

John Wesley's In-Correspondence (1724–30)

Table of Contents (Update: June 20, 2024)

1724 Aug. 19	Susanna (Annesley) Wesley	1
1724 Sept. 10	Susanna (Annesley) Wesley	2
1724 Sept. 10	Martha Wesley	3
1724 Nov. 24	Susanna (Annesley) Wesley	4
1725 Jan. 05	Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.	5
1725 Jan. 05	Susanna (Annesley) Wesley	6
1725 Jan. 26	Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.	7–8
1725 Feb. 23	Susanna (Annesley) Wesley	9–10
1725 Mar. 07	Mehetabel Wesley	11–12
1725 Mar. 17	Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.	13
1725 Apr. 07	Emilia Wesley	14–16
1725 May 10	Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.	17
1725 June 08	Susanna (Annesley) Wesley	18–20
1725 July 14	Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.	21–22
1725 July 21	Susanna (Annesley) Wesley	23–24
1725 Aug. 02	Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.	25
1725 Aug. 02	Susanna (Annesley) Wesley	26
1725 Aug. 12	Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.	27
1725 Aug. 18	Susanna (Annesley) Wesley	28–30
1725 Aug. 27	Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.	31
1725 Sept. 01	Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.	32
1725 Sept. 07	Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.	33
1725 Oct. 19	Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.	34
1725 Nov. 10	Susanna (Annesley) Wesley	35–38
1725 Nov. 30	Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.	39
1725 Dec. 07	Susanna (Annesley) Wesley	40
1726 Mar. 20	Martha Wesley	41
1726 Mar. 21	Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.	42
1726 Mar. 30	Susanna (Annesley) Wesley	43
1726 Apr. 01	Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.	44
1726 Apr. 09	Susanna (Annesley) Wesley	45
1726 Apr. 16	Susanna (Annesley) Wesley	46
1726 Apr. 17	Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.	47
1726 Sept. 28	Susanna (Annesley) Wesley	48
1726 Oct. 12	Susanna (Annesley) Wesley	49
1726 Nov. 29	Susanna (Annesley) Wesley	50
1726 Dec. 10	Rev. Samuel Wesley Jr.	51–52
1727 Jan. 20	Mary Wesley	53–54
1727 Jan. 31	Susanna (Annesley) Wesley	55–56
1727 Feb. 07	Martha Wesley	57–58
1727 Feb. 20	Robert Kirkham	59–60
1727 Mar. 08	Nancy Griffiths	61
1727 Mar. 14	Susanna (Annesley) Wesley	62
1727 Apr. 22	Susanna (Annesley) Wesley	63–64
1727 May 14	Susanna (Annesley) Wesley	65–66
1727 May 15	Rev. Samuel Wesley Jr.	67–68
1727 June 06	Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.	69

John Wesley's In-Correspondence (1724–30)

Table of Contents (Update: June 20, 2024)

1727 June 21	Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.	70
1727 June 26	Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.	71
1727 July 05	Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.	72
1727 July 05	Susanna (Annesley) Wesley	73
1727 July 18	Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.	74
1727 July 26	Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.	75
1727 July 26	Susanna (Annesley) Wesley	76–77
1727 Nov. 18	Rev. Samuel Wesley Jr.	78
1727 Dec. 28	Lewis Fenton	79
1728 Jan. 06	Rev. Samuel Wesley Jr.	80–81
1728 Jan. 10	Rev. Henry Sherman	82
1728 Jan. 20	Charles Wesley	83–86
1728 Jan. 20	Robert Kirkham	87
1728 Aug. 12	Susanna (Annesley) Wesley	88
1728 Sept.	Susanna (Annesley) Wesley	89
1728 Sept. 05	Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.	90
1728 Sept. 19	William Wright	91–92
1729 Jan. 05–22	Charles Wesley	93–96
1729 May 05	Charles Wesley	97–99
1729 c. May 24	Charles Wesley	100
1729 July 12	Kezia Wesley	101–02
1729 Aug. 11	Susanna (Annesley) Wesley	103
1729 Oct. 21	Rev. Dr. John Morley	104
1729 Dec. 31	Emilia Wesley	105–06
1730 Jan. 10	Martha Wesley	107–08
1730 Jan. 26	Kezia Wesley	109–10
1730 Feb. 09	Emilia Wesley	111–12
1730 Mar. 10	Martha Wesley	113
1730 Aug. 28	Mary (Granville) Pendarves	114
1730 Sept. 09	Sarah (Kirkham) Chapone	115
1730 Sept. 19	Rev. Samuel Wesley Jr.	116
1730 Sept. 28	Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.	117
1730 Oct. 12	Mary (Granville) Pendarves and Ann Granville	118
1730 Oct. 15	Emilia Wesley	119–20
1730 Oct. 26	Mary (Granville) Pendarves	121
1730 Oct. 28	Kezia Wesley	122–23
1730 Nov. 19	Mary (Granville) Pendarves	124
1730 Dec. 01	Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.	125
1730 Dec. 14	Rev. Richard Hutchins	126–27

From Susanna (Annesley) Wesley

Wroot [Lincolnshire]¹
August 19, 1724

Dear Jacky,²

I am somewhat uneasy, because I've not heard from you so long, and think you don't do well to stand upon points, and write only letter for letter, since I decline apace, and 'tis more trouble for me to write one than for you to write ten times. Therefore let me hear from you oftener, and inform me of the state of your health, how you go on, and whether you are easier than formerly, and have any reasonable hopes of being out of debt.³

We have dismal weather, and can neither get hay, corn, nor firing, which makes us apprehensive of great want. I am most concerned for that good, generous man that lent you £10; and am ashamed to beg a month or two longer, since he was so kind to grant us so much time already. Give my service to him, and thanks, however.

We were strangely amused with your uncle's coming from India,⁴ but suppose those fancies are laid aside. I wish there had been anything in it, then perhaps it had been in my power to have provided for you. For if all these things fail, I hope God will not forsake us. We have still his good providence to depend on, which has a thousand expedients to relieve us beyond our view.

Dear Jacky, be not discouraged; do your duty, keep close to your studies, and hope for better days. Perhaps, notwithstanding all, we shall pick up a few crumbs for you before the end of the year.

Dear son, I beseech Almighty God to bless thee!

Susanna Wesley

Source: manuscript copy; JW, Letter-book (1724–29),⁵ 24–25.⁶

¹Samuel Wesley Sr. added the parish of Wroot, Lincolnshire to his pastoral responsibilities in 1722, and the family had moved to the rectory in Wroot.

²Orig., 'D. J.'; Susanna's holograph letters of Feb. 23, 1725 and Oct. 25, 1732 show that she used 'Jacky' rather than 'John' or 'Jack'; from 1734 onwards she seems to have addressed him as 'Dear Son'.

³JW had recently completed his bachelor's degree at Christ Church, Oxford.

⁴Susanna's brother, Samuel Annesley Jr. (1658–1732), was a representative of the East India Company in Surat, India. His return in one of the company's ships had been reported in the press, leading Susanna to travel to London to meet him, only to find he was not aboard. Susanna believed that he was wealthy and that he might bestow some of his wealth on her family, despite a disagreement between him and Samuel Wesley Sr. Both of these beliefs were mistaken; cf. Arnold Wright, *Annesley of Surat* (London, Melrose, 1918), 38, 329–35.

⁵JW transcribed copies of select letters to him from members of his family in a small notebook entitled, 'Letters: 1724, 25, 26 / & 1727, 28–29'. This letter-book is preserved in MARC (MA 1977/157, JW III.2). The letters are all in the highly compressed longhand with special signs. The text is always here expanded without comment, and brackets used only where some doubt exists about the original. In these copies Wesley's dash represents an ellipsis, and is so shown here.

⁶Transcription published in *Works*, 25:148; and Wallace, *Susanna Wesley*, 103–04.

From Susanna (Annesley) Wesley

Wroot
September 10 [1724]

Dear Jacky,

'Tis above a week since I received your kind letter,¹ which has greatly revived my spirits; and though I should not have an ill opinion of you though there had really been some neglect on your side, yet I find I am much better pleased to think you do not grudge the pains of writing.

I'm nothing glad that Mr. — has paid himself out of your exhibition. ... Though I cannot hope, I do not despair, of my brother's coming, or at least remembering me where he is.² For I am persuaded God will yet order things so that either I or mine shall sometime be the better for that man; though most of my family are of another opinion. ...

The smallpox has been very mortal at Epworth most of this summer. Our family have all had it besides me, and I hope God will preserve me from it, because your father can't yet well [[spare money to bury me.³]] ...

I heartily wish you were in orders, and could come and serve one of his churches. Then I should see you often, and could be more helpful to you than 'tis possible to be at this distance. ...

Dear Jacky, I beseech Almighty God to bless thee!

Source: abridged manuscript transcription; JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 25–26.⁴

¹A missing letter of about Aug. 26, answering his mother's of Aug. 19.

²See previous letter.

³From cipher, for whose interpretation here as elsewhere Frank Baker leaned heavily upon Prof. Richard P. Heitzenrater.

⁴Transcription published in *Works*, 25:149; and Wallace, *Susanna Wesley*, 104.

From Martha Wesley

[Wroot]

September 10, 1724

Dear Brother,

I would not have you think I have forgot you, because I have not writ[ten] to you. For I can assure you it was not out of any want of love to you, but because I was unwilling to put you to the charge of paying the postage for a letter from me. For I shall never forget one kindness you did me when at Wroot, and I should be very glad to see you again. But I doubt I must not hope to enjoy that satisfaction a great while yet. Sister Nancy, I believe, will marry John Lambert.¹ Perhaps you may not have forgotten him, since you saw him at Wroot. I should be very glad if you would give yourself the trouble of writing a long letter to me, which would exceedingly oblige

Your sincere friend and affectionate sister,

Martha Wesley

Source: published transcription; *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* 68 (1845): 779.

¹Anne Wesley married John Lambert of Wroot on Dec. 2, 1725.

From Susanna (Annesley) Wesley

Wroot
November 24 [1724]

Dear Jacky,

I have now three of your letters before me unanswered, and take it very kindly that you would write so often though you heard not from me. Indeed I'm afraid of being chargeable, or I should miss few posts; it being exceeding pleasant to me in this solitude to read your letters, but I believe they would be pleasing anywhere.

Your disappointment in not seeing us as at Oxon¹ was not of such ill consequence as mine, in not meeting my brother at London. Not but your wonderful curiosities might excite a person of greater faith than mine to travel to your museum on purpose to visit them. 'Tis almost pity that somebody does not cut the weson² of that keeper with Adam's sword, to cure his lying so enormously.

I wish you would save all the money you can conveniently spare, not to spend on a visit, but for a wiser and better purpose—to pay debts, and make yourself easy. I am not without hope of meeting you next summer, if it please God to prolong my worthless life. If then you will be willing and have time allowed you to accompany me to Wroot, I'll bear your charges, and do other ways for you, as God shall enable me. ...

The story of Mr. B[arnesley]³ has afforded me many curious speculations. I do not doubt the fact, but cannot conceive for what reason those apparitions should come unto us. If they were permitted to speak to us, and we had strength to bear such conversation; if they had commission to inform us of anything relating to their invisible world that would be of any use to us in this; if they could instruct us how to avoid any danger, or put us in a way of being wiser and better, there would be sense in it. But to appear for no end that we know of, unless to fright people almost out of their wits, seems altogether unaccountable.

... I hope at your leisure you will oblige me with some more verses, on any, but rather on a religious subject. ...

Dear Jacky, I beseech Almighty God to bless thee!

Source: abridged manuscript transcription; JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 26–27.⁴

¹I.e., Oxford.

²I.e. throat, one of many variants of the obsolete 'weasand'.

³See JW's account of John Barnesley, an Oxford student, seeing an apparition of his mother, who had just died in Ireland; JW to Susanna (Annesley) Wesley, Nov. 1, 1724.

⁴Transcription published in *Works*, 25:152–53; and Wallace, *Susanna Wesley*, 104–05.

From the Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.

[Wroot]
January 5, [17]24/5

Your brother will receive £5 for you on next Saturday, if Mr. [Henry] S[herman]¹ is paid the £10 he lent you; if not, it must go to him. But I promise you, I shan't forget you are my son, if you do not that I am

Your loving father,

Sam. Wesley

Source: manuscript copy; JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 10.²

¹Henry Sherman (1691–1739) received his B.A. (1714) and M.A. (1717) at Christ Church, Oxford, before becoming a fellow there. Among the students he tutored was JW. Sherman had been ordained priest in 1721, and left Christ Church in 1728 to become vicar of Staverton, Northamptonshire, where he served until his death.

²Transcription published in *Works*, 25:156.

From Susanna (Annesley) Wesley

[Wroot]
January 5, [17]25

Dear Jacky,

(About sending money)¹

Your brother² talks of coming hither at Whitsuntide, perhaps between this and that something may occur, or it may happen that you may come with him. ...

God bless thee!

[P.S.] I wish you a happy new year.

Source: abridged manuscript transcription; JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 27.³

¹JW summarizes a section that he omits.

²Samuel Wesley Jr., who brought CW with him.

³Transcription published in *Works*, 25:157; and Wallace, *Susanna Wesley*, 105.

From the Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.

Wroot
January 26, 1724/5

Dear Son,

I'm so well pleased with your present behaviour, or at least with your letters, that I hope I shall have no occasion to remember any more some things that are past. And since you have now for some time bit upon the bridle, I'll take care hereafter to put a little honey upon it as oft as I'm able. But then it shall be of my own *mero motu*,¹ as the last £5 was, for I will bear no rivals in my kindness.

I did not forget you with Dr. Morley,² but have moved that way as much as possible, though I must confess hitherto with no great prospect or hope of success.

As for what you mention of entering into holy orders, 'tis indeed a great work, and I am pleased to find you think it so, as well as that you don't admire a callow clergyman any more than I do. As for the motives you take notice of, my thoughts are: 1) It's no *harm* to desire getting into that office, even as Eli's sons, 'to eat a piece of bread', 'for the labourer is worthy of his hire'.³ Though 2) a desire and intention to lead a stricter life, and a belief one should do so, is a better reason; though this should by all means be begun before, or else, ten to one, 'twill deceive us afterward. 3) If a man be *unwilling* and *undesirous* to enter into orders, 'tis easy to guess whether he can say, so much as with common honesty, that he believes he's 'moved by the Holy Spirit' to do it. But, 4) the principal spring and motive, to which all the former should be only secondary, must certainly be the glory of God, and the service of his church, in the edification and salvation⁴ of our neighbour. And woe to him who with any meaner leading view attempts so sacred a work. For which 5) he should take all the care he possibly can, with the advice of wiser and elder men—especially imploring with all humility, sincerity, and intention of mind, and with fasting and prayer, the direction and assistance of Almighty God, and his Holy Spirit, to qualify and prepare him for it. The knowledge of the languages is a very considerable help in this matter, which, I thank God, all my three sons have to a very laudable degree, though God knows I had never more than a smattering of any of them. But then this must be prosecuted to the thorough understanding the original text of the Scriptures, by constant and long conversing with them. You ask me which is the best commentary on the Bible; I answer, the Bible. For the several paraphrases and translations of it in the Polyglot, compared with the original and with one another, are in my opinion, to an honest, devout, industrious, and humble mind, infinitely preferable to any commentary I ever saw writ[ten] upon it, though Grotius is the best (for the most part), especially on the Old Testament.

And now, the providence of God (I hope it was) has engaged me in such a work wherein you may be very assistant to me, I trust promote his glory, and at the same time notably forward your own studies in the method I have just now proposed. For I've some time since designed an edition of the Holy Bible in octavo, in the Hebrew, Chaldee, Seventy,⁵ and Vulgar Latin, and have made some progress in it; the whole scheme whereof I have not time at present to give you, of which scarce any soul yet knows unless your brother Sam. What I desire of you on this article is that you would immediately fall to work: read diligently the Hebrew text in the Polyglot, and collate it exactly with the Vulgar Latin, which is in the second column, writing down all (even the least) variations or differences between them. To these I'd have you add the Samaritan text, in the last column but one (don't mind the Latin translation in the very

¹JW's transcription in his letter-book, 'mere motion'.

²John Morley (c. 1669–1731), rector of Lincoln College, also served as rector of Scotton, Lincolnshire, and had long been an acquaintance of Samuel Wesley Sr.

³1 Sam. 2:26; and 1 Tim. 5:18.

⁴JW's transcription omits 'and salvation'.

⁵I.e., the Septuagint Greek.

last column), which is the very same with the Hebrew except in some very few places, only differing in the Samaritan character (I think the true Old Hebrew), the alphabet whereof you may learn in a day's time, either from the prolegomena in Walton's Polyglot, or from his grammar. In a twelvemonth's time, sticking close to it in the forenoons, you will get twice through the Pentateuch; for I have done it four times the last year, and am going over it the fifth, collating the Hebrew and the two Greek, the Alexandrian and the Vatican, with what I can get of Symmachus, Theodotion,⁶ etc. Nor shall you lose your reward for it, either in this or the other world. Nor are your brothers like to be idle. But I'd have nothing said of it to anybody, though your brother Sam shall write you shortly about it. In the afternoon read what you will, and be sure to walk an hour if fair in the fields. Get Thirlby's Chrysostom *De Sacerdotio*.⁷ Master it; digest it. I took some pains, a year or two since, in drawing up some advices to Mr. Hoole's brother,⁸ then to be my curate at Epworth, before his ordination, which may not be unuseful to you, wherefore I'll send them shortly to your brother Sam for you. But you must return them me again, I having no copy—and pray let none but yourself see them.⁹

By all this you see I'm not for your going over hastily into orders. When I'm for your taking them, you shall know it, and 'tis not impossible but I may then be with you, if God so long spare the life and health of

Your affectionate father,

Sam. Wesley

I like your verses on the 65[th] Psalm,¹⁰ and would not have you bury your talent.
All are well, and send buss.¹¹

Work and write while you can. You see time has shaken me by the hand, and death is but a little behind him. My eyes and heart¹² are now almost all I have left, and bless God for them.

Endorsement: by JW, 'my F. Jan. 26, 1725'.

Source: holograph; MARC, WCB, D6/1/24.¹³ See also the abridged manuscript transcription in JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 11–13; and *AM* 1 (1778): 29–30, probably based upon letter-book, with many and considerable editorial revisions by JW.

⁶Both Symmachus and Theodotion (second century CE) produced Greek translations of the Hebrew Bible that were included in Origen's *Hexapla*.

⁷Saint John Chrysostom (d. 407), *De Sacerdotio, Libri IV*, edited by Styan. Thirlby (Cambridge: Edmund Jeffery, 1712).

⁸Nathaniel Hoole (c. 1700–37) was admitted to Sidney, Cambridge, in 1721 and ordained deacon by the Bishop of Lincoln in 1722; there is no evidence he was ever ordained priest. His older brother Joseph (d. 1745) was vicar of Haxey 1712–37, then rector of St. Ann's Manchester until his death.

⁹Published by JW in 1735, after his father's death, as *Advice to a Young Clergyman*.

¹⁰These verses do not appear to survive.

¹¹I.e., a kiss, or love.

¹²Instead of the word itself, JW drew a heart.

¹³Transcription published in *Works*, 25:157–59.

From Susanna (Annesley) Wesley

Wroot
February 23, 1724[5]

Dear Jacky,

I have received two letters from you, neither of which I've answered. Your father kept the first, it being included in one to him, and since the receipt of the last I have been very ill and confined to my chamber. But I thank God I'm much better.

Your last brings surprising news indeed about the pope, whom I doubt the conclave will not permit long to live. His justice to the young gentleman, in restoring him the estate his bigoted father gave from him to the monks is really very commendable, but his allowing the Scriptures to the laity, and declaring against his own infallibility, are actions truly Christian. In the latter he has given a mortal wound to the infallibility of that See; and whether he were in the right or whether he was in the wrong the matter is the same, for both horns of the dilemma strike them. They must resign their more profitable than honest pretence to infallibility. The King of Prussia¹ talks often, but is not to be depended on for action. Emily has answered for herself. 'Tis strange Mr. Leybourne² should send any service to me, but I accept the compliment, and without one wish him health and happiness.³

The alteration of your temper has occasioned me much speculation. I, who am apt to be sanguine, hope it may proceed from the operations of God's Holy Spirit. That by taking off your relish of sensual enjoyments, [it] would prepare and dispose your mind for a more serious and close application to things of a more sublime and spiritual nature. If it be so, happy are you if you cherish those dispositions, and now in good earnest resolve to make religion the business of your life. For after all that is the one thing that strictly speaking is necessary; all things beside are comparatively little to the purposes of life. Dear Jacky, I heartily wish you would now enter upon a serious examination of yourself, that you may know whether you have a reasonable hope of salvation by Jesus Christ;⁴ that is, whether you are in a state of faith and repentance or not, which you know are the conditions of the gospel covenant on our part. If you are, the satisfaction of knowing it will abundantly reward your pains. If not, you'll find a more reasonable occasion for tears than can be met with in a tragedy. This matter deserves great consideration in all, but especially those designed for the clergy ought above all things to make their calling and election sure, lest after they have preached to others they themselves should be cast away.

Now I mention this, it calls to mind your letter to your father about taking orders. I was much pleased with it, and liked the proposal well. But 'tis an unhappiness almost peculiar to our family, that your father and I seldom think alike. I approve the disposition of your mind, I think this season of Lent the most proper for your preparation for orders, and I think the sooner you are a deacon the better, because it may be an inducement to greater application in the study of practical divinity, which of all

¹Friedrich Wilhelm I (1688–1740).

