and asked God to forgive me for his sake alone and give me his grace [so] I would never offend him more. And, meditating in my heart on my duty towards God and whilst I was thinking on those words, I had something come to my heart like a dart, in one moment, and I was melted into tears, and tears of love indeed, for I found that I loved God more than those words could express. And faith was given in that moment that I should receive remission of my sins at the blessed sacrament on the morrow. I prayed and read the Holy Scriptures till one o' clock and still I believed I should receive pardon for my sins.

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I prayed to God to wake me in the morning, I was waked about three o' clock, I believe by the Spirit of God and so soon as I waked I believed still I should receive forgiveness of sins at the sacrament. I got up and went to prayers till five, then I called my old friend up that used to go to church with me. We used a short prayer together and so went to St. Lawrence Church and whilst I was there I hungered for the blessed sacrament for I believed from my heart I should be forgiven still. And when I received the cup from Mr. Sparkes, I received it as from my Saviour and saw by faith my sins blotted out and it was unto

me according to my faith. I rose from the table and found all guilt of sin taken away from me. I found peace with God and some joy. And this was the first of October 1738 in the beginning of the 28 year of my age - - -

But on Monday and Tuesday after, I found a hungering in my soul for something else but I could not tell what. On Tuesday night I went to a society in Bair Yard near Claremarket. Mr. John Wesley was there and expounded and after he had done we went to prayers and whilst I was at prayers I thought I should desolve away in tears. I thought I felt my heart open within me and like a fountain of water run from it and in that moment I felt such love, peace and joy past all expression. We sang a hymn [and] I thought I was out of the body with the angels in heaven for I was so full of joy I could not express myself. I went down stairs. Brother Jones, my old friend and companion stayed for me. He asked me how I was. I told him and all that were about me how I knew my sins were forgiven me for I had received the witness of it from God.

He went homewards with me, but the joy came more and more upon me, so we went back and took a walk round Lincoln's Inn Square. I felt the joys came more and more upon me so that I could not contain myself without leaning on him and wanted words to praise God for what he had done for my soul. These words came to me, "Oh praise the Lord O my soul and all that is within me, praise his holy name!" And whilst I was praising God, I found he was [near] to my soul, for I was like a vessel filled with new wine. And then it came to me, "the wind bloweth where it listeth but you cannot tell from whence it came, nor where it goeth." So I could witness for I saw nothing but I felt the power of the Holy Ghost in my soul.

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Then I returned home and told Sister Potes what the Lord had done for my soul and desired her to seek the Lord and not to be so careful after the things of this world. She then thought I was mad indeed for I broke out into praising of God before her and could not contain myself. Brother Jones and I went to prayers and to give God thanks for what he had done for my soul and so parted. I went to bed that night and dreamed I was with the angels in heaven. And so these joys lasted with me for three weeks and in these three weeks by times I could say with St. Paul, "whether in the body or out I could not tell." And when I have been walking in the morning I have heard such words of prayer and praise come out of my mouth before I was awakened to remember what they were, but when I came to be wide awake, they were as far taken from me as if I never had heard them and I believe to this day they were words not for mortal man to express. And these joys came on me by times that if I was in company with anybody I could not help breaking out into praises for I found it gave me ease.

And now I found love to all the world and could not help declaring to all I met with what the Lord had done for my soul that they might feel the same. Some told me I was mad, others told me the devil was in me, but I did not mind that for I spoke so much the more. Now I thought these joys would last always, and thought of nothing but dying and going to him whom my soul loved. I left all my wordly business for six weeks and was afraid of going into the world for it grieved my soul to hear the name of God blasphemed.

But in about three weeks these joys and this burning love which I had was taken from me and all comfort. Now the enemy was permitted to tempt me so I went mourning and was afraid I had offended God or he would not [have] taken my Comforter from me. Now the devil told me I had offended God for telling what the Lord had done for my soul, I should [have] kept it to myself and told nobody. So one day I went to Mr. John Wesley and told him I was afraid I had offended the Lord. He told me it was a temptation of the devil, I might keep the secrets of an earthly king but not of the heavenly for I did right

to declare it on the house top; so the Lord let me see I had not offended him. Mr. Wesley bid me look to Christ when I was tempted. So when the tempter came again I looked up to Christ and I found while I looked

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up I was always delivered, for before I could tell God what I wanted I was answered, and whilst I kept in that childlike simplicity I walked with God.

I conversed with my Lord as free as one friend would with another and asked him to direct me in all things and went on declaring what he had done for my soul, the Lord being my strength. And I found the Lord put words in my mouth to speak and none could resist that power which I felt. Sometimes I have been in company with many of the polite people of this world and they have begun to rail against you and your doctrine. I would let them go on a while and that time I would spend in prayer to God to help me and stand as a fool before them. Then the Lord put words in my mouth to speak to them that in a few minutes they have been so confounded they could not mock me nor answer. And this power I had from above and to God be all the glory, for I never had much learning and that you may see by my scrawl here to you now.

The Lord never left me long without the light of his countenance but when he was withdrawn from me I used to mourn and weep and be very uneasy. He was so loving to me he would return again and anytime when the tempter came and told me I was deceiving myself or that I was in a delusion, I used to look back to the time I received the witness of the Spirit. It would take off all doubts and so I believe I can say I trusted to my gifts for a year and a quarter. [until Feb 1740]

But in this time I was pressed in spirit to go into Staffordshire to see my friends and declare to them what the Lord had done for my soul. There I found the words of our Lord fulfilled for I found my greatest foes were those of my own relations. But the Lord blessed the word to some that I kept a correspondence with.

Now I stayed there about three months. I came to town again and this while the German brethren came over and the first private band night that we met came Mr. Hut[t]on and another. They told me I had not faith, but I withstood them and told them I had and the witness of the Spirit. They asked me if I could not go to bed without prayer and leave off prayer for a fortnight. This struck me in a surprise. They told me if I could not, I trusted in my own works. We parted that night but Brother Price staid with me and there the Lord showed me their advice was of the devil for I found it was pleasing

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to flesh and blood for I had found often it was contrary to my nature to pray at all. So at that time I was delivered. But I found [so] many of my acquaintance[s] turned out of the way that I left in a good way when I went out of town. They were told they had not faith, they must not go to the sacrament. So, they left off prayer and going to the sacrament till they fell into sin and were almost as bad as if they were never awakened.

Several came to me and asked me what they must do. Now there was so much talk that none should go to the Lord's table but those that had faith had put me into reasoning about it and I could not tell them what to do. But I dared not say they should not for it often came to me, did not I receive faith at the sacrament. And it happened at that time that you and Mr. John were out of town and I had nobody to declare my mind to. But one day I set a point for fasting and prayer and prayed to the Lord to show me his will in



these things and the Lord showed me that I must keep in all his ordinances and exhort all to go there. And blessed be the Lord, he sent Mr. John to town and he confirmed all that the Lord had showed me. So from that time the Lord hath kept me in his ordinances and I hope will do to the end. And this was about a year and three quarters ago [Mar. 1739?], but the Lord convinced me by hearing Mr. Molt[h]er one Sunday morning. His discourse was upon third [chapter] of the Philippians, "to forget those things that were behind and press forward" for till now I built on my gifts and graces and till now [I] thought I was a new creature. I thought I had a new heart. But now the Lord would [have] taken the nail from my heart but I would not suffer him and I had told many I had a new heart. But when I brought my experience to the word of God it would not stand the trial. Therefore, I found myself come short of it, I found pride and worldly mindedness, lust and many other evils in my heart. But still my pride was so great, I would not confess to God nor man but went to reasoning within myself how it was with me. I found I had faith and felt the abiding witness of God's Holy Spirit with mine and found by the word of God it would stand.

But about this time, I heard one of my brethren had been overtaken by the lust of the flesh. I was surprised to hear this of one that had faith for the Lord had kept me from it ever since I believed. But now I believe I was puffed up and thought myself beaten. But within a fortnight after, I fell into the same sin and the Lord let me see I was no better than him.

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Now I fell into reasoning with myself and into darkness, such darkness as may be felt for I felt a veil over my heart for near a fortnight and was in such a way I never was before. I was almost ready to give up all that ever I have received and ready to give up all hopes of myself. But in this time I could not commit sin for the Lord kept me. Then the Lord took away the veil from my heart and showed me inward corruptions. And now he humbled me and brought me to confess my sins before him as at the beginning and told my friends I was deceived when I told them I was a new creature. And now blessed be God for sending his ministers to comfort his people and opening the Scriptures to them to see further than at the beginning, for now came Mr. John from Bristol and he showed me my state better than I could express it myself. And from that time the Lord showed me deeper and deeper into my heart. And after the Lord hath shown me my heart, then he let me feel his love and so I go on from one step to another, for sometimes I feel myself such a sinful creature. I wonder I am not in hell for I feel as I think ten thousand hells my desert. Nay, I cannot help telling God so. And if he will thrust me there, I can look up to heaven with my eyes, my heart and hands, and tell him his will be done.

After I have had such a sight of myself I feel such a depth of the love of God it makes me cry out, "Oh the depth of the love of God. It is past finding out." For sometimes I think I can feel no more for I think I am ready to be consumed in his love and must leave this flesh behind me and go to the region above. But still the Lord enlarges my heart. Sometimes I begin to think I have a new heart but the Lord is pleased to show me to the contrary that I have [it] not yet. But I have a hope in me that he will perfect his work in my soul before he takes me hence and give me a clean heart. Sometimes I think I will wrestle with God and will not let him go till I enjoy that rest that is for the people of God, then comes unbelief and reasonings so I stare at the promises and draw back and cannot enter in because of unbelief.

I have found of late lust and uncleanness

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come upon me as a flood and such filthy dreams as I am ashamed to mention. I thought about a month ago I had that unclean spirit which our Lord spoke of and I believe I had, for I felt nothing but uncleanness. But one night, after we had been in band, I found faith to behold. I went to prayer and was

determined not to rise from my knees till he forgave me my sin and gave me power over the unclean spirit. And glory be to his name, for he heard my prayers, and ever since I have found a sweet calm in my soul. And at this time I find myself very happy in hopes of our Lord to come and make his abode in my soul and that he will strengthen, establish and settle me in him, the sure rock of ages. And this I have [written] to show you the particulars and what I know to be true.

From your unworthy son and servant, Thomas Cooper

[P.S.] Dear sir, I take you and your brother, Mr. John Wesley, to be my only ministers and shepherds over my soul under Christ. And if you see anything that I do or say which is not agreeable to the gospel of Christ I desire you will let me know by letter or by your own mouth. That I may not bring any scandal on the gospel, which God grant I never may, but be faithful unto death and that I may be the crown of your rejoicing in the last day when you faithful shepherds shall give up your accounts. And that is my prayers for the churches you are shepherds over, and that it may be with joy and not with grief. Dear sir, pray for me that my faith fail not.

Reference EMV: 15

Date: [1741]

Addressees: Nathaniel Hurst to Charles Wesley

Note: . Internal evidence indicated a London worker who first heard GW in the Moorfields c1738. He is awakened and convinced of the sin within; decided to prepare for sacrament and received at St. Lawrence's Church. From this time "I have had power over outward sins". Christmas week, 1739 he heard JW preach on "Lazarus come forth" at Fetter Lane Society and experienced evangelical conversion. Three separate times "the Lord began to show me my heart" followed by spiritual turmoil and then some event where the Lord delivered him (one in 1740 through JW's preaching, once at work, and the final time unclear; now "I find the Lord carries on his work in my soul." No external information found.

Rev[eren]d sir:

According to your desire I shall give an [account of] how the Lord has dealt with my soul. But since you asked us, I have been at a stand about writing to you and have been troubled a little for sometimes it comes to me I have nothing to say, but what I have is as followeth:

When first the Lord sent Mr. Whit[e]field out into the fields I went to hear him in Moorfields. I liked what he said very well. I said I would go again. Accordingly, I went on the next Sunday and ever since I have followed the Lord in his appointed ways. I had a form of godliness for some time but knew but little of the power. I w[as] not willing for to part with my sins; but when the Lord began to show me the evil of them, I could not live thus then. The Lord showed me the want of a Saviour, then he gave me to hunger and thirst more and more after him. I had a desire to receive the Lord['s] Supper but did not dare to come to it without preparing myself. Then accordingly I went one Sunday morning to St. Lawrence's Church and the Lord blessed me therein and from that time I have had power over outward sins.

[Note: Conversion Christmas week 1739]

Then the Lord was pleased to let me hear Mr. John Wesley one night at Fetter Lane. He expounded on the eleventh chapter of John o[n] "Lazarus come forth." I found myself that Lazarus whom he spoke of, I was all of atremble for my bones shook as if they would part from my flesh. But before Mr. Wesley had done his discourse the Lord spoke peace to my soul, he let me know my sins were blotted out by his blood. This was in the Christmas week, this Christmas two years.

After this I went on very smooth for a while, then the devil set his adversaries to work, for the master that I lived with was a carnal wordly man. He was of great hindrance in my progress but I know the Lord always sees what is best for his children. He suffered it for a trial of my faith. Then the devil took place for my master one night forced me to stay at home which caused us to have words, then anger broke out of me, then the enemy buffeted me and says to me, "How can you call yourself a child of God?" But it was not long before the Lord appeared in my behalf and showed me that I was again reconciled unto God. Then I could again rejoice in God my Saviour. But the devil would say to me sometimes, "Do not you deceive yourself" and sometimes I used to give away to him a little. But there was a hope left in me that I could not give up my confidence quite, but Jesus did keep me by his power.

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Then the Lord began to show me my heart and that there was a hell within me; for sometimes as I was standing I used to think that the ground whereon I stood was hot under me which made me almost to tremble and to think if the ground should open and swallow me up I should perish for ever. But the Lord

hath spared me yet longer that I might live unto him to praise him. Oh may I give unto him all the glory for his lovingkindness unto me in calling me out of darkness into his marvellous light. And this I can say, that Jesus has been gracious and loving unto me. He has dealt tenderly with me for he has fed me with love continuously which makes me to cry out, "Oh the goodness of God to such a poor worm as I am."

More than a year ago on a Sunday morning as I was a hearing of Mr. John Wesley, the enemy says to me, "Do not you deceive yourself?" which put me to a stand. But I presently knew from whence it came and from that time I have not had one doubt since of my being a child of God.

Then the devil departed for a season from me. My soul was full of peace and love. The Lord gave me many promises in Scripture and I used to feed on them much. Thus I continued for many months. I thought I never should see war anymore. Then the enemy came in as a roaring lion ready to devour me up, then the Lord began to show me what was in my heart and I began to find anger and pride and self-will and above all lust which wounded my soul sorely. But I did not find any desire to gratify it no manner of way.

After this I walked in darkness for a little while and so long as I was thus I went mourning, longing to be set at liberty. My soul was humble before the Lord, groaning under my burden. Then at length the light of God shone on me once more and my soul was filled with love. Then I could lift up my heart again to the Lord. And one day, as I was at my work, my soul was [so] overpowered with the love of God that I knew not whether I was in the body or out of the body. I took an opportunity of going to prayer. My heart was much enlarged and thus I continued all that day and sometime after my soul was calm and full of peace. Nothing seem to disturb me or to draw my mind from the Lord. I thought, "I desire to know nothing but Jesus and him crucified," thus I continued for some time.

Then the Lord gave me these words, "the darkness is no darkness

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with thee but the night is as clear as the day. The darkness and light to thee are both alike." This made me humble before the Lord. I thought the Lord had fulfilled his promise in my soul and had brought me into that rest that remained for the people of God. I did not dare to say that I was entered into that rest till I had found the fruits of grace in me. I was so for about six weeks, then after this I found my old nature began to stir again and I knew then that the root of bitterness w[as] not destroyed. After this I found pride and anger and lust more than before. After this, I saw myself more clearly than ever I did before, which made me some times to cry out, "Oh the goodness of God to such a poor creature as I am," which made me ashamed before the great majesty of God. Then after this I came into darkness by reason of my perverse will which lasted with me for about a week. I could not see the light of God or one Scripture promise for me. Then the Lord withdrew those dark clouds and I could see him as before which made me to cry, "My Lord and my God." And since that I have not been in much darkness but still I find the Lord carries his work on in my soul for this I can say; I find a hunger and thirsting after the Lord and am groaning under my corruptions, longing to be delivered; though not so much at sometimes as I ought to be, for I think at sometimes I grow cold and careless, which often makes me to wonder how God bears with me so long as he doth. It comes to me sometimes, Oh that my eyes were fountains of tears that I could weep day and night for offending such a Saviour as Jesus is. Oh may I never rest as I am, but grant that I may still cry unto God and never rest till I rest in the wounds of Jesus Christ."

And so to conclude, from you unworthy brother and servant in the Lord Jesus,

Nathaniel Hurst

Reference EMV: 107

Date: January 1742

Addressees: Elizabeth Mann to Charles Wesley

Note: Her identity is unsure. Miss Elizabeth Mann (d. 1751c) of London later married John Jones (1721-85) a traveling preacher and wrote two letters to JW in 1747 and 1749. JW buried Elisabeth Mann of Bristol 26 Oct. 1752. Evidence at present is inconclusive.

Annotation: A note in CW's hand reads: "Eliza Mann--full of love, Jan. 1742.'

Dear sir,

I had a great desire to write to you that you might remember me when you go in and out before the Lord. I earnestly desire your prayers and the prayers of those that are with you. If we pray for one another I am sure we shall love one another and the absent in body we shall be present in spirit.

O how sweet it is to hang upon Christ continually, to depend on him alone for strength and deliverance. O trust you in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength--strength to deliver from the power of Satan and from our inbred enemies. The Lord has undertaken our case, he shall fight for us, he shall destroy all our enemies and cause their memory to perish. Who is so great a god as our God. O praise you the Lord for he is good, and his mercy endureth for ever. Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? Who can show forth all his praise? O Lord, do thou give me a heart to praise thy name and to tell of all thy wonderous works. Fill me with thy love and out of the abundance of my heart let my mouth speak. I cannot express the love of Christ to my soul, he gives me sweet peace through his blood and at the same time that my soul is humbled in the dust by a sense of my own vileness, his love comforts my soul and banishes all fear from me.

I sometimes find myself beset with many evil thoughts, but I know my God will come with a recompense and destroy all my enemies and make me pure of heart and I shall see God and live. I groan to be delivered from this bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. God has given me a taste of that liberty and I doubt not but he will give me wholly to experience it all. My soul seemed lost in God. I do not remember that I felt one evil motion but all was love and praise and every breath was prayer. I know if God could keep me so for hours he can for years. I cannot doubt of this great salvation since it is so clearly spoken in the Old and New Testament. The light shineth and if men did not love darkness rather than light, they must perceive it, but blessed be that God who has shown us the light and bid us walk in it. May we never provoke him to withdraw it, may we walk in the light as God is in the light and feel the blood of Jesus Christ cleansing us from all sins.

I feel sometimes such an awful sense of the majesty of God that my flesh trembleth and I dare not look up.

"I loathe myself when God I see  
and into nothing fall content,  
If thou exalted be  
and Christ be all in all."

Oh that I lived no longer but Christ lived in me, this is my one desire and may I never rest till it is accomplished. God often calls me to prayer. He bids me ask and I shall receive. In confidence of this promise I ask, though I find the enemies would fain put me off and my own evil heart would find many excuses. But this makes me but the more earnest since I find all that is evil in me is against it and I find it is exceeding good for my soul to pray.

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It is in prayer God has communicated most of his blessings to me. It is in prayer mostly that [I] am convinced of any evil. It was in private prayer I was first sprinkled with the blood of the covenant. And after I had long groaned under the bondage of corruption and walked on in thick darkness; when I felt my inward parts were very wickedness and every thought of my heart only evil continually and found every moment ready to sink into hell; God again manifested his love to me in prayer. Nor have I less need of it now, for I know I am not safe while I am on this side of Jordan but may still return to the flesh pots of Egypt. But the grace of God is sufficient for me. God will not let me rest or depend on what I have received. When I think I have grace for the next hour it seems entirely withdrawn and by this I am learn[ing] to depend on Christ alone. And I never seemed so helpless in my life as I do now. I feel I can do nothing without Christ, but through him I shall soon do all things. I do not always find a great deal of joy but much sweetness in my soul and often a deep but loving mourning in my heart that melts me into tears and humbles my soul exceedingly. I find such strong hungerings and thirsting after perfect righteousness, and longing after God, that my soul seems as though it would burst the bands of flesh and fly to him it so loveth.

I love him because he first loved me and still his banner over me is love. Oh who can tell the love of Jesus? O draw me Saviour and I will run after thee. Thy love is more precious than thousands of gold and silver [pieces]. I long to love thee with all my heart. Kindle this flame in me and let it never be quenched. Seal me by thy Spirit unto the the day of redemption and fill me with all the fullness of God. Amen.

May the God of peace be with you, amen. I should be glad, sir, if when you had opportunity, you would favour me with a few lines. By this I should now that you loved in the bowels of Christ Jesus  
Your unworthy sister,

Eliza[beth] Mann

Reference EMV: 51

Date: 18 March 1742

Addressees: Susanna Designe to Charles Wesley

Note: Mrs. Designe was born about 1712 near the Isle of Ely of French parents. After marriage and the destruction of their home by flood she moved to Bristol with her husband and began to teach private students. This manuscript spiritual autobiography is a full sheet folded in half.

March the 18th 1741/2  
Bristol

Dear and Rev[eren]d sir,

According to the power the Lord shall give me I will relate his gracious dealings with me since I saw you. Unworthy as I am he daily poureth blessings upon me. Great shame and confusion of face doth often cover me at the sight of my own vileness. I see it without fear and grieve without pain. I almost hourly feel the power of God and a deep sense of my Saviour's love.

But yet my heart wanders from him. I want to serve him with a holy worship and in every thought obey him. I can say, "Lord thou knowest all things, thou knowest I desire to love thee." I find my hatred to sin increase and the least stirrings thereof is grievous to me. But the grace of God is sufficient for me, I hunger and thirst after Jesus and although I often feed on the manna of his divine love, my soul is not satisfied therewith, for I am not risen up after his likeness. I want to drink out of that fountain till I am filled with all the fullness of God. I find an unspeakable peace yet a restless striving attended with a pleasing pain. My heart flows with love and pants and reaches after God but I am not fully happy in him, but I doubt not but I shall [be].

O my blessed Jesus make me holy, then shall I be happy in thee. Fulfill these longing desires of my soul and let me know the depths of thy sanctifying love. O Lord, my time, my life, my all is in thy hand. Do with me what thou wilt, only take my heart unto [thy]self and let all I am be lost in thee.

I truly experience I want the blood of Christ every moment applied to my unrenewed soul. I feel I hang upon him for I am weak and helpless. Oh who is strong but those that are renewed in the image of God. Yet it is strength to see my weakness for then I trust in Christ alone.

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Much private prayer is profitable for my soul. At some times it brings my soul so near to God till I can pour tears of love and contrition into my Saviour's bosom. Then I am tempted to think, "now I am sincere, now I am in earnest." These thoughts are dreadful to me for some moments till I throw myself upon my dear Jesus and am helped. Oh what can stand before that name called upon in faith and what shall become of all my corruptions when the Lord shall come with power to take vengeance on his enemies that would not have him to reign over them. Surely the time is coming when I shall see them again no more forever. Oh that I may not rest on this side of Jordan or ever think I am anything but a poor hopeless sinner waiting at the feet of Jesus till his cleansing blood hath washed my soul from all sin. I have a hope full of immortality. I seem as sure as if I had already received it. I listen for the sound of his feet and hear a voice saying, "surely I come quickly." Even so Lord Jesus, come when thou wilt, but O my Jesus come.

I have lately received another letter from my dear sister, Sarah Perrin. It is a great quickening to me. She grows in grace daily. I find my love increase to her and I am drawn to prayer for her. We are greatly

united in spirit and seem as one soul. I have great hope the Lord will show her what is his will in all things, that she may be more closely joined to us and become a burning and shining light. She is not apprehensive of my writing to you but I can answer in her stead, her love flows freely towards you and her prayers are not slackened for you. The more desirous we are to love God, the more we love and pray for his ministers. I find a greater hunger after the word that ever I did and an increase of love to you and your dear brother and all the children of God. Oh that earthly affection may find no place in me but that as I draw nearer and nearer the fountain I may drink deeper of the stream, even of that Spirit the Lord has given you a double portion of. May he increase in a hundred fold.

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The rest of our friends in Stokes Croft pay their best respects to you. Mrs. Vigor bears her trial with great patience, it is the Lord's doing, I hope the work of God goeth on in her soul. I believe the Lord took him. Her heart was set upon to make room for himself and he will be more to her than ten sons. Oh the abundant love of God to take one into the storehouse of the dead to drive the rest to Christ and make them eager to hasten after. When this soul was received into the outward church by holy baptism, it was unknown to me before I came. The power of the Lord met me the moment I entered into the place and that scripture came to me, "cast thy bread upon the water and after many days thou shalt find it," and looking up to the Lord say, "what thanks shall I render unto [thee], O God, for all thy mercies." And while I was yet speaking the Lord showed me how to thank him by asking for all the rest. Oh what a gracious God have we to served. [He] desires no other return for all his numberless mercies but to ask for more. Which way shall I continue faithful but to look every moment for further supplies of grace to improve that already given.

Dear sir, I shall be glad to see [you] when it is our Lord's will to send you unto us in the fullness of the gospel of peace. I find greater ties both of love and duty to your brother and you than my natural parents after the flesh. Oh that I may always be obedient as unto the Lord, esteeming you very highly for your work's sake, giving all the glory to God, praying for you with all supplication.

Your unworthy sister,

Susannah Designe

Remind me in your prayers

[in margin of front page of MS letter]

Sister Robertson, Davis and Lucretia Smith give their duty to you; likewise Betty at the New Room. S[ister] P[er]r[i]n writes she thinks to be at Bristol the latter end of next month.



Reference EMV: 53

Date: 13 April 1742

Addressees: Elizabeth Downs to Charles Wesley

Annotation: CW's note, "Eliz. Downs's Exp[er]ience, April 1742, Justified in the Sacram[en]t of the Dissenters."

Note: A Bristol women who found spiritual conviction through John Wesley in 1739, experienced conversion after the sacrament in a Dissenting Church and was sanctified during the prayer time at a band meeting. No other external information available.

April 13th 1742

Sir,

When your brother came to Bristol first, I had not experienced anything of the work of God in my soul, though I was a constant hearer of the word and as duty communicated. As for Mr. Whitefield, I never heard him above twice, and that was when he was going to Georgia. The first of my hearing your brother was in the Bowling Green upon "the pharisee and publican." From the expounding upon the different states, I perceived my case was dangerous and began to be very thoughtful and restless; yet, I did never think myself safe before, but feared I should be lost. I had still somewhat within me [which] told me I was not right. I strove to help myself by my works. That afforded me no peace. I knew if I died as I was, I should be damned, but had a hope God would forgive me when I came to die. Yet, [I was] perfectly ignorant of any inward feeling in my soul, not so much as the drawings of the Father to distinguish it.

Some time after, I heard your brother, being one morning at public prayer. I felt myself so drawn to Christ, I thought I was thrusting my hand into the wounds in his side. After that, I often felt those inward drawings, and began to think it was not so hard to get to heaven as some did imagine. I often said, "Mr. Wesley teaches us an easy way to get there. He says it is but to believe and heaven is yours." Glory be to God for his grace. But at that time I was not convinced of one spark of unbelief. Soon after this, the Lord showed me I was an unbeliever; yet, I thought [as] before, nothing could be easier than to believe. It causes me now to shut my mouth against anyone that is not convinced of it, knowing it is by the mighty power of God.

Then I found the Spirit of God begin to move and work in my soul. I was very restless and deeply convinced I was in the lost state; yet, constantly directed to apply to the blood of Christ. I knew not what course to take, but was filled with horror and dread; find[ing] there was but a poor breath that separated me from hell.

I went to you and told you my case. You bid me look to Christ. I said I could not, because I had crucified him afresh. You asked me how long I had been convinced of that. I told you under your brother's ministry. I asked you if there was hope for me. You told me you could give me none. Then I thought my case was worse than before, and was exceedingly troubled. You bid me look to Christ; there was my hope.

I continued in great distress for several weeks. At last I went to sister Rawbins [Robins?] and told her my condition. She said I had frequent offers of grace, but could not believe it was for me. She said I would not let God work with me, but kept him out of my soul through my unbelief. One of the society came to me with great joy, telling what the Lord had done for her. I was struck with amazement, and concluded that God was a respecter of persons, and did think I was reprobated, and was for three days in a miserable condition and I wished I had never been born. I could have been glad to quit myself of the world, but I dreaded the torments of hell.

The Sunday following I went to meeting. Mr. D[i]aper was to deliver the sacrament. He took his text out of Revelations, "And I beheld; and lo in the throne; and of the four beasts; and in the midst of the elders stood a lamb, as it had been slain." His discourse upon that subject was very affecting; yet, it did not reach me. I was troubled at the hardness of my heart, and thought there was no help for me. I continued in that dead, stupid condition till [the] sermon was ended. I began to think, "I am dead and cold, and have neither life or power. If the Lord pleases he can remove this in a moment and if it be the will of God I shall be thus, his will be done."

Then I said, "Lord, thou are not confined nor limited to the narrow comprehension of my understanding, thou worketh when and where and how thou pleasest. I beg thou wilt give me a resignation to thy

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will and deal with me as seemeth thee good."

I felt a great calmness in my spirit. Then Mr. Diaper said, "Now look up and behold the Saviour; see him pour out his blood for your sakes." My heart was touched; in a moment the Lord revealed himself to me in his crucifixion evidently, by faith. I saw him with his blood running from his wounds, in branches divine; his arm and his body in great paleness, and his mouth was grasping his last breath. I felt I received a quickening power and the benefit of his blood applied to my soul that moment. After sacrament was ended, Mr. Diaper gave out the hymn; and at mentioning the cross particular, I felt, as it were, [such] a change as I thought inward and outward. My heart fluttered as though it would have torn out of my body. I seemed as though I had been convulsed. My mouth was filled with prayer and praise as fast as I could utter from thence. I believed I was justified. That I had a continual witness I should have a clearer evidence, but rested very much upon silent I had received, and was very much lifted up.

But it pleased the Lord to suffer me to fall into great doubt, and I felt my heart turn to the same centre. Then I dreaded I was falling asleep again, I was so dead to every spiritual work.

Soon after, it pleased to God to send Mr. John Wesley amongst us again, from London, which was the ninth week after I received, as I do since believe, the earnest of my justification. The Friday I went to intercession, the Lord gave me great power of importunity, but [I] soon fell again into great heaviness. I went that evening to expounding, and soon after Mr. John Wesley began, I felt my heart clipped as though a hand grasped it. The greater he was in power, the stronger I felt my pain. At last it extorted strong groans from me. I was unable to sit, but laid myself on the floor. The excessive pain and workings of my heart made me think it was death pains; yet, all the time I found no terror of death; but seemed so far resigned that I could say, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." But as soon as Mr. Wesley had done, I found I was somewhat released; but it left a great soreness in my heart.

The Sunday morning following, Mr. Wesley was showing the marks of justification. I found I came short of it, and could not say by the witness of God's Spirit my sins were forgiven. But I remembered I had heard Mr. Cennick say, "a person might be forgiven when they felt the atoning blood though they [could] not boldly say it." I thought either your brother or he was wrong. This I concluded: was I to trust my salvation upon man's opinion, I would sooner be led by the minister than [by] him. One thing I observed, I never found my heart [drawn] to him as it was to you and your brother; and I found, in the end, it was the great mercy of God it was not otherwise. I might have been led into those errors, as he is invincible opinionated. But by the power of God, the words sunk deep into me that morning, and drove me almost to despair. I could have dispatched myself; but by the preventing grace of God, I wrote to your brother

and told him the distress I was in; and sorely wounded, I found there was no help for me but immediately to fly to Christ. I earnestly besought the Lord to give me some token for good. In great anguish of spirit, I cried to the Almighty. He answered from his holy habitation. Therefore, I can say God deals particularly with men.

While I was in prayer, I laid the Bible before me, and the Lord directed me to those words in Zechariah, "Turn to thy stronghold, ye prisoners of hope. Even today, I do declare that I will render favourable unto thee." All glory be to God; even as he promised, so was it done unto me.

Yet, notwithstanding [all] I received; [I was] doubtful and thought it was too great for me to receive; but not to great for God to give. I resolved in the morning to carry the copy of what I had written to you, that you might see it. You were at the time recovering of the fever. Your brother set out for London, so that I had not the opportunity of seeing him; but my purpose of going to you was immediately stopped by those words strongly applied to me, "Put not thy trust in an arm of flesh, trust thou in the living God." I answered, "Lord I will." From that moment the intent of going to you was taken away.

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In the morning I met the band, being then upon trial. I found a more than usual desire to pray. As soon as I began, I was led to plead the benefit of Christ's death in suffering. I felt the power of God in such a manner as I cannot express. I was filled with joy and love, wonder and amazement, that the Lord should reveal himself in such a distinct manner as I thought then few had seen or felt the like. As St. John described him, so did I clearly behold him with the eye of faith, with his garment as as white as snow and a glittering belt about his paps, that my soul was filled with direct raptures. Sir, it was not fervent imagination. I know the Father did, with love, reveal the Son unto me; that he communicated the influence of his love to me by the power of faith. But for the time, I was in a strong sense of my justification and very clear, which was about fourteen days, and the continual sight of him as described before. [It pleased] the Lord to give me a full assurance of pardon; [he] applied these words to me, "I have blotted out thy transgressions; I have redeemed thy soul; this is the way, walk thou in it"; and continually, strong promises, while I was in this comfort; which I never could receive before.

But after I went home from the band the morning I received forgiveness, I sat down to think what the Lord was about to do with me. I never had felt the like before. I felt some[thing] pouring over my heart. I cannot describe what it was like particular, but it was as an odour that perfumed. I felt that every sinue and joint was effected; it ran through the very marrow of my bones, and [so] sunk me, as it were, into nothing, that I was ready to cry out several times in the day, "Lord, I cannot contain it." At last I felt the suffering of the love of God so in my heart that nature began to sink, and I said to Sister Nichols, "I believe I shall be forced to take my bed." She said, "The Lord will enlarge your capacity. He knows you are but an earthen vessel." I often felt such stirrings within, that my soul would seem to be all of aquiver, ready for the wing to soar to Christ. I wrote to your brother to London to let him know the Lord had answered his last petition for me and given me the benefit of his blessing when he left us.

The Wednesday following, about noon, I was in private prayer. I was immediately caught, as it were, out of the body. Jesus held out his left hand with the crown exceeding bright. I cannot tell you what I felt in my soul at that time; but I beheld it with great amazement. And about the space of two or three minutes after, he held out his right hand with the length of half a sheet of paper, white and clean. I looked earnestly, but could not perceive any writing. As to the mentioning this, it consisteth not but upon your desiring me to be particular. I find by daily experience neither sights, nor gifts, availeth to make the Christian complete until Christ be formed in me.

I do not remember losing the sense of my justification otherwise than by this; while one was reading Mr. Seward's journal, I sat by and found immediately I was disaffected to the author. Then I felt instantly that I had lost that sweet peace which before I enjoyed; but all that time I did not fall into any doubt, which was Sunday evening till Wednesday following. Then this Devil came upon me like a roaring lion, telling me that it was all delusion what I had received, and I had deceived my soul. Then I began to reason with him, "How can this be? Nature could not work this in me. I surely have had a foretaste of heaven; and that, thou canst not give me." I found my adversary too strong for me. I saw there was no other help for me but to fly to Christ, and lay hold of him. I strongly importuned him in prayer. The strength of the temptation was defeated for a season; yet, I soon fell into general doubts, and continued for several weeks till your brother's returned from London.

The morning he took his journey for London again, Mr. Nowers read in the desk. While he was in prayer, I felt first a great burning in my heart, and immediately my soul was filled with the love of God, and sweet peace, and those words applied to me again, "I have blotted out thy transgressions." I said, "Lord, if it be thy voice, I beseech thee, give me a further testimony." And it came again, "thou shalt not die in thy sins."

From thence to the Monday, eight days I enjoyed great peace and comfort in my soul. That evening I went to meet my band, but I found there was not likely to meet but the leader and myself. I directly went home, but had not been many minutes in the house before I fell into discourse with one that lived in house with me, of a matter that concerned me not, but to rob me of my peace. I withdrew myself instantly, for I perceived the Lord was departed from me. Then I was ashamed and

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confounded. I thought I dare not to ask one petition more of the Lord, I had so often forfeited my pardon and made breach upon breach. I had often made strong resolutions, when I lost the first sense of pardon; if the Lord would but once more try me again with his love, I would walk so circumspect and have such care over all my thoughts, words, and actions; that I would not grieve his Holy Spirit again. But I made those promises in my own strength. I know the Lord would have enabled me to perform this and more if I had been faithful to the grace given me.

After this, my causing the Lord to withdraw himself from me by unnecessary talking, I fell into great darkness and continued so some time. [The following words were replaced by the insertion included in the text: "till as near as I can remember."]

But last Ash Wednesday was twelve months [since] Mr. Humphreys preached in the Room at the Horsefair. He expounded on the seventeenth of St. John's Gospel. I believe then he had the power of God and the Spirit with him. I felt the application of it to my soul when he expressed those words, "Jesus is praying for you up to the Father." I said, "Lord wilt thou give me an inheritance in the kingdom." It was applied to me again, "Thou shalt have an inheritance in my kingdom." My soul seemed as though it was taken unto another region. It lasted but for a few moments. I cannot be particular, but I think it was that time only I received power under Mr. Humphreys to receive any promise by faith; I mean under his preaching.

But as soon as you returned from London, I found you came not alone. I know of a truth the Lord was with you. I felt the Gospel reach my heart continually; [I had] great workings and strong struggling for many months, even to this day [I am] frequently under such a deep sense of that love of Jesus to me through such a deep revelation, and backslider that I [am, I] stand amazed at the boundless mercy and long suffering God. The Lord shows me more that every breath I draw loudly calls for praise I

am not in hell. I do very often stand astonished and wonder I had not been there long ago.

The Lord has brought to my memory very fresh great deliverances he wrought for me above twenty years ago, as I thought then was of chance; but the Lord shows me that he hath watched over me for good from my youth up until now. Yet, I feel in me a spirit of ingratitude. I want to be more thankful. I find a continual desire of being set free, that my whole life might be spent in praise. I seldom come under the Gospel delivered by your mouth, but in an especial manner I feel the workings of my heart: longing, reaching, panting after Jesus; that some times I have faith as I think to be healed at once; my soul will be inflamed with love to Christ. But when I feel my heart cold and hard, I fall into great heaviness, and am ready to think I deceived myself, and am presumptuous, because I cannot doubt of a deliverance. This I find the Lord has so far wrought in me, I am contented.

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I have endeavoured to write, which may be unnecessary, though I have been tempted not to write. But I now believe, and feel; by the continual witness of God's Spirit, you are the true ministers of the everlasting Gospel; and God forbids me to disobey you. I desire to praise God with the utmost sincerity for his great mercy in sending you amongst us. Far be it from me that I should do anything to grieve you. This I know is of the Lord; also, my heart has been often grieved at my ingratitude to you; when we have such continual manifestation of your love and faithfulness, witnessed by the daily care, and pains, and trouble you go through for our sakes. Your sufferings are great, but your reward shall be great. Sir, I beg you will hold me in continual remembrance, and bear me upon your heart before the Lord. Pray for me, that the Lord may direct me in my prayers what petitions to ask for you as my faithful pastor and shepherd; that am a prisoner of hope.

Eliz[abe]th Downs

Reference EMV: 86

Date: [April 1742]

Addressees: Hannah Hancock to Charles Wesley

Annotation: CW's note, : "Hannah Hancock, April 1742, justified in sacrament."

Note: Internal evidence indicates a Bristol woman. There is no external evidence. This is significant because it one of the first manuscript accounts by a backslider restored to the Methodist fold. She was awakened by GW in 1738, convinced during a sermon by JW and converted Easter Sunday, 1740, receiving the sacrament. She fell away in June of that year and was recovered 28 Feb. 1742. No external evidence found to date

Dear sir, I have [illegible] endeavoured to let you know the state of my soul. When Mr. Whitefield came I heard him and received his saying as concerning repentance and faith in Christ, thinking it must be accomplished in my soul before I go hence. And the sufferings of Christ did melt me down extremely much, which caused me to make promises of amendment but I found it was in my own strength. When I was under the word I could make many resolutions but when I was away I found that they did not stand which convinced me it was in my own strength.

When [it] pleased God to send your dear brother here, I heard him with much delight and the first sermon came with power to me. [It] was is the sixth chapter of Romans and the twenty-third verse, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." When he explained the wages of sin, the word came with power and I saw the state I was in, how far I was from God. I then could not find any rest for my soul but was continually crying out: "What must I do to be saved," or with David, "a wounded spirit who can bare."

I went on mourning and found no comfort, sometimes in hope and then in despair. Behold I go forward but he is not there and backward but I cannot perceive him, on the left hand where he doth [rest] but I cannot behold him, he hideth himself on the right hand that I cannot see him. But he knoweth the way that I take; when he hath tried me I shall come forth as gold.

Then I found the drawings of the Father sweetly drew me which caused me to believe. Although it was long before the Comforter came, I believed he would come. I went near a year mourning before I found my Saviour and the enemy did sorely beset me, telling me my damnation was sealed and continually tempting that the Lord has sworn in his wrath that I should never enter into his rest. But I found Christ stronger than the enemy.

The sixth of April 1740 being Easter Sunday, I went to the sacrament under the weight and burden of sin and desired of the Lord not to let me depart till he had given me his blessing. There I found him rising on my soul with healing in his wings. The promise was applied, "I have blotted out thy sins out of my remembrance and thine iniquities will I remember no more." Oh how sweet was Jesus Christ to me when I could see him with the eye of faith. Then I found I died daily to the world and was in the light of his countenance and went on my way rejoicing. Oh how did I long for others to taste of the same continually saying, "O taste and see that the Lord is gracious."

I went on and had sweet communion with God for two months then the enemy came

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in as a flood upon me, telling me I was in a delusion and the Lord had done nothing for me. Then I cried might[il]y if it was so that the Lord would satisfy me and if not that it might be so.

The Lord heard and answered my prayer and gave full satisfaction and the second time the promise was applied to me, "Thine iniquities are conquered and thy sins are pardoned. Turn unto me for I have redeemed thee." Then I found much sweetness with God and greater power over sin. I could then say with Solomon, "I sat under his shadow with great delight and his fruit was sweet to my taste." I could then say, "his left hand was under my head and his right hand doth embrace me and his banner over me was love." But woe how soon did I forget my Saviour and how lightly did I esteem the rock of my salvation.

I then gave way to reasoning and reasoned myself into the belief of election. I then thought that God had made a remnant to be saved and remnant to be lost and won. The preachers of that doctrine came, I went to hear them and believed all they said concerning the \elected love\ as [they] called it and not falling from grace. But woeful experience soon told me I was fallen.

When I came to hear you I [had] great prejudice in me against you; [so] that I could not receive your sayings concerning universal redemption, no[r] sinless perfection. Then I happened in company with some of that belief and they asked me my experience. I told them as far as I had experience concerning justification and they told me I had never need doubt I was elected and I believed them. Then I found myself grow slack and careless in prayer and all duties. By the providence of God [I] was in company and we were telling our experiences concerning prayers. The persons I was with were baptists, I wished they would have joined with me but I found otherwise. The question I required was whether they thought there was anything in a form, whether people could not pray as well in their beds as on their knees. One answered no and told me it was very cold prayer in a warm bed, which word I found true, but little thought to hear such an answer from them. I then took to that armour of prayer again and these persons told me a prayerless soul was as Christly. The word sunk deep into my heart and [it] pleased the Lord to lay me on a bed of sickness. In the first part of [the] sickness I was in sore temptation and feared death, but the Lord soon removed that fear and filled me with his love. The promise applied to me was, "I will betroth thee to me for ever, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, in judgment, in love, in kindness and in mercy." The promise of God was food to my soul.

It pleased

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the Lord to send your dear brother to me. He asked me whether I believed Christ died for some or for all. My answer was for all. The next promise applied to me was, "thou art comely through my comeliness put upon." But after this love and kindness from God, how soon did I forget him; [so] that [I] could believe election [again]. I went careless waiting for his [ir]res[ist]able grace and I left [the] bands. But I found my soul was like Noah's dove, as the dove could find no rest for the soles of his foot till it returned, so was my soul.

I mourned after Jesus Christ for a fresh manifestation of his love. I heard your brother upon the 25th day of February, upon the ninth chapter of Ezra, the third and sixth verses. He showed the remorse of conscience after a soul had revolted from Christ. My soul witnessed what was then spoken. I was then under remorse. I could then look on Christ whom I had pierced and mourned it was often the language of my soul. I forced the first to disappear, I turned aside, "O Lord if thou hadst still been here thy servant had not died."

On the 28th day of February I heard your brother on the third chapter of Revelations, the second and third verses. He put those in remembrance of what they had received from God. The enemy did sorely beset me, telling me I had received nothing. But the witness of God was with me bearing witness I had

and the cry of heart was, "Lord if [I] perish I will perish at thy feet." Oh how ready [is] Jesus Christ to receive returning sinners. He met me while I was a great way off. He ran and fell upon my neck and kissed me with the kiss of peace.

On the first of March the Lord reconciled me to himself telling me, "I have healed thy back backsliding freely"; which gave me much comfort. The Lord has deeply convinced me of the necessity of inward holiness and I believe without holiness no man can see the Lord.

Sir, I beg your continual prayer. As my first desire was to know my interest in Christ, it is my earnest

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desire to know Christ living in me, the hope of glory.

From your humble and affection[ate] servant till death--Hannah Hancock



Reference EMV: 128

Date: 24 May 1742

Addressees: Mary Thomas to Charles Wesley

Note: Mary (1690-1745) was in her 50s when she was awakened by George Whitefield, convinced by JW and converted 30 Sept. 1739 during CW's sermon on the woman taken in adultery; see my transcription of this shorthand sermon published by the WHS (1985) pp. 71ff, or J. Tyson Charles Wesley Reader (OUP, 1989, pp. 172ff). JW noted her death in his published Journal (1 June 1745). There is a letter to CW from a Naomi Thomas of Bristol dated June 1742, perhaps a relative.

Reverend sir, according to your desire I have given a short account of my state.

When Mr. Whitefield came first to town I went to hear him. I very much approved of his doctrine. When I heard him preach the last sermon at Rose Green and telling that there was one coming after him whose shoe latchet he was not worthy to unloose, I found that [it] was he that stood by him. I found great love in my heart to him. After that, the first opportunity I had, I went to hear Mr. John Wesley and my conscience soon told me it was the true gospel of Christ that he preached.

I likewise began to think how I had spent my life having lived almost fifty years in this world. I found that I was ignorant of God. I always thought myself as good as my neighbours and a great deal better than some of them that did curse and swear and got drunk. I always had a good name amongst my acquaintance which was pleasing to flesh and blood. But the Lord soon showed me that I was a devil and had only deceived myself and all that knew me. When I went to church I seldom found anything there that disturbed me except it was being there too long. But when I came to hear Mr. John Wesley, I found nothing but discontent in my mind. He told me things that I had said and done when I was a child and from my youth up even until now and conscience always said, "thou are the woman," so that I had no peace in my mind. When anyone did cry out in the room I always wished to be the next in hopes to receive forgiveness of sins. But God did not see fit to grant me my request.