²Robert Leybourne (1693–1759), a contemporary of Samuel Wesley Jr. at Westminster School and Christ Church, who became fellow of Brasenose College, Oxford, in 1717, and eventually D.D. in 1731. He was rector of St. Dunstan's, Stepney, 1729, and of St. Anne's, Limehouse, from 1730 until his death, when he was buried in Bath Abbey in the grave of his second wife, Rebecca Towne of St. Mary's, Stratford-at-Bow, Essex, whom he was licensed to marry Jan. 20, 1732/3. For some time it had seemed likely that he would marry Emilia Wesley, but 'a near relation' (apparently her brother Samuel) and her mother intervened. See Emilia's letter to JW, Apr. 7, 1725.

³JW's transcription in his letter-book summarizes: 'Of news, the Pope, the King of Prussia, and of Mr. L.'.

⁴JW's letter-book transcription omits 'by Jesus Christ'.

other I humbly conceive is the best study for candidates for orders. Mr. Wesley⁵ differs from me, and would engage you, I believe, in critical learning (though I'm not sure), which though of use accidentally, and by way of concomitance, yet is in no wise preferable to the other. Therefore I earnestly pray God to avert that great evil from you of engaging in trifling studies to the neglect of such as are absolutely necessary. I dare advise nothing.

God Almighty direct, and bless you.

Adieu.

I have much to say, but cannot write more at present. I even long to see you.

Source: holograph; Wesley's Chapel (London).⁶ Abridged manuscript transcription in JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 23–24.

⁵I.e., Samuel Wesley Sr.

⁶Transcription published in *Works*, 25:159–60; and Wallace, *Susanna Wesley*, 106–07.

From Mehetabel Wesley

[Kelstern, Lincolnshire]

March 7, 1725

Dear Brother Jack,

I had answered your very obliging letter long before now, only your particular inquiry into Romley's affair put me upon so melancholy a task that you cannot wonder that I so long deferred the performance. You know that my father forbade him his house upon account of the old song when you were at Wroot, since which time I have never seen Romley.¹ He wrote me several times since, and we held a secret correspondence together for a little time before I came to Kelstern.² I desire you would not be inquisitive how the intrigue broke off; the bare mention of it is much, much more than I can bear.

My father came to Kelstern Christmas was twelvemonth [i.e., a year ago], and proffered me to wait on Mrs. Grantham. She accepted it, and my father promised Mr. Grantham that I should come hither before I knew a word of it. When I did know, it was in vain for me to endeavour to persuade my parents not to send me; they were resolutely bent upon my journey. So I came, very much against my consent, and had far rather have gone to my grave.

Dear Jack, I think I may write freely to you, for I have such an opinion of your generosity and good-nature that I hope you will neither upbraid me with my weakness yourself, nor betray me to those who will—I mean our family. Though I am sensible of the great folly of complaining where the grievance admits of no remedy, yet I find that misery and complaint are almost inseparable in our sex, and I have often concealed my uneasiness to the hazard of sense and life for want of some friend to condole and advise with me. I am in a great measure careless what becomes of me. Home I would not go, were I reduced to beggary; and here I will never stay, where they tell me that they should never have desired my company only my father proffered me, and they did not well know how to refuse me. And Mr. Grantham desires me to provide for myself against May Day. So I intend to try my fortune in London,³ and am resolved not to marry yet till I can forget Romley or see him again. Could I live without thinking, or had anything to divert my thoughts from what I don't care to think of, I might yet be easy. But here I have no company but my fellow-servants. And sometimes those that I care less for—viz., my lovers, a set of mortals who universally own me the most unaccountable woman that ever they knew. I am condemned to constant solitude, and have not been out of the town once since I came into it.

I thank you for the books you sent me, but do not care to read the *Fair Penitent*,⁴ though I admire it vastly. The poem you desire I cannot find, and cannot write it again, because I have forgotten it and almost everything else. So I can't desire the young lady's poetry you mentioned, though you seemed to think it good, a thing almost miraculous in a woman.

Do not think your letters can possibly be tedious to me, were they ever so long. You know I used to love long letters, nor am I changed in that particular. Pray write as long as ever you can get time, and when I am weary with reading I will tell you so.

Is Mr. [Robert] Leybourne at Oxford yet?

¹This 'intrigue', as Mehetabel describes it, likely involved one of the older sons of William Romley (c. 1676–1764), of Finningley, Nottinghamshire (a couple of miles from Wroot). For example, his son George (b. 1704) would have been about 19 when Mehetabel was 27. William's son John (1711–50) would later live with the Wesley family for a time, serving as Samuel's assistant, and briefly court Martha Wesley. Romley returned to serve as a curate at Epworth, under Samuel Hurst, who succeeded Samuel Wesley Sr. as rector in 1735.

²Kelstern, Lincolnshire; a small village about 8 miles west of Market Rasen.

³Staying with her uncle, Matthew Wesley.

⁴Nicholas Rowe, *The Fair Penitent; a Tragedy* (London: Jacob Tonson, 1703).

Forgive my unmerciful scrawling, and think how much I value your letters when I write now in as great pain as I can bear, to oblige you, and entice you to write again as soon as possible to

Yours,

Mehetabel Wesley

Address: 'For / Mr. John Wesley / Commoner of Christ Church / in Oxford / by way of London'.

Endorsement: by JW, 'S[ister] H[etty] March 7. 1725 / melancholy'.

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWF 9/1.⁵

⁵Transcription published in Stevenson, *Memorials*, 358–59 (but misattributed as from Martha).

From the Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.

Wroot
March 17, 1724/5

Son,

I've both yours. I've changed my mind since my last, and now incline to your going this summer into orders, and would have you turn your thoughts and studies that way. But in the first place, if you love yourself or me, pray heartily! ... I'll struggle hard, but I'll get money for your orders, and something more. ... Mr. Downes has spoke to Dr. [John] Morley about you, who says he'll inquire of your character.

...

Trust in the Lord, and do good, and verily thou shalt be fed!¹

This, with blessing, from

Your loving father,

Sam. Wesley

Source: abridged manuscript transcription; JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 13.²

¹See Ps. 37:3.

²Transcription published in *Works*, 25:160–61.

From Emilia Wesley

[Wroot]
April 7, 1725

Brother,

Yours of March 7¹ I received, and thank you for your care in dispatching so speedily the business I desired you to do. It is the last of that kind I shall trouble you with. No more shall I write or receive letters to and from that person.² But lest you should run into a mistake, and think we have quarrelled, like Sam³ and him, I assure you we are perfect friends. We think, wish, and judge alike; but what avails it, we are both miserable. He has not differed with my mother, but she loves him not, because she esteems him the unlucky cause of a deep melancholy in a beloved child. For his own sake it is that I cease writing, because it is now his interest to forget me.

Whether you will be engaged before thirty or not, I cannot determine. But if my advice be worth listening to, never engage your affections before your worldly affairs are in such a posture that you may marry very soon. The contrary practice has proved very pernicious to our family. And were I to live my time over again, and had the same experience I have now, were it for the best man in England, I would not wait one year. I know you are a young man, encompassed with difficulties, that has passed through many hardships already, and probably must through many more before you are easy in the world. But believe me, if ever you come to suffer the torment of a hopeless love, all other afflictions will seem small in comparison of it. And that you may not think I speak at random, take some account of my past life. More than ever I spoke to any one (but now I write to one I dare trust), suffer me to bemoan myself a little and to show you some little part of what I have endured.

After the fire, when I was fourteen years old,⁴ I was left alone with my mother and lived easy for one year, having most necessities, though few diversions, and never going abroad. Yet after working all day, I read some pleasant book at night, and was contented enough. But after we were gotten into our house, and all the family were settled, in about a year's time, I began to find out we were ruined. Then came on London journeys, convocations of blessed memory, that for seven winters my father was at London, and we at home in intolerable want and affliction. Then I learnt what it was to seek money for bread, seldom having any without such hardships in getting it that much abated the pleasure of it. Thus we went on, growing worse and worse, all us children in scandalous want of necessities for years together; vast income, but no comfort or credit with it.

Then I went to London with design to get into some service, failed of that, and grew acquainted with [Robert] Leybourne. Ever after that for three years I lived in close correspondence with him. When anything grieved me, he was always my comforter. When afflictions pressed hard on me, he was at hand to relieve me. That although our affairs grew no better. Yet I was tolerably easy, thinking his love sufficient recompense for the loss or absence of all other worldly comforts. Then ill fate, in the shape of a near relation,⁵ laid the ground-work of my misery, and joined with my mother's command, and my own indiscretion, broke the correspondence between him and I.

That dismal winter I shall ever remember. My mother was sick, confined even to her bed. My father in danger of arrests every day. I had a large family to keep, and a small sum to keep it on; expecting my mother's death every day, and my father's confinement. And yet in all this care, the loss of Leybourne was heaviest. For near half a year I never slept half a night. And now provoked at all my

¹This letter is not known to survive.

²Robert Leybourne, with whom Emilia had recently broken up.

³Her brother, Samuel Wesley Jr.

⁴Actually she would have been about 17.

⁵Possibly her brother Samuel.

relations, resolved never to marry. And wishing to be out of their sight, I began first to think of going into the world.

A vacancy happening in Lincoln boarding-school, I went thither; and though I had never so much as seen one before, I fell readily into that way of life. And I was so pleased to see myself in good clothes, with money in my pocket, and respected in a strange manner by everyone, that I seemed gotten into another world. And though I worked hard for my living, yet I could maintain myself with working, and I was very willing to do it. Here I lived five years, and should have done longer, but the school broke up. And my father having got Wroot living, my mother was earnest for my return. I was told what pleasant company was at Bawtry, Doncaster, etc., and that this addition to my father, with God's ordinary blessing, would make him a rich man in a few years; that they did not desire to confine me always here, but would allow me all the liberties in their power.

Then I came home again, in an evil hour for me. I was well clothed, and while I wanted nothing was easy enough. Last spring I went to Lincoln to dispatch some necessary business of my own, and it was with some difficulty, though I had money and clothes of my own, that my journey thither, and stay there for four months, cost my father not a groat. Thus far we went on tolerably well. But this winter, when my own necessities began to decay, and my money was most of it spent (I having maintained myself since I came home, but now could do it no longer), I found what a condition I was in. Every trifling want was either not supplied, or I had more trouble <to procure it than it was worth. I know not when we⁶> have had so good a year <both at Wroot and at Ep>worth this year. But instead of saving anything to clothe my sister or myself, we are just where we was. A noble crop has almost all gone, beside Epworth living, to pay some part of those infinite debts my father has run into, which are so many, as I have lately found out, that were he to save £50 a year he would not be clear in the world this seven years. So here is a fine prospect indeed of his growing rich! Not but he may be out of debt sooner, if he chance to have three or four such years as this has been. But for his getting any matter to leave behind him, more than is necessary for my mother's maintenance, is what I see no likelihood of at present.

One thing I warn you of. Let not my giving you this account be any hindrance to your affairs. If you want assistance in any case, my father is as able to give it now as any time these last ten years. Nor shall we be ever the poorer for it. Yet, in this distress, we enjoy many comforts. We have plenty of good meat and drink, fuel, etc.; have no duns, nor any of that tormenting care for to provide bread which we had at Epworth. In short, could I lay aside all thought of the future, and could be content without three things—money, liberty, and clothes—I might live very comfortably.

While my mother lives, I am inclined to stay with her. She is so very good to me, and has so little comfort in the world beside, that I think it barbarous to abandon her. As soon as she is in heaven (or perhaps sooner, if I am quite tired out) I have fully fixed on a state of life; a way indeed that my relations may disapprove, but that I do not regard. Bread must be had, and I won't starve to please any or all the friends I have in the world. And now,

Let Emma's hapless case be falsely told,
By the rash young, or the ill-natured old⁷

Whatever people may say of me here, I hope to meet with happiness in the other world, if not in this. And you that know my hard fortune, I hope, will never hastily condemn me for anything I shall be driven to do by stress of fortune that is not directly sinful. As for Hetty, we have heard nothing of her these three <months past⁸> at Mr. Grantham[']s]. I hear he has behaved himself very honourably <since> her last going.

⁶The portion of the letter where this text (and the next similar bracketed text) would have appeared is now missing. The text in *WMM* is followed.

⁷Matthew Prior, 'Henry and Emma', lines 316–17.

⁸A portion of the text has been lost. Tentative reconstructions are proposed as possible.

But there are more gentlemen besides him in 〈Kelstern an〉d the most of them now as lewd as Belial himself, a pretty w〈oman as she is〉 now, in a great family, is in a fine hopeful way, but when 〈I have any cer〉tainty of her, I will send you word.

I have quite tired you now. Pray be faithful to me. Let me have one relation I can trust. Never give any hint to anyone of aught I write to you, and continue to love

Your unhappy but affectionate sister,

Emilia Wesley

Address: 'To / Mr. John Wesley / Commoner of Christ Church / Oxford / by the way of London'.

Endorsement: by JW, 'S[ister] E[milia] Apr 7. 1725 / Acct of her cross'.

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWF 6/1.⁹

⁹Transcription published in *WMM* 68 (1845): 359–62; abridged transcription in *Works*, 25:161.

From the Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.

Wroot
May 10, 1725

Dear Son,

Your brother Samuel (with his wife¹) and Charles are here. I did what I could that you might have been in orders this Trinity, but I doubt your brother's journey hither has for the present disconcerted all our measures, though hereby you'll have more time to prepare yourself for it; which I pray God you may, as I am

Your loving father,

Sam. Wesley

Source: abridged manuscript transcription; JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 13.²

¹Ursula Berry married Samuel Wesley Jr. in 1724.

²Transcription published in *Works*, 25:161–62.

From Susanna (Annesley) Wesley¹

Wroot
June 8, 1725

Dear Jacky,²

Whatever satisfaction you may think your brother Charles would find in his journey, I believe it did in no wise answer his expectation. They were at Mr. Berry's³ before they came hither, where he was much mortified with your sister[-in-law Ursula] Wesley's ungente usage of him, and for want of liberty [[for eating and drinking⁴]]. The case was somewhat mended here, for I would so far overrule in my own house as to let him [[fill his belly⁵]], but we were none of us very easy. She resented my taking notice of him, and I her behaviour on the other side.⁶ To say truth, I never heard her once speak well of him all the time they were here; nor have I used the meanest servant I ever had in my life with less civility than she observed towards him. Not to mention the rest of the children, who were very unnecessarily provoked, in doing which she was very wrong.

I've Kempis by me,⁷ but have not read him lately, and cannot recollect the passages you mention. But believing you do him justice, I do very positively aver that he is extremely in the wrong in that impious—I was about to say, blasphemous—suggestion, that God by an irreversible decree hath determined any man to be miserable in this world. His intentions, as himself, are holy, just, and good, and all the miseries incident to men here or hereafter proceed from themselves. The case stands thus. This life is a state of probation, wherein eternal happiness or misery are proposed to our choice, the one as the reward of a virtuous, the other as a consequence of a vicious life. Man is a compound being, a strange mixture of spirit and matter; or rather, a creature wherein those opposite principles are united without mixture, yet each principle after an incomprehensible manner subject to the influences of the other. The true happiness of man, under this consideration, consists in a due subordination of the inferior to the superior powers, of the animal to the rational nature, and of both to God. This was his original righteousness and happiness, that was lost in Adam; and to restore man to this happiness by the recovery of his original righteousness was certainly God's design in admitting him to this state of trial in the world, and of our redemption by Jesus Christ! And surely this was a design truly worthy of God! And the greatest instance of mercy that even Omnipotent Goodness could exhibit to us!

As the happiness of man consists in a due subordination of the inferior to the superior powers, so the inversion of this order is the true source of human misery. There is in us all a natural propension towards the body and the world. The beauty, ease, and pleasures of the world strongly charm us; the wealth and honours of the world allure us; and all, under the manage⁸ of a subtle, malicious adversary, give a prodigious force to present things. And if the animal life once get the ascendant of our reason, it utterly deprives us of our moral liberty, and by consequence makes us wretched.

¹In answer to JW's of May 28.

²In *AM* (1778), JW altered this to 'Dear Son'.

³Rev. John Berry (c. 1662–1730), rector at Watton, Norfolk since 1698, and his wife Ursula (Bentham) Berry (1669–1743); the in-laws of Samuel Wesley Jr.

⁴JW transcribed this passage, like a few others, in cipher.

⁵In cipher.

⁶Charles was at this point 17 years old, but had been living in London for the last seven years, often with his brother Samuel and (after their marriage) Ursula.

⁷Thomas à Kempis, *Imitation of Christ*.

⁸JW reproduced this same word, now obsolete, in 1778.

Therefore for any man to endeavour after happiness in gratifying⁹ his bodily appetites in opposition to his reason is the greatest folly imaginable, because he seeks it where God has not designed he shall ever find [it]. Yet this is the case of most men. They live as mere animals, wholly given up to the interests and pleasures of the body; and all the use of their understanding is to 'make provision for their flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof',¹⁰ without the least regard to future happiness or misery. It is true our eternal state lies under a vast disadvantage, in that it is future and invisible. And it requires great attention and application of mind, frequent retirement, and intense thinking, to excite our affections and beget such an habitual sense of it as is requisite to enable [us] to walk steadily in the paths of virtue, in opposition to our own corrupt nature and the vicious customs and maxims of the world. Our blessed Lord, who came from heaven to save us from our sins, as well as the punishment of them, as knowing we could not be happy in either world without holiness, did not intend by commanding us to 'take up the cross' that we should bid adieu to all joy and satisfaction,¹¹ but he opens and extends our views beyond time to eternity. He directs us where to place our joy, that it may be durable¹² as our being; not in gratifying but retrenching our sensual appetites; not in obeying but correcting our irregular passions;¹³ bringing every appetite of the body and power of the soul under subjection to his laws, if we would follow him to heaven.¹⁴ And because he knew we could not do this without great contradiction to our corrupt animality, therefore he enjoins us to take up this cross, and to fight under his banner against the flesh, the world, and the devil.¹⁵ And when by the divine grace¹⁶ we are so far conquerors as that we never willingly offend, but still press after greater degrees of Christian perfection, sincerely endeavouring to plant each virtue in our minds that may through Christ render us pleasing to God;¹⁷ we shall then experience the truth of Solomon's assertion, 'The ways of virtue are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.'¹⁸

I take Kempis to have been an honest, weak man, that had more zeal than knowledge, by his condemning all mirth or pleasure as sinful or useless, in opposition to so many direct and plain texts of Scripture.¹⁹ Would you judge of the lawfulness or unlawfulness of pleasure, of the innocence or malignity of actions? Take this rule.²⁰ Whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, or takes off your relish of spiritual things; in short, whatever increases the strength and authority of your body over your mind; that thing is sin to you, however innocent it may be in itself. And so on the contrary.

'Tis stupid to say nothing is an affliction to a good man. That's an affliction that God makes an affliction, either to good or bad. Nor do I understand how any man can thank God for present misery. Yet do I very well know what it is to rejoice in the midst of deep affliction: not in the affliction itself, for then it must necessarily cease to be one. But in this we may rejoice, that we are in the hand of a God who

⁹Orig., in *AM*, 'gratifying all'; corrected in errata.

¹⁰Rom. 13:14.

¹¹1778, JW added, 'indefinitely'.

¹²1778, 'joy, how to seek satisfaction durable'.

¹³1778, 'which is not to be found in gratifying, but retrenching our sensual appetites; not in obeying the dictates of our irregular passions, but in correcting their exorbitancy'.

¹⁴Letter-book omits 'if we would follow him to heaven', without indicating the ellipsis.

¹⁵1778 only, 'and to fight ... devil'.

¹⁶1778, 'And when by the grace of God's Holy Spirit'.

¹⁷Letter-book omits, without indication, 'sincerely endeavouring ... pleasing to God'.

¹⁸Prov. 3:17.

¹⁹Letter-book omits, indicating the ellipsis by a dash, 'or useless, ... Scripture'.

²⁰Letter-book omits, indicating by a dash, 'of the innocence ... Take this rule'.

never did, nor ever can exert his power in an act of oppression, injustice, or cruelty! In the power of that superior wisdom which disposes all events, and has promised that all things shall work together for good (for the spiritual and eternal good) of those that love him! We may rejoice in hope that Almighty Goodness will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able, but will with the temptation make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it.²¹ In a word, we may and ought to rejoice that God has assured us he will never leave or forsake us; but if we continue faithful to him he will take care to conduct us safely through all the changes and chances of this mortal life²² to those blessed regions of joy and immortality where sorrow and sin can never enter!

Your brother has brought us a heavy reckoning for you and Charles. God be merciful to us all. Prithee, Jacky, what reception did Mr. L[eybourne] give your sister Wesley? Or did you ever affront her? I have somewhat against that same man, but I hope he is good in the main, and I think humanity and good breeding are not among his wants.

Dear Jacky, I earnestly beseech Almighty God to bless you.

Adieu!

Sources: abridged manuscript transcription; JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 28–32; collated with *Arminian Magazine* 1 (1778): 33–36, which is apparently based upon the holograph, though probably with some editorial revisions by John. The letter-book version, in abbreviated longhand, with some cipher, alone contains the opening and closing paragraphs, and this forms the basis of the hypothetical holograph. Only passages from the *AM* which almost certainly derive from the holograph are inserted in the text; those reproduced in the footnotes may either be original or JW's revisions; several minor differences have been completely omitted as almost certainly editorial alterations.²³

²¹Letter-book omits, indicating by a dash, 'that we may be able to bear it'.

²²Letter-book seems to abridge the original, reading: 'In a word, we may and ought to rejoice, that we are assured he will never forsake us, but if we continue faithful to him, will conduct us safely through this mortal life.'