When you came first to Bristol I seem to like you better than your brother and I thought your way of delivery was finer than his. I thought I should be easier in my mind in hearing of you then I was in hearing of him. But alas, I found it worse and worse every day.

Last St. James fair was twelve month [when] you ordered the society to come and speak with you; which I found a great grief to me for I was ashamed to think I was no better. But I came as I was and you asked me if I was justified and I said no. You told me I was in a state of damnation which words pierced my heart though it was what I had heard many times. Yet, it never pierced my heart so much as it did then. I then was ready to cry out, "my punishment is more than I can bear." I saw myself banished from the presence of God. I then began to think the day of grace was past. I began to think how I was brought up when I was a child to know the Lord and what a love I had for Christ when I was a child. But after I was grown up I did reject the Spirit of the Lord in doing that I knew I ought not to do and the Lord hath said, "My spirit shall not always strive with man." I could find no comfort for me. I knew not where to go. I began to wish I never had heard them. I was quite out of hopes and wished I knew the worst and earnestly desired the Lord that he would by what was preached that night show if I should be saved or not, for I longed to know the worst. When I came to the room you were there. The chapter you were on was concerning the woman taken in adultery and the Lord said unto her, "Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more." The word seemed as spoken to me. I knew not where I was.

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For a short time I felt such a heft [weight] go off my heart that I cannot express it. I was assured that Christ died for me. I feared nothing where I knew I had Christ with me.

I was in this joy for about a fortnight when being at the room one night before you came, there were two young women [who] sat behind me and telling how they were and they had cried out such a time and what an agony they had been in before they had received forgiveness. They said that those that did not feel those agonies, that they deceived themselves. Here the devil got me again in his snare in putting me to think I was not justified because I had not been taken in such a manner. Here I soon lost my joy and began to drive on heavily. Sometimes I was ready to give it all up, then the Lord shed abroad his love in my heart and I could have lost my for the truth of it. But as soon as that joy abated, I was in fear and so continued till the ten days before Mr. John Wesley fell sick. When he was telling of the five wounds Christ had received for us, then I found his blood applied to my heart, saying, "Daughter, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee." Then I found great joy and sweetness in my soul.

I then went upon trial into the bands and there I found great love to my band. When Mr. John Wesley came last to Bristol I was taken into the public bands. I have not now such joy as I had. I see myself the worst of sinners and stand amazed to think that I am out of hell. I see I can do nothing to the glory of God. I find [that] every imagination of my heart is only evil continually, but I know when Christ speaketh the word I shall be made perfectly whole. In the meantime, I beg your prayers that the Lord will give me power to fight manfully under his banner against the world, the flesh and the devil. May God pour a double portion of his Spirit upon you and your dear brother and all his faithful ministers and grant that the word may be as seed sown into good ground and that we may bring forth fruits a hundred fold which is is the prayers of me, your unworthy servant,

Mary Thomas

May the 24th 1742

Reference EMV: 44

Date: May 1742

Addressees: Fanny Cowper to CW

Note: These are the dying words of Miss Francis Cowper (d. 1742) of Donnington Park, friend of the Wesleys, Whitefield and the Countess of Huntindon.

Annotations: "May 1742; Fanny's Dying Words."

I cannot be unmindful of all your dear labours of love to me, a poor worm, unworthy of all things. The Lord Jesus bless you in time and eternity and give us to meet in glory.

The strength to [write with she has] no more but desires you to commend her to your brother.

Reference EMV: 87

Date: May 1742

Addressees: Elizabeth Halfpenny to Charles Wesley

Annotated: "Eliz. Halfpenny's Exp[erience] May 1742."

Reverend sir,

According to your desire, I have given you a full account of the state of my soul at present, and also of some of my former life as I thought would be proper to mention, as it now occurs to my mind.

It pleased God that when Mr. Whit[e]field first came to preach in Bristol I went to hear him at Nicholas Church, and seemed to approve of his doctrine, and was a constant hearer of his and seldom missed any opportunity. Mr. Whit[e]field's doctrine had some effect upon me, so that I was in part convinced of sin, and shed tears very often. But [I] received no glimpse of the light of God's countenance and went on still in darkness and had no thoughts of a Saviour. Now I clearly see that I was then grovelling in the dark and knew not whither I went. When Mr. Whitefield was going to Georgia, I was unwilling to be a hearer of your brother, Mr. John, who was then to come here to Bristol. [I] went to Mr. Whitefield on that account and testified to him my unwillingness to hear Mr. John, whom Mr. Whitefield recommended as a faithful shepherd in such a manner that induced me to consent to be his hearer. And accordingly I went to the Bowling Green, where he had not long been preaching before I was tempted to think he was a Roman Catholic. I found now that I was a hearty bigot, as it was well known.

When I was under your brother's doctrine those words had great effect upon me which I had in my childhood meditated upon: "Ask, and ye shall receive, seek, and you shall find, knock, and it shall be opened unto you." My business calling me among those who they call the fashionable people of the world who endeavoured through their pretension, to have love and tenderness for my soul, to entice me from hearing the word by telling me such things as the world doth. But all their devices had no effect upon me (Blessed be God). At one time I went to the Bowling Green to hear Mr. John, where I heard him speak of entertaining strangers which I found affected me much. But [I] rather esteemed him as a Saviour than a minister, and so continued in that dreadful state for about a year, my soul never being at rest but when I was with him or hearing him talked of. But this idolatrous love proceeded no further than trusting in the arm of flesh; but yet I was not willing anyone should know it lest I should be told I was in error. I had promised to go into the country and at the time of my going, your brother was just come down from London and I went down to the New Room in order to see him; because I could not go away before I had seen him. I went down but he was not there; but Mr. Richards and Mr. Ellison were there at breakfast, who sung a hymn whose first line is, "O thou who when I did complain," at which time I was in some measure supported under my heavy burden.

While I was in the country, I had the liberty of coming to the room at Kingswood where I saw Mr. Nowers, to whom I was pressed in spirit to speak concerning the idolatrous love I had for your brother which he had so often warned us against. But fearing he would put a wrong construction on what I should speak to him I refrained for that time. But afterwards I spoke to him, upon which he told me it was no strange things to him to hear of those things, or in other words to that effect, and I found considerable relief at that time. Sometimes after, I went to Rose Green, where Mr. John expounded on "the fiery trial," in which trial I was then in and continued therein sometime. When Mr. John came down from London, and expounded in the New Room, I then found my affection grow cold toward him at which I was grieved and troubled very much, not knowing at that time that

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it was a conviction from the Lord.

At the first time of expounding at Weaver's Hall, Mr. John was expounding on the death of Lazarus, when I found such work in my heart as I never felt before, and saw that necessity of a thorough change of life, a blessing so great that I knew not how to praise God for. I went home, and for some time would read ne'er a book, but the Bible. I began to feel the drawing of the Father, which continued a considerable time. I was very glad to hear people talk of the love of God, though I myself was not a partaker of it. But I could always rejoice to hear talk of the loving kindness of the Lord and I desired that the Lord would teach me what I knew not.

New Year's Day, you expounded "the barren figtree" at the New Room which made a considerable impression on my heart which continued about a fortnight. I had no rest because of my desire to have more knowledge of the Scripture. When you said that we might be put on a level with whores and drunkards and outward sinners, I could not receive the saying and staggered at it very much. Mr. John would often say to me, "Oh that you could become as a little child" (blessed be God). I believe his prayers are heard. I was at Temple Backs at one time, there the Lord was pleased to enlighten my understanding to see the meaning of part of the Scripture. I felt, as it were, a mountain removed from my heart and clouds from my understanding. Oh what shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits and his unspeakable mercies? Sing ye heavens, and rejoice O earth, for the Lord had done it. Let the floods clap their hands, and the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord.

About two years ago I went to Rose Green, where (under your ministry, Blessed be God) I received forgiveness of sins, since which I found that I thirsted for Christ more and more, and more of his love. I found that whatever temptation would beset me would work together for my good if I would cast all my care on the Lord and not in my own strength.

At a certain time in my band, I received an extraordinary measure of the love of God, which made me think that I loved the Lord alone. I had no love for the world nor the things thereof, I counted all things but dung and dross for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord. Ever since, the word of God sinks in my heart with greater power and demonstration and I enjoy a closer union with God.

The time that your brother read the letter in the bands, which Mr. Cen[ni]ck wrote, it was of great use to me. This underhand dealing of Mr. Cen[ni]ck could never be right, which made me have no conversation with him. And at that time, the Lord strengthened me to be upon my watch against Mr. Whitefield coming here, and so I never heard him, neither have I had a desire to speak to him ever since. But the Lord hath gathered me as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and I doubt not but he will, if I prove faithful to the grace I have received.

Sometime ago, I could not believe that there was any such state as perfection before death, but under your doctrine on a Saturday, I was convinced to the contrary. Being at Kingswood on Sacrament Day, in an instant [it] was brought to my view by the eye of faith, the form of a tall parson in his surplice. His hair was white and [he] seemed to move on the ground with his back towards me, but he was soon vanished. The first time of my coming to hear the word, after being confined from it a considerable time, the word came with such power and demonstration that I was so full with the love of you, it caught me to overflow with tears several times which left a soreness at my heart, which I never felt before.

Oh that I may be always upon my watch, looking unto the Lord, that I may have no head knowledge, no wisdom of my own, but that wisdom which flows from God.

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Oh may I ever give the glory to God for the blessing that he bestowed upon me in drawing me to hear your doctrine and enabling me to continue in the way that he hath appointed. Now there is nothing troubling me but a continual fear of you and your brother's death. But it comes to mind often that the Lord will strengthen me if he should be pleased to call you hence. I now can rejoice in tribulation and persecutions, and as I have been a partaker of the benefit of your prayers, Lord grant that I may always be teachable with respect to your advice and direction to me, being sensible it will be for my good. Your unworthy servant and daughter in the Lord—

Elizabeth Halfpenny

I have omitted one thing which I have undermentioned-- at the time you expounded at Rose Green I thought it was a very unsuitable chapter which you was upon, which was the sixteenth of Ezekiel, and was much offended at it. But before you had done, the Lord was pleased to set to his seal, and I received forgiveness of sins. The words came with s[uch] great power that I seemed to be lifted off the ground, and never since have I fallen in doubt of my justification. And now if I find any darts or temptations assaulting me, they are not burdensome to me.

Reference EMV: 126

Date: May 1742

Addressees: Elizabeth Sais to Charles Wesley

Annotated: Annotated by CW: "Elis. Sayse; May 1742."

Reverend sir,

According to your desire, I have endeavoured to give you a full account of the state of my soul at present, and also of some part of my former life as I thought would be proper as it does at present occur to my mind.

It pleased God, that about five years ago I went to hear Mr. Whit[e]field preach at St. Nicholas Church and thought that strange things were brought to my ears. The word came very sweet but my understanding was not opened. I approved of his doctrine, which seemed as a lovely song of one that hath a elegant voice, and heard him constantly. And when I heard him recommend Mr. Wesley to the people as one to be preferred before him, I thought that impossible.

When Mr. Wesley came, I went to hear him in Nicholas Street Society, but at that time the word had little effect on me. But at his preaching at Clifton Church, the word came very sweet and with power. I shed tears, but knew not well for what reason. I went constantly to the societies, and at one time when the people were taken with violent fits of conviction, some of whom being in a few minutes set at liberty and sang praise to the Lord, I also sympathized with them and thought that I also must have been [a] partaker of their condition before I could be a Christian and wished to undergo the same convictions. When I came home, I did not refrain from acquainting my neighbours what strange work the Lord was reviving in the midst of the years.

Sometime after, Mr. John Wesley went to London and Mr. Cen[ni]ck came here, who I heard expound at Bedminster, on the Revelations. But it was all a mystery to me. When you expounded on Isaiah it all seemed very sweet but when you, or another, said that we deserved to be damned; I thought I might be excepted, thinking I was not as bad as a whore or a drunkard. But soon after, I saw that my inward parts were very wickedness and could put myself on a level with the chief of sinners. I was very angry with my husband when he put himself in the bands. I had great convictions, insomuch that when I went to bed I feared I should be in hell before the morning. I was afraid to go to prayer for fear of the devil, who I thought was in every corner of the house. In this condition I came to hear the word, expecting to quiet my conscience which was as the troubled sea that cannot rest.

In this state I continued for several weeks. When my husband talked of faith, and forgiveness of sins, I thought we might receive forgiveness of sin but not in such a manner as to know and feel it applied. Thus I went on in darkness and deadness until it pleased God, whom quickeneth the dead, in great mercy [to] pass by me when I was in my blood and said unto me, "live;" which was, at your repeating the eleventh verse of the thirty-third chapter of Ezekiel, "Say into them, as I live, saith the Lord God: I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn you, turn you from your evil ways, for why you die, O house of Israel." I gladly received the exhortation and could with great joy testify that I had redemption in his blood, the forgiveness of my sins.

When I came home I could not be persuaded by my husband not to think that Christ lived in me, being so overflowed with the sense of pardoning love. But soon after, I gave place to the reasoning devil who asked, "How can these things be" and so I was in doubt about the certainty of it which I reneged the more when I felt stirrings of anger, and what to do I knew not. One night my husband and I were coming to the

Room where I expected to hear you, but one told us that Mr. Cen[ni]ck was to be there, at which I was so displeased

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that I would have returned and attempted to go back three or four times had not my husband used his utmost persuasion that I might not. But as soon as I came to the Room, I was for going out; but I found at Mr. Cen[ni]ck's giving out a hymn that I was taking the enemy's part against my own soul for when the hymn was sung, those four lines of another hymn came to my mind which are written below, and the Lord spoke those words to my soul and applied them to my heart; so that, to the great comfort of my soul, I could once more declare that the God of tender mercy had healed my backsliding and written pardon in my heart as with a pen of iron. I could wish to die that instant, because I was not at all afraid to meet the king of terror.

"I know thou will accept me now,  
I know my sins are now forgiven.  
My head to death O let me bow,  
Nor keep my life, to lose my heaven."

Thus I went on my way rejoicing.

Soon after, I entered myself in the bands. And when I came with the bands the first time I had reasoning with myself in this manner; "as I have now entered into the bands I must certainly cut off the right hand and pluck out the right eye, and forsake all that I may be Christ's disciple, for no man putting his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of heaven."

I did not long continue in the light of God's countenance but fell into doubts and fears. The poor and needy sought water but there was none and her tongue failed for thirst. I was so feeble that I could scarce speak, my sorrows compassed me about on every side. I thought I should never any more have the oil of joy for the spirit of heaviness. I had no rest in my bonds by reason of the absence of my God. My very body was ready for the grave. The spirit had well nigh failed before him and the soul which he had made.

Sometime after, I went to hear your brother, Mr. John, preach at Temple Backs where the power of God was in an extraordinary manner. But I was so much cast down that I was obliged to have the help of one of our sisters to place me in a convenient place for hearing where I some time waited, expecting to find relief, being sensible how God did visit others then present with his loving kindness and the word seeming to me as a tinkling cymbal. I was as a dead man out of mind; but before it was over, I heard Mr. John speaking thus, "Is there one soul among you that seems to be forsaken, from whom God hath hid his face? Is there not one that would gladly accept of a Saviour." In speaking [these] words or some others to that effect, he fastened his eyes on me and applied himself to me as though he had known my desperate case, and offered salvation to us so fervently till at last I received it in such a manner as I never expected. I felt in my inmost soul that I was forgiven. I was as if I was flying on the wings of love up to my Saviour's breast. The angel of the Lord came upon me and a marvellous light shone into my prison and my chains fell off. I found that my Saviour was a physician that healed both soul and body. In short, I cannot express the happiness I then enjoyed.

I always found great comfort when I received bread and wine in remembrance of our Lord's body and blood, which I actually fed on by faith



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as my body is fed by meat and drink, and [it] always left a lasting impression on my heart. One time in particular, at receiving the sacrament, I felt the power of God in such a manner that I was as one that had but little strength left. I seemed to the minister as though I was in heaviness, who told me that it was a place for rejoicing and not for mourning. At one time I heard you encouraging us against martyrdom, at which I seemed to stagger, fearing when I should be called to suffer for Christ I should recant. But some time after, when parting with a friend, I thought I was a stranger and pilgrim on the earth and could readily (had I been called that time to suffer) jumped in and clapped my hands in the flames for I counted all things but dung and dross so I might win Christ.

But I soon was lifted up and trusted in the gifts and graces. I was rich and increased with goods and had need of nothing. But all this while, I was not sensible that I was lifted up until you met our private band when you asked me if I was not troubled with self and pride, which struck me as dead for I knew not what to answer. And when I came under the word I found it to be quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of joints and marrow and a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. For I was so sensibly cut by it as my body might be by a sword and would often wish to withdraw myself from such searching.

Thus I went on mourning for the loss of my Saviour as one that mourneth for his only son. I was as Noah's dove and could find no rest till I was again taken into the ark. The name of a Saviour was as ointment poured forth. I hungered and thirsted for my Lord and every place seemed melancholy by reason of his absence. I could not lift up my heart to God for he seemed as though he was not pacified with me. I had no power to pray to God but to the Son. It was he to whom I sued for pardon, that he might reconcile me again to his offended Father, which he did one night I was at prayer. For before I had ended my prayer to Christ, that he might reconcile me to his Father I could not only cry, "My Lord," but, "My Lord and my God." And in the night time, I had such a view of the presence of God that humbled me to the dust. I became in his sight as a dead dog. I saw that I was in his sight less than nothing and vanity and as a beast of the field. During my seeing the vision the words that came to my mind were those, "I will make all my goodness pass before thee. Behold there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock, and it shall come to pass while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock and will cover thee with my hand when I pass by. And I will take away mine hand and thou shalt see my back parts, but my face shall not be seen." So gracious a sight it was that I know not how to forget it, "Rejoice O heaven, and you that dwell therein. Shout with joy you worms of the earth for the Lord omnipotent's condescension in thus humbling himself to behold a sinful worm, even dust and ashes, and favouring me with such amazing love and condescension."

After this, the Lord was pleased to uncover my heart more and more, and so all evil tempers did beset me sore, but the Lord gave the strength as my day was. I have gone through close trials which always worked together for my good, for I found that temptation always stirred me up to lay hold on the Lord, for suffering faith did always brighter glow and purify the heart. I go to prayer, generally with reluctance, but when I am at prayer, I find the Lord reproveth and convinces me of

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my folly for as much as he then gives me an extraordinary blessing and [I] could then wish to be always at prayer.

Since Mr. John's coming here this last time, I find that I am quickened and strengthened considerably;

and more especially when the hymns on universal redemption are sung. At a certain time when the leaders met, everyone was asked concerning the witness of the spirit. When I was asked when I had received it, I mentioned the time at which we were all affected so much that we were all as one mighty blaze, the fire of love, God being in the midst of us as in the holy place of Sinai. The more I press forward the more I feel of the evil and corruption of my heart, and though I feel my sins rise as mountains, yet the Lord gives power against them. He deals tenderly with me and no temptation happens without his making a way for me to escape that I may be able to bear it. I doubt not, but the Lord who hath bestowed upon me his grace and blessings in such a manner as he has done, will (if I am faithful to his grace) bring me into the rest of the people of God. I have no more to add but that I shall acknowledge you as my father in Christ, and that it is my bounden duty to pray to God to give you the choicest of his blessings in time and eternity, your unworthy servant and daughter in the Lord,

Elizabeth Sais

Reference EMV: 136

Date: May 1742

Addressees: Joan Webb to Charles Wesley

Annotated: Annotated by CW: "Joan Webb's Exp[er]ience, May 1742."

Reverend sir,

I was one that always lived a sober life and I kept to my church and sacrament every Sunday. For some time I had strong desires to serve God but I was often terrified at the thoughts of death. I had two texts of Scripture that often came to my mind; one was, "he that keepeth the whole law and offendeth in one point is guilty of all"; the other was, "perfect love casteth out all fear." And I thought I had not that perfect love which made me often to fear. Then I thought to pray more and oftener for I was very desirous to love God.

A little after that Mr. Whitefield came to town and I went and heard him but was not awakened as yet. My husband at that time left me and I was in great trouble. One day I opened the Bible and where I opened I read which was Isaiah the forty-first [chapter] and from verse the eighth to verse the fifteenth. I found great comfort in those verses. I did not know that I was to apply the promises to myself. I had then some hope that God would bring me out of all my trouble.

The first time I went to church after my trouble the text was the last verse of the fifty-fourth chapter of Isaiah. I felt the words but did not know that it was from God. My heart was soft with weeping. I after[wards] came to hear Mr. John Wesley. He put it very close to us whether we did love God. I thought I could then make answer is surely for I had took great care to live a sober life. But I thought, "How should I be sure that I did love God?" Then he said that some of you will say, "How shall we know if we love God?" He said, that it was as easy to know as to know whether we were hot or cold. I thought it was not. He said if we loved one man or woman better than another, we must certainly know it. I then thought, did not I love my husband better than God. I was willing to put it off and thought it was my duty. I heard him again and was fully convinced that I did not love God, which was a sore burden to me. I was so grieved with the thoughts of not loving God that my other trouble abated. I had then sweet drawings. I often heard the word and one time Mr. Wesley expounding upon these words, "He that is born of God doth not commit sin." I thought as Nicodemus did, "how can these things be," for I thought the best Christians did sin while they lived here. I was careful in hearing and it was made very plain to me that he that was born of God might live without sin. It was great things to me, but I thought nothing was impossible with God. I was taken with a great trembling and turning my head to the window and looking in the element. I thought I saw God and Jesus Christ standing at his right hand. I strove to hide my trembling from the people. It was so powerful that I

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I was obliged to come out for fear I should fall down. I was so ignorant that I did not know that I was to be justified. I knew it soon after that and thought if ever I was, that was the time, but was not able to lay hold of it. I desired the Lord to show me if we were to know our sins were forgiven. I opened the Bible and read a chapter in the Epistles of John and was fully convinced. I laid down the book and said I would wait God's time. I was very desirous to put myself upon a level with harlots and publicans but I was not able, for I still thought myself better than they.

I then spent much time alone in tears and prayers, desiring the Lord to show me and one day in pray[er] the Lord showed me in a moment that I was the same by nature as the chief of sinners. Then I could see what great reason I had to bless God for I saw that it was nothing in me but the restraining grace of God

that kept me. I could not rest day nor night my burden was so great. I put in a note to desire the Lord to show me if I was justified. I then received the witness in myself. I thought I felt Christ in my heart, such comfort I never before tasted. It lasted some few days before the enemy of my soul come to tell me it was great things to know my sins were forgiven.

I then came upon trial in the bands, whom I heard had the same temptation, which greatly strengthened me whenever I was doubtful. It came to me Christ died for sinners and I knew I was a sinner and then all my doubt did vanish. Christmas [blotted] I was earnestly desiring the witness of the Spirit when I came to the room. You were praying and earnestly contending—for the same which I believed I then received--for that comfort was sweeter than the other. I then could rejoice if I heard the archangel sounding the trumpet. I hardly knew where I was. How could I praise God who had been so merciful to me, a helpless worm before that time. I saw our blessed Lord on the cross always looking upon me for two days and two nights, but I could never walk by sight without I felt it in my heart. I thought I would often pray that I might not be tempted, for in the beginning I was afraid of temptations for I always found the devil could never stand before earnest prayer. One time I felt such a heft [weight] upon me that no tongue is able to express and I could not tell what was the meaning of it. But I could then say that if God had cast me into hell, he was merciful. It lasted three or four hours.