²³This reconstructed transcription published in *Works*, 25:164–67; and Wallace, *Susanna Wesley*, 107–09.

From the Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.

Wroot
July 14, 1725

Son,

'Tis not, I'm sure, from want of affection that I'm some letters in your debt, but because I could not yet answer yours so as to satisfy myself or you, though I hope still to do it soon enough, that is, in a few weeks.

As for T[homas à] Kempis, all the world are apt to strain on one side or the other. And 'tis no wonder if contemplative men, especially when wrapped in a cowl, and the darkness of the seraphical divinity, and near akin, if I mistake not, to the obscure ages, when they observed how mad the bulk of the world was (as they still will be) for sensual pleasures, should run the matter too far on the contrary extreme, and attempt to persuade us to have no senses at all, or that God made 'em to very little purpose: an opinion not very improper for those who fancy they can and do believe transubstantiation.

But for all that, mortification is still an indispensable Christian duty. The world's a siren, and we must have a care of her; and if the young man will 'rejoice in his youth', yet 'twould not be amiss for him to take care that his joys be moderate and innocent, and in order to this sadly to remember 'that for all these things God will bring him into judgment'.¹ I've only this to add of my friend and old companion T. Kempis: that making a pretty many grains of allowance he may be read to great advantage, and that notwithstanding all his superstition and enthusiasm, 'tis almost impossible to peruse him seriously without admiring and (I think) in some measure imitating his heroic strains of humility, piety, and devotion. But I reckon you have ere this received your mother's, who has leisure to 'bolt the matter to the bran',² and can write without pain, which I cannot, though I have not seen her letter.

As for your standing at Lincoln, I waited on Dr. [John] Morley³ (and found him civiller than ever) in a day or two after I had yours. He says the election is talked of to be about, or on, St. Thomas's day; that you are welcome to stand, and that he knows but one that will stand against you, and that him you have no great reason to apprehend. (But for all that, study hard, lest the tortoise should beat you; for which you'll have near a quarter of a year after you're in orders.) The Doctor [Morley] says he keeps up his correspondence with Mr. Nicols; and I doubt not but Sam⁴ will ply him for you, as I'll set Sir Neville Hickman,⁵ Mr. Downes, and Mr. Kirkby upon the Doctor.

I'll write to the Bishop of Lincoln⁶ again. You shan't want a black coat as soon as I've any white, etc.

You may transcribe any *part* of my letter to Mr. Nathaniel Hoole (but not the whole) for your own private use;⁷ neither lend it, but any friend may read it in your chamber. I'm not yet in haste for it. Master St. Chrysostom,⁸ our Articles, and Form of Ordination.⁹ Bear up stoutly against the world, etc. Keep a good, an honest, and a pious heart. Pray hard, and watch hard, and I'm persuaded your quarantine

¹Eccles. 11:9.

²John Dryden, 'The Cock and the Fox', line 523.

³Remember that Morley frequently resided at Scotton, Lincolnshire.

⁴I.e., Samuel Wesley Jr.

⁵Sir Neville Hickman (d. 1733), 4th Baronet, of Gainsborough.

⁶Richard Reynolds (1674–1743), became bishop of Lincoln in 1723.

⁷The letter that JW eventually published in 1735, after his father's death, as *Advice to a Young Clergyman*.

⁸Specifically, Chrysostom's *De Sacerdotio*.

⁹The Articles and the Form of Ordination are both found in the Book of Common Prayer.

is almost at an end, and all shall be well. However, nothing shall be wanting to make it so that lies in the power of

Your loving father,

Sam. Wesley

I'll write to your brother Sam next post. Why do you never write to him?

Source: holograph; Wesley's Chapel (London).¹⁰ All except the summarized fourth paragraph is transcribed in JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 16–17. JW published the second paragraph, edited, in *AM* 1 (1778): 30.

¹⁰Transcription published in *Works*, 25:170–71.

From Susanna (Annesley) Wesley¹

Wroot
July 21 [1725]

Dear Jacky,

Whether Charles have given occasion for her contemptuous usage or no I can't determine; but his time of bondage is now near expired² and, if it be not his own fault, his future life may be easier. ... 'Tis well your sister[-in-law] has ever been civil to you, and would have you also so to her. But never put it in the power of that w[oman] to hurt you; stand upon your guard, and converse with caution; and I wish Mr. [Robert] L[eybourne] would take the same advice. He has in my opinion done much to oblige those that have not the most grateful sense of his kindness.

Though I have a great deal of unpleasant business, am infirm and but slow of understanding, yet 'tis a pleasure to me to correspond with you upon religious subjects; and if it may be of the least advantage to you, I shall greatly rejoice. May what is sown in weakness be raised in power!

I know little or nothing of Dr. Taylor's *Holy Living and Dying*,³ having not seen it above twenty years; but I think 'tis generally well esteemed, therefore can't judge of the rules you suppose impracticable. Of humility I'll tell you my thoughts as briefly as I can.

What he calls humility is not the virtue itself, but the accidental effects of it, which may in some instances, and must in others, be separated from it.

Humility is the mean between pride, or an overvaluing ourselves, on one side, and a base, abject temper on the other. It consists in an habitual disposition to think meanly of ourselves, which disposition is wrought in us by a true knowledge of God, his supreme, essential glory, his absolute, immense perfection of being! A just sense of our dependence on and past offences against him, together with a consciousness of our present infirmities and frailty.

In proportion to the sense we have of God's infinite majesty and glory, and our own vileness and unworthiness, this disposition will be stronger or weaker. And those who are arrived to a great degree of Christian perfection, that know and are assured by reason and experience that there is none good but God, will be sure to hold him in the highest estimation, and are generally observed to be the most humble and mortified of men. Such persons as these make the glory of God their principal aim in all their actions; and to please him is to them more eligible than to enjoy the esteem of the whole universe.

They will be very well content to be slighted or undervalued,⁴ provided their conscience do not reproach them, and the honour of God be unconcerned in the case. But where it is concerned none are more wary in their outward deportment, lest they give occasion of scandal to the profane, or of stumbling to the weak. None are more careful to observe, 'Whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report',⁵ and if through surprise or inadvertency they have said or done amiss, such slips commonly make them more watchful and humble ever after.

As we should not covet to be little esteemed, because a fair reputation is of excellent service in promoting the glory of God, so neither should we desire the praise of our good actions to terminate in ourselves; for of a right it belongs to him of whose grace it is that we either will or do according to his good pleasure.

¹In answer to JW's of June 18.

²CW had one year remaining at Westminster School.

³Jeremy Taylor (1613–67), *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living* (London: Francis Ash, 1650); and *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Dying* (London: Richard Royston, 1651).

⁴Here Susanna begins to deal point by point with JW's quotations from Taylor.

⁵Phil. 4:8.

If we are in disgrace, either we deserve it or we do not. If we do, his caution is good; if not, he is wrong; for we certainly may, and I believe should be pleased with consciousness of our innocence.

I will not say we must judge of ourselves as he directs, but believe there are some who are much inclined to think themselves not only the worst in a particular company, but worse than any in the world. For being strongly pressed on by thirst after universal righteousness, they behold their own deficiencies with great severity: every mote in their own eye appears a beam, while every beam in their brother's eye seems to them as a mote.

Weakness, deformity, and imperfection of body are not moral evils, and may accidentally become good to us.⁶ Yet surely they are not to be desired, for strength and comeliness are valuable blessings, may be of great use, and ought to be enjoyed with thankfulness. If they prove incentives to pride, 'tis our own fault: a humble man will improve all those advantages for God's service, and a ⟨...⟩⁷

Source: abridged manuscript transcription; JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 32–34.⁸

⁶Susanna is endorsing the fifth passage that JW quoted from Taylor.

⁷Four pages of the Letter-book are missing, apparently containing both the remainder of this influential letter (for which see JW's reply of July 29), her reply of Aug. 2 (JW's answer to which of Aug. 11 is missing), and the beginning of her next important letter of Aug. 18. (That the four pages were lost at an early period is implied by JW's misdating the Aug. 18 letter as July 18 in *AM*.)

⁸Transcription published in *Works*, 25:172–73; and Wallace, *Susanna Wesley*, 109–11.

From the Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.

Wroot
August 2, 1725

Son,

... If you be but what you write, you and I should be happy. And that would much alleviate my misfortune in her whom I have this day lost—though she's not so well as dead.¹ ... I was at Gainsborough last week to wait on Sir John Thorold,² and shall again, by God's leave, tomorrow, to endeavour to make way for you from that quarter.

As for the gentlemen candidates you write of ..., does anybody think the devil is dead, or so much as asleep, or that he has no agents left? 'Tis a very callow virtue, sure, that can't bear being laughed at. ... I think our Captain and Master endured something more for us, before he entered into glory;³ and unless we ... track his steps, in vain do we hope to share that glory with him. Nor shall any who sincerely endeavour to serve him, either in turning others to righteousness, or keeping them steadfast in it, lose their reward. Nor can you have better directions (except Timothy and Titus) than Chrysostom *De Sacerdotio*, and our Form of Ordination—and 'God forbid that I should ever cease to pray for you'!⁴ I hope with more success than I've done for your wretched sister, at whose elopement this day your mother was a little shocked, but has partly recovered it. ... Naught else but blessing from

Your loving father,

Sam. Wesley

Have a care of giving characters in your letters.

Source: abridged manuscript transcription; JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 15.⁵

¹JW's older sister, Mehetabel, who was enveloped in scandal (see next letter from Susanna Wesley Sr.).

²Sir John Thorold (1675–1748), 7th Baronet, of Gainsborough, who held influence in matters of Lincoln College, Oxford.

³See Heb. 12:2.

⁴Cf. 1 Sam. 12:23.

⁵Transcription published in *Works*, 25:176–77.

From Susanna (Annesley) Wesley

[Wroot]
August 2, 1725

About a week before last Monday Mr. Green, an attorney, brought sister Hetty home from K[elstern] to Wroot and asked your father's consent to marry her.¹ He being a perfect stranger, Mr. Wesley told him he must enquire of his character, which Mr. Green seemed to wish he should do. Upon strict enquiry your father found Mr. Green not to be so good as he should be either in estate or morals, upon which it was but reasonable he should deny his consent to the match. Yesterday Mr. Green, attended by three men mounted and another all in black whom we supposed to be a clergyman, came to Wroot, took away Hetty, kept her out all night, on the morrow they all disappeared. No one knows whether he will marry her. We should be easy to part with her, being very tired out with her licentious² and scandalous adventures, of which we fear the worst. Though if she should be kept as a Miss,³ it will be no great surprise. I need not tell you that this is an adventure that ought to be mentioned to no one till we be certain whether she be wife or not.

Source: MARC, DDWes 8/21 (a secondary manuscript copy⁴).

¹This letter was not published or known to many scholars until recently (thus it does not appear in Wallace, *Susanna Wesley*). In the absence of a name, V. H. H. Green appears to be the first to suggest that the one who seduced Hetty was 'a young lawyer, Will Atkins'; see Green, *The Young Mr. Wesley* (London: Edward Arnold, 1961), 109. This suggestion is hard to accept, as Green knows from JW's Oxford diaries that both JW and Samuel Wesley Sr. were interacting cordially with Atkins in 1726, a year after the events described in this letter by Susanna (Annesley) Wesley.

²Susanna spells 'licensuous'.

³I.e., a mistress.

⁴The original of this letter has not survived. JW lists a letter of this date in the front of his letter-book, but does not transcribe it. The text that survives is in a nineteenth-century hand, with the opening explanation: 'On June 23, 1864 I visited Miss Tooth, who gave me the copy of a letter which she saw Mrs. Richard Smith destroy, least its contents should become known. It was from Mrs. Wesley to her son John.' This appears to be the letter that George J. Stevenson mentions seeing, before it was destroyed; see *Memorials of the Wesley Family* (London: S. W. Partridge, 1876), 302.

From the Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.

Bawtry [Yorkshire]
August 12, 1725

Dear Son,

Two minutes since I had yours to Hetty;¹ and since she's lost to me, as in my last, ... I opened it. I'm glad I saw it, and this is my answer.

I don't know one of my children whom I would not suffer everything for in this world to make them happy. I hope I have given evidence of the same, and shall still continue to do so, whether or not they are sensible of it.

Your [[late]] sister and [[my²]] daughter, Hetty, is no exception to this rule, though I've had little hopes of her—I consider what I write—since she has been half a year old. (A character of her.³) Yet though I knew this, and she was returned upon me, after I had been twice at the charge of setting her out handsomely (I never reproached her for coming home again, but told her she was welcome to stay), as she has often acknowledged, and would throw the fault on her mother, whom I could [not] blame for being heartily weary of her.

But oh, too much of this! Gangrene, farewell! And mayst thou never cause me any pain hereafter. ... Won't my son John give me more comfort?

As for your business at Lincoln College, I think it stands pretty fair Sir John Thorold has writ[ten] to his son;⁴ Mr. Rainer,⁵ to his. I hope the Doctor [Morley] is firm.

No more yet (I wish I could) from

Your loving father,

Sam. Wesley

Source: abridged manuscript transcription; JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 14.⁶

¹This letter is not known to survive.

²Partly in cipher, viz. 'Yr .mb. S – n_ D, H'.

³JW summarizes a section which he omits.

⁴The fellowship at Lincoln College which JW eventually secured had become vacant on May 3, 1725, by the resignation of John Thorold (1703–75), son of Sir John Thorold, 7th Baronet.

⁵This is likely the Rayner family of Gainsborough.

⁶Transcription published in *Works*, 25:177.

From Susanna (Annesley) Wesley¹

[Wroot]
August 18, 1725

⟨...⟩² but still insist on that single point in Dr. Taylor, of thinking ourselves the worst in every company;³ though the necessity of thinking so is not inferred by my definition. But this I perceive much affects you, and you can't well digest it. Therefore you employ your wit in making distinctions and formal arguments; which arguments I shall reply to after I've observed that we differ in our notions of the virtue [of humility] itself. You will have it consist in thinking meanly of ourselves, I in an habitual disposition to think meanly of ourselves; which I take to be more comprehensive, because it extends to all the cases when that virtue can be exercised, either in relation to God, ourselves, or our neighbour, and renders the distinction of absolute and comparative perfectly needless.

We may in many instances think very meanly of ourselves without being humble. Nay, sometimes our very pride will lead us to condemn ourselves, as when we have said or done anything which lessens that esteem of men we earnestly covet. As to what you call absolute humility with respect to God, what greater matter is⁴ there in that ... had we no more than a mere speculative knowledge of that Awful Being, and only considered him as the Creator and Sovereign Lord of the universe; yet since that first notion of him implies that he is a God of absolute and infinite perfection and glory, we can't contemplate that glory, or conceive him present, without the most exquisite diminution of ourselves before him!

The other part of your definition I can't approve, because I think all those comparisons are rather the effects of pride than humility.

The truth is the proper object of the understanding, and all truths, as such, agree in one common excellence; yet there are some truths which are comparatively of so small value, because of little or no use, that 'tis no matter whether ever we know them or not. Nay, in some instances 'tis better never to know them. Among those I rank the right answer to that question, whether our neighbour or we be worse. Of what importance can this enquiry be to us? Comparisons in this case are very odious, or do most certainly proceed from some bad principle in those that make them. So far should we be from reasoning upon the case, that we must not permit ourselves to entertain such thoughts, but if they ever intrude, should reject them with abhorrence.

Suppose then in some cases the truth of that proposition, my neighbour is worse than me, ... be ever so evident, yet what does it avail? Since two persons in different respects may be [both] better and worse than each other. As in your own instance. One who in company with a free-thinker, or other person signally debauched in faith and practice (we must suppose he is debauched in neither) can't avoid knowing himself to be the better of the two. He may be so in appearance; but if he trust in his own righteousness, and value himself upon it, he may appear more vile and contemptible in the sight of God than the other, merely on account of his self-idolizing pride. Though the Pharisee might speak very truly with respect to many of his neighbours when he said, 'I am not as other men are,' and probably his outward behaviour was more regular and decent than the poor publican's had been, whom perhaps he despised because he knew he had been a scandalous offender; yet we find the humility of the publican ...

¹Apparently answering JW's letter of July 29, even though other letters had meantime passed between them.

²See the end of her letter of July 21. The four pages missing from JW's Letter-book contained not just the end of that letter, but Susanna's reply of Aug. 2 (JW's answer to which of Aug. 11 is missing), and the beginning of this important letter.

³Jeremy Taylor, *Rules of Holy Living*, Ch. 2, Sec. 4, Of Humility.

⁴Orig., 'in'.

rendered him acceptable to his Maker, while the Pharisee returned unjustified.

If we are not strictly obliged to think ourselves the worst in every company, I am perfectly sure that a man sincerely humble will be afraid of thinking himself the best in any, though it should be his lot (for it can never be his choice) to fall into the company of notorious sinners. 'Who makes them to differ?' or 'What hast thou that thou hast not received?' is sufficient, if well adverted to, to humble us, and silence all aspiring thoughts and self-applauses; and may instruct us to ascribe our preservation from enormous offences to the sovereign grace of God, and not to our own natural purity or strength.

There's nothing plainer than that a free-thinker, as a free-thinker, an atheist, as an atheist, is worse in that respect than a believer, as a believer. But if that believer's practice does not correspond with his faith ... he is worse than an infidel. ...

You are somewhat mistaken in your notion of faith. All faith is an assent, but all assent is not faith. Some truths are self-evident, and we assent to them because they are so. Others, after a regular and formal process of reason, by way of deduction from some self-evident principle, gain our assent; and this is not properly faith but science. Some again we assent to, not because they are self-evident, or because we have attained the knowledge of them in a regular method, by a train of arguments, but because they have been revealed to us, either by God or man, and these are the proper objects of faith.

The true measure of faith is the authority of the revealer, the weight of which always holds proportion with our conviction of his ability and integrity. Divine faith is an assent to whatever God has revealed to us, because he has revealed it. And this is that virtue of faith which is one of the two conditions of our salvation by Jesus Christ. ... But this matter is so fully and accurately explained by Bishop Pearson (under 'I Believe') that I shall say no more of it. ...⁵

I have often wondered that men should be so vain, to amuse themselves with searching into the decrees of God, which no human wit can fathom; and do not rather employ their time and powers in working out their salvation, and making their own calling and election sure. Such studies tend more to confound than inform the understanding, and young people had better let them alone. But since I find you've some scruples concerning our Article of Predestination, I'll tell you my thoughts of the matter, and if they satisfy not, you may desire your father's direction, who is surely better qualified for a casuist than me.

The doctrine of predestination, as maintained by the rigid Calvinists, is very shocking, and ought utterly to be abhorred; because it directly charges the most holy God with being the author of sin. And I think you reason very well and justly against it. For 'tis certainly inconsistent with the justice and goodness of God to lay any man under either a physical or moral necessity of committing sin, and then punish him for doing it. 'Far be this from thee, O Lord. ... Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?'⁶

I do firmly believe that God from eternity hath elected some to everlasting life. But then I humbly conceive that this election is founded on his foreknowledge, according to that in the 8th of Romans: 'Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate, to be conformed to the image of his Son. ... Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called. ... And whom he called, them he also justified, and whom he justified, them he also glorified.'⁷

Whom in his eternal prescience God saw would make a right use of their powers, and accept of offered mercy, ... he did predestinate, adopt for his children, his peculiar treasure. And that they might be conformed to the image of his Son, he called them to himself, by his external Word, the preaching of the gospel, and internally by his Holy Spirit. Which call they obeying by faith and repentance, he justifies them, absolves them from the guilt of all their sins, and acknowledges them as just persons, through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ. And having thus justified, he receives them to glory—to heaven.

⁵John Pearson, *An Exposition of the Creed* (London: John Williams, 1659).

⁶Gen. 18:25

⁷Rom. 8:29–30.

This is the sum of what I believe concerning predestination, which I think is agreeable to the analogy of faith, since it never derogates from God's free grace, nor impairs the liberty of man. Nor can it with more reason be supposed that the prescience of God is the cause that so many finally perish, than that our knowing the sun will rise tomorrow is the cause of its rise.

I am greatly troubled at your [[increasing debts⁸]]. Your brother writes for your father to get you £60 before you stand for the fellowship. ... Alas!

I shall not cease to pray for you, that God would sanctify all conditions, and deliver you out of present distress.

Jacky, may God Almighty bless thee!

Source: abridged manuscript transcription; JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 39–43.⁹ The closing paragraphs on predestination were printed by JW in *AM* 1 (1778): 36–38, slightly revised.

⁸In cipher.

⁹Transcription published in *Works*, 25:178–80; and Wallace, *Susanna Wesley*, 111–13.

From the Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.

Wroot
August 27, 1725

Dear Son,

Thanks be to God, we are all well (*excepta excipienda*,¹ who I doubt never will be so).

I send the certificate on the other side,² and will be soon with Mr. Downes at Dr. [John] Morley's.

Your loving father,

Sam. Wesley

You need not show the other side unless 'tis asked for. Say you are in the twenty-third current.

Source: manuscript copy; JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 15.³

¹'The necessary exception being made'; i.e., Hetty.

²I.e., a certificate of baptism necessary for JW's ordination as deacon by Dr. John Potter, Bishop of Oxford, which took place in Christ Church Cathedral, on Sunday morning, September 19, 1725.

³Transcription published in *Works*, 25:180–81.

From the Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.¹

Bawtry
September 1, 1725

Son!