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After I had received the witness of the Spirit I had some times fears and doubts, but I found the witness grew stronger till I found that all my doubts were gone. The large manifestations I had in my last sickness I am not able to express. I was no more afraid of death than I was to go to my bed, for I had a strong witness that the Lord would finish his work before he would take me hence. About a fortnight after I sat up, I had such a cry in my heart for holiness. I wanted to be far from all company, that I might cry aloud unto the Lord for holiness. That cry lasted about three days, I find my burden is greatly lightened for it seems to me that my burden is laid upon Christ. I find I have nothing to do but to look to him for I greatly see my own helplessness; that I am no more than a leaf that flies before the wind. I see all my thoughts and actions very imperfect. I see that I am now kept every moment by looking to the Lord, but I have never no doubt. I do so much believe that I shall be delivered from all sin, as I do that I shall one day die.

Dear sir, pray that seed may be sown deep in my heart. And the Lord grant that you that sow and we that reap may rejoice together in that day and hear that comfortable sentence, "Come you blessed children of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you." So I remain, one of your weak children in Christ, Joan Webb

Reference EMV: 129

Date: (June 1742)

Addressees: Naomi Thomas to Charles Wesley

Reverend sir,

I have given you a full account of the state of my soul at present, also of some of my former life as I thought would be necessary as it comes into my mind.

When Mr. Whitefield came here to Bristol to preach in the churches I went to hear him and also wherever he preached or expounded. [I] heard him with great delight but though I did believe his report. Yet, the arm of the Lord was but in little or no degree revealed to me before the Lord was pleased to send your brother, Mr. John, to preach his word in such a clear way and manner as he did; which made me often think it was another Gospel in comparison of what I heard before. And it pleased the Lord to cause it to have great effect upon me for many times by his preaching I have been, as it were, sawn asunder and at my wits end; not knowing what to do. And then I found that what I had done was as nothing. I had not as much as begun to be a Christian but still I was out of Christ and in a sinful state and under the covenant of works and chained down under the wrath of God and thought I must have forever perished. So I went on bemoaning my lost state by original sin. A small time after, I went to hear your brother Mr. John at Baptist Mills, where the Lord was pleased to show me plainly and more fully than before that I was under the yoke of bondage and that I was a slave to sin and the devil. I then knew not what to do, but could scarce keep myself from crying out in the bitterness of my soul, "what shall I do to be saved."

I came to my house but none but the Lord knew what I felt at that time; neither can I express it. I went on for a long time in doubts and fears, and without any hope. Neither could I tell my condition to any person, but still I was ashamed of my own vileness--which made my burden the heavier. I went to hear your brother at Clifton Church, where the word came with such power into my soul that I was taken in such a manner that I never was in before and was afraid I should expose myself before all the people. But [I] could not mind one word of all he spoke for my bones seemed to me as if they were out of joint, but I made shift to come home with much ado.

Monday morning following I went to Newgate to hear your brother, where I was taken in the same manner as before and still I was afraid men should see me so I came home. One of my friends would have me go with her to the Brickyard the same day, but I told her I was afraid to venture again knowing how it was with me twice before. But in the evening I went to the society in Baldwin Street and there I found that the Lord had not forsaken me, but made his power to be known by such a rebellious wretch as I (who had resisted the motions of his spirit) in taking away my senses and strength for a small time and afterwards giving me ease for a little space from the burden I was under and enabling me to come home as if nothing had been the matter with me and giving me such joy and comfort all that night that I cannot express.

So I went on (expecting a greater deliverance than what I had already received) in great joy and peace. Afterwards I heard yourself, sometimes being wounded by it and afterwards healed again, the Lord setting his seal to your ministry so as to cause it to come to my soul with the demonstration of the Spirit and of power. One time in the Bowling Green you preached on those words, "I in them and they in me," which came with such power to my soul that then I had redemption in the blood of Christ, the forgiveness of my sins, and [was] filled with such joy that I cannot express.

A little time later, I went to hear you at the Brickyards where the Lord was pleased to give me a clearer sense of his pardoning love than before, for then I could speak to you and not before. And at Mrs.

England's Society I desired you to return thanks for the great mercies I had received by your ministry that evening, neither can I declare the comfort I have received through your ministry time after time, neither can I be but astonished at the goodness and love of God to such a sinner.

Thus I went on in peace and joy

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until I found myself much ruffled in mind, and begun to question the truth of all I had experienced before. But blessed be God who soon gave me relief from those words written in a book which I then opened--"Think not of thyself wholly left, although for a time I have sent thee some tribulation, or withdrawn thy desired comfort; for this is the way to the Kingdom of Heaven"--from and through which words I was comforted and supported considerably under the troubles my soul was in at that time. And the Lord enabled me to call upon him, though in a broken way. And at that time I could say that the Lord had begun that good work in my soul and that he would enable me by his grace to hold out to the end and endure with patience what he should be pleased to lay upon me while on earth and would keep me from all sin. I went to hear you at the Malt Room on Matthew twenty-four, and could then say "it is good for me to be here," at which time you described what wars and rumours of wars were in the souls of men and told us that if we did not experience it in our own souls, we never knew what it was to be born again; which I hoped I did, for I had found such conflicts and fightings in my soul many times.

At a certain time I heard you expound on the five wise, and the five foolish virgins. By the lamps are meant, you said, an outward profession of faith and holiness. By oil in our lamps was to be understood true repentance and faith in Christ. And then you told us, we could not be Christians unless we had our hearts furnished with the graces of the Holy Spirit of God as a prevailing and abiding principle in our souls. In the evening I heard you expound from the same chapter, when you showed the necessity of good works and said we could not be Christians without them, neither could we be saved by works without faith in Christ. Then I seemed to be dead and dull until the next morning, when (blessed be God) I was again in love and peace and desired to be more heavenly minded, and that I might see more of my own vileness and the corruption of my own wicked heart, and that the Lord would enable me by his grace to hold out to the end.

Friday following, in the evening, I heard you expound on the sufferings of Christ, and what he underwent for poor sinners, with which I was much affected, so that my desires reached out after him that is altogether lovely. So I continue next day, in love and joy; and also till Sunday following when I went to the Lord's Table in comfort and belief that in and through Christ I should be accepted.

But soon after I was in doubt again and did not know what to do. But the Lord was pleased to confirm those words to me which I before received and believed touching the suffering which Christ has gone through in our stead. And so I was again restored to my former peace and joy and still desired the Lord in his own way and time to deliver me from all sin; for I know and sometimes do believe that the Lord will cleanse me from all filthiness of flesh and spirit and enable me by his grace to perfect holiness in his fear, notwithstanding all my fears and distresses I am in, many times occasioned by my own deceitful heart, though often like a watered garden. Yet I do hope that I shall renew my strength, and rest until I obtain the blessing, and lay hold on the promises of the Gospel until they are fulfilled in me. Oh that I may [be] enabled by the grace of God to say with holy David, "thy words have I taken as mine heritage forever, for they are the joy of my heart." With many such texts of scripture the Lord has been pleased to comfort me; but I must own with shame that I have fallen by my negligence, and unfaithfulness to the many graces and mercies that I have received from time to time; and am sometimes ready to cry out

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"Oh that it were with as in months passed."

I went on in this uncomfortable manner, dead, dull, and weary of myself, and did not care whether I came to hear to word or no. But the last time you came from Wales, in the morning, I heard you expound. The Lord manifested himself to me again.

But I sometime after grew slack and gave way to my corrupt and deceitful heart, and did not attend the ordinance of hearing the word as I used to do; which made me grow dead and slack and almost without desire to hear the word at all, and made me sometimes afraid to call upon the Lord in prayer. But the Lord was pleased to show me my vileness, and the corruption and deceit of my heart. The last time you met the bands I seemed unwilling to meet, but blessed be the God of mercies and long-suffering, who (in tender compassion to such a backslider as I) melted me down with his love in such a manner that I could find no word whereby I might worthily praise him who loveth such a sinner as I as though I had never sinned against him; and who has been so often called upon to return to the God of my salvation.

Dear sir, pray for me, that the Lord would never leave me nor forsake me, but that he would enable me to hold out to the end, and not begin in the spirit and end in the flesh, but be a follower of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises, which is my earnest desire, and that I may go on from strength to strength. Although I am now in the dark, yet I know the Lord has not wholly forsaken me although (through my own deadness and coldness) the Lord hath left me to weaken in darkness at this time. But yet I do hope that the Lord will deliver me out of this present state which I am in at this time. Oh that I may look on him whom I have pierced afresh and mourn for my sins. And the Lord grant that I may never rest till I am in Christ a new creature. Yesterday evening I heard you in great joy, though in much grief to think that I had so backslidden from what I was. But yet the Lord did then appear to my great comfort, and through the exhortation I was enabled by the grace of God to hope against hope that the Lord will deliver me from all appearance of evil; which is, and I hope shall be, by divine assistance--the earnest desires of my soul who desires your prayers for me. Your willing though unworthy servant

Naomi Thomas

Reference EMV: 111

Date: 8 October 1743

Addressees: Thomas Middleton to Charles Wesley

Annotated: Annotated by CW: "Tho. Middleton; Oct. 8, 1743; Now in the Harbour."

October 8, 1743

Dear Reverend Sir,

Downing Street, Westminster

You are my father, my counsellor and my guide. The Lord has made you the means to deliver my soul out of trouble. I sometimes stand amazed at myself and am even a mystery how I have been kept as a bush in the midst of a flame and not consumed. As I was walking through the fire, the Lord was with me, or it had not failed that I should have been consumed. For as I was going on forwardly to follow my own heart's lust, his loving Spirit pursued me and hedged me in on every side; so that I could not accomplish my will. I was often constrained to retire to prayer, and there the Lord would show me his will. But I stopped my ears and would not hearken; but when departed, followed on to do my own will, till at length I was ready to take my own will to be the Lord's, so near was I to be given up to my own inventions.

But the Lord in mercy still pursued me. First with blessings, in setting before me the happiness of enjoying him alone, here and hereafter, to all eternity. He also pursued me with judgments, in representing to me the miserable state of those that taste of the love of God and fall away doing despite unto the spirit of grace, and also of the blackness and darkness forever. And also, under the means of grace I could have no fellowship nor communion, but they was a wearisomeness unto me, and a half an hour seemed to me to be an hour.

Yet I was not suffered to stay from them; but when I came to preaching or any of the ordinances, I was struck with such a sense of my wretchedness and misery in departing from God that my first expressions were, "God be merciful unto me, God be merciful unto me, God be merciful unto me."

Thus was it with me and a great deal worse till it pleased God of his mercy to send me to you. Your sharp reproof and advice, through the blessing of God, brought me to a resolution, and to have my eye single to the Lord. But oh the deceitfulness of my heart, and the crafty wiles of Satan; how was I again departing from my own steadfastness. How sorry was I that I had wrote to you my own mind and did, for [I] thought I might have had my own will, and others might not know but that it was the will of God. But God possesseth the heart and the veins, neither is there anything hid from him with whom we have to do, for whither shall I go from his presence; there is no hiding place as I can find, though I have sought it

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carefully. But from the second time I was with you, I sought to hide myself no more, but wanted to pour out my soul to the Lord and to show him of all my trouble. I wanted to weep my life away at the Saviour's feet, to wash his feet with tears, and to kiss his feet.

But my heart still remained hard till the next day which was Sunday. I came to the Foundery in the morning and the hymn and the preaching seemed to me, directed immediately to me. They was to my soul as healing medicines. And at the chapel, all the service my heart was poured out before the Lord.



It was full and ready to break, and particularly at the Lord's table. Just as I came to it, you gave out a hymn which expressed God's mercies and deliverances. It was so suitable to me it reached my very heart. All that day I thought I could desire no greater happiness than to mourn and weep continually.

I experienced your words that my peace would return again if I gave over thinking to oppose the will of God. I find that yet I have an advocate with the Father, who is the propitiation for this, and for all my sins.

Whence to me this wast of love,  
Ask my advocate above;  
See the cause in Jesu's face,  
Now before the throne of grace.

The only thing that now besets me is lightness of spirit, a temptation I least of all expected, I being always so opposite unto it. I believe it is my punishment, but I am amazed that I should be so when my heart is in heaviness and I have so much reason to mourn as I have and sometimes do. But I make my prayer unto God, and I look to be delivered from that, and from every evil word and work.

Be pleased to order, to consult who can be set as leaders over the class at Hyde Park Corner and Grosvenor Square No. 133 and 134; they being so far from me that I cannot attend them. As for the classes in Westminster, I do not know but I may be able to look after them.

From your unworthy son,

Tho[ma]s Middleton.

Reference EMV: 114

Date: 5 July 1745

Addressees: A. Nowel to Charles Wesley

Cardiff July the 5th, 1745.

My Dear Fr[ien]d and Father,

Since I parted with you, you have been often in my thoughts, and could I but retain the sympathizing Spirit which I have felt towards my suffering friend, I should think the five weeks I spent in Bristol was not lost, but rather that time, and all the fatigue of a dangerous passage home to be abundantly recompensed. It was not altogether in vain that you read those sad lines to me. I think I then found God in some manner fulfilling the desire of my soul. I know you need not my compassion, because [I am] incapable of relieving your distress. Yet I want to feel great sorrow and to pray for you. I believe if I were near you my heart, hard and stupid as it is, would be often affected what a sense of what you have and with you daily suffer. I could not see your affliction and hear your groans unmoved, surely I could not. It was my regard for you which caused these uneasy apprehensions of which I complained, but I did but fear as you assure me where no fear was. Your late behaviour has encouraged me to use that freedom which I am naturally inclined to use towards those I would esteem my real friends. Where I am sensitive there is sincerity I can bear with everything, and excuse every weakness, therefore expect everyone who vouchsafes to admit me in the number of their friends and hath in some measure proved me faithful, will thus bear with me.

I was so overpowered the day I left Bristol with a sense of my obligation to all my friends that I had little to say in return. How shall I be sufficiently thankful? I must desire you'll thank Mrs. Vigor and her sisters in my name, their friendship having been more abundant to me upon your account. I want to be useful to my friends but am sensitive of my unprofitableness. I would fain avoid the cross. How grievous it is to a grateful mind to reprove a dear friend because it is so disagreeable to human nature to be convinced of its errors, either in principle or practice, that it is seldom we can admonish one another but it is thought the reprover must think himself wiser or better than ourselves and therefore his esteem for us must certainly be lessened.

I wanted an opportunity of talking with you more particularly about our friend. I would fain have every hindrance to her soul's health removed. It was with concern I observed that needless anxiety she hath for her friends. I have known her to be burdened two or three days in writing a letter to you, which hath for that time almost wholly employed her time and thoughts. She is fearing this may be thought too free, or that may be thought amiss. How you can act in this particular I cannot advise. I observed a word you mentioned one day, that you were burdened even among your friends. I knew partly what you felt, and could not wonder at your constant desires to quit this vale of tears. I could almost say "amen" to

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your prayer. But how apt are we in the bitterness of our souls to utter words without knowledge. Were you or I to talk with a person under your circumstances we would not point them to death as the remedy of their woe. No, you would say, "Wait upon the Lord and you shall renew your strength. He will shed his love abroad in your heart and make all your ways pleasantness, and all your paths peace, and you shall rejoice evermore." Though I have not faith to believe I shall thus see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living but think my sorrow remediless in this life; yet, I dare not speak this to others (except those who know the conflict of a soul with the power of darkness) because it would be inconsistent with the principles I profess to believe.

At my return I found this society in a very declining way. Many are weary and faint in their minds. Others are altogether gone out of the way, so that the hands of those who laboured amongst us are much weakened insomuch that they are few who seek the truth in the love of it. Some rest in notions, others in dead form. May the Lord hasten your coming in pity to us. Your sending any of those who have lately been amongst us will be of little advantage. They don't so much want to know, as to be directed in practice, to be built up in the faith which by you hath been delivered to us.

Our society hath been injured by being reputed wise, but I cannot condemn them herein. For whether I am wise, or a fool, I desire to be instructed how I may attain communion with God. Indeed all forms and opinions seem to me as nothing and I wait as one stripped of all dependence upon anything but the immediate power of God. Yet I cannot but highly value every instrument whereby God conveys light and life or comfort to my soul and I may truly say that excepting you and your brother's preaching, I found but little good for my soul at Bristol. But whatever my thoughts are on these things I have so much wisdom as to conceal my sentiments in regard to the good of others. But speaking them to you cannot be amiss, because my heart is open to receive your advice, to bear your reproof, and to acknowledge any fault or error you can convince me of. Be but as free with me as you would with your own soul, and I trust you shall never have cause to repent your friendship to your weak unworthy friend.

I do really desire to see you, and am not altogether selfish herein; though you especially are a preacher to my state. But whether you come or not I desire God to bless you with every spiritual gift, to give you a right judgment in all things, and to prosper the work of your hands, and make you even here a witness of his uttermost salvation. Then you will surely receive this saying, "Thou shalt weep no more."

If it is not imprudent in me to ask such a favour, I would desire when you write that you would transcribe ten, or a dozen of the first of those lines. I do acknowledge I stand in need of means to excite my stupid soul, both in regard to the love of God, and my neighbour, and nothing seems to me so effectual as a lively description of another's sufferings to oblige me to remember those in bonds as bound with them. My mother and sister, and Mr. Wells desire their love to you.

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I was not told Mrs. Jones hath taken it ill that you have not written to her. I wrote to her since my return and urged all the reasons I could in your excuse.

Reference EMV: 61

Date: 28 June 1745

Addressees: Mary Francis. to Charles Wesley

Annotations: 1. Shorthand passage

2. CW's hand: "June 1745 / M. Francis of S. Roger's Death"]

Address with no postmark: "To the Reverend Mr. Charles Wesley / Bristol"]

Kingswood  
June the 28, 1745

Reverend Sir,

The most that Sister Rogers spoke she spoke to me. Therefore he desired me to write it. She, all the time [of] her illness, seemed resigned to the will of God, excepting once for a little season. She was tempted to take it hard that she could not go to hear the word. But as she grew nearer her end she was resigned in that also. She was in a great deal of body pain but she never seemed the least impatient, but cried out, "Lord give me but patience and lay what thou will upon me. When she was in the greatest extremity of pain she would say. "Well is it for me that my peace is made with God." She exhorted every one that came to see her to be earnest to seek the Lord and not put it off to a sick bed. "For what should I do if Jesus was not my Lord. But I know he is." She had no fear of death all the time of her illness for she said she was as sure of heaven as if she was there already. Though she knew the work was not finished in her soul. But she believe he that had promised would also preform it before she went hence.

For about a fortnight before her death she said nothing interrupted her peace night nor day, but she was in continual prayer unto the Lord. And so she continued

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till she died. The day before her death she sent for me and told me her departure was at hand. I asked her if she was willing to die and leave her family. She said she was, for she committed them into the hands of the Lord whom she knew would care for them. She said, "Don't ye doubt of me if I can't speak much before I die, for I know I shall be eternally happy and be forever with him whom my soul loveth." She chose her text, the 23 Psalm, and she desired that her funeral sermon might not be preached till you came, for she said you knew more of her than anyone else. About three o'clock the next morning she sent for me again and she was then adying. I asked her if she had a full assurance of her happiness. She said, "I have. I know I shall be happy forever but I have not strength to speak." Her whole cry was, "Come Lord Jesus. Come quickly." Some minutes before she died she seemed to have a strong combat with the Devil. But she turned herself about like a lamb and cried, "Come Lord Jesus," and so departed. O may my end be like unto hers. O sir, pray for me.

[CW's shorthand passage in left margin of text: "\*\*\*"]

Your Daughter in the gospel,  
Mary Francis

[Postscript in bottom margin by Mrs. Francis]

Sir,

I hear that Hanna Barrow at the Chapel hath sent for you to give her the sacrament I should be glad to speak with you first.

Reference EMV: 62

Date: 14 September 1748

Account of the conversion and happy death of Daniel Galvin

Annotation: There is one line of shorthand at the end of the page and another at the top of the next followed by these words: "Death of Dan Galvil; Papist, once, now a Saint in Glory."

A Short Account of the Death of Daniel Galvin Late of Dublin He was born in and brought up and educated in the principles of the Church of Rome. In the year 17--. He was apprentice in Dublin to be a cabinet-maker. He lived as the generality of young people do, in pleasure and sensual delights, not regarding the one thing needful, thinking it sufficient if sometimes he attended the mass.

But about the latter end of last May or the beginning of June he went to hear Mr. Williams. The seed fell on good ground. He not only heard but kept the word of God. It was to him as a hammer which breaketh the rock in pieces. He was presently awakened and felt himself a sinner, which he no sooner did than he left his sins and the Church of Rome together. He was a penitent indeed, and brought fruits meet for repentance.

When he left the Church of Rome he joined in communion with the Church of England and soon became a member of the Society here.

From that time he was remarkably serious, and never wilfully lost any opportunity of hearing the word, meeting his class, and attending the Church and sacrament.

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He warned all that came in his way, to flee from the wrath to come and to seek the Lord while he might be found, but did not press on others what himself did not do. His reproofs were so reasonable, that all who were acquainted him blessed God for him and deplored their loss when he took him from them.

About the beginning of September he caught a violent cold which introduced a spotted fever. Yet it did not hinder him from coming to the preaching three or four times. But it soon grew too hard for him and at last confined him to his bed.

He experienced a very great desire to see me, but something or other hindered that I did not go for the space of two or three days, in which time Brother Wesley (who was then in town) visited him. He found him very ill both in body and soul. The spirit of a man may sustain his infirmities but a wounded spirit who can bear?

Still he grew more and more uneasy to see me. I now went to see him and found him exceeding bad; but though he was delirious, he knew me and was glad to see me. I spoke a little to him and spent some time in prayer with those about him, and then departed, but did not neglect to visit him frequently after that time.

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His disorder had some intervals, at which times he laboured to enter in at the straight gate, particularly on the Sunday before he died. He then seemed confident that the Lord would visit him with his salvation and said to one that was with him he would not take ten thousand worth for that confidence and added, "If I had a thousand lives they should all go for Christ" and again "if Christ would but reveal himself to

me, I should not care how long I lay on this bed. Where is the physician of souls, where is the blood of sprinkling. Oh that thou wouldst look upon me as thou didst upon the thief on the cross."

Speaking of the blood of Christ, he said, "That blood is warmer than all the blood in the world," and turning to them in the room he said, "Don't be afraid my brethren, Christ will come. He hath said look unto me and be ye saved. I know I shall see the Lord before I go hence to be no more seen."

On the morrow morning he was sensible again and continued so till about three or four o'clock. He was now quite impatient to see me, and no marvel, for glory be to his name who sends by whom He will send, God designed me to be the welcome messenger though neither of us knew it. One of our brothers who lived in the same house came to call me, but I was on my way shortly

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before he set out.

When I came in I found him past hopes of recovering, but earnestly wrestling with God for the blessing; for still he was without the knowledge of salvation which is given by the forgiveness of sins. I spoke a few words to him and then went to prayer. I soon felt that God was there. My own heart was broken as was most of theirs who were then present. I found access to the throne of grace, and begged the mediator to remember his own agony and bloody sweat, and by his cross and passion to deliver his servant who was appointed to die.

I rose up and began to speak of the suitableness of Christ to save them that are ready to perish and of his willingness to do it. But I had not spoken long before the Lord came suddenly to his temple, took away the veil and revealed himself unto his sorrowful disciple.

Immediately he cried out, "I see him, I see him--the Lamb, the Lamb." Now sorrow and sighing fled away while he ate and drank of the bread and water of life. Delight and satisfaction sat upon his countenance and the name of Jesus was like ointment poured forth. When I stopped speaking he cried out with eagerness a few words more. I asked him if he had any doubt

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or fear, he answered, "No, none at all," and said, "I have no pain, I never had such pleasure in all my life. It runs all through me," meaning the love of God. The words which he now spoke were spirit and life, for turning himself to them in the room we not only heard but felt him say, "My brethren make haste, give all diligence, for now is the accepted time," or words of that import.