I came hither today because I can't be at rest till I make you easier. I could not possibly manufacture any money for you here sooner than next Saturday; when, I think, I shan't miss on it, and design to wait on Dr. [John] Morley with Mr. Downes on Monday next, and try if I can prevail with the Doctor to return you eight pounds, which I shall then pay him (to assist you for the charge of the ordination), and I hope bigger sums afterwards, between this and Christmas, as well as after, though I'm now just struggling myself for life. This eight pounds you may depend on the next week, or the week after.

I like your way of thinking and arguing, and yet must say I'm a little afraid on it. He that believes *without* or *against* reason is half a Papist, or enthusiast: he that would mete revelation by his own shallow reason is either half a deist or an heretic. O my dear, steer clear between this Scylla and Charybdis, and God will bless you, and you shall ever be beloved by (as you'll ever be a comfort to)

Your affectionate father,

Sam. Wesley

If you have any scruples about any part of revelation, or the scheme of the Church of England, which I think is exactly agreeable to it, I think I can answer them.

Address: 'For / Mr John Wesley / Commoner of / Christ-Church / Oxford'.

Postmarks: 'BAWTRY', '3/SE'; *Charges:* '4' (erased), and 'In all 7'.

Endorsement: by JW, 'Sept. 1. 25'.

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWF 1/5.² Abridged manuscript transcription in JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 17.

¹Apparently answering JW's of Aug. 18, to which it offers some clues.

²Transcription published in *Works*, 25:181.

From the Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.

Gainsborough [Lincolnshire]
September 7 [1725]

Dear Son John,

With much ado you see I'm for once as good as my word, and carry Dr. [John] Morley's note to the bursar. ... I hope to send you more, and believe by the same hand. God fit you for your great work. Fast, watch and pray, believe, love and endure, and be happy. Towards which you shall never want the most ardent prayers of

Your affectionate father,

Sam. Wesley

Source: abridged manuscript transcription; JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 18.³

³Transcription published in *Works*, 25:182.

From the Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.

Wroot
October 19 [1725]

Dear Son,

I had yours of the 20th ult., with the welcome news that you were in deacon's orders. I pray God you may so improve in them as to be in due time fit for an higher station.

If you formerly gave any occasion for what is said of you at Lincoln, you must bear it patiently, if not joyfully. But be sure never to return the like treatment. ... I've done what I could; do you the same, and rest the whole with providence.

The hard words in our creeds are of the same nature with an anathema, whose point is levelled against obstinate heretics. Is not even schism a work of the flesh, and therefore damnable? But is there not a distinction between what is wilful and what may be in some measure involuntary? God knows, and doubtless will make a difference! We don't so well know it, and therefore must leave that to him, but keep to the rules which he has given us. ...¹

As to the main of the cause, the best way to deal with our adversaries is to turn the war and their own vaunted arms against them. From balancing the schemes it will appear that there are many irreconcilable absurdities and contradictions in theirs, but none such, though indeed some difficulties, in ours. ... To instance but in one of a side ... they can never prove a contradiction in our Three and One, unless we affirmed them to be so in the same respect, which every child knows we do not. We can prove there is one in a creature's being a creator, which they assert of our Lord.

If you turn your thoughts and studies this way, you may do God and his Church good service. ... To his blessed protection I commit you, and am

Your loving, etc.

S. W.

Source: abridged manuscript transcription; JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 18–19.² The third and fourth paragraphs were published in *AM* 1 (1778): 31, the third paragraph probably being heavily edited rather than based upon the holograph.

¹JW's version in 1778: 'You seem staggered at the severe words in the Athanasian Creed. Consider, their point is levelled against, only against, obstinate heretics. A distinction is undoubtedly to be made between what is wilful, and what is in some measure involuntary. God certainly will make a difference. We don't so well know it. We therefore must leave that to him, and keep to the rule which he has given us.'

²Transcription published in *Works*, 25:182–83.

From Susanna (Annesley) Wesley

Wroot
November 10, 1725

Dear Jacky,

I believe I've received three letters from you since I wrote to you; but the dismal situation of our affairs, which has found me full employment at home, and my unwillingness to burden you, prevented my writing hitherto. But I will now look over your letters, and reply to each if there be occasion.

Your first of Aug. 4th requires no answer, only there's one passage in it which I don't well understand. You say [George] Berkeley has convinced you 'that there is no such thing as matter in the world, if by the real existence of matter is meant a subsistence exterior to the mind, and distinct from its being perceived'. What does he mean by imperceptible matter?¹

Your second bears date Aug. 24th, wherein you are satisfied about humility; and I wish you had also a better notion of that faith which is proposed to us as a condition of salvation. I think Pearson's definition of divine or saving faith is good, and no way defective. For though the same thing may be an object of faith as revealed, and an object of reason as deducible from rational principles, yet I insist upon it that the virtue of faith, by which through the merits of our Redeemer we must be saved, is an assent to the truth of whatever God hath been pleased to reveal, because he hath revealed it, and not because we understand it. Thus St. Paul, 'By faith we understand that the world was made'²—q. d.,³ rejecting the various conjectures of the heathen, and not resting upon the testimony of natural reason, but relying on the authority of God, we give a full assent to what he hath been pleased to reveal unto us concerning the creation of the world. Now the reason why this faith is required is plain, because otherwise we do not give God the glory of his truth, but prefer our weak and fallible understanding before his eternal word, in that we will believe the one rather than the other. If you will but read Bishop Beveridge on *Faith and Repentance*, Vol. 7th,⁴ you'll find him a better divine than [Richard] Fiddes.⁵

I can't recollect what book I recommended to you, but I highly approve your care to search into the grounds and reasons of our most holy religion, which you may do if your intention be pure, and yet retain the integrity of faith. Nay, the more you study on that subject, the more reason you will find to depend on the veracity of God; inasmuch as your perceptions of that awful Being will be clearer, and you will more plainly discern the congruity that there is between the ordinances and precepts of the gospel, and right reason; nor is it a hard matter to prove that the whole system of Christianity is grounded thereon.

If it be a weak virtue that can't bear being laughed at, I am very sure 'tis a strong and well confirmed virtue that can stand the test of a brisk buffoonery. I doubt there are too many instances of people that, being well inclined, have yet made shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, merely through a false modesty, and because they could not bear the raillery of their companions. Some young persons have a natural excess of bashfulness, others are so tender of what they call honour that they can't endure to be made a jest of. Nay, I've often observed that those very people which will on all occasions take the liberty to play upon their neighbours are of all living the worst able to bear being so used themselves. I would therefore advise young persons in their beginning of a Christian course to shun the company of

¹See JW's reply to this letter, Nov. 22.

²Heb. 11:3.

³*quasi dicat*; 'as if he were to say'.

⁴William Beveridge, *Sermons on Several Subjects*, 12 vols. (London: R. Smith, 1708–15); Vol. 7: *Sermons on Faith and Repentance* (1710).

⁵In his letter-book transcription JW summarized this paragraph: 'Of Hylas and Philonous, and the nature of faith'. See letter of Nov. 22.

profane wits as they would the plague, or poverty; and let 'em never contract an intimacy with any but such as have a good sense of religion. And if 'tis their hap to live where few of that character can be found, let them learn the art of living alone; and when once they are masters of that rare secret, and know how to converse with God, and themselves, they'll want no other company. For properly speaking no man wants what he can be happy without.

I now proceed to answer your last, of October 14th. And in this you desire me to speak on a subject above my comprehension. I do not mean as to the nature of zeal, for that is easily defined; but to assign precisely every instance when it is allowable, or we are required to show that zeal to the world needs a better head and pen than mine. However, I'll offer some hints, which you may correct or improve by your own meditation.

Zeal or jealousy is an effect of love; and the more intense the love is, the greater is our desire of the good and possession of what we love, and the more vigorously shall we strive to repel and exclude everything that is repugnant to the beloved object or may prevent our attainment or quiet enjoyment of what we so love. As we observe in friendship, whoever really loves his friend always desires the good of that friend, and if his love be strong, it moves him against everything that is contrary to it; and accordingly he is said to be zealous for his friend and for his reputation when he endeavors all he can to repel everything that is said or done against him. Thus on account of the great love he bears to us, Almighty God is frequently in holy writ represented as zealous or jealous over us, lest we bestow that honour and love which is due to him on anything else—particularly in the Second Command where he says that as he will show mercy unto thousands of those that love him, so he will punish to the third and fourth generation those that hate him, i.e., transfer their love from him to a creature. And the reason is because he is a jealous God.

Zeal with respect to God consists in an awful regard and tender concern for his glory and will, and it ever holds proportion with the degree of our love towards him. If our love be cold, so will our zeal be, too; if fervent, we shall endeavor what is in our power to advance his honour and service in the world, and shall feel much displicency⁶ and grief when either we ourselves or any other is guilty of dishonouring or offending him and shall strive what we can to prevent or repel whatever is done against his honour and will. So Elijah says of himself, 'I have been very jealous, or zealous, for the Lord God of Hosts, for the children of Israel have forsaken his covenant and thrown down his altars.'⁷

The habit of this zeal is always necessary, being indeed inseparable from our love to God; but the visible expressions of it must be ever under due restriction, always according to knowledge, and strictly guarded by prudence and Christian charity; for without restriction and such a guard 'tis the most pernicious thing in nature, and has done more mischief in the world than even licentiousness or infidelity. These have slain their thousands, but zeal its ten thousands, as might be shown in many instances. This sacred fire must be kindled at the altar; nor should the perturbation arising from malice, revenge, or any private interest or selfish regard presume to mingle with it. Otherwise, we may fitly apply to zeal what St. James says of an unbridled tongue: "'Tis a fire, a world of iniquity, it setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.'⁸

Now that the outward expressions of our zeal may be acceptable to God and useful to men, 'tis necessary in the first place that our intention be good, that the glory of God and good of others be really our aim without any private views or worldly consideration. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory. And herein prudence is of great use in choosing such means and using them in such a manner as is most proper and worthy the ends we propose. For prudence ever has respect to time, place, persons and manner of speech or action. As to time it directs us to observe and improve that special season for speaking or acting which we call opportunity, when we are likely to do most service to God, i.e., to make

⁶I.e., dissatisfaction.

⁷Cf. 1 Kings 14:19.

⁸Cf. James 3:6.

him better known and loved in the world, as for instance if we have an opportunity of instructing the ignorant, to confirm the weak or reprehend the sinner. Or if we would administer relief to our neighbour, it must be done when he stands most in need of it and when we can best spare it without injuring our dependents or creditors; the former must first be provided for, nor will God accept robbery for sacrifice.

Prudence also considers place, and in all these instances the most private is the best, unless in some exempt cases which I can't stay to mention particularly.

Persons also it regards, and here I must advise that if we sincerely desire to promote the glory of God or would successfully attempt anything for his service or the good of mankind, that we do first turn the point of our zeal against ourselves. Let us be careful to sanctify the Lord God in our own hearts by holding him in the highest estimation, by bearing equal respect to all his commands, by purifying our minds from whatever is contrary to his will, and planting each virtue there that may through Christ render us acceptable to God. For [it is] in vain that we appear zealous for that glorious Being, if we do not inwardly esteem and revere him ourselves. In vain shall we attempt to serve him while we indulge ourselves in any known sin and do not vigorously proceed in our own reformation. For otherwise, instead of a plaudit we must expect to meet with that sad expostulation from God: 'who hath required this at YOUR hand? Bring no more vain oblations; the incense of your service is an abomination unto me.'⁹ Nor can we expect better success in instructing or reproving our neighbour who fail[s] to observe the disproportion between our lives and professions; and instead of taking our good offices kindly they will, and may justly, retort upon us, 'physician, heal thyself'.¹⁰

Again, prudence requires all persons with or without distinction to keep with their own sphere of action. The inferior magistrate must not intrench upon the prerogative of his prince, nor any private person assume the office of the magistrate. Neither should any secular person of what degree soever invade the province of a priest. But princes, magistrates, husbands, wives, parents, children, masters, servants must all observe their several stations; nor will any pretense of zeal justify a man's acting out of his own proper character. For our God is a God of order and not of confusion. Nor does he require ought of us but what is consistent with a due performance of relative duties. And indeed there's work enough for our zeal in accurately discharging the duties of each relation.

But in the last place prudence is more especially concerned in the manner of our speaking or acting, either for God or our neighbour. For be our intention never so good, our zeal ever so fervent, unless we perform all after a due manner we shall not compass our design. If we would serve Almighty God, we must do it with that vigour, that cheerful gravity, and becoming reverence, as (the¹¹) importance of the work requires. If we are about to instruct the ignor(ant let) us proceed with so much seriousness that they may see we are well appriz(ed of the) truths we teach, and are ourselves under the same impressions we endea(vour to) make on their minds. If we would confirm the weak, it should be done witho(ut any) reproach, and with that tenderness, and arguments so well adapted to their cas(e,) as may serve to convince them that we are really concerned in their safety and happiness. If we reprove the sinner, let us avoid pride and vainglory, and be careful lest we fall into indecent passion, or be guilty of unchristian revilings, and contemptuous language, which would probably prove a greater sin in us than that we are about to reprehend in another. As we should never undertake a matter of this nature without desiring to do good, so we ought by all proper methods to make the person spoken to sensible of that desire; for we gain a great point if we can persuade them that we really bear them goodwill, and have no design to upbraid, much less expose them, but merely to do 'em good.

The second thing mentioned as a guard of our zeal was charity, which I shall briefly speak of, and so conclude.

⁹Cf. Isa. 1:12–13.

¹⁰Cf. Luke 4:23 (quotation marks added).

¹¹A portion of the right hand side of the letter has been torn away; the missing text can be confidently reconstructed in this and the following instances.

Love to God, and love to our neighbour, which often in Scripture is called charity, is, or ought to be, the principle and rule of all our thoughts, words, and actions, with respect to either. And whatever we do for God or man that flows not from this principle, and is not squared by this rule, is wrong, as wanting a good foundation, and a right conduct. Thus St. Paul: 'though I give my body to be burned and all my goods to feed the poor and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.'¹²

I have not time to discourse on divine charity, but shall only mention a few instances wherein charity must correct our zeal in thought, word, and deed in relation to our neighbour.

And first, we must never conclude any man so bad as 'tis possible for him to be; nor think because he is guilty of many sins that therefore he must be guilty of all; nay, we should not judge that the most profligate sinner cannot possibly amend. For what are we that we should presume to limit the omnipotent mercy of God or consign any to eternal misery whom the almighty Goodness for ought we know may intend to save at last.

Secondly, our charity should strictly confine our zeal within the bounds of truth and soberness. We must not lie for God, nor falsely accuse our brethren; nor in a pretended zeal run into censoriousness and evil-speaking, crimes utterly to be abhorred of all good men.

Thirdly, no pretence of zeal should make us lay aside our humanity, or exercise any act of injustice or cruelty towards our neighbour. Nor must we suffer a bad man to perish for want of our relief. For we have no commission to slay the wicked or right to invade any man's property because he is a sinner. But we must be careful to do our duty to all men, let 'em be what they will.

Yet after all that can be said, though prudence and charity should correct the irregular motions of our zeal, they must by no means extinguish it. But we must keep that sacred fire alive in our breasts, and carefully lay hold of all opportunities of serving God, nor should we tamely endure to hear his glorious name blasphemed in execrable oaths or impious discourses without expressing a just indignation against such offences. And if we happen to be in presence of those that either are so superlatively wicked or too much superior to admit of reproof, we may find some way to testify our dislike of such conversation, and leave their company.

I've room to add no more but that I send you my love and blessing.

S.W.

Your sisters send their love.

I've just received a letter from you, which I'll answer if I've leisure.

Your brother[-in-law William] Wright fetches your sister Hetty from hence the end of this week.¹³

Address: 'For / The Revd. Mr John Wesley / Commoner of Christ-Church / Oxon'.

Postmarks: 'BAWTRY', '15/NO'. *Charges:* ((4)), 'In All 7'.

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWF 2/6.¹⁴ Abridged manuscript transcription in JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 44–45.

¹²Cf. 1 Cor. 13:3.

¹³After obstructing Mehetabel's potential marriage to Mr. Green in August, Samuel and Susanna arranged for her to marry William Wright, a local journey-man plumber, on Oct. 13, 1725.

¹⁴A transcription with significant elisions appears in *Works*, 25:183–85. The full text is transcribed in Wallace, *Susanna Wesley*, 118–22.

From the Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.

Wroot
November ult. [i.e., 30, 1725]

Son John!

You see by the enclosed ... I'm not unmindful of you; and all I can do for you, and God knows more than I can honestly do, is to give you credit with Richard Ellison¹ for £10 next Lady Day²

Nothing else from

Your loving father,

Sam. Wesley

Source: abridged manuscript transcription; JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 19.³

¹The husband of JW's sister Susanna.

²Mar. 25, the Feast of the Annunciation.

³Transcription published in *Works*, 25:189.

From Susanna (Annesley) Wesley

Wroot
December 7 [1725]

Dear Jacky,

(Of Mr. Norris's Sermon on Divine Love.¹)

Who but an atheist will deny that God, and God alone, is the supreme efficient cause of all things, the only uncreated good! But can it be inferred from hence that he hath imparted no degree of goodness to his creatures? ... We may full as well argue that because they are not self-existent, therefore they have no being at all

Your sister Wright went with her husband² about three weeks since to their house in Louth, with Molly³ to keep her company this winter. Your sister Anne was married last Thursday at Finningley to John Lambert,⁴ and goes this day home with him. He has hired the red house as we go to church, which they have made very pretty and comfortable, and we hope they will do well.

Em[i]ly sends her love to you, as do all the rest. She goes not hence this winter, and greatly desires to hear from you.

I suppose the election at Lincoln College draws near, and your father gives me small encouragement to hope for your success. ... Our crop at Wroot was almost destroyed by floods; and of the small remains your sister Nancy [i.e., Anne] has the best part in dowry, besides near, if not quite, £30 for hers and Hetty's clothing, which I've yet to pay. What then can I do you? Nothing but pray for you; nothing but lift my helpless eyes and hands to heaven and beseech Almighty God, to whom all power belongs, to do that for you which I cannot: to appoint some expedient for your relief, and raise you some friend in this time of distress. And who can tell? Perhaps he may condescend to hear the unworthiest of his creatures. ... I will not despair, but against hope, believe in hope: for I know that often man's extremity is God's opportunity, wherein he delights to manifest his mercy to such as call upon him.

Dear Jacky, I send you my love and blessing.

Adieu!

Source: abridged manuscript transcription; JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 45–46.⁵

¹John Norris, 'Discourse on the Measure of Divine Love', *Practical Discourses upon Several Divine Subjects*, vol. 3 (London: Printed for Samuel Manship, 1683).

²I.e., William Wright and Mehetabel (Wesley) Wright.

³I.e., JW's sister Mary.

⁴Anne Wesley married John Lambert on Dec. 2, 1725.

⁵Transcription published in *Works*, 25:189–90; and Wallace, *Susanna Wesley*, 122–23.

From Martha Wesley

[Wroot]
March 20, 1725/6

Dear Brother,

I believe it is above half a year since I writ to you.¹ And yet, though it is so long since, you never were so good as to write to me again. And you have writ[ten] several times since to my sister, but as perfectly neglected your loving sister Martha as if you had not known there was such a person in the world. At which I pretended to be so angry that I resolved I would never write to you more. If I had but kept my resolution you would have been well freed from a deal of impertinence. But my anger soon gave place to my love, as it always does whenever I chance to be angry with you.

But you only confirm me in the truth of an observation I have long since made, which is that if ever I love any person very well, and desire to be loved by them in return (as, to be sure, whoever loves desires to be loved), I always meet with unkind returns. Not that I ever was so happy as to have it in my power to express my love to you in anything but words; and what do they signify when one cannot possibly demonstrate them to be sincere? Though certainly 'love is a present for a mighty king',² and that is all I have to offer you, and 'tis what I wish you would accept.

I shall be exceedingly glad if you get the fellowship you stand for, which if you do I shall hope that one of the family besides my brother [Samuel Jr.] will be well provided for. I believe you very well deserve to be happy, and I sincerely wish you may be so both in this life and the next.

For my own particular, I have long looked upon myself to be what the world calls ruined. That is, I believe there will never be any provision made for me; but when my father dies I shall have my choice of three things: starving, going to a common service, or marrying meanly, as my sisters have done. None of which I like, though I do think it possible for a woman to be happy with a man that is not a gentleman, for he whose mind is virtuous is alone of noble kind. Yet where a man has neither religion, birth, riches, nor good-nature, I can't see what a woman can expect but misery. My brother[-in-law Richard] Ellison wants all but riches. My brother[-in-law John] Lambert, I hope, has a little religion. Poor brother[-in-law William] Wright has abundance of good-nature and, I hope, is religious; and yet sister Hetty is, I fear, entirely ruined, though 'tis not her husband's fault.

I shall be very glad if I can have the happiness of seeing you this summer, for I can hardly desire a greater satisfaction than I hope to enjoy in your company. But I fear I have quite tired your patience. I shall therefore conclude with desiring you to write to me. But I fear 'twill be as much in vain as it has hitherto been; though if you would be so good as to let me hear from you, you would add much to my satisfaction. But nothing can make me more than I am already, dear brother,

Your sincere friend and loving sister,

Martha Wesley

P.S. I hope you will be so kind as to pardon the many faults in my letter. you must not expect I can write like sister Emily or sister Hetty. I hope too that when I have the pleasure of seeing you at Wroot you will set me some more copies, that I may not write so miserably.

Source: holograph; DDWF 12/1.³

¹JW's letter-book lists a letter from Martha on July 14, 1725, but gives no text.

²George Herbert, 'The Church Porch', line 350.

³Transcription published in Stevenson, *Memorials*, 359–60 (misdated as Sept. 1725).

From the Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.

Wroot
March 21, 1725/6

Dear Mr. Fellow (elect) of Lincoln,

I've done ... more than I could for you. On your waiting on Dr. [John] Morley with this, he'll pay you £12. You are inexpressibly obliged to that generous man. We are all as well ... as can be expected ...

Your loving father,

Sam. Wesley

Source: abridged manuscript transcription; JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 19.¹

¹Transcription published in *Works*, 25:193.

From Susanna (Annesley) Wesley

Wroot
March 30, 1726

Dear Jacky,

I think myself obliged to return great thanks to Almighty God for giving you good success at Lincoln. Let whoever he pleased be the instrument, to him, and him alone, the glory appertains. For as the best concerted measures often prove ineffectual, so sometimes things that carry little probability in them shall succeed beyond expectation. And why is this? But because God prospers the one, and (as his Spirit expresses it) 'blows upon the labour of the other'.

I am much more pleased and thankful because I have observed sometime that the Holy Jesus (to whom the whole manage of our salvation is committed) seems to have taken the conduct of your soul into his own hand, in that he has given you a true notion of saving faith, and, I hope, an experimental knowledge of repentance. Therefore I trust that he will be pleased to direct your intentions, and assist you in the exercise of the ministerial office, that he will incline your heart to the love of justice, so that you will not look on the small addition to your fortunes as given you to make provision for the flesh, but as a talent committed to your charge: to pay your debts in the first place, and the residue to be employed as religion and prudence direct.

(Of [John] Norris's distinction between complacency and goodwill.¹)

Many and great are the trials it has pleased God to exercise us with; and though that is not the reason of my not writing so long, yet I must say they have found me sufficient employment to keep my mind from fainting. And your father being displeased at my writing so often, because of the expense it was to you, our pressures disposed me to a more implicit obedience than perhaps I should otherwise have paid him. I would not inform you of anything that might grieve, but Dr. Morley advising your coming into the country, 'tis not probable any unhappy circumstances or practices of some of our family should remain concealed from you. Dear Jacky, I hope you are a good Christian, and as such do firmly believe that no events happen but by the commission, or rather² at least permission of divine Providence. Therefore do not much afflict yourself, let what will befall. God hath promised, 'All things shall work together for good to those that love him.'

(Of my father's getting money for me.)

How or when do you intend to come hither? It will be necessary to let us have timely notice of your intentions.

Dear Jacky, all send their love; I, my love and blessing.

Source: abridged manuscript transcription; JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 46–47.³

¹Wesley's summary of this section of Susanna's letter.

²Orig., 'o/r'.

³Transcription published in *Works*, 25:193–94; and Wallace, *Susanna Wesley*, 123–24.

From the Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.

Wroot
April 1, 1726

Dear Son John,

I had both yours since your election.¹ In both you express yourself as became you for what I had willingly, though with greater difficulty than you imagine, done for you. For the last £12 pinched me so hard that I'm forced to beg time of your brother Sam till after harvest to pay him the ten that he lent you, nor shall I have so much as that, I question whether five, to keep my family from May-day till after harvest, and don't expect I shall be able to do anything for Charles when he goes to the university; and what will be my own fate God knows, before this summer be over. *Sed passi graviora*²—and wherever I am, my Jacky is Fellow of Lincoln.

Yet all this, and perhaps worse than you know, has not made me forget you. For I wrote to Dr. King,³ enclosed in one to Sam, desiring leave for you to come for two or three months into the country, where you should be gladly welcome, though with small hopes of obtaining it, because you know what has passed already.

As for advice, keep your best friend fast, and next to him Dr. Morley (to whom service). And have a care of your other friends, especially the younger. All at present from

Your loving father,

Sam. Wesley

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWF 1/6, compared with abridged manuscript transcription in JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 20.⁴

¹Apparently JW's letters of Mar. 18 & 25.

²'But I have suffered worse things'; cf. Virgil, *Aeneid*, i.199.

³Likely Dr. William King (1685–1763), Principal of St. Mary Hall, Oxford, a strong Tory and friend of Samuel Wesley Jr. King had served previously as a secretary to the Chancellor of Oxford.

⁴Transcription published in *Works*, 25:194–95.

From Susanna (Annesley) Wesley

[Wroot]
April 9 [1726]

Dear Jacky,

... I th[ought] to send a servant the 25th of this month, with two horses. ... Send now a speedy answer, that we may give them a little food extraordinary.¹

Dear Jacky, I beseech Almighty God to bless thee!

Source: abridged manuscript transcription; JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 47.²

¹Both JW and CW did come to spend the summer in Wroot.

²Transcription published in *Works*, 25:198; and Wallace, *Susanna Wesley*, 124.

From Susanna (Annesley) Wesley

[Wroot]
April 16 [1726]

Dear Jacky,

... Your father has ordered his servant, Alexander Clark, to set out hence on the 18th instant. ... One thing I suppose needful to admonish you of, that you do not propose to yourself too much satisfaction in coming hither; for what the world calls joy lives not within these walls. But if your heart be right, and you can rejoice in God whether you have or have not anything else to rejoice in; if he be the pleasure of your mind, so that you can feel delight in each perception of his presence, though encompassed with [[poverty, reproach, and¹]] shame; then you may spend a few months in Wroot as happily as in any place of the world

Dear Jacky, God bless thee!

Source: abridged manuscript transcription; JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 47–48.²

¹In cipher.

²Transcription published in *Works*, 25:198; and Wallace, *Susanna Wesley*, 124.

From the Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.

[Wroot]
April 17 [1726]

Dear Son,

I hope Sander¹ will be with you by Wednesday noon, with the horses, books, bags, and this. ... I got your mother to write the enclosed (for you see I can hardly scrawl) because it was possible it might come to hand on Tuesday; ... but my head was so full of other cares that I forgot on Saturday last to put it into the posthouse. ... I should be very glad to see you, though but for a day; but much more for a quarter of a year. ... I think you'll make what haste you can. ... I design to be at the Crown in Bawtry, Saturday sennight. God bless and send you a prosperous journey to

Your affectionate father,

Sam. Wesley

Source: abridged manuscript transcription; JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 20–21.²

¹I.e., Alexander Clark.

²Transcription published in *Works*, 25:198–99.

From Susanna (Annesley) Wesley

[Wroot]
September 28 [1726]

[Dear Jacky,]

(Of my father's mare, left ill at Banbury, and my plain nightgown)

Source: abridged manuscript transcription; JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 48.

From Susanna (Annesley) Wesley

[Wroot]
October 12 [1726]

[Dear Jacky,]

(Of my father's mare, and my nightgown)

I greatly rejoice that your lot is cast among such agreeable companions, nor am I a little pleased with the hopes of your being [[out of debt¹]]. Would Almighty God n[ow] permit me the satisfaction of being so myself, and seeing my children [[clear²]] in the world, with what pleasure could I leave it! ...

Your brother and sister Wright³ are now in Wroot at John Lambert's.⁴ By your father's permission I went to see her, and was much surprised to find that she met me without the least emotion of joy or grief. I desired a private conference, which she could not deny, though I found she was not pleased with it. I spoke what I thought proper for the occasion, but observed she was on the reserve, nor could I prevail with her to speak freely on anything. To induce her to it I used as much mildness as I am mistress of, told her I freely forgave all her offences against me, and spake more than perhaps was required on my part. She heard me with great indifference, made no acknowledgment of my proffered kindness, but seemed rather not pleased that I supposed she stood in need of my pardon. I then proposed a reconciliation between her and Mr. Wesley, and asked her if she would not see him if he were willing to see her. She told me she had no desire to see him, because she knew he would reproach her with what was past, and that she could not bear. I replied, he would certainly put her in mind of her faults, which I thought he was obliged to do, as a father and as a clergyman; and that she was not to call the just rebukes of a parent reproaches, but submit herself to him, which she would certainly do if she were truly penitent. She repeated her not desiring to see him, and added, she wished for no reconciliation till one of 'em came to die. What effect my discourse had on her I know not, but I'm sure I returned home strangely mortified, neither pleased with her nor myself. I hoped from Molly's⁵ representation of matters to have found her in a different temper from what I did. Therefore I did not say enough to convince her of her duty, and was troubled to find her averse from her father, whom I take to be as well disposed to be reconciled to her as man can be. For he seemed pleased that I went to her, and never restrains any of the children from being with her as much as they will. I verily believe that I could by a few words speaking reconcile him to her, but God forbid those few words should be spoken by me till she is better disposed. What her inward frame of mind is, is best known to the Searcher of hearts, to whose mercy I leave her, beseeching him to give her true repentance, without which I desire to see her face no more.

Charles is greatly to blame in not writing to Sam. ...

Dear Jacky, I pray God to bless thee!

I desire what I've spoken of Hetty may be concealed. I have not spoken so freely of her to our folks, nor is it necessary they should know my thoughts. Let all think as they please.

Source: abridged manuscript transcription; JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 48–49.⁶

¹In cipher. This is in reply to JW's letter of Oct. 3.

²In cipher.

³William and Mehetabel (Wesley) Wright.

⁴I.e., John and Anne (Wesley) Lambert.

⁵JW's sister Mary.

⁶Transcription published in *Works*, 25:199–200; and Wallace, *Susanna Wesley*, 124–26.

From Susanna (Annesley) Wesley¹

[Wroot]
Tuesday, November 29 [1726]

Dear Jacky,

... The mare cost £4. 10s. 9d before we got her home. (Of the money I left at Wroot.) Dear Jacky, I must say unto thee as Naomi to her daughters, 'It grieveth me much for your sake that the hand of the Lord is gone out against me.'²

This has withheld me from writing, though I had a great desire to hear from you and poor starving Charles.³ For it seemed a palpable piece of cruelty to make you pay for a letter unless I could send money too. But [as] I can't fix a time of payment, I now think it better to write, lest you should impute my silence to a worse cause.

... Let us know how you like your plaid

I heartily wish your converse with your friend⁴ may prove innocent and useful; but old folks are scrupulous, and much given to fear consequences. May God preserve you from sin and danger.

Dear Jacky, I pray God bless thee.

Mr. Wesley is this day gone to Mr. Farmery's (late minister of Brighton's⁵) funeral.

Source: abridged manuscript transcription; JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 50.⁶

¹In answer to JW's of Oct. 20.

²Ruth 1:13.

³CW had been elected to Christ Church, Oxford in June but was trying to raise the additional necessary money before he could begin classes.

⁴Sarah Kirkham (1699–1764), with whom JW had continued to correspond after her marriage to Rev. John Chapone (or Capon), the local schoolmaster, in Dec. 1725.

⁵I.e., William Farmerie, vicar of Blyton cum Wharton, Lincolnshire.

⁶Transcription published in *Works*, 25:200; and Wallace, *Susanna Wesley*, 126.

From the Rev. Samuel Wesley Jr.¹

[Westminster, Middlesex]
December 10, 1726

Dear Jack,

I thank you for your speedy and large answer.² If you are not nearer reconciliation than before I should wonder much. I left some particulars untouched to that end, particularly your supposition if anything you could do could give me either hope or fear. I think I may fairly say, though I have now and then assumed some superiority, I have given you no ground to imagine I look upon myself as unconcerned in your welfare, or as if I were of a species above you. If I had not feared your being guilty I had not mentioned my father's anger; if I had not *hoped* from you, I would never have spent a farthing upon you. Don't take this as an upbraiding or grudging what is past. I mentioned it only to show I thought my last was not only just but tender. The expression *pro forma*³ I don't perfectly remember, but I think it related more especially to your university exercises; and if so it was so far from harshness that it was a kind wish to hope you might improve yourself by them. However I shall not pretend to defend what I have almost forgotten. The other *ad hominem*⁴ was severe, I own, yet so fair an occasion might probably have excused even more; though after all, if this is, as I believe it is, the worst of my treatment, I persuade myself on more mature deliberation you will not mightily complain of hardship. An opinion of your imprudence to my father might have drawn more keen expressions, and his word was sufficient to ground an opinion, though not to pass a sentence upon. As to anything concerning myself, as you now assure me you have submitted and asked pardon, I am heartily at this instant writing reconciled to you.

The sentence I sent you about the 53rd Canon was my only *praecognitum*.⁵ I reckon myself obliged to you for your frankness in that matter, and freely acknowledge 'tis impossible you should break that law without set purpose and design. Neither do I think your previous dispute amounts to such a purpose. It was indeed an unhappy circumstance, which might have made your silence more advisable. Your reading to my mother was a wrong step, too. You might have had it to say that no one living had seen it; for the authority of her approbation on the one side did not outweigh the suspicion of combination on the other. My father, you say, was seemingly well satisfied that evening. How came he afterwards altered? Did anyone tell him you had such or such intentions? Or was he insulted with your declaring authoritatively against him? Some cause or other must have changed him. I find the point of doctrine was not so plain but that doctors differed; and therefore, if you please, I shall be glad to read your sermon as soon as you shall have an opportunity to send it.⁶

By your debt *in foro conscientia*[e]⁷ I mean the whole of your education, as far as you may be able to return it to the family. You have had better luck than I if you have not been upbraided with the disproportioned charge of the boys and of the girls. My mother and sisters in all likelihood will need more than we can do. My advice therefore is needless, because you must know as well as I where to place your superfluities.

¹Replying to JW's of Dec. 6, 1726. JW's diary shows that he received it on Dec. 17.

²Samuel Jr.'s letter, to which JW was replying, is not known to survive.

³'As a matter of form' or 'perfunctorily'.

⁴An argument 'against the person' rather than the topic being discussed.

⁵'Basic knowledge necessary to arrive at an informed judgment'.

⁶Samuel Jr. is requesting the text of the sermon on 'Universal Charity' that JW preached in Wroot on Aug. 28, 1726, which roused his father's wrath by its implicit defense of JW's sister Hetty. While JW sent the text to Samuel Jr., it is not known to survive to the present.

⁷'Before the tribunal of conscience'.

I wish you had spared the paragraph of my father's temper. I have lived longer with him than you, and have been very intimate, and yet almost always pleased him, and am confident I shall do so to the end of my life. So that what you are persuaded is flatly impossible, I affirm upon experience is direct fact. I beg you would not use any more solemn appeals to the Searcher of hearts. I believe you sincere without them; neither is my satisfaction an occasion august enough for so tremendous asseverations. If you are not high-minded, fear.

I wish my mother and sister Em[ily] were heartily reconciled to Hetty. I am resolved to try what I can do both with them and my father; though upon supposition indeed of her being penitent, otherwise I will never plead for innocence and guilt's being treated alike. Your own sermon was aimed at the person, though not the priesthood, of my father. A letter to him had been better much. I think you no more than imprudent in the case.

You are widely mistaken if you think I charge sister [Anne] Lambert with an alteration for the worse in her conduct. I suppose the very contrary, and therefore wonder there should be any alteration for the worse in her treatment from others—if any such there be.

I hope we are now near an end of our altercation, methinks I see land. I am very well satisfied as to your sentiments towards me, but would always have you remember, I place the whole of my merit to the account of my mother and sisters. Repay them. We join in love to you and Charles. I am, and hope shall be till death, your sincere and affectionate friend and brother,

S. Wesley

Pray send me your receipt for the Michaelmas Charterhouse money.⁸ My father has sent me the certificate.

Address: 'To / the Revd. Mr. Wesley / Fellow of Lincoln / Colledge / Oxford'.

Postmarks: Two circular, different sizes, including one Bishop mark; both indecipherable.

Charge: '3'.

Endorsement: by JW, 'SWJ' and 'Dec. 26' (and in another hand, '1726').

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWF 5/5.⁹

⁸Graduates of Charterhouse in London (like JW), who went on to university, were provided a stipend of £16 a year, distributed at the four festivals of the year, for up to eight years, as long as they stayed connected to the university.

⁹Transcription published in *Works*, 25:205–06.

From Mary Wesley

[Wroot]
January 20, 1726/7

Dear Brother Jack,

Though I have not the good hap to be one of your favourite sisters, yet I hope you won't grudge the postage now and then of a letter; which, if it can't be afforded, I desire that you will let me know, that I may trouble you no farther. I am sensible nothing I can say will add either to your pleasure or profit. And that you are of the same mind you've evidently shown by not writing when an opportunity offered. But why should I wonder at any indifference shown to such a despicable person as myself, seeing I am conscious there is nothing in my composition that merits esteem? Were I indeed like Edwin —

Edwin, I ween, a gentle youth,
Endowed with virtue, sense, and truth,
Though badly shaped he be.¹

— I might be so vain as to hope to be taken notice of. But as I only sympathise with his body, it would be injustice for me to desire an equal share of respect with one adorned with all the beauties of body and mind. I should be glad to find that miracle of nature, a friend which not all the disadvantages I labour under would hinder from taking the pains to cultivate and improve my mind. But since God has cut me off from the pleasurable parts of life, and rendered me incapable of attracting the love of my relations, I must use my utmost endeavour to secure an eternal happiness; and he who is no respecter of persons will require no more than he has given.

You may now think that I am uncharitable in blaming my relations for want of affection. And I should readily agree with you had I not convincing reasons to the contrary; one of which (and I think an undeniable one) is this, that I have always been the jest of the family. And it is not I alone who make this observation, for then it might very well be attributed to my suspicion. But here I will leave [it], and tell you some news. Mary Owran is married today, and we only want your company to make us completely merry (for who can be sad where you are?). I've got Miss Betty to buy me some silk to knit you another pair of gloves, and I don't doubt you will doubly like the colour for the buyer's sake.

My sister Hetty's child is dead.² And your godson³ grows a lovely boy, and will, I hope, talk to you when he sees you, which I should be glad to do now, were it possible. Though I can never expect so much happiness as to converse freely with you, especially while the more ingenious part of our family continue with us. In the meantime I design to take the freedom of writing, if it will be acceptable. And if my letters were as pleasing to you as yours are to me, I am sure you would never neglect giving so much satisfaction to

Your loving sister,

Mary Wesley

Pray please seal my brother's letter before you give it him.⁴

Address: 'To / the Revd Mr John Wesley / Fellow of Lincoln Colledge / Oxon'.

Postmark: '23/IA'.

¹Cf. Thomas Parnell, 'Fairy Tale in the Ancient English Style', *Poems on Several Occasions* (London: B. Lintot, 1722), 32. Parnell has 'I wis' for 'I ween'; and 'courage' for 'virtue'.

²Mehetabel Wright, baptized Feb. 18, 1726; buried Dec. 27, 1726 in Louth.

³John Lambert, son of JW's sister Anne, baptized Sept. 15, 1726.

⁴It does not appear that this was done.

Endorsement: by JW, 'S[ister] M[ary] Jan. 20. 1726/7'.

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWF 8/1.⁵

⁵Transcription published in Stevenson, *Memorials*, 290 (misdated 1726).

From Susanna (Annesley) Wesley

[Wroot]
January 31, 1727

Dear Jacky,

... Emily can have no time to work the chairs, having given her promise to Mrs. Taylor to go with her at Lincoln at May Day¹. The small interval between this and that is hardly sufficient to prepare for her removal. I would gladly have kept her here, but it cannot be. Our seas run high, and each succeeding wave impairs her health, so that I plainly perceive she has not strength to ride out the storm, but must either make some other port or shortly leave the world. For which reason I am content to part with her, however pleasing or useful she might otherwise be to me.

... I often revolve the state of my family and the wants of my children over in my mind. And though one short reflection on the sins of my youth and the great imperfection of my present state solves all the difficulty of providence relating to myself, yet when I behold them struggling with misfortunes of various kinds, some without sufficiency of bread, in the most literal sense, all destitute of the conveniences or comforts of life, it puts me upon the expostulation of David, 'Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly, but those sheep, what have they done?'² Though thus the tenderness of a mother pleads their cause, yet I dare not dispute God's justice, wisdom, or goodness. I know that to allot all men such a sphere of action as all things considered is best for them is the proper exercise of his providence, as it is what none but he can do. We yesterlings do not know whether prosperity or adversity, health or sickness, honour or disgrace, would most conduce to our good. ... What then to desire for myself or children I wot not. One thing I know, that the unsearchable wisdom of God is a good reason why we should not censure those mysterious methods of Providence which we cannot comprehend, but rather vigorously apply ourselves to do our duty in our several stations, leaving all things else to be disposed of by that almighty goodness which was exhibited to us in the redemption of the world by Jesus Christ. Only let us join in this petition to our Incarnate God, that as our day is, so our strength may be! Amen!

(Of my father's borrowing money for brother Charles, detained by brother Sam.)

I have many thoughts of the friendship between Varanese³ and thee, and the more I think of it, the less I approve it. The tree is known by its fruits, but not always by its blossoms; what blooms beautifully sometimes bears bitter fruit. ...

(Against the continuing the acquaintance with Varanese.)

I often muse on the prodigious force of present things, and am grieved to observe with what a strong impetus passion and appetite bear us in pursuit of sensitive enjoyments, contrary to our best informed understandings.

... We would freely serve God with what costs us naught, but if he require a costly sacrifice, a right eye, or a right hand, we are ready to say, 'These are hard sayings, Who can bear them?'⁴ We are apt to think heaven too dear a purchase if our favourite must be given for it

... I am verily persuaded that⁵ the reason why so many 'seek to enter into the kingdom of heaven, but are not able',⁶ is because there is some Delilah, some one beloved vice,⁷ they will not part with; hoping that by a strict observance of other duties that one fault will be dispensed with. But alas! they

¹Mrs. Taylor ran a school in Lincoln, at which Emilia was going to work.

²2 Sam. 24:17.

³JW's literary nickname for Sarah (Kirkham) Chapone.

⁴Cf. John 6:60.