One of our brethren called to see him, about two hours after I left him and asked him how he did. He answered, "Full of peace and joy in believing," and squeezing him by the hand said to him, "Praise, praise."

Soon after Mr. Williams called and found him rejoicing in God his Saviour. He now bore his affliction with great patience and was never heard to complain either of pain or sickness.

Most part of Tuesday he was light in the head till towards evening, when the minister of Saint John's came to see him. He asked him how he did. Daniel replied, "Very well with the blessing of God." The minister then asked him if he had no doubt, he told him, "No, none at all." He then bid him take care he did not deceive himself.

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He told him he did take care.

To one that came in to see him, he said it will be but a day or two we shall see one another here before we meet in glory. He sung and rejoiced often even to his last moments which was on Wednesday, the 14th of September in the twenty-first year of his age after about 14 days' sickness.

O let me die the death of the righteous, and let my latter end be like his.

Reference EMV: ??

Date: [1748]

Addressees: A female band leader in London to the Methodist sisters in Bristol of the death of Miss Copper

I received yours a few days ago with great thankfulness and had it not lain all this time I should have answered it sooner. I still find most assuredly that our souls are closed united to our Bristol Community; we are one in him who joins us. The Lord has been pleased to honor us with several glorious deaths of late. The most striking of which I have had on my mind to send you an account of, as Miss March took it down who was with her the whole time, for I always find when anything is profitable I long for my Bristol sisters to partake of it. The person was Miss Copper of whom I suppose you may have heard often. During life she was an uncommon steady walker and adorned her profession in all things. And a few years ago misfortunes happening to her mother's husband. She gave up, as soon as she came of age, all her little fortune and went out into the world as a companion to a gentlewoman of our society. Here she was exceedingly tried, but proved that the way of the Cross was the way to the Kingdom.

After God had spoke peace to her soul about two years he began to stir her up to seek a farther blessing, convincing her she had been an unbeliever of his power although she had tasted of his love, limiting the holy one of Israel. She continued sometime seeking with much earnestness till at length the Lord gave her power to cast her whole soul by faith on Jesus as made unto her of God: wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. From this time she rejoiced and loathed herself in her own sight, often saying, "I feel no desire but to please Jesus Christ and know not of anything in my will but what is sanctified to him. I depend on him every moment as my advocate with the Father and daily feel my shortcoming without condemnation. The blood of sprinkling speaks me clean. And if I could perform the obedience I desire, I should still be ashamed before him. And though I do not glorify God as I would, I am not condemned but abased before him."

In sickness as well as health she lived in the will of God. She abode in faith and dwelt in love.

A few days before her last illness she said to one of my band, "I have always, from a child, had a fear that at the hour of death I should have great conflicts and not be able to endure. But this day God has assured me I shall finish my course with joy."

Soon after that she was constrained to sing.

"When pain on my weak flesh prevails  
with Lamb-like patience arm my breast."

And when she sent for Miss March, she wrote in her note, "I suffer the will of Jesus, all he sends is sweetened by his love.

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I am happy as if I heard a voice say,

"For me my elder brethren stay,  
and angels beckon me away,  
and Jesus bid me come."



When one told her, "You will not be frightened, my dear, but it is the small pox." I answered, "I can't be frightened at the will of God." Sometime after she said, "I shall die a lump of deformity, but I shall meet you all glorious. I shall still have fellowship with your spirit."

When Mr. Morgan came in, he asked her what she thought the only way for souls to walk in and what were their chief hindrances? She answered, "I consider these dangers as partly constitutional[?]. It was mine to be of a reserved temper of mind, to be very quiet, to suffer much and say little. [Some] are of a different disposition. Some may think the one more excellent, some the other. But I see the great thing is to live in the will of God. And for some months past, when my soul has been more particularly devoted to God, I have felt such a being guided by his eye and the union which I have received from the Holy One teacheth me all things," etc. He asked her if she had particular conviction she should die? She answered, "No, only from the nature of disorder. But I feel his will so precious that it is impossible to choose."

On Friday morning she said she believed she should die, and sitting up in the bed prayed, "Lord I bless thee that thou art one with me and all that thou hast is mine. Thy Love is greater than my weakness, greater than my helplessness, greater than my unworthiness. Lord thou sayest to corruption, thou art my sister. And glory be to thee, O Jesus, thou art my brother. Let me comprehend with all saints the length and breadth and depth and height of thy love," etc.

Some hours after the agonies of death came on, her teeth were clean and and [sic] her face at the same time full of smiles of triumph. She clapped her hands for joy and soon after said, "The enemy is as a roaring lion."

Mrs. C--- said, "But you, my dear, are more than conqueror through the blood of the Lamb." She said, "Yes! O yes, \sweet Jesus\. O death where is thy sting?"

When Mr. Wesley came, he said, "Do you believe now that you are saved from sin?" She replied, "Yes, I have had no doubt of it these many months. That I ever had was because I did not abide in the faith. For while I believed, I always felt it. But I now feel I have kept the faith and there is no fear in love, perfect love [casts] out fear," etc.. She exhorted all that came in her way to be wholly given up to God. She was near 28 hours without swallowing anything and at the end of that time said she should be content to live a twelve month for the will of God was so dear she could feel no complaining in her soul etc.. Sometime after, Mrs. D--- said, "My dear, we have not long to enjoy each other or suffer together." She replied, "My dear, our enjoyments are eternal, never to have an end." On Monday, she was lightheaded but sensible at times. One said "Jesus is your \Mark\." She answered with a low voice, "I have but one mark. I am all spiritual." Miss M--- once said, "You dwell in God! \Altogether\," said she. She then said, "The Lord keeps my soul above all or I don't know what would become of one. He is very good."

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She was in strong convulsions sixteen hours before she died. Her pain was extreme. She said, "You are made perfect this [sic] sufferings." "More and more so," said she. She then lay some time and said, "Lord thou art strong." Then pausing sometime, she said, "My Jesus is all in all to me. Glory be to him in time and to all eternity." In half an hour after she quietly fell asleep in him, her soul lover.

May we die the death of the righteous and our last end be as hers. Having so much to write of this account (which indeed I have been forced greatly to shorten) I shall not have time to say all that I would.

Reference EMV: 75

Date: 29 September 1751

Addressees: John Hutchinson to Charles Wesley

Annotated: There follows four lines of shorthand, probably CW's. On the reverse is one line in shorthand, another in Latin, the date and the following inscription by CW: "J. Hutchinson--what James Hutton \was\!"

My most dear and best beloved friend

Baildon Sept. 29th, 1751

I rec[eiv]ed yours. With much fatigue \I got safe on\ Monday night about seven o'clock to this place, where I yet carry the burden of a sorrowful mind. On my journey I endured the most exquisite grief and still remain \inconsolable\ for the loss of so dear, so valuable, and much loved friend. When I call to remembrance my ingratitude in not answering your letters when at Newcastle, my sorrow is aggravated still more, the sense whereof forces me to acknowledge [I am] no more worthy of that friendship which is dearer to me than life. Were your tender regard and friendly admonitions from this moment to cease, [I] own [it] would justly be my desert. My uneasiness at present requires me to \ask you ten thousand pardons\, and once more look over the folly and indiscreetness of a thoughtless, heedless, ungrateful youth, and beg you will \assure me in\ your next, the promise of a continuation \of your favour\.

I hope you have enkindled an affection in my heart which will \never be extinguished\. It is an affection \that excites a\ strong desire to ensure my place above these rolling spheres where we shall no more be separated. O dear sir, \I cannot describe how I love you\. My heart is ready to break that providence hath allotted me \to be so far separate from\ you. \I could live and die with you\. If you \don't visit Yorkshire\ \soon I can never be at rest\. If you confine yourself in the south for so many years, as of late you have done, and forget you have a sincere unalterable friend here, I shall be miserable. Long absence causeth that heat of friendship to decrease, I am jealous over you but much more over myself. I know by experience my good desires vanish like

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the morning dew. The good instructions you bestowed I \hope will not be in vain\. My prayer is that I may be \your crown of rejoicing\. You shall yet \have joy over me\ and more that you have sought a wandering sheep and brought him to the fold. The next time we meet, I hope \you will see me in another likeness\, with some small stamps of the divine image upon me. Write to me often and love me more, \let no new convert be my rival\, continue your loving kindness unto me and \admit no one to have\ a greater share in your affection than your poor, unworthy, ungrateful young man.

I have been broken hearted ever since your departure. What yielded me most ease was the thought of hearing from you, which I impatiently waited for. Upon first sight of your letter, my heart leaped for joy. I have read it over times without number, but cannot find your accustomed manner of writing, (which was) \Dear Johnny\, \dear youth\, \etc.\, \etc\. I remember in your three letters to Mr. Shent, you begun with "Dear William." Don't be angry at my simplicity, it is a weakness I cannot help. What shall I say? In my own strength I can promise nothing; but according to the present situation of my mind, I desire I may cease to breathe when I forsake you. You are dearer to me than myself, and you shall never want anything I can do for you. Only continue \to travel and I will wait for\ your support.

I continue in health \much the same as when\ at Manchester. I got much better [at] \home than could be expected for a\ person in my situation. Direct your next to me at Leeds, I shall return there on Wednesday

or Thursday next. You desire to know if I remember who parted with me at Smithy Door's. Yes, it is he! whom I most love; whom I shall never forget until I shall be no more; my friend more beloved than all Indian wealth.

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I shall endeavour to put your proposal in execution as soon as I return to Leeds, I will get my mother to prevail, if possible, for me to pay \you a visit at Bristol\. I do not doubt performing the fatigue of the journey, if so pleasing a journey would be granted me. Then should I regale myself with the agreeable conversation of my dear, dear friend. I fear you will be wearied in \reading my long scribble\. Believe me, it is the real language of my heart. And now [I] conclude with my kind \love to Mrs. Wesley\, \returning her ten thousand thanks\ for all her tender, but undeserved courtesies to me. And [I] shall, if possible, accept her agreeable invitation. My love when you write to that most inimitable composition of body and mind (I mean Mrs. Perring)

I observe your \appointment at twelve o'clock\. I have little hopes for myself. [I] delight in your commands and in doing you the little service I am capable of at present.

I remain, with all the tender ties of love and friendship,

My dear, dear sir,

Your ever affectionate  
real friend and brother,

J[oh]n Hutchinson

P.S. Write to me at Leeds. I shall expect to receive a letter from you, the thoughts of which give me pleasure.

Reference EMV: 22

Date: February 1752

Addressees: Happy death of Joanna Barber, sent by her husband to Charles Wesley

Annotated: There follows four lines of shorthand, probably CW's. On the reverse is one line in shorthand, another in Latin, the date and the following inscription by CW: "J. Hutchinson--what James Hutton \was\!"

The following is a particular account as I can give you concerning my wife [Joanna Barber]. -----

When she was first awakened it was under your brother's ministry, that very Sabbath-day that he preached at St. Giles-in-the-fields. And such an awakening I have seldom seen, for the Lord in that hour gave her such a sight of herself, had not the people been very thick, she must a sunk down to the ground. In a few days after the Lord convinced her of unholiness and set her sins in array before her face in such a manner that indeed she could truly say the burden of them was intolerable.

She laboured under the burden of her sins for near two years before she found deliverance, in which time she had many and sore conflicts with the enemy. She could not go along the street about her business but if [she] saw any of the creatures that God made, some evil or blasphemous [thought] would arise in her mind. Many and various were the temptations that she was assaulted with from the enemy while she was under conviction. But when the Lord spoke grace to her soul she rode, as it were, upon the wings of the wind for a season till the enemy came again with his angel's face and said, "Now thy sins are forgiven, thou hast no more to do." She found this the greatest temptation of all and as often said. She was ready to sink into the earth at the very thought. But the Lord had taught her better things, for she saw the great necessity of being fully renewed in his image, which was her constant prayer and desire.

When the time came that we parted from our brethren at Fetter Lane, she readily agreed thereto, for she saw that stillness was so agreeable to self and nature that she could in no wise agree therein. And from that time she never went to hear them more.

She was of a fearful and timorous disposition lest she should presume too far upon the mercies of God. She would often put the blessings from her. She was often complaining of her evil heart and her corrupt nature. But her continual prayer to God was for full deliverance.

When the time came that the Lord was about to take her to himself, she was visited with exceeding great pain of body. Her prayer to God was for faith and patience to bear what the Lord was pleased to lay upon her. She saw her end drew near and would often cry out, "Come Lord Jesus, come quickly." Being asked if she had anything that burdened her mind. She answered, "No." She knew that Christ had taken away all her sins. She said, "I do not find much joy but sweet calmness and serenity of mind." But when the time of departure drew nigh, which was Sunday morning, she

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said, "I must go home, I must go home to my Father's house," and would often cry out in the intervals, "Come Lord Jesus, come quickly." She said, "This is my dear last Sabbath, my dear last Sabbath."

Her last words that she spoke was,

"Come shed thy promised love abroad

And make my comforts strong."

And then she laid herself down and sweetly slept in the Lord.  
Joanna Barber.

Reference EMV: 76

Date: 20 September 1752

Addressees: John Hutchinson to Charles Wesley

Annotated: On the reverse of the letter is: "Sept. 20, 1752. J. Hutchinson offering to board with us and my answer." The answer written in shorthand at the bottom of the sheet.

Leeds, Sept. 20, 1752

Dear Sir,

It is with no small pleasure that your two last letters brought me the news of Mrs. Wesley's safe delivery of a son and continues in a likely way to recover. [I] am glad to hear she is out \of danger\. I hope when this reach[es] you she will be quite well, fit to \nurse\ and take care of my godson.

I have now to return you and Mrs. Wesley my most grateful acknowledgements for the honour you have done me, as also my compliments to the gentleman, (Mr. James) my representative. Mr. Perronet, I mean Mr. Charles P[erronet], is expected here on his journey to Bristol. I shall \send two guineas by him\ for Mrs. Wesley to dispose of as she thinks proper. I had not opportunity, or would have sent it before the christening.

In your next, let me know how my \god son goes on for I think\ \I shall be very fond of him\ and do assure you once more, nothing would be more agreeable to me than an opportunity of paying you a visit at Bristol. I wish my desires in that may be accomplished. I believe it would be \for my eternal welfare\.

I continue yet very irregular [and] think I shall never be better \until\ \I make my abode with you\. I have some thoughts, as I entirely dislike to live at Leeds, to come and \live at Bristol\ as soon as I can be disengaged from business; which will not be

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before the expiration of two years, it please God so long to spare me. Will you let me \board with you\, \or would Mrs. Wesley condescend\ to let me have house room? I should not desire much attendance. I think I shall be glad to wait on my dear Mr. Wesley, and render him all the \little services I am\capable. This I often \tell our people and it is\ the sentiments I have had for twelve months past.

At your request, I have seen Mr. Thornton, but I had not opportunity to have much conversation with him. I am exceeding sorry to be deprived the happiness of seeing you this summer. It will be a year since I parted with you at Manchester the twenty-third of September O.S. [Old Style] and if I must not see you \until spring\, \don't\ disappoint me then. My best respects to Mrs. Wesley and my dear godson.

Your very affectionate friend and servant.

J[ohn] H[utchinson]

Reference EMV: 116

Date: 3 December 1754

Addressees: Ann Partridge to Charles Wesley

Annotated: The note in CW's hand reads: "Ann Partridge; A Seal; at Leigh; Dec. 3, 1754.

Not unto me, O Lord, not unto me!"

Dear and Reverend Sir,

I beg pardon for making so free with you, but duty obliged me to acquaint you of the great blessing I have received by your ministry. The Lord gave me to expect some blessing from you from the very first time that I heard of your coming, which made me long to see you though I never had seen you in the flesh.

Dear Sir, the Lord gave me to take your message as from himself. He was pleased to show me a glimpse of his face. Nay, he even forced me to believe for my unbelieving heart was ready to cry, "how can these things be, seeing I am a hell deserving sinner?" But the Lord gave me to see plainly that it was his Spirit alone which convinced me of that and that he was both able and willing to forgive and receive me through the merits and righteousness of his dearly beloved son, Christ Jesus; which brought these words with power to my soul: "Yes I yield, I yield at last: listen to thy speaking blood: me with all my sins I cast: on my atoning God." I saw, as it were, the Lord's frown turned into a smile. It forced tears of joy to overflow my eyes. I cannot express how I felt in my soul.

Dear Sir, let me beg of you to remember me before the throne of grace. I know the Lord will hear you. Nay, he has heard you already for me. I am free at this time from any doubts or fear. Blessed be my God for it. I pray God increase my faith.

Dear Sir, I earnestly beg of God to give you to watch in all things, to endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of your ministry. I pray God give you a double portion of his blessed Spirit. And wherever you go, may he always watch over you for good; which is the earnest prayer of me, your

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friend and servant,

Ann Partridge.

Pray sir, please to give my duty to the Reverend Mr. John Wesley.

Reference EMV: ??

Date: 9 March 1756

Addressees: William Turner to Charles Wesley

London, March the 9th, 1756

Reverend Sir,

Under your preaching on Monday last in the forenoon, I was set at liberty from the spirit of bondage into the glorious liberty of the children of God, for which I desire to give humble and hearty thanks to Almighty God (my reconciled Father) for the same, through Jesus Christ my once bleeding but now exalted Saviour. Behold, on Good Friday I abstained from my usual diets for Christ's sake and my comfort, which I found to increase greatly, and whilst you was preaching peace by Jesus Christ, I by precious faith found that peace of God that passeth knowledge. It is to me something remarkable that God should bless me with his pardoning love in a manner near the same as was happy Cornelius by the same word preached and the same number of days abstinence. I doubt not your joy for the same, and desire to remain your humble

servant for Christ's sake,

W[illia]m Turner

I think it incumbent on me to make known the manner of my being convinced of sin and the manner of my small progress in the divine life, such an instance perhaps you do seldom hear of.

About a year ago a friend lent me a book of Mr. Romaine's published out of the Song of Songs. But first I must acquaint you that I had laboured hard early and late, being by trade a joiner, for some months, but my master broke and it was to me a great temporal loss. I had no friend living, and away from all old acquaintance in a strange place, thought I must seek happiness from God. So [I] began to amend my life by going to sacrament and fixing resolutions to lead a new life.

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But on perusal of Mr. Romaine's discourses, I found myself not right because I could not call Jesus Christ my beloved and my friend from my heart.

I soon began to see the want of a Saviour. I thought of the words of the most fairest, "Learn of me for I am meek and lowly." I endeavoured to copy after the example, and may the Lord be pleased to give me grace so to continue, and found much comfort.

My hatred to sin increased and love to holiness, for I had been shown the spirituality of the law. I did look up to the author and finisher of my faith and rested on him, relying on his righteousness and renouncing my own. I did see first the great want of faith. But by looking up to Jesus it was increased and I had power to die to all outward sins, but found a very stony heart. Jesus by his Spirit often knocked at the door of my heart to depart from creature comfort, which was my bosom sin. Blessed be God, I have rich amends for parting with it. I have hated myself for my ingratitude to my God, but never was under much burden of sin. Under the word preached [I] oftimes had great doubts whether or not I was deluded, but strongly relied on my Saviour's power and willingness.

Oh that the Lord may anoint you and all your fellow labourers in Christ's vineyard with his Holy Spirit;



that you may not faint and that your prayers may be [answered]; that I, a youth about twenty-five may be kept unspotted from this unhallowed world. Grace be to all that love the Lord

Jesus in sincerity.

Amen.

Reference EMV: 63

Date: (August 1760)

Addressees: Nicholas Gilbert to Charles Wesley

Annotated: CW's note, "Nicholas Gilbert's Experience to Aug. 1760."

A Short Account of God's Dealings with a Sinner from his Infancy.

I had a real reverence for the name of God ever since I have any remembrance of anything and death was dreadful to me always and my meditations on it have been very deep and frequently very disturbing. Religious persons and religion itself, was amiable in my sight. And often have I wished to be good, when alas, goodness was far from me. For as I grew in years, sin grew upon me. Though my convictions and resolutions were many yet my evil would not be restrained; but anger, greed and vanity captivated my whole soul and preyed upon me continually.

Sermons indeed would make impressions on my mind, and fixed good purposes in my heart such

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as determination to leave the company of the wild unthinking boys with whom I was brought up. Of a Lord's day I frequently resolved to stay within and read the Scriptures knowing that to be found trifling away my time was all wrong; and for it, shame has often covered my face. But my resolutions were like Ephriam's goodness, \they passed away\.

Thus I went on from my first dawning of reason till I was about 19 years of age. Then it pleased God (the Methodists being in Cornwall two years before) to bring me in the way of one who had known something of the goodness of God to his soul. And as I was before this convinced that the Methodists were the most religious of any people I had ever seen, was therefore easily persuaded to

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fix a resolution of going to hear them. And my first hearing after my mind was thus resolved, was one Good Friday in the year 1744.

Soon after I joined the society of the Methodists, and near midsummer it pleased God to manifest to my soul the forgiveness of my sins by faith in JESUS CHRIST. And in the beginning of the year [17]46 the Lord opened my mouth to give a word of exhortation to a few of my neighbours who used to meet together to sing and pray then. Soon after I began to speak from a portion of Scripture. This I did two or three times a week, sometimes oftener while I continued my business for about three years time. Then in Feb. 1749, Mr. Wesley sent for me to attend at his conference at Bristol, which was to begin in March. Accordingly I left Cornwall and came to Bristol and began work as an itinerant in the Wiltshire Circuits, where I continued

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till August when I went to London. There I remained till in December I set out for Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

In these parts I laboured till July 1750. I came into Yorkshire, remaining in Yorkshire till May 1751. It was the determination of the Conference that I should visit Ireland. Being detained at Liverpool about a fortnight, I began preaching for the first time in the fields. I embarked for Dublin in the beginning of June

and in three days landed at the end of the New Wall in Dublin Bay.

I continued in Ireland labouring principally in Dublin, Cork and Limerick till May 1755. I came into England and after spending a few weeks in Yorkshire, set off with Mr. Greenwood for Cornwall, after being away upwards of four years. Here I continued till July 1756. I came to Bristol

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and in September embarked with Mr. Hopper, Mr. Massiot, Mr. Murlin and Mr. Olivers for Cork. We left Bristol on Tuesday and landed in Ireland the Sunday. After spending four months in Cork I went to Dublin where I continued till May 1757. I went into the North for well nigh three months then returned to Dublin and soon after went to Limerick where in November and part of December I had a very severe fit of the fever which brought me very low in as much that my life was despaired of by almost all that saw me.

I returned to Dublin in Jan. 1756, where I remained principally till the beginning of August. Mr. Hopper, Mr Greenwood, Mr. Johnson and I embarked for Parkgate. We left Dublin Bay Sunday noon and landed at Parkgate Monday evening,

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in a few days came to Bristol, and in the beginning of September, went to Norwich. [I] continued in Norwich, Colchester and London till Feb. 1759, came to Bristol and in May returned to London where I continued till September. And after spending a little while in Sarum and the plains contiguous there to, I returned to Bristol where I remained principally till August 1760.