⁵'I am verily persuaded that' (the beginning of the *AM* selection) is not in the letter-book.

⁶Luke 13:24.

⁷Letter-book: 'because there is some beloved vice'.

miserably deceive themselves. The way to heaven is so narrow, the gate we must enter in so strait, that it will not permit a man to pass with one known unmortified sin about him. Therefore let everyone in the beginning of a Christian course seriously weigh what it will cost to finish it. 'For whosoever having put his hand to the plough, looketh back, is not fit for the kingdom of God!'⁸

I am nothing pleased we advised you to have your plaid. Though I am that you think it too dear, because I take it to be an indication that you are disposed to thrift, which is a rare qualification in a young man who has his fortune to make. Indeed, such an one can hardly be too wary, or too careful.⁹ Not that he should take thought for the morrow, any farther than is needful for his improvement of today, in a prudent manage of the talents God has committed to his trust. So far I think 'tis his duty; I heartily wish you may be well apprised of this, while life is young.

Believe me, youth, for I am read in cares,
And bend beneath the weight of more than fifty years.¹⁰

Believe me, dear son, old age is the worst time we can choose to mend either our lives or our fortunes. If the foundations of solid piety are not laid betimes, in sound principles and virtuous dispositions, and if we neglect, while strength and vigour last, to lay up something ere the infirmities of age overtake us, 'tis a hundred to one odds but we shall die both poor and wicked.

Ah! my dear Jacky, did you with me stand on the verge of life, and see before your eyes a vast expanse, an unlimited duration of being, which you were obliged shortly to enter upon, you can't conceive how all the inadvertencies, mistakes, and sins of youth would rise to your view; and how different the sentiments of sensual pleasures, the desire of sexes, and pernicious friendships of the world would be then,¹¹ ... from what they are now, while health is entire, and seems to promise many years of life! ...

My love and blessing attends you and your brother. Dear Jacky, adieu!

Source: abridged manuscript transcription; JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 51–53, collated with a fuller version of the last four paragraphs edited by Wesley for publication in *AM* 1 (1778): 38–39.¹²

⁸Luke 9:62.

⁹In JW's letter-book the paragraph begins: '... One who has his fortunes to make can hardly be too careful.'

¹⁰[John Dryden?], 'To Mr. Creech, Upon his Translation of Lucretius into English', in Thomas Creech, *Titus Lucretius Carus, the Epicurean Philosopher ... Done in English Verse* (Oxford: L. Lichfield, 1683), [p. xxi].

¹¹Letter-book: 'and how different your sentiments would be then'.

¹²Transcription published in *Works*, 25:209–11; and Wallace, *Susanna Wesley*, 131–33.

From Martha Wesley

[Wroot]
February 7, 1727

Dear Brother,

I must confess you had a better opinion of me than I deserved, for that seducer jealousy had got me in his clutches and was just running away with me when I received your letter. That uneasy passion did indeed suggest to me that you had very small kindness for me. This melancholy reflection was occasioned by your not writing to me. I flattered myself with the pleasing expectation of hearing from you when Sander¹ came from Banbury. But when I knew that you were just returned from Worcestershire, where I suppose you saw your Varanese,² I then ceased to wonder at your silence, for the sight of such a woman, 'so known, so loved',³ might well make you forget me. I really have myself a vast respect for her, as I must necessarily have for one that is so dear to you.

When you sent the parcel to my sister Lambert,⁴ and wrote to her and sister Emme,⁵ and not to me, I was much worse grieved than before. Could I ever have the vanity to think that my letters were capable of giving you half the satisfaction that yours do me, it should be an extraordinary accident indeed that should hinder my writing. I was truly meditating revenge, and thinking what I would say to you when I wrote, though had I writ[ten] then my foolish anger would only have made me appear contemptible to you. But I believe one kind word from you would calm my soul in the greatest storm. For no sooner had I read your kind letter than I was so much altered I scarce knew myself, and could not forbear applying to my own case the words of Marcus,

Thou best of brothers, and thou best of friends,
Pardon a weak, distempered soul that swells
With sudden gusts, and sinks as soon in calms.⁶

I believe I need not tell you that when we love any person very well we desire to be loved by them in the same degree. And though I can't possibly be so vain as to think that I do for my own personal merits deserve more love than my sisters, yet can you blame me if I sometimes wish I had been so happy as to have had the first place in your heart?

I have read the plays you sent sister Lambert several times,⁷ for 'tis a great pleasure to me to read a good play. Though I have the same fate in that as in most other things I like, I have them very seldom.

Sister Emme is going to Lincoln again, of which I'm very glad for her own sake, for she is weak and our misfortunes daily impair her health. Sister Kezzy too will have a fair chance of going, for when Mr. Hargreave's family come to Lincoln again they will send either for her or me, and I have no thought or desire of going again upon the terms I went before. I believe if sister Molly [Mary] stays long at home it will be because she can't get away. It is likely in a few years' time our family may be lessened; perhaps none left but your poor sister Martha, for whose welfare few are concerned.

¹Alexander Clark, a family servant.

²Sarah (Kirkham) Chapone.

³Nathaniel Rowe, *Tamerlane, a Tragedy* (London: Jacob Tonson, 1702), 33.

⁴Anne (Wesley) Lambert.

⁵I.e., Emilia Wesley.

⁶Joseph Addison, *Cato, a Tragedy* (London: Jacob Tonson, 1713), 4 (end of Act 1, scene 1).

⁷JW's Oxford diary records reading several plays by Joseph Addison, John Dryden, Thomas Otway, Nathaniel Rowe, William Shakespeare, and others during this period.

My father has been at Louth to see sister Wright, who by good providence was brought to bed two days before he got thither,⁸ which perhaps might prevent his saying what he otherwise might have said to her. For none that deserves the name of a man would say anything to grieve a woman in a condition where grief is often present death to them. I fancy you have heard before now that my brother Willy⁹ is gone off for debt, he having been bound for his father, and that sister Hetty's child is dead.¹⁰ You can't imagine what a satisfaction it will be to me to have a long letter from you, and I hope you will be so good as to write by the next post to,

Your sincere friend and loving sister,

Martha Wesley

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWF 12/2.¹¹

⁸Mehetabel (Wesley) Wright's second child, Jane, was baptized on Mar. 3, 1727; and died soon after, being buried Mar. 8, 1727 in Louth.

⁹William Wright, Mehetabel's husband.

¹⁰I.e., Mehetabel Wright, baptized Feb. 18, 1726; buried Dec. 27, 1726 in Louth.

¹¹Transcription published in Stevenson, *Memorials*, 361–62.

From Robert Kirkham¹

Stanton [Gloucestershire]
the 20th of the instant [i.e., February 20, 1727]
Monday, 11 o'clock, by the dial

With familiarity I write,² Dear Jack,

On Friday night last I received your kind accusation. You generously passed by, or pardoned, all insipid or impertinent expressions. But I am condemned for brevity before I could put forth my defence. My plea is that I writ yours, as likewise one to Harry Yardley³ of equal importance, in the space of three hours. Had Miss Betty's⁴ been sent in as few days after it was begun, she would have received it without the name, though scarce an imperfect price.

Upon your accusation reflecting upon the letter that I sent you, I could not but compare it with yours as to the length thereof. '*Sed parvis componere magna solebam*.'⁵

My letter was really longer than yours by Scripture proof⁶—for you writ scarce much out of the abundance of your thoughts; whereas I writ all that I thought of, and thought of all that I could write. *Quid de fele potes praeter habere cutem*.⁷

I have not the presumption to compare my expressions or style, if it may be so termed, with yours, because there I am excelled beyond all degrees of comparison.

For when you write, smooth elocution flows;
But when Bob scrawls, rough ignorance he shows.

I am just going down to a dinner of a calf's head and bacon, with some of the best green cabbages in the town. I wish I could send you a plateful of this our entertainment while it was hot. We have just tapped a barrel of admirable cider. Dost not spring? I am gone down.

2 o'clock. I am come up again with a belly-full, *sufficit*.⁸ Being retired into my chamber, I, an insignificant correspondent, dedicate this my performance to you, though is unworthy your reception. I hope you take no further notice but to laugh at it and burn it with my last, when perused.

You desired an answer to one particular, which you may read <as> follows:

*abest adulatio*⁹

¹Robert Kirkham (c. 1708–67), a student of Merton College, Oxford, son of Rev. Lionel Kirkham, rector of Stanton, Gloucestershire, whom Robert succeeded after his death in 1736. Robert was brother to Sarah (b. 1699), Damaris (b. 1701), and Elizabeth (b. 1705). Their mother was Damaris (Boyse) Kirkham.

²This explanation is written in the left column.

³Henry Yardley (born c. 1706), of Notgrove, Gloucestershire, had matriculated in Trinity College, Oxford in 1723, received his B.A. in 1726, and was currently working on his M.A.

⁴Elizabeth ('Betty') Kirkham, Robert's sister. Her literary nickname used by JW was 'Athenias'.

⁵Virgil, *Eclogues*, i.24; 'compare great things with small' (Loeb).

⁶Probably an allusion to the story of the 'widow's mite'; Mark 12:41–44 and parallels.

⁷Charles Este, ed., *Carmina Quadragesimalia ab Aedis Christi Oxon* (Oxford: Sheldonian Theatre, 1723), 97, substituting 'Quid' for 'Nil'; 'What can you have but the skin of the cat?'

⁸I.e., 'sufficient'.

⁹'Flattery in your absence'.

Your most deserving, queer character; your worthy personal accomplishments; your noble endowments of mind; your little and handsome person; and your obliging and desirable conversation have been the pleasing subject of our discourse for some pleasant hours. You have often been in the thoughts of M[iss] B[etty], which I have curiously observed, when with her alone, by inward smiles and sighs and abrupt expressions concerning you. Shall this suffice? I caught her this morn in an humble and divine posture on her knees.

I am called to read a *Spect[ator]* to my sister Capoon,¹⁰ therefore must conclude, and subscribe myself,

Your most affectionate friend, and brother (I wish I might write),

Robert Kirkham

[P.S.] I long for the time when you are to supply my father's absence.¹¹ Pray write at the bottom of your next, for my satisfaction, 'Keep your counsel, and burn this when perused.' You shall have my reasons in my next. Pray write as often as you desire that I would, and you would exceeding oblige yours.

Address: 'To / the Revd. Mr. Wesley Fellow of / Lincoln Coll. Oxon / By the Worcester Carrier'.

Endorsement: by JW, 'b K. Feb. 20 1726/7. / Hints of Athen[ais] being in [[love with me]]'.

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/610/91.

¹⁰In the Stanton, Gloucestershire parish register Sarah Kirkham's married name is most often spelled 'Capon'; which reflects its likely pronunciation. 'Chapone' became the preferred spelling by Sarah's death, and was used by her son John.

¹¹I.e., when JW would preach in Rev. Lionel Kirkham's place at Stanton, Gloucestershire.

From Ann Griffiths¹

Salop [i.e., Shropshire]
March 8, 1726/7

Dear Sir,

I am now situated in the midst of my friends and relations, who express a good deal of tenderness and affection in all their actions towards me. I have likewise all the diversions that a rural life can afford at my command. And to complete my happiness (was going to say) a bevy of young ladies at the next door who have youth, beauty, wit, and innocence sufficient to make conversation both edifying and delightful. And as they have always lived and delighted in a private retired life, they have not that crowd of admirers which women of their accomplishments are usually pestered with. So that I may enjoy their company when and as often as I please without interruption. Is there any real happiness in this? No! I am convinced there is little or no solid pleasure or satisfaction in the enjoyment of the creatures of this world; and am therefore resolved to seek it in the enjoyment of Him with whom there is fullness of joy, and at whose right hand there is pleasure evermore.²

The questions I formerly asked were not relating to anything Athenais³ said or did. If they had, I can see where the danger in answering them could possibly lie,⁴ considering whom you trusted. Many circumstances of this nature hath happened since our first acquaintance, and as I never suspected design, I frankly, and without equivocation, satisfied you directly. How widely different hath your behaviour been towards me in this respect! I should by no means have reported anything past had not you urged me to it. You [wil]l oblige me in the most signal instance if you never mention it or the name of Athenais again, or make her acquainted with our past correspondence.

I shall in a fortnight's time remove my quarters; as soon as I am settled you may depend upon hearing from,

Your humble servant,

N. G.

Service to all friends. Adieu

Endorsement: by JW, 'N G March 8. 1726/7'.

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/610/62.⁵

¹Ann ('Nancy') Griffiths (b. 1701), was a daughter of Rev. John Griffiths (b.c. 1677), vicar at Broadway, Gloucestershire, and part of JW's circle of friends in the Cotswolds. She appears as a frequent correspondent with JW in his Letter-book (1724–29). Ann was apparently visiting extended family in Shropshire.

²See Ps. 16:11.

³'Athenais' was the literary nickname for Elizabeth Kirkham among JW's circle of friends in the Cotswolds.

⁴Orig., 'lye'.

⁵Transcription published in *WHS* 32 (1960): 127–28.

From Susanna (Annesley) Wesley¹

[Wroot]
March 14 [1727]

Dear Jacky,

... I congratulate your good success in taking your Master's degree. ...

I'm greatly pleased with your reflections on the methods of divine providence relating to a family, and am entirely of your mind, that less violent motives would not have prevailed (on me at least) to make us seriously apply ourselves to the study and practice of the virtues you mention.

(Commendation of Sherlock on providence.²)

The relation I have to your friend Theod[osius]³ made me think it my duty to speak freely on his friendship to V[aranese]; which having done, I have no more to say or do, but only earnestly to pray for him; and to commit the conduct of his soul to that superior wisdom which alone can guide it into the ways of truth and peace. I have a good opinion of the honesty of his intention, and believe he proposes to himself no happiness at present but what appears to him solid, rational, and Christian. But age has less fire and more caution than youth, and may perhaps sometimes be afraid where no fear is. But I hope it is excusable, and that no offence will be taken, where none was intended.

(Of Bishop Sprat's sermon on zeal.⁴)

... I wish I had that funeral sermon you preached;⁵ but if that can't be, prithee send me the text, and bring the sermon, if you should come again ere I die.

Dear Jacky, I beseech Almighty God to bless you!

Source: abridged manuscript transcription; JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 53–54.⁶

¹Apparently a reply to Wesley's letter of Feb. 10, in which he described the exercises for his M.A., even though the degree was not conferred until Feb. 14.

²William Sherlock, *A Discourse concerning the Divine Providence* (London: William Rogers, 1694).

³An unidentified member of JW's circle of friends in the Cotswolds.

⁴Thomas Sprat, *A Sermon preached before the King at White-Hall, December 22, 1678* (London: Henry Brome, 1678).

⁵John ('Robin') Griffiths (born c. 1703), the son of Rev. John Griffiths, vicar of Broadway, died Jan. 8, 1727. JW honored Robin's desire that he preach the funeral sermon. The sermon, on 2 Sam. 12:23, is found in *Works*, 4:237–43.

⁶Transcription published in *Works*, 25:211–12; and Wallace, *Susanna Wesley*, 133.

From Susanna (Annesley) Wesley¹

[Wroot]
April 22 [1727]

Dear Jacky,

I have so much to say that I verily believe I shall forget at least one half of it. ... Therefore 'tis the best way to begin with that which seems of most importance.

(Of my cutting off my hair; reasons for it.)

Your drawing up for yourself a scheme of studies highly pleases me, for there is nothing like a clear method to save both time and labour in anything. 'Tis a pretty observation of Seneca's, 'Most people pass through the world like straws upon a river, which are carried on by the wind or stream without having any proper action of their own.'² Whether it proceed from mere impotence of mind, intemperate love of pleasure, want of courage, or indolence, 'tis certain there are very few that will persevere in a regular course of life; and 'tis as certain that without such a course a man must necessarily spend most of his days in doing nothing, or nothing to the purpose. ... I know very well that if a man ... will resolutely break through the foolish customs and maxims of that world, ... he must submit to be often the sport, perhaps the scorn, of the profane and the witty; but

Slight those that say, amidst their sickly healths,
Thou liv'st by rule. What does not so, but man?³

A little well-timed neglect, or a prudent withdrawing from such company, is the best answer in those cases; and the inward peace that results from a well-ordered life is an ample recompense for all its difficulties.

There is another thing in your last letter that almost equally pleases me, and that is your wise and honest resolution of not being trusted again by anyone. I heartily wish, dear Jacky, that God may enable you to keep it ..., and that his merciful providence will ever grant you all things that are necessary for life and godliness, without your being compelled to live the life that I have done; and that you may have such power over yourself as to be able to live cheerfully without such things as his wisdom thinks fit to withhold from you

How you account for your being weak and little I know not; but I believe the true cause of your being so is want of sufficiency of food for ten or twelve years when you were growing, and required more nourishment. If your contracting any ill habit was a means of your acquiring or confirming any good ones, the reason of God's permitting you to contract it is very clear. He often demonstrates the power of his mercy toward us by bringing good out of sin, the greatest evil; and his not hearing our prayers proves sometimes, in the event, the greatest instance of his favour.

I am not sorry that you missed the school.⁴ That way of life would not agree with your constitution, and I hope God has better work for you to do. ... I would not have you leave making verses. ... Rather make poetry sometimes your diversion, though never your business.

I must own I vehemently suspect your doctrine and practice did not well agree. I know Mr. Griffiths⁵ was a favourite on more accounts than one or two. Be that as it will, I am glad you are better; though I verily believe you will never have any good state of health while you keep your hair.⁶

¹Clearly an answer to JW's missing letter of Apr. 4. JW's accounts show it was received Apr. 26.

²Cf. Seneca, *Morals Of a Happy Life*, Chap. IX, 'Of Levity of Mind', par. 2.

³George Herbert, *The Church Porch*, ll. 133–34.

⁴See JW's mention in his letter of Mar. 19, of possible appointment as schoolmaster in Skipton.

⁵John ('Robin') Griffiths, who had recently died.

⁶Susanna is trying to dissuade JW from his resolution to grow his hair long, instead of using a wig.

My Lord Nottingham⁷ has given Mr. Pennington⁸ a small living, about £74 a year, paid in money, to which he goes the 10th of May. ... 'Tis your father's intention to serve both his cures⁹ for a year, which (beside that I think it too much for him) I know would satisfy neither parish. Now I think, if it will be no great prejudice to your affairs, and you can submit to live as we must do in his absence, it will be a charitable thing to come hither and supply his place during that time. I am persuaded that if it be in your power to help us, you will do it. ...

Thus far I had written when Mr. William Hume,¹⁰ who succeeded his father¹¹ in Laughton living, sent a servant to tell Mr. Wesley that his third brother, Daniel,¹² enters into holy orders on Trinity Sunday; and that he desires, since Mr. Pennington is preferred, he would accept of him for a curate. On Thursday next the two young gentlemen are to meet here about it. I shall [not] fail to inform you of what they resolve, as soon as it comes to my knowledge.

Your sister Emily is upon the point of leaving us, and we intend, if God permit, to put M[olly] to a trade at midsummer. So we shall have only P[atty] (i.e. Martha) and K[ezia] at home.

Dear Jacky, I beg of you to leave drinking green tea. It ill agrees with a weak constitution. If you drink sage, be sure you make it of sage well dried. ...

I beg Almighty God to bless and guide you in all your ways.

Dear Jacky, adieu.

I have abundance more to say, had I time.

Jacky, do you really think Charles has [[victuals¹³]] enough? He writ me a mighty kind letter, with an air of great sincerity; but yet I am sometimes afraid he represented his case rather too well, out of mere goodness, to make me easy.

Source: abridged manuscript transcription; JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 54–56.¹⁴

⁷Daniel Finch (1647–1730), 2nd Earl of Nottingham.

⁸John Pennington (1699–1768), a graduate of Christ's College, Cambridge, had been Samuel Wesley Sr.'s curate at Epworth, beginning in July 1725. His new position was as rector of Foulness, Essex, where he served until 1733. He then became rector of All Saints', Huntingdon, 1733–62; and prebend of Lincoln from 1755 to his death.

⁹I.e., both Wroot and Epworth; Pennington had been caring for one of these.

¹⁰William Hume (1700–31), received his B.A. from Exeter, Oxford, in 1718, and his M.A. from Pembroke in 1724, the same year he was ordained priest. He officially succeeded his father as vicar of Laughton with Wildsworth in Feb. 1728, where he served until his death on May 24, 1731.

¹¹James Hume (c. 1676–1734), ordained priest in 1696, served as vicar of Laughton with Wildsworth, Lincolnshire, 1711–28, and vicar of Bradwell, 1729–34.

¹²Daniel Hume (b. 1705), graduated Magdalene, Cambridge, and was ordained deacon in May 1727. There is no record of further preferment.

¹³In cipher.

¹⁴Transcription published in *Works*, 25:215–16; and Wallace, *Susanna Wesley*, 133–35.

From Susanna (Annesley) Wesley

Wroot
May 14 [1727]

Dear Jacky,

I wrote some [time] since to your brother Charles and you, but have not yet heard whether either of you received my letter. Yours, dated the 7th of April, found me engaged in much business, and if I had not I should have made no great haste to answer it, because you told K[ezia] you were to be absent from College for some time. ... And now I am about to answer it, I don't know how to do it to your satisfaction; for I've very little to say on zeal more than I've said already. Yet I can deny you nothing that is in my power to grant, though I write to no purpose.

(Of zeal.)