Reference EMV: 145

Date: 2 March 1762

Addressees: ?? to Charles Wesley

Address: From Basque Road - "For the Reverend Mr. C[harles] Wesley"

Annotation: Note in CW's hand: "Christ in the Flesh / March 2, 1762"

Dear Brother and Sister,

There being a packet[?] here about sailing for England, I take this opportunity of letting you know how the work of God increases. I bless the Lord who has indeed given us to see that it is only for the sake of Jesus Christ that salvation ever came on earth. And that as of old, so now, he sendeth by whom he will send. The Lord is arisen to work, none can let it! Before we left passage a town near Cork very profane, we had been there some time before we could see one that had the fear of God before their eyes. But now, blessed be God, through the instrumentality of Captain Taylor, they have a society formed and many are seeking to be saved on Christ's terms. We expected to have went to Bellile, so we provided ourselves with several little books entitled, \A Word of Advice to a Soldier\. Notwithstanding, we gave them to the sailors when we arrived here. And the good they have done is very great indeed under God. Two or three days after we arrived here, having disposed of a few of them among the common men that came on board us, it reached the officers ears and the purser[?] of one Man of War sent a billet to Captain Taylor with Sir Thomas's compliments (the Commodore) and hearing Captain Taylor had some useful sermons to

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dispose of, begged the favour of one or two for his perusal. We sent Mr. Charles's \Awake Thou That Sleepist\, and other such as we had. The next day another such message came from another ship and I think the next day another. Then the officers came themselves and invited Captain Taylor to dine with them. All the men are exceeding eager for reading them. [Some] have several times offered money for them. Our second mate, having business on board some of them, generally carried some with him. And he says the people are ready to jump overboard for them, into the boat, shiving[?] who shall get them first. Many I trust have left off outward profanity, as well officers as men, and some I humbly hope have gone farther. I never heard or read or saw such work before. Surely the day of the Lord is at hand. One of our brothers, a shoemaker, came over in a transport carrying upwards of 40 hands. He asked the Captain, who had no fear of God before his eyes, if he might pray with \them\. He left the cabin and gave him liberty. He (our brother) told the Boatswain and called them together. He prayed and intended to conclude, but they stood still as if wanting something to be said to them. He then exhorted them to repentance, told them the misery of dying without Christ, and the happiness of a Christian ((life)) here and hereafter. They eat the Word and some of them are under strong convictions he says. The Lord end it in a sound conversion. He has been on board most of the Men of War and the condescension of the officers is amazing. They are desirous to be taught by anybody, as are the men in general. O what is the Lord doing! Our people seem very earnest at present.

Reference EMV: 112

Date: [March 1762]

Account of the death of Joanna Mussell

Annotation: CW's note, "Joanna Mussell's Death 1762."

### A Brief Account of the Conversion and Death of Joanna Mussell

About the year 1742, Mr. Charles Wesley preached in Mr. Moon's tanyard near St. Phillips plain upon the parable of the prodigal son, "I will arise and go to my father" and under which sermon she was deeply convinced of her lost state and felt the need of a Saviour. Under deep convictions she laboured more than six months and was often heard to say, "Oh I have a precious immortal soul, and know not whether it will be saved or lost."

Mr. John Wesley about this time preached in the Malthouse on Temple Back on these words, "Be not afraid it is I". Her sorrows rather increased during the sermon, but after, she came home and threw herself on the bed as one bereaved of all comfort, she continued pouring out her broken complaints to the Lord, when on a sudden, a profound silence seared her spirit, and she saw as it were a bright cloud presented before her, and in the midst of the cloud the form of a man with his hands and eyes lifted up to heaven, and it was revealed to her that it was Jesus making intercession for her. At this her burden was much lessened but not entirely taken away. The next day she related this to one of her sisters, doubting what would be the meaning of this impression, who advised her to go on and the Lord would do for her greater things than these. About three days after this as she was walking in the street crying and praying (for prayer was now her constant exercise) she heard a voice saying, "Daughter be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee." Immediately her soul was set at liberty, and forgetting the business she was going to do, returned home praising and glorifying God and calling on all that came near her to join in that work. Nay, [she] could scarcely refrain from telling the birds that flew, what God had done for her soul, that they might also warble out his praises. Thus she went on for many months admonishing every one she conversed with to turn, repent and live. And her labour was not in vain for a young man in the same house, but not of her family, was taken sick and it proved unto death whom she attended. He was very ignorant and hardened at first, but God wrought [so] wonderfully with her exhortations and prayers that he was soon deeply convinced of sin and in less than a week found pardon, and soon after died triumphantly.

Her gifts and knowledge of the Scripture increased and her life seemed harmony and love; but not suspecting an evil heart within ready to join with Satan on all occasions; [she] was not sufficiently watchful and humble. Satan whispered to her how highly favoured she was of God who had made such an alteration on her, showing the gifts she was endowed with, and what good she had already done, etc. This bait she too readily swallowed and by ascribing that honour to herself which belongs to God only,

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fell into great darkness, and all her gifts with her memory and health was taken away from her. Satan, now continually accusing her of infidelity and bringing texts of Scripture to increase her condemnation, made her conclude she was lost to all eternity and that all hope of salvation was vain. Satan not only abused her with many things, but stirred up her husband and near friends sorely to persecute and threaten her, during which she constantly attended the Word morning and evening. Though [she] found but little encouragement, she would often say when returning home from the Room hearing the birds sing, "See how these warble out their Maker's praises; but I hang my head like a bullrush. Oh that it was with me as in the months that are past."

Thus it continued till the year 1745, when Mr. John Wesley came to Bristol. She conversed with him about her deplorable state, who talked to her closely and comfortably, after which the darkness a little dissipated and she cried out with great earnestness,

"Rejoice not over me O mine enemy, though I am fallen, I shall rise again."

And taking courage, she pursued this glimmering light. And soon the Lord returned to her saying, "I will heal thy backsliding and love thee freely, I will be thy God, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee, nothing shall be able to pluck thee out of my hand. From that time she held her confidence in God, though often in much weakness and heaviness, being led through many cross providences, particularly the death of her husband in 1746, which laid her open to much adversity, especially as her bodily health or memory never returned to her again to that degree which she before enjoyed.

The beginning of December last it pleased God to afflict her with a lingering illness attended with violent pains of body. Those pains were often so great that human nature sunk under them and life could scarcely be perceived in her. And Satan, her potent enemy, watched all occasions to inject hard thoughts of God telling her if God loved her he would mitigate her pain, and endeavoured to persuade her that she was deceived and her hope was only that of a hypocrite, and her past experience a delusion, etc. She struggled with those temptations and kept close to God in prayer, often in these words, "Lord [grant] more faith and patience, now is the time. Satan is nigh, look upon thy feeble dust. Save me or I shall rebel against thee. Make me more than conqueror through the blood of the Lamb." And her gracious God, who knows how to succour those that are tempted, came seasonably to her relief applying those promises, "My grace is sufficient for thee. Fear not only believe. I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," and many other parts of Scripture; which so strengthened her confidence, and refreshed her soul, that she often forgot her pain of body. Mr. Charles Wesley administered the sacrament the fifteenth of February under which means she was much refreshed and strengthened. The conviction of the necessity of being fully renewed after the image of God took deeper

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root in her heart than ever, and was her constant petition, for the sin she was most addicted to was a quick, impatient spirit leading to anger. This in time past did very much trouble her and too often got power over her which has given her many hours of sorrow and often [she] would complain, "Lord shall I perish at the hands of Saul." This sin she now particularly watched and prayed against, and not without an expectation of deliverance; for being asked if she expected full redemption from this and all sin, she answered, "I firmly believe it as though I now enjoy it, for the sin that murdered God shall die, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it and he cannot lie."

About a week before her death, she felt this quickness taken away, for which mercy she continually thanked God, and was enabled more cheerfully to give herself up to do and suffer the whole will of God.

Sunday the 28th, February. The pangs of death approached and violent pains attended, and about ten o'clock in the evening, her pains being exquisite, Satan came upon her with great violence. She struggled for some time and then broke out in this complaint, "My agonies must end in death, Lord Jesus pity my distress." He soon fled from her, and about twelve o'clock her pains abated also and came no more on her, by which means she was enabled to spend her time in silent communion with God.

The next day, as she lay in this composed frame, these words came so loud that she could scarcely be persuaded but what the person who attended her must hear them, "Thy life is hid with Christ in God."

Wednesday morning, early, the third of March, she called for her two children, and after joining in prayer, her son asked her, "How is it now between God and your soul?" She answered with a faltering tongue, "Beautiful, my Jesus supports me wonderfully, I have no doubt." He asked if Satan troubled her, she answered, "No, he makes attempts but cannot hurt me." She then took them both by the hand and gave them their last charge, prayed for them and commended them to the grace of God, and then added "Glorious Saviour of my soul, I lift it up to thee." Her speech failing, [she] could proceed no farther. She continued in prayer and praise (though her words could not be understood) till near five o'clock in the evening, when she calmly breathed out her soul into the bosom of her Redeemer.

Reference EMV: 105

Date: 29 June 1762

Addressees: Mary Maddern to Charles Wesley

Address: From Bristol

Annotation: CW's note, "May 29, 1762."

Bristol, 29 June, 1762

Reverend Sir,

At your request, I am going to give you a few particulars of God dealings with me, a poor unworthy creature.

Almost from my earliest infancy, he seemed to drag me to himself, and I had strong desires at times. When I was eight years old, I surely had a taste of the love of God though I knew not what it was, but felt such love to Jesus Christ that I longed to be with him. But I soon lost it and at times was uneasy where I should go if I was to die. At twelve years old that uneasiness greatly increased through a very awful dream that I had. I attended upon the means of grace but could find no comfort.

Sometime after, Mr. Whit[e]field came to London. I attended constantly on his preaching in the churches and often found great sweetness, but was not awakened to any sense of unbelief. In this way I went on till you and [your] brother's first preaching in the churches. I heard Mr. Wesley several times but did not much like him. At that time there was a report spread that both you and him had dr[iven] many to despair through your pernicious doctrine. My parents, on this, laid their commands on me not to hear you anymore, and I believe I promised to obey them. But my God, who knew best by what way to work on me, brought me to Cread Church to hear, as I thought, a preparation sermon preached by the minister of the church. He read prayers. After he had done, you came up in the pulpit. I was locked in a seat or otherways should have gone out of the church. But I thought; however, I would not listen to anything you said. But when God's will works, who shall hinder? I well remember your text was: "Ye serpents, ye the generation of vipers, how shall you escape the damnation of hell?" The Lord was pleased to send every word home to my heart and I went away crying out, "What shall I do to be saved?"

I then felt the burden of sin indeed intolerable. But God soon showed me a

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Saviour; though it was several months in deep distress of soul before I could lay hold on him by faith. And often times, like one without hope, I attended constantly upon the preaching; but saw myself worse and worse, and farther and farther, as I thought, from God. And never more so than the night when God was pleased to speak peace to my troubled soul in your prayer at Mr. Axel's at the Seven Dials. (You, sir, know how long that is since. Oh! what [an] unfaithful wretch have I been to the grace of God; otherways how much more of his presence might I have enjoyed. My heart then seemed filled with peace and joy in believing and I could do nothing but tell of his goodness to poor sinners.

But alas, I soon lost it by listening to the temptations of the devil, who preached stillness to me before I ever heard it preached by any human creature. It was some time before I saw my loss, inbred sin, which had been covered for a season, again revived. I reasoned with the enemy till I was like one in despair, thinking there was no mercy for me as I had fell from the pardoning love of God. And I believe I was six months or more in this way before I mentioned it to any one, though I attended upon the word preached as often as I could.



As my friends was utterly against my going, I could not have the opportunity that many had. I happened one day to meet with your brother, he advised me to meet a band, which I did for some time before I found any relief from that deep distress of soul.

But that God who is gracious to all that call upon him, as I was in private prayer, returned again unto my soul; and not only gave me back my former peace and love, but much more abundantly when those words were applied to my heart, "Have I not loved and sealed thee for my own?" I could then truly say I lived to God alone, and was in all things perfectly resigned to his will; finding no evil of any kind in my heart, nor any inclination to sin of any kind for near four years. My

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whole soul was dedicated to him and every desire of my heart was to glorify his holy name.

I must own [that] I thought myself in the full sense born again of God, and never thought of seeing evil more. But his thoughts are not as our thoughts. He gave me to taste of the good land. But there was a larger measure of sufferings for me before I am made an inhabitant of that; though it is what I both look and long for; and I believe I shall be made a living witness of that great truth, as it is his free grace, for I have nothing in me to merit it. But I daily experience so much of his tender care and love towards me, unworthy as I am, that I cannot doubt. O sir, pray for me. My trying hour is at hand. Oh may his strength be made perfect in my weakness. And may the Lord strengthen you in body and soul and teach you wisdom secretly, is the

Prayer of your,  
Unfeared friend and servan[t],

Mary Maddern

If you please, with my love, to inform Mrs. Wesley that I have just been to see Miss, and she is exceedingly well and very cheerful. All the family is also well and desire their duty. Mrs. Wigan and Miss Stratford desire their love and are glad to hear you got safe to London.

I must beg you, sir, the incorrectness of this as I am obliged to write surrounded with children.

Reference EMV: 134W

Date: 11 August 1762

Addressees: John Walsh to Charles Wesley

Annotation: CW's marginal note, "Walsh's Ranters; Aug. 11, 1762."

Sir,

To the Reverend Charles Wesley.

London. August 11, 1762

The account you desired me to write, of my own experience and remarks on others requiring much haste, you will be sure to find it both irregular and inelegant as well as extremely short for such a subject. I can write nothing well unless I take time to compose, correct and alter with such a degree of slowness and diffidence that an account of the Lord's dealings with me which I begun almost three years ago will probably not be finished in three or four more. But as in the present case you desire only truth and intelligence, I shall be content with making myself understood and thus hurry over the matter without any farther apology.

At the age of six years I was much given to swearing, drunkenness, and other sins. At seven the Lord strongly drew me by the cords of love and I delighted in his presence, abhorred sin, and thirsted after righteousness. I then suffered great persecution, especially from other boys. The Lord soon after hid his face and I forgot him a considerable time. He returned again convincing me not of actual but original sin. I knew his horrors a long while, sought his face, and was hailed by all or most about me. At ten I was justified, declared it, and prayed publicly. Great was my spiritual joy and so great my pride thereupon, that I would scarce acknowledge God my superior. [I] sinned against him by desire of the creature which is yet my besetting sin and besetting temptation, made several vain attempts to gratify that sensual desire, and lost the knowledge of God. I was alarmed soon after by a dream, sought him earnestly, was persecuted vehemently, and found his favour again; which I lost and found, loved and hated sin from time to time till I was fourteen years old when I was ashamed of all my past religion, went to sea, and in spite of innumerable visitations and providences, no weapon that was formed against me being ever able to prosper, I sinned against my God with a high hand. I counted my past experience foolishness and hated the remembrance thereof till I totally forgot it. I fell into such a state in the year 1747, as may be called indeed scepticism, but consisted more of Atheism than either Deism or Pythagoreanism; which were the only two systems I could ever adopt in those days beside Atheism.

I then made a great mock of true religion, laughing at the glorious Trinity,

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challenging the God who died to save me, while arguing against his divinity. Once especially upon Constitution Hill [I called on God] to strike me dead with thunder and lightning if he were a God, and that being not done, I insisted on having gained my point with my antagonist.

But strange to tell I was yet favoured and visited night and day by the unknown God. Take the following instance which I copy verbatim from the description of a tour I made in Hampshire:

"September 17, 1755. My companion stayed at Petersfield, while I visited Stonard Hill--this prospect entertained me above two hours and me thought the solitude gave a keener enjoyment of this vision, the weather being the finest of the whole year, and "All things gilded by the clear sunshine:

Delightful solitude! Oh bright abode,  
To think of Nature and of Nature's God!  
Now sacred temples, altars, I despise;

And hail my God; and view the azure skies.  
Then down to earth I turn my curious eyes,  
And still his footsteps all around me spy.  
No object touch me but his glory teach;  
No sounds are uttered but his Godhead preach.  
I'll in the chorus join my humble voice,  
Like the little buzzing flies rejoice.

Thus from the scenes of unadulterated nature, my contemplation  
took wing to the great Architect: no reasonable soul arriving to  
take a proud offence at my lowly rhapsody:

While eager words their feeble aid impart,  
Mixed with the sighing language of the heart,  
God of all worlds! Thy glory to rehearse:  
Musing the vastness of the universe:  
How vast yon flaming sun! That glowing sky!  
How vast this earth! an what an atom I!"

Before the end of September 1755, my Sister Leadbetter, whose turning Methodist about a year before  
made me wish her

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dead and think her mad, venturing to give me some kind advice, I proudly gainsaid, till her unaffected  
piety beginning to touch me, and God, being pleased to make her that instrument of my conversion, the  
strong chain of Atheism began to loosen about me; so that I went with her to hear your brother whose  
words I thought incomprehensible but felt the sweet presence of my unknown God who guarded me then,  
as oft before, while I knew him not.

I was justified November 24, 1756. Before and after which, Mr. Swain often told me what difference of  
opinion subsisted among Christians. Wherefore I besought the Lord, both frequently and earnestly, to  
defend me from all opinions, be my only teacher, and keep me from all error: at which times he would  
dart these words into my mind "Come ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to  
be accounted of."

About the beginning of the year 1757, Mr. Swain surprised me with the first tidings of the strange  
doctrine of perfection in the flesh: wherefore I begged of the Lord to show me whether it was right or  
wrong; who, giving me no answer but continuing to bless me as usual, I was contented with seeking him  
alone as formerly and thought within myself of perfection, "Do you stand on one hand while  
predestination keeps on the other and I will go straight forward between the two to the God of my  
salvation." But the preaching of Thomas Walsh at last brought me over to the belief of perfection. I then  
sought it with extreme earnestness, counting my knowledge of God a small thing, because I had not  
found him out unto perfection. But generally when I prayed to be made perfect he would cause an idea of  
the room wherein I was justified to rise before me and a sweet repetition of these words to pass through  
me, "There he gave the blessing, and life for evermore." Yet would I not desist from seeking perfection.  
As to sanctification, a very great and astonishing degree of it was given me about six weeks before my  
justification. Perhaps there is no sin so strong as that which beset me; and yet in a single moment the  
mighty God, in answer to my request, so fully destroyed its power that for above

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three years I confidently believed it would subsist no more.

It seems needful in this place to break the thread of my narrative and insert a letter which I wrote to Mr. Berridge several years after, because that letter contains an account of experience which I had about this time. That gentleman, who had always protested against perfection, having sent me a letter in its behalf, I wrote this answer verbatim.

Reference EMV: 134W

Date: 28 May 1761

Addressees: John Walsh to John Berridge

Edgware. May 28, 1761.

Dear Sir,

Seeing you give permission to write without reserve, and have never taken offence at the freedoms I use, my intention now is to set before you the chief observations I have made concerning such of the Methodists as call themselves perfect. I have had free conversation with eight of them and shall say something of each, I trust without partiality, when I have told you a little of my own experience therein.

About one half a year after my justification, I began to seek perfection with great desire; and expected it from time to time till I received the gift so called which I take for a kind of sealing or doubling the faith that preceded it. You may read in Mr. Wesley's German travels of several at the Herrnhut receiving the same. But how are the mighty fallen! My great mistake about it was that after being so blessed I should sin no more because the propensity to sin would be taken away so as never to return. But surely the promises of God are still conditional, and he yet says to every saint of his, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." I felt sin again in my heart at the end of twenty-seven hours and I spoke as freely thereof in band, as I did of the perfect gift. But the first person called perfect who heard me talk of sin being yet in my heart would have had me count it only temptation. I had often since that time felt the perfect love of God, I suppose more than 1,00 [one hundred] times, casting out all fear, and not seldom the whole propensity to sin. I believe also this to be the common experience of all real Christians; but have long suspected that many professors of justification had it not, or have surely lost it; and when the Lord manifests his love to any of these, it is no wonder they should mistake it for perfection. As to such whose experience resembles mine, I believe they are

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ashamed to retract their first declaration. Whether I am right or wrong in these thoughts, it seems to me certain that your preaching was not wrong at all in the year 1759. For the Lord owned it altogether; nor could I perceive any difference when you was at London except an increase of his talents. The good God increase them to you more and more.

I come now to the persons intended: Mrs. Burrows of Deptford told me she rejoiced so much when made perfect as to shed many tears; and saw daily, sometime before, and ever since, the air full of spirits; the good resembling stars or pieces of silver coin, and fewer in number than the evil; which resembled eels or serpents, and entered the mouth, nose, and ears of every person, or almost all she met with; and would frequently lay themselves across their eyes. But the good were far swifter in operation. The shadows of the evil appeared to her also in the water when passing the Thames and I think the good with

them. I could see nothing amiss in her life. But a boisterousness attended her zeal for God, whom I believe she really loves.

I met in band at Deptford with Mr. Joyce, a zealous loving person, who has long counted himself perfect. He said Satan brought the figure of a naked woman to tempt him every night; but on his praying it disappeared; and a round light, about a foot in diameter, then appeared till he fell asleep. I have seen no evil in him except it were his desiring me to make interest with Lady Huntingdon and get him the place of master sailmaker in Deptford Yard because of the great good a perfect man might do with such a salary.

The remaining six are in London.

Mrs. Crosby was desired to talk with me on account of her eminence among the perfect when I had experienced and lost what is called perfection. But being unable to speak of anything above what I know, she fled from me soon after in the chapel and refused to visit my Sister Leadbetter any more; lest I should bring her to a second interview.

I think it improper to name the next young woman who had not long declared herself perfect when she desired me to give two shillings on her account to another, for she had no change, and would return it the next time we met. I did so and often saw her afterwards without receiving it: whereupon I said at last, "I gave what you desired me." "No," said she, "for I gave it myself." Wherefore I went again to the person in distress; who, denying the matter, I returned to the perfect one who then said, "If I did not give her two shillings, I am sure I gave one." And so ended this trifling affair. I made no reply but could never since think her perfect, though probably justified.

Mrs. Clay you are no stranger to. I brought you her promise at Everton to speak no more against the work of God which was carried on through your ministry; but meeting with her afterwards at Bedford, she disputed one half an hour against it.

Mr. Bell, coming to tell me his perfection the day after your letter which favours that doctrine came to hand, I credited his assertion, sought the same, and hearing you was at London wrote a line to let you know thereof. But [I] have since had sufficient cause to think him less conscientious than I ever found him before. But as he was always ready to imbibe some new notion, I hope his faith will overcome this, even as it has the rest.

Mr. Wake, of the Life Guards, whom I always thought a well-meaning honest man, has told me that his perfection is complete with regard to his body but his mind still roves from God. And he feared that it was wrong to speak thus freely to me lest being weak I might stumble at his acknowledgement.

Mr. Langshaw, a stranger whom I met one hour in band, seems filled with love and zeal just as John Keeling was, and calls himself perfect which I dare not gainsay.

I can recollect no more persons whom I have had any particular knowledge of while counting themselves perfect; and I will not relate anything by hearsay. God give you discernment to set me right if this letter be wrong. I received much benefit by yours of March twenty-third and so have some of my friends, especially Mr. and Mrs. Swain; but your allowing perfection, has caused me to write all the foregoing thoughts upon it.

Oh may God give me such perfection as chiefly consists in the height of love evidently seen in Mrs. Hardwick and the depth of humility evidently seen in Mr. Fletcher! Yet these declare themselves poor

sinners and utterly disclaim perfection, though not the doctrine. I strive to know the trees, my dear friend, by their fruit; for discernment is a useful part of Christianity.

The Lord guide you by his Holy Spirit, and suffer not your thoughts to err.

I am your affectionate brother in the hope set before us,

J[ohn] W[alsh]

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This letter had such an effect on Mr. Berridge that he has ever since opposed the doctrine of perfection. Alas, alas!

I will now turn back to the year 1757. The fear of God prevented me from saying I was perfect, but evil was far away, and God continually with me. Once indeed I felt, in the process of time, upon a great provocation, that anger was yet in me, and at the end of fourteen months perceived the same again; but in respect of my besetting sin, it seemed as totally foreign to me as to an angel of God. Nor was the Lord ever, that I know of, absent from me or out of my thoughts and I wondered exceedingly that my brethren who had known the Lord longer did not rejoice in him as I did. For none could I find, no not even among the boasters of

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perfection, who saw anything of my joy. Wherefore I would put them in mind of such Scriptures as this, "Let the inhabitants of the rock; let them shout for joy from the tops of the mountains." My talking thus would amaze them and make them stare as if they thought me distracted. But still I thought they might rejoice if they pleased, even as I, because they were also believers.

Nothing more delighted me than the seeming extirpation of my besetting sin: a strong temptation to which, began its assault in July 1759. The waters roared amain, the fires flamed exceedingly, but none could come near enough to touch me. A little presumption might have made me say like our present perfectionists, "Satan comes indeed, but finds nothing in me." Thus I went on to the middle of February, 1760, when all things conspired to cast me down from the mount of God, but rather would I have parted from life itself than my great blessedness. I never ceased from watching and praying. I was free, to my thinking, from the very shadow of sin and went about doing good with all my might, even at the frequent hazard of my life. And to this very day, the Lord has not shown me that ever I was remiss in following him. Yet in effect, he then said unto me, "Go down also and possess the sins of thy youth. I give thy besetting sin dominion over thee, and thou shalt desire but not enjoy it." Such has indeed been my lot for on the nineteenth, sin and temptation [came] like two mighty robbers, while I resisted even unto blood, prevailed against me, and have ever since trampled me under foot. But as I have never committed any wilful sin, I cannot say that I have ever since fallen into any condemnation. Yet has my warfare been astonishingly great, nothing of the kind perhaps, being more bitter than my temptations and nothing sweeter than my consolations. Take one instance of the latter.

August 4, 1760. Being alone in my house at Knightsbridge, I was inexpressibly harassed with my besetting temptation; this afternoon [I was] running upstairs and down as if distracted, and praying in vain to be delivered from corrupt desire till I fell into a kind of despair and could say little more than this, "Lord, if I perish, be it at thy feet." I could hardly reach West Street at the chapel time where the sermon, as customary, proved a dead letter to me. The temptation, however, ended with it and

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I wondered at my resembling so lately an incarnate devil; but when the two last lines of the hymn were sung, at least that I heard, as follows,

"Thy warfares past, thy mournings o'er,  
Look up, for thou shall weep no more.

To the best of my remembrance I heard only this,

"... mournings o'er,  
Look up, for thou shalt weep no more."

And instantly lifting up my soul in strong hope, I wished for the repetition of those lines; but when sung again, could only hear,

"... thy warfare over,  
Look up, for thou shalt weep no more."

But oh, what joy did I then feel! And what a visionary scene appeared to the eye of my soul! For it seemed as if I saw myself lying on a death-bed, and heard and saw the Almighty speaking to me from a cloud and filling my soul with as strong assurance as if he had even sworn by himself to me,

"... thy warfare o'er,  
Look up, for thou shalt weep no more."

The first impression caused me to weep with a small audible cry; then I leaned along for some minutes while the tears of gladness ran down my face, and I trembled much; for the same gracious words and appearance, though lessening by degrees, long visited my soul and I could scarce describe it with dry eyes till next day. I then counted it as firm a promise to me from the Lord as the following promise from the angel to Daniel: "... thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." I believe also, from hence, that my temptations and trials will not entirely cease till I am going to expire.

Such being my general experience, I considered it altogether; even from my justification, and wrote these verses thereupon, September 19, 1760.

Oh, that I now could show thy peaceful ways,  
And speak the wonders of redeeming grace!  
But language fails, and utterance melts away,  
Before the blaze of this my Gospel day.  
O king of glory, stoopest thou to shine,  
On such vile earth, and such a soul as mine!  
I know, I feel, thy precious blood applied:  
For me the great beloved Jehovah bled and died!  
No guilty weight my conscience longer feels:  
I still am sprinkled, and the blood still heals.  
Oh matchless love, my trembling soul to save,  
And bid me triumph o'er the dreaded grave!

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If here thou lead, along the narrow way,

And after bring me to the realms of day,  
I'll sing thy praises in the courts above;  
The boundless mansions of eternal love;  
Where thy dear saints, in blest communion sing  
The ceaseless triumphs of their glorious king;  
Beholding and resembling what thou art;  
Thou, from whose presence I shall not depart,  
But all the heaven of heavens be round me spread,  
And everlasting joy upon my head!  
Glory to God on high, my song shall be,  
And glory to the lamb, who died for me.

September 18, 1760. I went from Knightsbridge to live at Edgware. December 31. I dreamed of going round Mr. Whitefield's gallery at Tottenham Court, feeling great love to him and the people, and praying for them with strong joy. This very dream I was favoured with several preceding nights; wherefore, I cast away my prejudice and heard him the next day with a good will. And indeed it was time I should, though I knew it not, as the preaching at West Street was much altered, and the Shekinah would no more visit me while his word was preached in that temple except once while Mr. John Jones cried out, "O death, where is thy sting." January 14, 1761. I heard that Mr. Berridge was persuaded to believe the doctrine of perfection at last Sunday's lovefeast. February 25. The men bands at West Street were a greater number than usual and disputed much about perfection, which I counted a false doctrine founded on spiritual pride. They who pleaded for it were many and showed much warmth. Their opponents were few and cool, only Mr. Bell spoke with vehemence against it.

March 5. I dreamed of hearing a large company sing hymns in the open air unintelligibly. Wherefore I went from them and cried to the Lord, "O let me hear thy voice and live!" My joy was then great before him and while I uttered some other ejaculations.

April 24. I rejoiced in the Lord greatly while walking through Hyde Park and shunning the common track. I felt a deliverance from the whole propensity to sin, as common in such visitations, praised the Lord with great thankfulness, and vehemently besought him to hasten the day of judgment, which has been for some years the most earnest and frequent of all my petitions.

April 26. I heard two sermons at West Street maintaining the doctrine of perfection; moreover, the generality of the Methodists I conversed with are of that opinion; all [of] which could not alter mine: of a propensity to sin being felt by the greatest saints on earth, at one time or other, when strongly tempted to their old besetting sin. Yet have I been acquainted with the perfect love of God at intervals; to whom I can truly say,

"Lord, I am thine; and on thy side thou king of glory."

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July 4, 1761. Mr. Bell, who called himself perfect, being abroad, I sat in his house meditating. And after desiring the Lord to show me his true state, opened a Bible and cast myself first on Second Chronicles; twenty-five, twenty-two, "And he did \that which was\ right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart." About which time, (on account of my saying [that] neither he nor any other called perfect appeared to have so much of the mind that was in Christ as Mrs. Hardwick etc.) he went abruptly from me. And when we met again, he would have spoke to me no more if the Lord had not bid him receive me as a brother.



July 5. While Mr. Neal preached at West Street, I thought several justified; especially one who sat next me. But he said he was justified before and now made perfect because he had wept with extreme joy as I have done one hundred times, though without presuming to call myself perfect, or anything better than a dog or swine. I was told by Mr. Bowen and Amos Copeland that their hearts were clean; the former in a week after justification. I went this evening to Mr. Bell's assembly by Grosvenor Square and felt a strange overcoming power without any joy while he prayed that God would make me perfect.

July 7. Having kept some time from Tottenham Court on account of Mr. Whitefield's illness and my great dislike to Mr. Davis, I forget by what means I was induced to go this evening where I heard Mr. Davis a full hour on, "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." And at the close, while I was in great heaviness, he strongly declared the faithfulness of God; to whom I lifted up this prayer, "Heaven and earth, I believe, shall pass away; but not one jot of thy word. O speak to me! bid me live for ever. Let me be glad in thy love to all eternity, for Jesus' sake." Immediately the preacher cried out, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one jot of his word, and can he give thee up? No, for he hath loved thee with an everlasting love." All which the Lord applying, I trembled and wept with great joy and strong assurance of his everlasting love. This reconciled me to Mr. Davis, and so fully put an end to my bigotry that I have gone ever since with equal readiness to Tottenham Court as West Street.

July 9. Out of eight men, with whom I met in private band, six declared they had clean hearts; and the chief of them, Mr. Langshaw, to whom I said, "Let him that standeth, take heed lest he fall and be not high minded but fear." Though he seemed to like these, and most of my words, [he] called me afterwards in his prayer, \an advocate for the devil\. And likewise brought accusations against Mr. Vardin, the leader, who had no otherwise contradicted him than by recommending caution.

July 12. Recieved the sacrament at W[est] Street and heard Mr. Maxfield who confidently said to me and all such, "Oh fools and slow of heart." I heard Mr. Madan at the lock this afternoon, fifty-eight minutes on, "Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king." I rejoiced in the Lord several times; especially when he said, "He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye."

July 21. Mr. Davis was in his sermon when I came to Tottenham Court, on, "My grace is sufficient for thee." Wherein he sharply preached against the doctrine of perfection, calling it the greatest blasphemy that he knew. The word came

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with power and I felt the Lord's presence from first to last, removing from my soul a great weight of distrust and anxiety. My rejoicings were so frequent and so many words applied that it would be tedious to write them. None came with so great energy as these, "Fear not thou worm Jacob." I then so wept and trembled that several eyes were upon me.

July 22. I waked with a headache, probably from last night's joy in the Holy Ghost, a joy which several of my West Street brethren once vilified, entitling it a frame and feeling; but now in the pride of their wisdom, call even a little degree of it perfection.

July 27. With full confidence in my God I went to Reading, as lieutenant of a press gang.

September 27, 1761. I received a letter from Mr. Bell, lamenting my imperfection, wherefore I wrote thus to him the next day.

Reference EMV: 134

Date: John Walsh to George Bell 28 September 1761

"My dear brother,

You seem jealous for the salvation of my soul; and I thank you. The tokens of inspiration are in your letter, by which I know your soul must be alive to God, for whose honour I am jealous on your account. My own ears having heard you say, first, that you were perfect, then that you could not fall from your perfect state unless God himself could fall from his throne. Whereas I have passed through that delightful state wherein you now are and of which you presume to boast, but am safely brought down by the mighty workings of the Holy Ghost into the deep vale of humiliation where I see distinctly that you and I, though Christ be formed in us, are no better than dead dogs by nature, nor any more holy after the flesh than the fish of the sea or fowls of heaven. I surely dwell in a body of death and corruption even as they, nor is your body better than dust and ashes. The body of Christ was perfect indeed and therefore could not see corruption, but is your soul united to such a body? Or do you not lie with a woman to this day because your flesh lusteth against your spirit? Even a poor heathen, Alexander the Great, could tell his flatterers, "I am surely no god because I bled like a mortal man when wounded and because I desire women."

You must likewise acknowledge that you are not changed into the clean, the holy nature of God, whose dwelling is not with flesh; or must deny that you desire your wife when you lie with her. I doubt not but your body is a temple of the living God, as I know that my own is; and yet, we must see corruption, having dead bodies already in God's account because of sin, that original leprosy which is diffused through all creatures under the sun as long as they remain embodied. But I doubt not that you and I shall be clean at last, when taken away from the body and carried up to the company of spirits of just men made perfect.-----etc., ect.-----I doubt not, my dear friend, of our taking sweet council together again, if God prolong my days; which sometimes I think are shortening apace. One Scripture sign of them that believe is this, "If they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them." Why not? "Because underneath us are the everlasting arms." You have certainly drank a large draught of spiritual pride; but the Lord will not let

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you fall I verily believe, nor even be hurt when the temptation is past. You perceive it not now because [you are] rejoicing in your first love, the time of the gladness of your heart.

My own espousals to Christ, or the celebration of them rather, continued about three years and I had the same power over sin as you have. Oh that our brother Moss, or some other, who has been upon the mount like me, and is come down again as I am, had such a zeal for the truth, if not love to a fellow disciple, as to glorify God by declaring freely, "That there is none good upon earth but one; that is God." Isaiah says, "He will carry the lamb in his bosom." And again, "Whom shall he teach doctrines, them that are weaned from the breasts." You are now a babe in Christ and must be weaned, as I have been, which is a grievous warfare, before you will understand the true, the lowly doctrine of every man being abominable by nature, and not one being ever made perfect on earth.

The Lord enlighten more and more, both you, and your ever affectionate brother in the glorious Gospel,

J[ohn] W[alsh]

P.S. My love to our brethren of the guards. Advise them to rejoice with trembling. I cannot find time to write all I would, and I have scribbled over, this upon a common five miles from Reading. You cannot imagine the number and greatness of my worldly trials: I have lain all night in a field; I have had a town-full of people rise up to destroy me; I have run as great risks in my strange employment as some men run in the service of God; I have often gone at the hazard of my life, in sickness and bad weather, to perpetrate what I approve not; and to the men I am connected with it may truly be said, "The best of them is as a brier." And almost all other men have declared a kind of civil war against me. Where would your perfection be in such temptations as mine? I have fightings without and fears within. But the grace of God has hitherto been sufficient for me and made me more than conqueror over the world, the flesh and the devil.

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November 30. I return to London having been hurt by nothing but my besetting temptation, which continued to increase upon me.

January 12, 1762. By Mr. Berridge's desire, I brought Mr. Bell to converse with him at Mr. Whitefield's in Tottenham Court Road; where I said little for my own part except the same observation which Mr. Berridge made, that Mr. Bell had then something dismal and shocking in his face; which indeed I had observed ever since March 27, 1761, when he first told me that he was perfect; whereas he had a remarkably good look before. What he now chiefly said was that God had given him the gift of healing, which he had already practiced, and of raising the dead which he should perform in God's time; that the millenium was begun, and he should never die; that he and several other men had seen Satan bound and cast into the bottomless pit, and the angel had set a seal upon him that he should not come out to deceive the nations; and that all Mr. Berridge's excellent observations did not at all shake his confidence of these things. And indeed his whole deportment, calmness, and assurance, wrought so much upon me, that I had thoughts of asking him to heal my mother who was asthmatic and should probably have credited all he said, for I had imbibed the doctrine of perfection a few days before, if the Lord had not brought to my remembrance

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a tedious and bitter delusion, showing me withal, how mightily Satan was permitted in these days to deceive the truly religious by appearing as an angel of light. Wherefore, I rejected once more the whole doctrine of perfection. As to the impressions which from time to time for the space of five years I had believed to come from God, every one, I think, did really prove to be from him; except the delusion I have just hinted; which added much to the affliction of my soul.

February 17, 1762. A man at West Street bands declared he had been made perfect by Mr. Bell's laying his hand upon him and on him. On the twenty-third, much the same thing befell me; wherefore on the twenty-sixth, your brother had S.S. put upon my ticket.

February 27. I made little doubt of my being perfect till this afternoon when I could not tell whether I felt anger or no at the ignorance of another perfect man.

March 4. After dreaming of idolatrous temptations, the dream concluded with my praying

Where Jonathan his David meets:  
There, where no frosts our spring annoy,  
Shall thou alone my love enjoy."

March 20. I rejoiced before the Lord a considerable time in a dream with this and other triumphant experiences, "Thou givest me here thy hidden manna: wilt thou not give me thereafter the morning star."

March 23. I wrote the following letter to Mr. Berridge.

Reference EMV: 134

Date: John Walsh to John Berridge 23 March 1762

Dear Sir,

Being sorely distressed in spirit the twenty-second of last month, I wrote the following verses:

Where, O almighty God, shall I find rest,  
If thou no longer wilt inspire my breast?  
Faithful and true, where is thy spirit flown?  
And thy rich mercy, oft to me made known?  
Why can I now no more prevail with thee?  
Ah, why this hiding of thy face from me?  
How, from thy dazzling height of happiness,  
How am I fallen into deep distress?  
Oh raise me up again, my soul restore,  
Let soul and body feel thy quickening power!  
Now as of old thy goodness let me see:  
Come Holy Ghost, thou well-known God, to me!  
Still condescend my longing soul to meet:  
Come Holy Ghost, eternal \Paraclete\  
Still to my heart the \Blood of Jesus\ bring;  
Thy precious Blood, Oh \Salom's\ peaceful king!  
Ransomed by thee from all the guilt of sin,  
But still defiled and longing to be clean,

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Come that I may from all its power be freed:  
Come, O my God, and make me free indeed!"

Mr. Bell came the next morning unexpectedly and said, "Well, now let us pray together; and neither of you (for my mother was present) resist the Spirit of the Lord." He then prayed and I, when he had done, but all seemed unaffected. We then stood up and he sung several verses; which I remember not, though some were significant of my name being written in the Lamb's Book of Life; and on hearing those I felt a palpitation at the bottom of my stomach and a small giddiness in my head. The Lord also gave me his peace at the same time. And Mr. Bell, after singing, asked my mother how she found herself; who replied with tears of joy in her eyes, "Ah, Mr. Bell, it would be a happy thing if one could be always thus." He then put the same question to me and I told him what an additional peace I had found. He then left us and in a few minutes the Spirit of the Lord so abundantly filled me that I sat down in an elbow chair, prayed silently for an entire deliverance from the power of sin, breathed short, and panted in the multitude of peace from seven o'clock till quarter past eight, when I seemed going to die suddenly and that I might resist it if I would. But the presence of the Lord being delightful, I said, "Let me fear only thee." And casting my care upon him, I felt as if lightning, or a slower ethereal flame, had been penetrating and rolling through every atom of my body; which being past, I did not breathe so short as before but found a sweet composure, and ineffable calmness of spirit. I then walked about the room rejoicing and seemed to feel my body so light that I might choose whether to walk or fly.

Such has been my unaccountable experience; neither know I whether I have felt any sin or not, either spiritual or bodily, from that hour to this, only in dreams. But I think I have more than once, and would rather call myself the chief of sinner than a perfect Christian. How great is the mystery of godliness! Oh that you and I may continually be taught of God and rejoice in his highness, world without end!

I am your affectionate Brother in Christ,

J[ohn] W[alsh]

P.S. On hearing Mr. Bell another night, sing the verses he sung February 23rd, I could recollect that the chief lines which the Lord then applied to my soul were these,

Sing, O my soul, for thou hast cause,  
Thine enemy is slain:  
Thy sin that late thy burden was,  
No more may rule again:  
The Holy Child the Virgin bore,  
Delights in thee to dwell:  
Sing, O my soul, for thou no more  
Shall be afraid of hell.  
Its stings, thy sin, he takes away,  
The law is disannulled;  
Thy pardon sealed in endless day,  
And here thy name enrolled.

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March 25. I rejoiced before the Lord in a dream while desiring and expecting his great day. Some of my words then were, "I know that thou lovest me with an everlasting love."

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March 30, 1762. I took Mr. Bell and Mr. Bowen to see a widow at Highgate who was near death and almost despairing of mercy. Mr. Bell asked her a few questions and bid her speak a few words after him. She did so and was justified, the Holy Ghost coming at the same instant upon us all and with such power that I cried for joy a considerable time.

April 10. After a mixture of deliverance and uncertainty for 46 days, I now clearly perceived my besetting sin to remain where it formerly was, even in me. Several other persons called perfect, though not Mr. Bell, from time to time acknowledged themselves to be in some degree as I was; but what I called sin, they counted temptation.

April 20. I dreamed of lewdness and of abhorring it; whereupon I rejoiced immediately in the Lord while uttering these unscriptural words, "I turn to thee, O Lord, as the loved flower to the sun."

May 14. One woman roared and another cried out at W[est] Street sacrament, but only once did I ever feel the Lord present at these Friday meetings of the S.S.; where often, according to my judgment, I have heard flat blasphemy though I forget the particulars.

May 16. My soul being distressed above measure by my besetting temptation, I heard Mr. Davis at Tottenham Court, fifty-two minutes on Micah six, five. I wept and shook several times with full assurance and joy in the Lord, especially while these or like words were spoken, "The Lord is thy refuge." "There is no enchantment against Jacob, nor divination against Israel." "I know thou art ready sometime to conclude that a curse is come upon thee and that thy God will not visit thee any more. But thou will always find him a Covenant-keeping God, whose love is everlasting. Satan may tell the otherwise, but believe him not for he is the father of lies. Recollect the past favours of the Lord; knowest thou not that he who delivered thee out of the paw of the lion will deliver the likewise from every accursed Philistine?"

May 19. Being distressed again, I heard Mr. Madan, fifty-five minutes, on Job [chapter] nineteen, [verse] twenty-five through twenty-seven. I rejoiced in the Lord with great sweetness, tears, and shaking while these words were uttered concerning the beatific vision, "And the tears shall be wiped away from every eye."

May 23. I dreamed of saying with a loud voice to a tempting devil, "I am Christ's, Christ is God's." To which he replied, "I know it well."

May 26. In W[est] Street bands, Mr. Jackson, who is called perfect, said Christ cut himself open with a knife and put him into his breast. Mr. John Jones disliked the expression.

May 31. After six hours disorder of body, and sadness of soul, I heard Mr. Davis at Tottenham Court, forty-two minutes on Romans eight, eleven. I rejoiced a little most of the time with deep humility; and once with great ecstasy, strong assurance, tears, and shaking, while he uttered these and like words, "Fear not; march, go on; thy God shall go with thee through fire and water." So ended my heaviness.

June 22. I sweetly rejoiced in the Lord while hearing Mr. Dyer at Tottenham Court, thirty-six minutes, on Philippians one, verses two and three; towards the conclusion, especially when these and like words were uttered, "Believer, the day of thine espousals draws nigh....and in that day, God shall wipe all tears from thine eyes."

July 1. I wrote the following letter to Mr. Berridge.

Reference EMV: 134

Date: John Walsh to John Berridge 1 July 1762

"Dear Sir,

I hope you received my letter of March 23rd, in which I related the deliverance God gave me from present distress after Mr. Bell had

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sung a few verses. That deliverance was not one day complete; and yet like Elijah's cake, it proved a means of strengthening my soul above 40 days; at the end of which I became weak as aforetime, and have ever since lusted as usual in my heart with frequent murmurings against God.

You have received in a former letter, some account of a much greater and more durable blessing, though of the very same kind as that which I found after Mr. Bell's singing. And I could mention several other visitations of God extremely different from either of those and exceeding them in point of sanctification

as well as joy in the Holy Ghost. But it would be tedious to rehearse them and impossible to recollect them all. One of the first was on Sunday, May 22, 1757, in the fields of Risley in Derbyshire: so great and sweet for about an hour was my joy in the Lord that I could then compare my state to none but that of St. Paul when caught up into the third heaven. Oh, how much did I then desire to be dissolved and see my God without a veil! But he gave me to understand, that his grace would be sufficient for me while upon the earth and though I heard no voice nor saw anything, I was well contented to wait for my appointed time; being fully assured that he spake such a promise to me. And why did I not after this, and 1,00 [one hundred] of the like unutterably joyful communions with God, cry out, \He has made me perfect\! The reason is plain: a messenger of Satan was then, or about the same time, first sent to buffet me, two or three years, chiefly with suicide and afterwards a thorn in the flesh; which remains to this day and makes me seem to myself a perfect beast; as the former did a mere devil. Thus are the favours of God always guarded to me and from time to time he breaks the pride of my heart in pieces.

Now I will tell you what I think of all who count themselves perfect. They have tasted something of divine joy; but, neither been used to it nor felt it a tenth part so strongly or ineffably as I have, they are neither buffeted by Satan nor have a thorn in their flesh like me but are absolutely at ease in Sion. Pleasing as that state is, I believe it lays the soul open to the greatest snare of Satan, which is spiritual pride. Alas for me! that very state would be my choice if I did not fear God who has led me through many a terrible fiery furnace, into none of which am I ever willing to enter. And of all the Gospel ministers, none has been a means of such blessing to my weary soul as the Reverend Mr. Davis who speaks most of them all to the real saints that are tempted and afflicted, tossed with tempests and not comforted.".... etc., etc., etc., ...."

J[ohn] W[alsh]

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July 11th. I felt evil desire at the Table just before Mr. Dyer and Green gave me the sacrament, which was the first I ever received at Tottenham Court Chapel. I looked up to God and took it with these words, "Yet will I cast my soul on thee." I rejoiced in the Lord after it for ten minutes with shaking and watery eyes.

July 16. I received a letter from Mr. Berridge. A small part of which follows.