The difficulty of separating the ideas of things that nearly resemble each other, and whose properties and effects are much the same, has made some think that we have no passion but love, and that what we call hope, joy, fear, etc., are no more than various modes of it. This notion carries some show of reason, though I can't acquiesce in it. I must confess I never yet met such a definition of love as fully satisfied me. 'Tis indeed commonly defined, 'a desire of union with a known or apprehended good'.¹ But this directly makes love and desire the same thing, which I conceive they are not, for this reason: desire is strongest and acts most vigorously when the beloved object is distant, absent, or apprehended unkind or displeased; whereas when the union is attained, delight and joy fills the lover, while desire lies quiescent; which plainly shows that desire of union is an effect of love, not love itself.

What then is love? How shall we define its strange, mysterious essence? It is—I don't know what: a powerful something; source of our joy and grief! Felt by everyone, yet unknown to all! Nor shall we ever comprehend what it is till we are united to our First Principle, and there read its wondrous nature in the clear mirror of Uncreated Love! Till which time it is best to rest satisfied with such apprehensions of its essence as we can collect from our observation of its effects and properties; for other knowledge of it in our present state is too high and wonderful for us, neither can we attain unto it!²

Dear Jacky, suffer now a word of advice. However curious you may be in searching into the natures or distinguishing the properties of the passions or virtues, for your own private satisfaction, be very cautious of giving definitions in public assemblies, for it does not answer the true end of preaching, which is to mend men's lives, not to fill their heads with unprofitable speculations. And after all that can be said, every affection of the soul is better known by experience than any description that can be given of it. An honest man will more easily apprehend what is meant by being zealous for God, and against sin, when he hears what are the properties and effects of zeal, than by the most accurate definitions of its essence.³ And it is of incomparably greater concern to every individual soul of your auditory to be well instructed how to temper zeal than to have the most accurate definition of its essence

I've now received yours dated May 8th,⁴ and find by it you have my last. If you are so averse from parting with your hair ... I've no more to say. ... I wish you health, and, if it please God, a long life

Your being subject to frequent bleedings at the nose is no sign of the fluids being too thick, but ... of the contrary. ... The cramp is a nervous distemper, and proceeds from some obstruction that prevents the regular circulation of the spirits. 'Tis no wonder you should be afflicted with it, when your father has had it so violently, especially when he was young. One of the best remedies in this case is eight or nine hours of sleep, and moderate exercise, avoiding as much as possible the being abroad after sunset.

¹Susanna is likely quoting from JW's letter to her in late April, which is not known to survive.

²'Till which time ... unto it' added from *AM*.

³'And after all ... of its essence' added from *AM*.

⁴This letter is not known to survive.

... Water does certainly increase the fluids, but whether it corrects their viscosity or no I cannot tell
(A recipe⁵ for viscosity or sharpness in the blood.)

What curate your father will hire I don't know.⁶ I think Mr. [Daniel] Hume will be the man. Till Martinmas he designs to serve both cures himself. ... I did once with some degree of earnestness wish you here, but I don't now; rather I am glad that there is no occasion for your coming at all. For 'tis best for me to have as few attachments to the world as possible.

Dear Jacky, the conclusion of your letter is very kind. That you were ever dutiful I very well know, but I know myself enough to rest satisfied with a moderate share of your affection. Indeed it would be unjust of me to desire the love of anyone. Your prayers I want and wish; nor shall I cease while I live to beseech Almighty God to bless you! Adieu!

I congratulate your composure of mind; for sure 'tis a happy temper, and can never make you unfit for good conversation. 'Tis my simple opinion that no man is so well qualified for converse in the world as he that most despises it.

Charles has writ[ten] a letter to your father, which much pleases him.

Em[ily] is gone to Lincoln.

Source: abridged manuscript transcription; JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 56–59, collated with and expanded by JW's edited version of sections of the original letter in *AM* 1 (1778): 78–79.⁷

⁵I.e., a 'prescription' for treating this health issue.

⁶Samuel ended up persuading JW to return to Epworth in Aug. 1727 and serve as his curate; he would stay until Nov. 1729.

⁷Transcription published in *Works*, 25:217–18; and Wallace, *Susanna Wesley*, 135–37.

From the Rev. Samuel Wesley Jr.¹

[Westminster]
Monday, May 15, 1727

Dear Jack,

I have sent you your sermon,² and like it very well on the whole. What passages seem exceptionable to me are these that follow. 'Tis far from certain the Samaritans were guilty of idolatry; most think it a slander thrown on them by the intemperate zeal of the Jews, who were willing to paint them as black as possible. The very end for which our religion was instituted is charity; it should be more determinate [to say] one great end, because you presently name another to which this is only subordinate—the glory of God. 'This commandment is new in respect of its extent'; I much doubt it. Strangers are expressly and frequently entitled to benevolence in the Old Testament; and enemies are directly, not by implication, included. 'If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again.'³ God never yet bid man hate his enemy; that was only one of the many traditions of the Jews which made the law of God of none effect. The command may be new as to the plainness and frequency of its injunction, the degree and importance of our love, the person who gave it, and the motives to its practice. We are under more particular obligation to the household of faith, indeed we are not only more bound to love them, but bound also to love them more, in an higher degree and manner than others, which I think you have not inserted. Our Saviour's example is well urged, but methinks it would have been highly proper to have taken off a seeming objection—that even he called the scribes and Pharisees hypocrites and painted sepulchres, and Herod a fox, and so have showed that even such sharpness was not railing. We are not only to forgive but also love our enemies. I am of opinion some degree of love must be before we can possibly forgive, but 'tis of small import which is first, provided they are inseparable, as I believe they will be found. Repentance is not necessary to these, but in order to trust it doubtless is. You have fairly proved that God's enemies are not excluded, no more than our own. That all speaking what is evil of another is not contrary to εὐφημεῖν⁴ is plain from St. Stephen himself, who in his very prayer charged his murderers with sin. I do not well understand what you mean by violent methods in church rulers; and if [you mean] excommunication, I hold it so far from being contrary to the Gospel that 'tis one of the institutions of it. They ought doubtless to use their utmost caution in that as well as other matters, since 'tis required of a steward that he be found faithful. Severe proceedings are entirely foreign to the duty of a private man. I have several things here to offer. First, I take the endeavours to amend scandalous offenders to be much more especially the duty of governors. 2) Heresy is not the only ground of our withdrawing, nay is not mentioned [in] 1 Cor. 5:11, but merely immoralities. 3) I don't think it plain either by general precept or particular that we ought always to admonish, over and over, before we avoid. 4) There is a special reason why private and weak Christians ought immediately to shun such persons, and namely lest evil communication should corrupt good manners. Our Saviour was above temptation, and therefore might safely frequent the company of publicans and sinners, but we read not the same of his apostles; they preached to all, but did not feast but with brethren. A physician may frequent a pest-house, where 'tis madness and presumption for another to go without a call. You had not room to insert these guards. There is but one passage which I think can be well taken as levelled at my father, which is this: 'if providence has pointed you out for the agents by the near relation between you and the offending person'; wherein I own I see no harm, unless it contain an insinuation that he had not set about that work before, which is so severe that truth itself could not have

¹Answered by JW's of May 23.

²The sermon on 'Universal Charity' requested by Samuel Jr. in his Dec. 10, 1726 letter to JW. The text of this sermon is not known to survive.

³Exod. 23:4.

⁴To speak auspiciously—'of good report', as in Phil. 4:8.

excused it in the pulpit.

I have received a letter from my sister Hetty since my last to you, wherein she tells me her child is dead, and she has set up a school; by which, though not meeting with so much encouragement as she expected, she hopes to get food at least, and somewhat to put her out of her present condition of a heathen philosopher. Brother Lambert⁵ may want money perhaps sufficiently, but I am sure he does not want confidence to ask you to lend it him. I am afraid you have more than one reason for not complying with so unreasonable a request. I fancy my mother's earnestness for having your hair off proceeds from the length of it; for sure if you take away but two or three inches of its old size it would be full as primitive and sacerdotal as a wig.

I have never taken the least notice to my father of your sermon, nor ever design it unless I should come face to face, and then not unless I found it still stuck hard at his heart.

My love to all friends. I must leave some room for a letter to Charles. Your sister⁶ sends her love. I am, dear Jack,

Your affectionate friend and brother,

S. Wesley

Address: 'May 15, 1727 / To the Revd. Mr. Wesley / Fellow of Lincoln / Oxford'.

Endorsement: by JW, 'May 15. 1727'.

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWF 5/6.⁷

⁵John Lambert, the husband of their sister Anne.

⁶I.e., Samuel Jr.'s wife Ursula.

⁷Transcription published in *Works*, 25:218–20.

From the Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.

Wroot
June 6, 1727

Son John,

I hope I may still be able to serve both my cures this summer, or if not, die pleasantly in my last dike. Though I believe if I should not hold it out, whereof I've yet no symptom or suspicion, your mother would write you word. If that should happen, I see no great difficulty in bringing your pupil¹ down with you for a quarter of a year or so, where you may both live (at least) as cheap as at Oxford. I shall be myself at Epworth, as soon as I can get a lodging.

This is all to you at present, but you'll see more than enough to poor Charles on the other side from,

Your humble father,

Sam. Wesley

Source: abridged manuscript transcription; JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 21.² JW's accounts show that the letter was received on June 10, and the following letter from his father shows that he replied on June 14.

¹Apparently Richard Walker Freeman; see Samuel Sr.'s follow up letter of June 21.

²Transcription published in *Works*, 25:223.

From the Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.

Bawtry
June 21, 1727

Dear Lads,

This moment I had the satisfaction of yours of 14 instant.¹

In answer to John:

I had no more reason to doubt of your duty to me than you have had of mine to you. Although I'm sure you can't think it proper there should be two masters in a family. Read! Reflect! You know I can't but love you, if you please, and if you think it worth your while that an old father should love you.

What should I be if I did not take your offer to come down soon, as I ought? But you could not now get from hence to Wroot, though I can make a shift from Wroot to Epworth per boat, and it can't be worse this summer. However, if you have any prospect of doing good on Freeman² (O let none of my lads ever despair!), I beg you for God's sake to take to him again. For how do you know but you may thereby 'save a soul from death, and cover a multitude of sins'?³ If not of your own, yet of mine, who heartily give you this advice, and beg of you, as you love God or me, that you'd follow it as far as 'tis practicable. Once more, remember what a soul is worth, as you know what price was paid for it.

I hope in a fortnight to be able to walk to Epworth. When I'm tired I'll send you word. If you should come, buying a horse would be best (for I've now ground enough to spare for a dozen, and could make him as fat as a bear).

Your mother is well; Em[ily] fat, and (quasi) rich at Lincoln; Polly,⁴ creeping out of the CAVE this midsummer.

I'm weary, yet must still walk further.

[a note to CW on the next page]

Your loving father,

S. Wesley

Address: 'For ye Revd Mr Jno Wesley / Fellow of Lincoln College / Oxon'.

Postmarks: 'Bawtry', '26/IV'.⁵ *Charge:* ((4)).

Endorsement: by JW, 'my f. June 21st, 1727'.

Source: holograph: MARC, DDWF 1/7.⁶ Abridged manuscript transcription; JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 21, 65.

¹These letters are not known to survive.

²Apparently Richard Walker Freeman (born c. 1710), who matriculated at Lincoln College, Oxford in Jan. 1726.

³James 5:20.

⁴The family referred to JW's sister Mary alternately as 'Molly' and 'Polly'.

⁵JW's accounts, however, say it was received June 24.

⁶Transcription published in *Works*, 25:223–24.

From the Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.

Wroot
June 26, 1727

Dear Son John,

I don't think I've yet thanked you enough for your kind and dutiful letter of the 14th instant,¹ which I received at Bawtry last Wednesday, and answered there in a hurry. Yet on reflection I see no reason to alter my mind much as to what I then writ. But if you had any prospect of doing good on your pupil, should have been pleased with your attempting it some time longer. If that is passed, or hopeless, there is an end of that matter.

When you come hither, after having taken care of Charterhouse² and your own Rector,³ your headquarters will I believe be for the most part at Wroot, as mine, if I can, at Epworth, though sometimes making an exchange. The truth is, I am hipped (with an i) by my voyage and journey to Epworth and fro last Sunday; being lamed with having my breeches too full of water, partly with a downfall from a thunder shower, and partly from the wash of the [River] Torne over the boat. Yet, I thank God, I was able to preach here in the afternoon, and was as well this morning as ever, ex(cept) a little pain and lameness, both which I hope to wash off with an hair of the same dog this evening.

I wish the rain had not reached us on this side [of] Lincoln; but we have it so continual that we have scarce one bank left, and I can't possibly have one quarter of oats in all the levels; but, thanks be to God, the field-barley and rye are good. We can neither go afoot, or horseback, to Epworth, but only by boat as far as Scawcett⁴ Bridge, and then walk over the common, though I hope 'twill be soon better. I would gladly send horses, but don't think I've now any that would perform the journey; for 1) my filly has scarce recovered [from] the last, and I question if she ever will. However, I've turned her up to the wagon, and very seldom ride her; 2) Mettle is almost blind; 3) your favourite two-eyed-nag they have taken care to swing in the back, and he's never like to be good for riding [any] more; 4) and Bounce, and your mother's nag, you know.

Therefore if you can get a pretty strong horse, not over fine, nor old, nor fat, I think it would improve, especially in summer, and be worth your while. I would send as far as Nottingham to meet you, but would have your studies as little intermitted as possible, and hope I shall do a month or two longer, as I'm sure I ought to do (at least) all I can both for God's family and my own; and when I find it sinks me, or perhaps a little before, I'll certainly send you word, with about a fortnight's notice; and in the meantime sending you my blessing, as being

Your loving father,

Sam. Wesley

Endorsement: by JW, 'F. Jun. 26, 1727'.

Source: holograph; Charterhouse School, Godalming, England.⁵ Cf. abridgment in JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 65.

¹This letter is not known to survive.

²JW needed permission to leave Oxford from Charterhouse because of the pension he had been receiving from them; cf. Samuel Jr. to JW, Dec. 10, 1726.

³I.e., the rector of Lincoln College.

⁴Orig., 'Scawsit'.

⁵Transcription published in *Works*, 25:224–25.

From the Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.

Wroot
July 5, 1727

Dear Children,

I had yours of the 25th instant,¹ and that before, I think of the 14th. In answer, though you could neither of you be assisting to me here, as I know you would both be much so, yet your company would be very acceptable if we can possibly find any way to get you hither. The main reason of my being willing to delay my son John's coming was his pupil; but his last has satisfied me, that is over. There was another, that I knew he could not then get between Wroot and Epworth either on foot or horseback (nor can he yet) without hazarding his health or life (though I hope it will soon be better). Whereas my hide is tough, and I think no carrion can kill me; having walked eight or ten miles on Monday, the breadth of Hatfield Moor;² part of it, and about sixteen yesterday, which was like to be enough for me. But this morning I thank God I was not a penny worse. (Only sixpence I spent, myself and my attendant, in my two days' journey.) The occasion of this pretty-rank-booted walk, for I can't spare one horse from [carrying] coals, was to hire a room for myself, and sometime perhaps for you, if I can get you hither, to lodge in at Epworth; and now I have achieved it. I writ you last that I approve my son John's proposal of buying a horse for the journey, and think, for the reasons there given, that, at the far end, it will cost him less than nothing. All the difficulty is for Charles, for I think you'd be either of you like a bird with one wing without the other. The only way your mother and I can think possible is if he could go to Banbury, whence they say there is a carrier and wagons come to Nottingham, whither we could send an horse for him, as we could to Lincoln, for I see your route is now laid per London. And further I cannot say on this head, but would have you write both from Oxon and London.

I thank Charles heartily for The Horse.³ He who made those verses need not fear winning the poetical prize in any academy in Europe.

God bless and guide you, and send you both a speedy and happy meeting with,
Your loving father,

Sam. Wesley

You'll find your mother much altered. I believe what will kill a cat has almost killed her.⁴ I've observed of late little convulsions in her mouth, very frequent, which I don't like.

Endorsement: by JW, 'my F. July 5' .

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWF 1/8,⁵ a double letter from both Samuel and Susanna Wesley. Cf. abridged manuscript transcription; JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 66.

¹This letter is not known to survive.

²A moor due west of Epworth.

³A poem CW composed for the Blenheim prize competition.

⁴I.e., curiosity.

⁵Transcription published in *Works*, 25:225–26.

From Susanna (Annesley) Wesley

[Wroot]
[July 5, 1727]

Dear Jacky,

I had answered your letter,¹ but was prevented by an unusual illness, which I thank God is pretty well over. When I wrote last I thought your father had laid aside his design of sending for you hither, but perceive now he has altered his purpose, and has desired you to come. He does certainly want an assistant, though I believe if you stay a little longer ere you come hither he will want none. How Charles can get to Wroot I can't tell. 'Tis impossible for us to send horses farther than Nottingham, and I suppose he may scruple coming so far with the carrier.

In great haste I send ye both my love and blessing.

S. W.

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWF 1/8,² a double letter from both Samuel and Susanna Wesley. Cf. abridged manuscript transcription; JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 59.

¹A letter of June 14, which is not known to survive.

²Transcription published in *Works*, 25:226–27; and Wallace, *Susanna Wesley*, 137.

From the Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.

Wroot
July 18, 1727

Dear Son John!

We received last post your compliments of condolence and congratulation to your mother on the supposition of her near approaching demise; to which your sister Patty¹ will by no means subscribe, for she says she is not so good a philosopher as you are, and that she can't spare her mother yet, if it please God, without very great inconveniency.

And, indeed, though she has now and then some very sick fits, yet I hope the sight of you would revive her. However, when you come you will see a new face of things, my family being now pretty well colonized, and all perfect harmony; much happier in no small straits than perhaps we ever were before in the greatest affluence. And you'll find a servant that will make us rich, if God gives him leave, and us anything for him to work upon. I know not but it may be this prospect, together with my easiness in my family, which keeps my spirits from sinking, though they tell me I've lost some of my tallow between Wroot and Epworth. But that I don't value, as long as I've strength still left to perform my office.

If Charles can get to London I believe Hardsley at the Red Lion, Aldersgate Street, might procure him an horse as reasonable as any to ride along with you to Lincoln (city), and direct him where to leave it there with the carrier to return, which will be the cheapest and the safest way. And I'll warrant you we'll find means to bring Charles up again. Your own best way, as in my last, will be to buy an horse for yourself, (IF ∴²) for the reasons I then told you. I'm weary, but,

Your loving father,

Sam. Wesley

Address: 'For the Revd Mr John Wesley / Fellow of Lincoln-College / Oxon. / Per Lond:'.

Postmarks: 'BAWTRY', '21/IY'. *Charges:* ((4)), 'In all 7'.

Endorsement: by JW, 'Jul 18 27'.

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWF 1/9.³ Abridged manuscript transcription; JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 66–67.

¹I.e., Martha Wesley.

²A logic symbol meaning 'therefore'.

³Transcription published in *Works*, 25:227.

From the Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.

[Wroot]
July 26 [1727]

Son John,

I shall be at Lincoln (*Deo volente*¹) on the 21st instant,² and shall stay till Friday morning. If you can get thither by Wednesday or Thursday night, I shall be glad of your company home. And not long after I hope to send Charles a tolerable reason for following you. ... Whenever you come, you'll be fully welcome to,

Your loving father,

Sam. Wesley

Source: abridged manuscript transcription; JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 67.³

¹'God willing.'

²This is clearly an error. Samuel probably meant July 31, which was a Thursday.

³Transcription published in *Works*, 25:228.

From Susanna (Annesley) Wesley

[Wroot]
July 26, 1727

Dear Jacky,

The very ill health I have had this two or three last months makes me much indisposed to write, or I should have answered yours of the 15th instant sooner.

'Tis certainly true that I have had large experience of what the world calls ill¹ fortune; but as I have not made those improvements I ought to have made under the discipline of providence,² I humbly [conceive] myself to be unfit for an assistant to another in affliction. But blessed be God you are at present in pretty easy circumstances, which I thankfully acknowledge is a great mercy to me, as well as you. Yet if hereafter you should meet with troubles of various sorts, as 'tis very probable you will in the course of life, the best preparative I know of for suffering is a regular and exact performance of present duty. For this will surely make a man pleasing to God, and put him directly under his protection, so that no evil shall befall him but what he will certainly be the better for.

'Tis incident to all men to regard the past and the future, while the present moments pass unheeded; whereas in truth neither one nor the other is of use to us any farther than they put us upon improving the present time

You did well to correct that fond desire of dying before me, since you do not know what work God may have for you to do ere you leave the world. And besides, as you observed, I ought surely to have the pre-eminence in point of time, and go to rest before you. Whether you could see me die without any motion of grief I know not; perhaps you could. 'Tis what I've often desired of the children, that they would not weep at our parting, and so make death more uncomfortable than it would otherwise be to me. If you, or any other of my children, were like to reap any spiritual advantage by being with me at my exit, I should be glad to have you with me. But as I have been an unprofitable servant during the course of a long life, I have no reason to hope for so great an honour, so high a favour, as to be employed in doing our Lord any service in the article of death. It were well if you spoke prophetically, and that joy and hope might have the ascendant over my other passions at that important hour. But I dare not presume, nor do I despair, but leave it to our almighty Saviour to do with me both in life and death just what he pleases; for I have no choice.³

The family you mention under some affliction I suppose to be that of Varanese.⁴ I hope no branch of it has proved so bad as Hetty.⁵ If it has, I pray God to comfort the rest of them, for they have trouble enough

I have writ so often to my sister Annesley,⁶ and have received no answer, that I believe she either never got my letters, or has forgotten me. I wish you would see her ... and inquire whether my sister Richardson⁷ be alive, and how she lives.

Your father, I suppose, is for your coming hither presently. But what becomes of poor Charles? I'm ill, and can't write to him.

¹AM, 'adverse'.