Reference EMV: 134  
John Berridge to John Walsh (extract 16 July 1762)

"Dear Sir,

I rece[ive]d your letter of July first and a former of March twenty-third

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to which I returned no answer because I know not how to speak or write to perfect people and therefore avoid correspondence with them. Many things I saw in them, when in London, which grieved me much; and many things here in the country which have grieved me more: such pride! such boasting! such censoriousness! such contempt of others! But what is mighty strange, these perfect people still talk of growing. If they are really perfect, what can be lacking except to continue in that state? As far as I can discern, they are unwittingly growing or grown out of Christ. They apply to the Lord for grace by prayer

and faith, and grace is obtained. With this stock they set up and trade against the Redeemer; not seeking, as Paul says, to be presented perfect in Christ, Colos[sians] one, twenty-eight; but to be presented perfect in themselves. etc., etc."

J[ohn] B[erridge]

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July 29. Mr. Bell and Bowen spake and prayed as if I had not been justified.

July 30. I dreamed of triumphing in the favour of God and remember to have repeated these words in my dream, "Let the saints shout for joy; let them sing aloud upon their beds."

Now, Sir, if you desire to know the present and general state of my soul, it is in my judgment, "\suffering and temptations\". The opinion I have now and at most times of myself I cannot express more truly than by these few, which are my favourite words to God and Man:

"\Behold\, I am vile\".

As to the papers, treat them as you please. You have the free consent of,

Your affectionate Brother, in Christ,

John Walsh.

August 15, 1762



Reference EMV: 56

Date: 23 December 1762

Addressees: William Ellis to Charles Wesley

Annotation: The note in CW's hand reads: "W. Ellis offended; Dec. 23, 1762."

Rev[ere]nd and very dear sir,

Dear indeed are the ministers of the most high, who like St. Paul, guard not against evils only but also against the very appearance thereof, and with all his might against errors creeping into the Church. And I believe, yea, I know that many will have reason to bless God to all eternity that he gave you to tread in the Apostle's steps, for errors indeed have crept in among us and abound. For as the people so are the priests, and with a great deal of truth the cry in London might be, "Where shall we go to hear a genuine Gospel sermon?" Oh that \you would come to\ town, and I pray God that he would answer many of his peoples' prayers, and bid you get up.

Indeed I should like to open my mind to you. But how can I without either grieving or offending you considering he who is near and dear to you is hereby concerned. Indeed when I read the fifteenth of the first of Samuel and the twenty-fourth verse, my heart aches for him, for I think I see his picture. But is he the only one that God had a controversy with for giving way to the same spirit. Nay there was Eli also for not laying a restraint upon his sons, only telling them of their sins, upon whose account the ark of God was took by the Philistines, at the news of which the anger of God was displayed against Eli by permitting him to fall and break his neck. Oh, how jealous is that God of Israel of his honour with whom we have to do. How strict then ought his ministers to be and to the end that they may [discipline the people]. Christ himself has left another circumstance upon record which is to the angel of the Church of Thyatira in the second [chapter] of the Revelations. Now indeed there is great danger of being carried away with such a spirit, for there is a show or the appearance of meekness, long-suffering, patience, forbearance, and thinking meanly of myself, preferring another because he is wise and can command his own spirit better than I. But whether it is through pretence of seeming graces or any excuse whatever, God will not leave those unpunished who restrain not the sins of others, when in their power, and more so if they deceive or suffer his people to be deceived.

But if it is said, God as placed Mr. John Wesley as head or leader of this people, therefore, he knows best how to guide them and what to do better than any can tell him, how shall I contradict this when they were my own words and thoughts not long ago. But God has took my idol from me, and now I am constrained to cry out, all men are failable, yea liable to fall into gross errors. So that the head cannot say to the foot I have no need of thee. So that saying God has made him leader of the people is just saying nothing at all, for God anointed Saul to be king but it does not appear that Saul executed God's command, also God required or looked for Eli to restrain

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the wickedness of his sons; but he did not, though he was a prophet and for aught I know, as wise and good a man as Mr. Wesley. Likewise our Lord gives the Bishop of the Church of Thyatira a blessed character as touching many things, but threatens to punish notwithstanding for not removing errors or deceivers out of the Church.

But is this all that lays against Mr. Wesley? I wish it was, but perhaps I have been too plain already, though I cannot tell how that can be if we consider the nature of the thing, especially if we see the dreadful effect it has: I mean, in those who call themselves perfect. Even the very heads of them cannot

bear a civil question to be asked without falling in a great passion, even to the calling of horrid names. I have met with this treatment from them myself, as well as many others. And on Thursday last in my band, it was insisted upon they could not say the Lord's Prayer for themselves, neither did they stand in need of the atoning blood. (Oh, what Socinianism is this!) But it does not stop here. Last night I heard a worse account of one of their principal ones, which was that he was ill upon his bed cursing and blaspheming. I, being willing to see and know for myself, went this day to his house and found it even so. O my God, lay to thy hand, stop the torrent of errors. I can add no more, my grief and sorrow overcomes me. Pardon the abruptness of this and throw a mantle of love over all you may see amiss, considering it comes from one grieved in spirit for the cause of God and for the souls of brethren. I am reverend Sir,

Your sincere friend and  
well-wisher,  
William Ellis

P.S. It is through Mr. Butterfields informing me you would be glad to hear from any of your friends in London, made me take the liberty. If you are so obliging as to favour me with a line, please to direct me in Kings Gate Street, Holborn, next door to a Farriers.

Reference EMV: 135

Date: 23 June 1762

Addressees: Josiah Dornford to Charles Wesley

Annotation: Note in CW's hand: "Watts' death / June 23, 1763"

Reverend and Dear Sir,

My late dear friend, Mr. Watts, when I first knew him about twelve years ago was as the generality of the men of the world are. He was naturally of a facetious turn of mind and fond of company, and I think I have heard him say he was guilty of almost every sin except murder. He married a first cousin of mine of whom he was extremely fond, who died in the flower of her age after they had been married a very little time. He had one only brother who likewise lived with him whom God took away just within a few days of his wife. Him he dearly loved, for they lived together as I would wish all brothers did. God having now shipwrecked all his happiness here, he now began to be in deep concern about his soul and to search for happiness above, and he did not long seek in vain. The Lord gave him many tokens of his love, but he was naturally what we call a fearing, doubting Christian. He was extremely diligent in the means and though he was very weakly, he would rise in the morning in the midst of winter and walk from Temple Bar to the Foundry. Mr. [William] Romaine's preaching, I have heard him say, was very useful to him, and he attained by degrees (not all at once) to the assurance of faith. He was very much tempted and had many spiritual combats with the enemy of souls. During his last illness, which was long and grievous, being many months and his body being afflicted and wasted away with scorbutic sores and ulcers, no one I believe ever heard him complain. He was a pattern of invincible patience and modesty. He always thought he deserved infinitely more than what he suffered and

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when I saw him a few days before his death he lay as I would wish in my last hours, quite resigned to the will of God. In patience he possessed his soul. He repeated that whole verse in Job, "I know that my Redeemer liveth and etc." With holy confidence and joy, and he said he longed to be dissolved and to be with Christ, and feared to have offended because he longed to be gone. A few days before he died all his pains were amazingly taken away, and he retained his senses to the last. A few minutes before he died one brother that was with him asked him if he had power to look up and he replied "yes" louder than ordinary, and his lips kept going till he expired. I would mention one thing more of him which is he was the fondest of the Bible I think I ever saw a man, he seldom going out without it in his pocket. He always strove to speak in a truly scriptural manner and was of a most truly[?] forbearing disposition.

I am, dear sir, with all dutiful respect,

Yours Affectionately,

Jos[iah] Dornford

Pray excuse haste.

Reference EMV: 121

Date: 28 February 1764

Addressees: Brother Richards to Charles Wesley

Annotation: Note in CW's hand: "Richards sense of sanctification Feb. 1764"

Rev[eren]d Sir,

Tho' I have not had the pleasure of receiving a letter from you since you left London, I have had the satisfaction of hearing of you by several of the brethren whom you favoured with letters, thro' whom you was pleased to convey your love to your friends who met you on Sunday evenings, among whom I would take the pleasure of ranking myself.

As the time draws nigh that your brother will leave us, for a great part (as we suppose) of the summer, permit me to observe to you what great satisfaction it will be to your friends and well-wishers, and I am persuaded to the society in general to see you here upon his[?] leaving us. Indeed it was the sense of your friends that you and he should have had a personal conference before he left London, with which some of them (I suppose) may have acquainted you, in order the better to consert[?] Mr[?] [smear]es for the good of the society and prevent ill-designing persons[?] [waterspot] insinuating[?] the mealues[?] into the favour of the one, at the expense of the other. But as I understand he told the leaders yesterday that he should see you at Bristol ((London)) I hope it will answer the same end. It was very pleasing to hear from your brother that he expected you would be here in March "so (says he) we agreed before he went out of town" which gives us the agreeable satisfaction that there is a good harmony subsisting between you and him. And we hope your rec[en]t interview will be a means of strengthening and increasing it.

I would observe with great satisfaction that since you left us, your brother has preached in the general in the good old way and rarely to insist upon instantaneous sanctification. One Sunday he leant pretty much[?] that way, which occasioned[?] me to write to him in account whereto he wrote me "That it is his settled judgment and has been for many years, that

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every believer may expect to be sanctified in a moment, in an inexpressibly higher degree, than he was when he was justified." I think this is reducing the matter to a narrow compass, for here is no full or entire sanctification insisted on, but only a higher degree and therefore I wrote to him-"that if this great work of the Spirit be not understood to be confined to one particular operation, as if it was only at one particular time throughout his whole life, that a believer is to expect to be so highly favoured, I can readily receive it, and I know of none but what are like minded. For I believe that experience shows that every believer who continually watches unto prayer is favoured with many fresh manifestations of the love of God, in a higher and sometimes undoubtedly, in an inexpressibly higher degree, than when he was justified and that a further or higher degree of holiness is brought into the soul proportionable to the degree of love shed abroad in the believer's heart. So that I am persuaded of the truth of what you said a 12[?] month ago in public, that where the love of God fills the heart, and so long as it fills the heart, there is no room for sin. And therefore if sin be only subdued, it answers the same end upon your plan, as if it was expelled. Seeing your judgment is, that it may be brought in again." So far my letter[?]. How far your brother approves of it, or how far you may approve of it, I know not. But I thought it proper to mention this to you now, on account of the expectation of you two conferring together, before you come to town [London].

And now sir, what should hinder your speedy rousing to supply your brother's lack of service? All things are ready. A lodging is ready to receive you and your family. Your friends are ready to wait upon you. The congregation is ready to receive the glad tidings of salvation at your mouth. The holy angels are ready to guard you. The Holy Spirit is ready to assist you and bless your labour of love among us. The blessed Jesus is ready to own and bless his Word designed[?] by you. And the eternal Father is ready to own your endeavours with success.

My wife [tear] her Christian love to you and your spouse and lovely offspring, with

Yours affe[ctionate]ly

B Richards

28th Feb[rua]ry 1764

Reference EMV: 110

Date: 1765

Addressees: Account of the death of Sister Mecham sent to Charles Wesley

Annotation: CW's hand: "S. Mitcham's death 1765."

#### A Short Account of the Experience of Sister Mecham sent to Charles Wesley

She was early induced with much of the fear of God and her own mother remarked she was scarce ever seen to smile till twelve years old. She married young (about 20 yrs. old) when it may be said her trouble began, for her first husband, being quite unconcerned about his salvation took her a walking on a Sabbath day. As they went, she thought the people she saw were all going the broad way to destruction. Yet she went in with him to the ale house. The next day convictions followed her so strong she thought she had committed the unpardonable sin and was tempted to destroy herself. At one time in particular when her husband was going out on a Saturday night, as was his custom, she locked her chamber door and had a knife ready. But her husband without any cause that he knew of, returned (doubtless sent of God) and went up directly to the chamber door and finding it fast, burst it open directly, when she flung the knife away behind the bed.

The same temptation continued some months, none knowing it but God. But meeting a friend, a Dissenter that she thought was a Christian, she opened her mind to him. But he, being ignorant of such experiences, acquainted her husband and friends contrary to her desire and as she sought his promise, she now thought there was no such person as a Christian to be found. Immediately her friends sent for the Reverend Messrs. Wilson and Marlow, both curates of Shoreditch, who took a deal of pains with her (though for some time they could not but think she had committed some enormous crime). She kept constant to the prayers of the Church and hearing both Sundays and weekdays; but dared not take the Lord's Supper fearing she should do as Judas did; till Mr. Wilson, meeting her on the day before Good Friday, asked if she intended receiving the next day. She was startled at the question but told him "no" for the above reason. But Mr. Wilson told her that if she would not, he would never speak to her any more. She complied rather than disoblige him; and there she received a full sense of the pardoning love of God and went home rejoicing. This is about 30 years since.

It should be noticed that in the time of her troubles her friends took her out to Whitechapel Mount when thousands of people were there to see a shame siege. She

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cried out aloud, "There is not among us such a wretch as I," and fell down as dead. Also at hearing a sermon of the Reverend Mr. Wheatley on the sin against the Holy Ghost, she also fell down as dead. This was about the time the field preaching began here, which she was often persuaded to hear but would not, being strongly riveted to the Church till our brother Barnes, who lived in the neighbourhood, knowing Mr. Wesley was going to preach on a morning on our Lord's temptations, sent her word desiring her to come to hear him at six in the morning. She came, though against her inclination and heard. When asked how she liked [it], she told Mr. Barnes that he must have told Mr. Wesley all her life; which when he declared he had not, she thought God had directed the word to her and [she] continued hearing in the morning and evenings; her husband being then at sea (who would else have opposed it).

He died in the West Indies leaving her with one child. His relations were very kind to her in his absence till she came to the Foundry. They then sent for her to ask if she intended to continue with the Methodists. She told them she hoped that the day she left them that God would require her soul from her body. From that day they all forsook her. The great enemy of her soul, who had long lain idle, began to

renew her old temptations upon her now, though not quite so powerfully as before. About twenty-three years ago she married again. On consulting the Lord in prayer, the words were strongly imposed on her mind, "You shall have trouble in the flesh. Nevertheless I spare you." A year after, and after a lying in, God was pleased to afflict her with a cancer in her breast. But the temptations of her soul were beyond all that you might say. Tears were her meat day and night. About seventeen years ago God visited her with another sharp affliction, an ulcer in the womb, both which bodily afflictions continued to her death and a fever generally once a year.

About nine or ten years ago she received a great blessing under the Reverend Mr. Charles Wesley's preaching when you said you had come that they might receive a second benefit, which was a great support to her. She was never so well as when she could be in the house of God and many a time has dragged her frail body there though her pains were so great she thought she should never get back. She often received great comfort from Mr. Walsh, Mr. Morgan, Mr. Nelson, etc., in private conference. Yet the enemy pressed her so very sore with blasphemous and hard thoughts of God that within a fortnight of her death she cried out in agony she feared she should be damned at last.

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She was naturally of a quick spirit and a very tender conscience which frequently caused her much trouble, for when having said a thing, she would keep her word however difficult so to do. She may justly be said to have been a faithfully loving wife and mother, a kind friend and neighbour, a good mistress and a compassionate Christian.

Reference EMV: ??

Date: 29 January 1768

Addressees: George Lambertson to ?? Wesley

A most surprising instance of love the Lord hath lately shown to one of my neighbours who has been in a decline of body about three years. He has been inclinable to all manner of sins and that to a very high degree except the sin of murder; and that he has been near committing upon his wife sundry times. One would be almost ready to think he had been born in hell.

His soul had lay upon my spirits a long time. He would not suffer any person of any religious turn of mind to come at him. He was confined to his chamber about six weeks. Thirty days before his death I took an opportunity and went to his house. His wife being present at my entrance, I asked her if it would be agreeable to her husband to ask him how he did. She said she thought it would not, but said she would go and ask him. And when she returned she said nothing at all; therefore, I concluded there would be no admittance. However, his wife went upstairs again to carry something which was wanting. I then thought, if I do not see him at this time, I never shall; upon this, lifting my heart to the Lord, I took courage and followed her upstairs without any manner of invitation.

No person can support the anger which appeared in his countenance. I sat down without asking and dropped a few words in the tenderest manner I probably could for fear of blocking up my way. Before I left him the first time, I asked him if it would be agreeable to him to make him a short visit at times. To that he gave little answer; however, I repeated my visit the next day and took a little more freedom with him by telling him the danger of living and dying without an interest in the Redeemer. He seemed now to be more attentive and I found more liberty to speak to him. Before I left him the second time, I asked him if it would be agreeable to him to offer up a few words in prayer to God on his behalf. He said he thought there could be no great harm in it, upon this he went down upon his knees to my very great surprise.

Now from this time forward I visit him twice every day till he left the world. When my first week was expired, it pleased the Lord to convince him of the deplorable condition he was in. He was terrified and affrighted at the sight of himself. He, perhaps, had as dreadful a conviction as ever men had. The next time I went he said, "Mr. Lambertson, I have turned over such a night as never man did." He said, "I have seen hell and them foul fiends in it; and that's my place, there's nothing for me but banishment from the presence of God for evermore," and many such dreadful expressions as these, too dreadful to dwell upon.

In this condition I think he continued two days and two nights. He was now ready to go into despair. I told [him] God had not shown him hell to put him into it, but to convince him it was the place he merited; and likewise to pray to God to be delivered from it. He said, "Do you think so?" I told him the blessed Jesus died for the very vilest of the vile. But he replied, "I can have no part in his death, I have been such a wretch."

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I bid him lay his soul at the feet of the blessed Jesus. He immediately replied, "I will, but do you think he will have mercy upon such a hell deserving creature as I am." I told him I verily believed he would, if he from the bottom of his soul could cry for mercy. He said, "Oh! great is your faith for me!"

In two days, after the conviction was ended, the Lord gave him a secret hope. He then said, "If he sends me to hell I'll praise him there." The next visit that I made [to] him, he said, "These foul fiends of hell I



hope hath nothing to do with me now, I'll be glad to see you every hour if you please," and would never have had me from him. Every visit now that I made him filled my heart with transports of joy. The next morning I went as formerly. He said, "I have been conversing with Jesus." This was his language, "my soul lays at the feet of my blessed Saviour." I answered him, "let it continue there and if you perish, I'll perish with you."

It would have delighted any Christian's heart to have conversed with him. He had been much inclined to drink strong liquors, but after he was convinced of his sin, would scarce take what would support him. He said, "It keeps me from praying, and it keeps me from my Saviour." The day before he left the world, I asked him if he did not choose to take a little of something to refresh himself. His answer was, "I'll sup no more till I sup with my blessed Jesus in his everlasting kingdom." He further said, "I would be glad to suffer something for my Saviour who suffered so much for my sins."

A few hours before he departed I asked him if he had any fear of death. His answer was, "Death will be a welcome messenger to me." The last two hours that he lived, he lay as one dead with his hands grasped together. We did not expect him to speak one word more; but that God who knows what will most advance his own glory gave him something further to speak, and when the last two hours was ended, he loosened his hands from together and put one of them out to his wife. She took hold of it and with broken accents said, "Did you want to say something to me, my dear?" Now this same man said to his wife only five weeks before his death that he would curse her to his last breath, now clasped her in his cold arms, and with a much louder voice than he had spoke for a fortnight said, "God bless thee! God bless thee! God hath pardoned all the sins that ever I committed in my life. God bless you all, praise God and sing" and away he went triumphant to glory. He died in the thirty-third year of his age, left a wife, and a child, and a small estate.

"Follow after he cries, as he mounts to the skies,  
Follow after your friend  
To the Blissful enjoyment that never shall end."

Five persons of circuit heard all these last dying words.  
Leeds, Jan. 29th, 1768

Reference EMV: 54

Date: 11 April 1773

Addressees: Isaac Duckworth to Charles Wesley

Annotation: Note in CW's hand: "Isaac, April 11, 1773 Triumphant Deaths. / Vision!"

Bradford, Easter Sunday 1773

Reverend and dear Sir,

I am still willing to let you know that am in the land of the living. And thanks be to God, I feel my soul is alive to him. Sir, you are often in my mind and could and doth often wish to see you. But this must be when the Lord will. But let not our love to each other grow less. But oh may our love to God increase, then doubtless we shall love ~~on another~~ another. My brothers and sister joins with me in duty and love to you. My eldest brother has been much afflicted this winter by an impost in his head which broke inwardly and discharged itself at his left ear. But he is better. While he was bad the whole care of our business and family lay upon me but he is much recovered again. I hope you do not forget me. Indeed I do not nor I cannot forget you. The work seems to prosper *much in these parts and a great many is added to our society this year in Bradford circuit.* And a great many is gone to glory. Brother Otley, one of our preachers, has two funerals to preach this ~~day~~ day at Bradford. One for Sarah Tettley, aged 15 years, the other Mary Garnet, aged 19 years. They both died very happy. Oh that my last end may be like theirs. And now, sir, please to let me have a line from you soon. Please to give my duty and love to Mrs. Wesley, to Master C[harles Wesley junior], to Miss Sally [Wesley junior] and to all friends. And now, sir, may peace, peace, peace be with you for ever. Amen and amen. This from your unworthy but loving son and servant, Isaac Duckworth

PS ~~The~~ The remainder of this is an account of Elizabeth Hurst who lived and died near Bristol. Mrs [Miss Mary] Bosanquet joins with me in duty and love to you and would be glad to have a line from you. So no more at present but love. Farewell in the Lord.

To the Reverend Mr. Charles Wesley  
at the Foundry, Upper  
Morefields  
London  
Single Sheet

Reference EMV: 49

Date: 27 February 1786

Some few remarks concerning the late Mr. J[oh]n Davies by an intimate friend

Before, he was like unto others. It is about 24 years since he was first brought to a spiritual light. And the means it pleased God first to use was a person who worked with him; who, he in some degree with the rest, had used to ridicule. But when it pleased God to give him a view of what he was and his danger; he, like a drowning man was, will catch at every straw. So he was running after all opinions in his own mind, for he was at one time minded to join the Quakers, at another the Romish Church, and so on. But as his advice was, so was his conduct, to try all things and hold fast that which was good. And as such, he joined himself to the Rev. Mr. Wesley's society, about 16 years since, with whom he continued to meet as long as his father would permit; a great part of which time he was a leader; and I very believe, a more exemplary man was not among the Methodists.

In him godliness or the knowledge of God was profitable in all things, for he had from school no further learning than the grammar. But since, by his thirst for a better comprehension and knowledge of things, with close application and study, had acquired the knowledge of the Latin, French, Greek and Hebrew. But for want of being known; he, who those fine flowers which in the wilderness blooms, whose beauty is lost for want of being seen, so was that brilliant character of his great abilities.

And though he had such a great blessing of being empowered to do justice and use mercy to such a great degree that even his enemies, who would not speak well of him freely, were constrained to say "that if there was ever an honest man in the world, John Davies was one." And though it pleased God to increase his substance, so as to be of the world independent; which is so great a temporal blessing, though so

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great a snare; yet [it] was to him a blessing, for as was his day so was his strength. For as a good steward, he could give an account of his stewardship; for in purse and person was found willing to administer as far as in his power, both knowledge of things spiritual, and temporal relief. And [he] was one of the first that established that most excellent institution, the *Bible Society*. And at last [he] was able, amidst all his affliction, to declare to me, though not in these words but to this purpose, "that there was nothing in heaven or earth that he desired equal to such of the presence of God which he had experienced; to that degree of knowledge of him; in him to be unity, peace and concord; and that he was willing to do his will, either to depart or stay." But to depart and be with him, which was far better, seemed to be his prevailing choice; which he did on Monday, the 27th day of February last, in the 48 year of his age, after a long affliction of near three years.

A. Shoreland

1786