²AM, 'but I have not made those improvements in piety and virtue, under the discipline of providence, that I ought to have done; therefore'.

³The AM selection ends here.

⁴Sarah (Kirkham) Chapone.

⁵Mehetabel (Wesley) Wright.

⁶Anne Annesley (1661–1734), who never married.

⁷Mary Annesley (1652–1746), who married Nathaniel Richardson in 1671.

I shall be glad if your coming to Wroot may be to your satisfaction. We are under some pressures, but will endeavour to make things as easy to you as possible. 'Tis well you've left [[drinking tea⁸]]; for 'tis doubtful whether I shall be able to get you any.

Dear Jacky, God bless thee!

Your sisters Patty and K[ezy], who are both recovering from a fever that has brought them very low, send their love to you; and do humbly petition that if you have any [[old shirts⁹]], you would give them to them.

Once more, Adieu!

This¹⁰ letter was not sent till the 15th of August. We have been sick, and I could not finish it.

Source: abridged manuscript transcription; JW, Letter-book (1724–29), collated with Wesley's editing of a selection for *AM* 1 (1778): 79–80.¹¹

⁸In cipher.

⁹In cipher.

¹⁰Baker misread as 'Your'.

¹¹Transcription published in *Works*, 25:228–29; and Wallace, *Susanna Wesley*, 137–38.

From the Rev. Samuel Wesley Jr.

Dean's Yard [Westminster]
November 18, 1727

Dear Jack,

I am obliged to you for the beginning of the portrait of our family.¹ How I may judge when I see the whole, though I may guess nearly within myself, I cannot positively affirm to you. There is, I think, not above one particular in all the character which you have drawn at length that needs further explanation: when you say you can bring ear-witnesses to attest, whether that attestation relates only to money sent or to that bed. That bed too? Jealousy naturally increases with age, of which I think one of the best uses we can make is to guard against it betimes, before the habit grows strong.

I hope your being in the country, as it is some inconvenience to you, so it will be a considerable help one way or other to friends at Wroot. Else I shall be tempted to wish you at Oxford, as I heartily do my brother Charles, though it is too late to tell him so now, since he cannot possibly save this term unless he be there already.

You send me no account of your negotiation with the dean for his absence. But I don't blame you since you filled every corner of your own paper with much more important matters than anything his Lordship can say or do—even though Charles's studentship were to depend upon it, as I hope it will not.

I have been ill of a cold and sore throat, and kept from school for two days together, which is more than I have done before time out of mind. But by taking it in time, I am grown so well as to be able to go out next week. I hope I shall send a letter with your receipt and certificate this evening and with orders once more to inquire of Mr. Tooke² whether he has asked you leave to be absent the greater part of the quarter, or the whole, as it may happen.

My wife and I join in love and duty, and beg my father's and mother's blessing. I would to God they were as easy in one another, and as little uneasy in their fortunes, as we are! In that sense perhaps you may say I am *Tydides melior patris*,³ though I believe there is scarce more work to be done at Wroot than here, though we have fewer debts to discharge. Next Christmas I hope to be as clear as I have hoped to be these seven years. Charles is, I think, in debt for a letter. But I don't desire he should imagine it discharged by setting his name in your letter, or interlining a word or two. I must conclude, because my paper is done, and company come in. I am,

Your affectionate friend and brother,

S. Wesley

Address: 'To the Rev. Mr. John / Wesley at Mr. Wesley's / at Wroot / near Bawtry / Yorkshire'.

Source: holograph; MARC, WCB, D6/1/60.⁴

¹This account does not appear to have survived.

²Andrew Tooke (1673–1732), of Charterhouse, from whom JW needed permission to be absent from the university while still receiving his stipend; cf. Samuel Jr. to JW, Dec. 10, 1726.

³Horace, *Odes*, I.xv.28; 'Tydides, better than his father'.

⁴Transcription published in Clarke, *Memoirs* (1823), 387–88.

From Lewis Fenton¹

Lincoln College [Oxford]
December 28, 1727

Sir,

Yesterday I had the satisfaction of receiving your kind and obliging letter, whereby you have given me a singular instance of that goodness and civility which is essential to your character; and strongly confirmed to me the many encomiums which are given you in this respect by all who have the happiness to know you. This makes me infinitely desirous of your acquaintance. And when I consider those shining qualities which I hear daily mentioned in your praise, I cannot but lament the great misfortune we all suffer, in the absence of so agreeable a person from the College. But I please myself with the thoughts of seeing you here on Chapter-day, and of the happiness we shall have in your company in the summer. In the meantime, I return you my most sincere thanks for this favour, and assure you, that if it should ever lie in my power to serve you, no one will be more ready to do it, than, sir,

Your most obliged and most humble servant,

Lew. Fenton

Source: published transcription; John Whitehead, *The Life of the Rev. John Wesley* (London: Stephen Couchman, 1793), 1:414.

¹Lewis Fenton (1705–78) had received his M.A. and been elected a fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford in 1727. He resigned his fellowship in 1757, and served his last years as rector at Winterborne, Dorset.

From the Rev. Samuel Wesley Jr.

[Westminster]
January 6, 1728

Dear Jack,

In three weeks of holy-days I have scarce had an hour's leisure, what with visits abroad and bills at home. I begin to wish for school again, or at least to expect Black Monday¹ with less distaste than ordinary.

I thank you for your second letter upon a very ungrateful subject,² wherein there is very little new to me besides the dates of some things which I had forgot. Miserable is the story at the best, and still more so than you relate it. No person in this world has or can have, without a miracle, so thorough a knowledge of it as myself. I think I may positively say without a miracle, for I should look upon it as little less for anyone in our family now to be what I once was, an equal favourite to both parts. I am very sorry it was ever known. One thing I am sure we ought to have a care of, that is not to lay the cause of our misfortunes upon any person's fault so much as our own. I could say much, but I dare not write; and indeed, *cui bono?*³

Charles is still with me here. His letter to the dean being dated December, I thought I might keep him till he had seen the great Westminster meeting, which probably hereafter he may never have an opportunity to see. He was, when he came up, so entirely infected with your gravity that every motion and look made me almost suspect it was you. Nay, I begin to think he will hardly ever lay aside the present solemnity of his person and behaviour. Pray thee, what is his allowance? I never yet *heard* the sum, any more that he (I fear) received it.

Your last letter was extremely welcome and did make me exercise my faculty of staring. I wish it may not be too good news to be true, or at least to continue so. I wonder at nothing in relation to Dick,⁴ who, if I mistake him not, does not desire to have it thought he has any religion, good-nature, or good manners. I should have blamed you for being bound even for my father, if you had not taken care to secure yourself. Because otherwise you might increase his ruin indeed, but not prevent it.

Charles ought certainly to have wrote to his father and mother, but does not always do as he ought. So busy is he that I question whether he can find time to do it unless I find it for him, even before he goes to Oxford. My love to sister Molly,⁵ and tell her she can direct to aunt [Anne] Annesley at Shore House in Hackney. She gives her love to sister Wright⁶ as regularly as if I knew anything of her, whom I know no more of than the man in the moon. I thank my mother for her kind letter. Pray give my duty to her and tell her I was yesterday to see my aunt Anne [Annesley] at Hackney, who sends her love to her; but whispered to me in the ear the true reason she did not care to write was because unless she were on the spot she feared she could do her but little service. Love to Patty,⁷ and tell her I will answer her as soon as ever I can find time to write my intended packet into the north, which at present I am so far from that I have not been yet able to read all that I have received from thence. Charles says he should have wrote to his father, only he thought it better to stay till he was settled at Oxford. My wife and I join in duty to

¹The first day back to school, after holidays.

²This letter is not known to survive, but it clearly continued JW's 'portrait of the family' mentioned in Samuel Jr.'s letter of Nov. 18.

³'to whose benefit'.

⁴Richard Ellison, the husband of their sister Susanna.

⁵Mary Wesley.

⁶Mehetabel (Wesley) Wright.

⁷Martha Wesley.

father and mother, and love to sisters. Don't forget Nancy's *epithalamium*.⁸ I am, dear Jack,
Your affectionate friend and brother,

S. Wesley

Address: 'To / the Rev. John Wesley / at Epworth to be left at Bawtry / Yorkshire'.

Postmarks: 'FR', '6/IA'.

Endorsement: by JW, 'Jan 6. 1728'.

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWF 5/7.

⁸An *epithalamium* is a lyrical ode in honor of a bride. Anne ('Nancy') Wesley had married John Lambert in Dec. 1725. Among Samuel Jr.'s manuscript verse is an ode titled 'To My Sister Lambert, on Her Marriage'.

From the Rev. Henry Sherman

Christ Church [Oxford]
January 10, 1727/8

Dear Sir,

I have taken what pains I can with our dean¹ to excuse your brother's absence from the College all this time. But I would now advise him to come as soon as he conveniently can, though I believe I have secured the point with the dean to be as favourable with him as he can. But the reason why I would have him come the sooner is because he has been recommended to Dr. Stratford,² who intends to give some money to some of the young people of the College.

I was asked by one here to recommend some young students above a quarter of a year ago, and I mentioned nobody but your brother, Jack,³ who I have since heard is like to succeed, and I dare say will be one, but the Dr. will expect he should be resident. At least the sooner he comes it will be more sure for him to be one of the number, all the others being here, as far as I can learn. Therefore I will leave you and him and your father to judge whether I am not in the right to advise him to come as soon as he can conveniently. I have no reason in this my advice but to consult his good and welfare. I believe the money that will be given will be 4 or 5 £. The Dr. will go to London I believe before it be long. I am very sorry to hear that you have been out of order. I believe the gentlemen of your college would be glad to see you too in Oxford, and I have lately heard say that it would be much to your advantage to be here, for they say Mr. Totnam⁴ wants very much an opportunity of resigning his pupils to you. My humble service attends your father and brother.

I am, dear sir,

Your faithful servant and affectionate friend,

H. Sherman

Pray let me hear from you. I have accordingly sent you a frank. Mr. Manton has three pounds of your brother's, of this last quarteridge, and I have 7 sh.

Address: 'To / the Rev'nd Mr John Wesley / at the Rev'nd Mr Wesley's Rector / of Wroot at Wroot in Lincolnshire / near Bawtry in Yorkshire / by way of London'.

Postmark: '12/IA'.

Endorsement: by JW, 'Mr. Sherman / 1728 My tutor'.

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/610/115.⁵

¹The Dean of Christ Church at the time was William Bradshaw (1671–1732).

²William Stratford (1672–1729) had received his D.D. from Oxford in 1705. In addition to being a canon of Christ Church, he became Archdeacon of Richmond and Rector of Little Shelford.

³Sherman is addressing John Wesley by his nickname 'Jack'.

⁴I.e., John Tottenham (1697–1741), who was elected a Fellow of Lincoln College in 1717 and resigned his fellowship in 1730, to become vicar of Cheddar. He appears as a correspondent in JW, Letter-book (1724–29).

⁵Transcription published in *WHS* 32 (1960): 126.

From Charles Wesley

[Christ Church] Oxon
January 20, 1727[8¹]

Dear Brother,

Half an hour ago I received yours² and have laid by my collections³ to talk with you a while. When I can find time to finish my letter I no more know than ever brother Samuel did at beginning one of his, being at least as busy as he can be for the life of him. Yesterday I had penned a full and true account of my treatment at and departure from Dean's Yard⁴ for Christ Church (where I breathe once again, a free though sharp air), which said account upon second thoughts, judging not altogether so fit for travel, I have thrown by, not designing you shall see it before you do me, if then.

As to your queries: 'How those accidents shall be your last', I don't think proper to say. To 'what company was in the York coach', my answer is, a relation of that business is fitter for a private conference. To 'what said brother and sister',⁵ ditto. As to 'the surprising particulars', I must beg to be excused. Miss Weston, since broke off with the cit,⁶ has willed her service to be presented [to] you more than once. 'Somebody' for many reasons, shall be nobody. Your 'who wonders', I don't understand. Want of money and clothes are great temptations to dullness. I wish the person that says 'I'm like you' had <mo>re⁷ reasons for so saying. 'The necessity I lay under' is past, now <tha>t⁸ I'm turned out with some shillings in my pocket. This is your speediest, largest, distinctest, and as matters go now the only answer I can make to 'all and every of your questions'.

Tis an ill wind that blows nobody good! That same favourable blast, at which my father may say '*Ego in portu navigo*'⁹ has quite overset my patience, which you know is but a slight vessel at best, and at present is sadly at a loss for ballast. 'Settled for life, at least for years!'¹⁰ You can't imagine what a violent effect those few words had upon the gentle reader. Bob¹¹ and I have been ready to knock our heads against every post we have met since that plaguing piece of news. It will most certainly have one of two widely different effects upon me—make me a very hard student or none at all, an excellent oeconomist or a poor desperate scoundrel, a patient grizzle like Moll or a grumbletonial like Pat.¹² Tis in the power of a

¹CW is using old-style dating; it must be 1728, because JW did not become curate at Wroot until August 1727.

²This letter of Jan. 17 from JW is not known to survive, but CW responds to several questions that JW raised.

³CW was in his second year of studies at Christ Church, Oxford; students there were required to make 'collections' (abridged copies) of their major texts being studied.

⁴St. Peter's College, Westminster, where CW did his preparatory schooling.

⁵Samuel Wesley Jr. and his wife Ursula.

⁶*OED*, 'A citizen (in various senses). Usually used more or less contemptuously, for example to denote a person from the town as opposed to the country, or a tradesman or shopkeeper as distinguished from a gentleman.'

⁷The word is partially covered by the wax seal, but the reconstruction is fairly clear.

⁸*Ibid.*

⁹Terence, *Andria*, Act III, scene 2, 'I sail into harbour.'

¹⁰I.e., JW has told CW that he is intending to stay at Wroot, not return to Oxford.

¹¹Robert Kirkham.

¹²Contrasting his sisters Mary and Martha by shortened versions of their family nicknames: 'Molly' and 'Patty.'

few Epworth or Wroot guineas and clothes to give things the favourable turn and make a gentleman of me. Come money then, and quickly, to rescue me from my melancholy maxim *ex nihilo nihil fit*.¹³ I can possibly save nothing, where there's nothing to be saved.

'Nor yet from my dim eyes THY form retires!'¹⁴

(The cold empty starving grate before me makes me add the following disconsolate line.)

Nor cheering image of thine absent fires.

No longer now on Horrel's¹⁵ airy van,
With thee shall I admire the subject plain,
Or where the sight in neighbouring shades is lost,
Or where the length'ned prospect widens most:
While or the tuneful poet's (something¹⁶) song,
Or truths divine flow'd easy from thy tongue.

You'll pardon my turning your own words upon you, as likewise my dwelling so long upon so trifling a subject as is that of our separation for a few years only.

I'm glad however at some passages in your letter.¹⁷ I picked up some crumbs of comfort at reading the Christian had got the upper hand of the Turk.¹⁸ If you can but tie up the beast (or at least his tongue) to his good behaviour and prevent his falling foul on the family in your awful presence, you'll have achieved¹⁹ a nobler enterprise than did Sir Calidore when he chained up the blatant one.²⁰ He may perchance rebel against me too if he 'scapes you, who are confessedly the very pink of courtesy.

Though I was resolved to say naught of Westminster, I can't choose [not] telling you my sister [Ursula] triumphs hugely upon your not sending up immediately a receipt for your last quarter as my passport to Oxon; my brother [SW Jr.], you must know, expecting it as a reimbursement for what he expended there for me and in my journey hither. I could wish you would spare it, but if not you needn't fear my giving in to my sister's persuasion who would willingly have me think you don't care a farthing for me, and is desirous I should care just as much for you. But all this trial of my passive valour is at last over. *Dicite Io*, etc.²¹ She is at London and I at Oxford! Our sister I parted from with great regret, and one

¹³'from nothing comes nothing'.

¹⁴CW is quoting a line from JW's poem 'Verses to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady', found in JW, MS Miscellany Verses, 39–43; see p. 42 (on CSWT website). CW proceeds to provide an abridged and revised version of two stanzas in JW's original.

¹⁵'Hinxy's' is written above 'Horrel's' as an alternative. Horrel is a plantation on a hill to the south of Stanton, Gloucestershire and Hinxey Hill is two miles south of Oxford.

¹⁶CW appears to be saying he has not found the right word yet.

¹⁷Orig., 'your l.'; could also be 'your last'.

¹⁸CW is almost certainly commenting on JW's influence over their brother-in-law Richard Ellison (husband of their sister Susanna), who was abusive to his wife and at odds with the family.

¹⁹Original is blurred by a crease and divided at a line break; it appears to read 'at / chieved'. It may be 'attained', but 'achieved' seems a better fit.

²⁰See Edmund Spenser, *Fairie Queen*, Book VI, Canto 3.

²¹'Speak!' or 'declare it boldly'. Cf. Ovid, *The Art of Love*, Book 2, 'Dicite "io" Paean! et "io" bis dicite Paean!'

person more—poor sister Hetty!²² It grieves me almost to think how exceeding kindly she treated me, who am seldom so happy as to meet with bare humanity from others. Tis a shocking comparison! It was but a week before I left London that I knew she was at it. Little of that time, you may be sure, did I lose, being with her almost continually. I well could almost envy myself the deal of pleasure I had crowded within that small space. In a little neat room she has hired did the good-natured, ingenious, contented wretch and I talk over a few short days, which we both wished had been longer. As yet she lives pretty well, having but herself and honest Will²³ to keep, though I fancy there's another a-coming.²⁴ Brother and sister²⁵ are very kind to her, and I (hope²⁶) will continue so; for I have cautioned her never to contradict my sister, whom she knows.²⁷ The other person you'll hear something of when you come here, which I would advise you to do at summer if you would have me survive next winter. I'd like to have forgot, my sister [Mehetabel] begs you'd write to her at Mr. Walkden's in Crown Court, Dean's Street near Soho Square. Bob²⁸ heard a few days ago from Stanton,²⁹ etc., where they're all well, as he shall tell you more particularly if I can light on him by and by. What say you to a visit next summer? Won't that tempt you up? *You* don't insist upon an invitation. If this won't fetch you, nothing will, and I must starve, as my father says, like a philosopher. Ere (I³⁰) write again I shall have been at Abingdon,³¹ and then will send you something of them; who, by the by, though they have a very great respect for you as well as my own worship, and are some of your most zealous admirers, yet think you are a little too positive. This comes from a friend and so make the most on it. Lush³² is still at London. I would have you write to him, and direct to Stephen Lushington, at Will's Coffee House, in Scotland Yard. Need I make an apology to *you* for the length of my (letter)? I shall deliver your orders to Comb[e] tomorrow.³³ Bob's com(e.) I must resign my pen though never so much,

Your loving brother,

(C. W.³⁴)

²²Mehetabel (Wesley) Wright.

²³William Wright.

²⁴Mehetabel would deliver a child in 1728, but not until Sept. 15, and the child died within three days of its birth; cf. William Wright's letter to JW, Sept. 19, 1728.

²⁵Samuel Wesley Jr. and his wife Ursula.

²⁶A fragment of the letter is torn off; the missing word is fairly obvious.

²⁷Ursula had a reputation for anger in the family.

²⁸Robert Kirkham.

²⁹Stanton, Gloucestershire; home of the Kirkham family.

³⁰Some fragments of the letter are missing, but the reconstructions are fairly clear.

³¹JW often visited Thomas Woods (1682–1753), headmaster of Abingdon School, in Abingdon, Oxfordshire. Woods had married Penelope Kirkham of Stanton, Gloucestershire, and it was in Abingdon that JW met Robert Kirkham.

³²Stephen Lushington (b. 1709), of Sittingbourne, Kent, was a contemporary of CW at Westminster School, then matriculated in June 1726 (the same time as CW) at Christ Church, Oxford. While the socializing of his early years at Oxford raised doubts, he did earn a BA in 1730 and MA in 1733. CW's turn to a more serious spirituality would soon lead him out of Lushington's circle of friends.

³³Charles Combes was a stationer and printer for Oxford University.

³⁴A fragment of the letter, where CW would have placed his initial, is missing.

[Written at the top of the first page, upside-down is a postscript:]

Write as soon as may be. Mem³⁵ clothes.

Address: 'To / The Revd Mr John Wesley / Curate at Epworth in the Isle of / Axholm near / Wroot'.

Endorsement: by JW, 'Jan 1727'.

Source: holograph; MARC, DDCW 1/1.³⁶

³⁵'Remember'?

³⁶Slightly abridged transcription published in *Works*, 25:229–31.

[From Robert Kirkham]¹

[Oxford]
[January 20, 1728]

My Dearest Friend,

I beg you would excuse my not writing to you before I had any directions. Term [me] no more 'scurvy, lousy knave'.² This time [I] shall forget it. Bett³ has been delivered of a very great burden and trouble, I believe, since you were at Stanton. Varanese's⁴ time is nigh come. You sent your last letter to your brother, the most lamentable piece of news, save one, that ever I saw, or at least was made sensible of. I now almost wish I had never knew thee, for then I should never have knew the loss of you. The thought of it [is] grievous unto me, the burden of it scarce tolerable. Had I been still kept in the dark, I should have entertained some hopes of great pleasure and real happiness, i.e., of your return. But I thank God who has not left me quite desolate, but has sent a comforter unto me, and has blessed me with Charles, who is the greatest consolation to your most sincere friend.

Source: holograph; MARC, DDCW 1/1 (at conclusion of CW's letter above).⁵

¹Added to the letter from Charles Wesley of the same date.

²'Scurvy, lousy, knave' is a Shakespearean reference to the character Pistol, a swaggering officer in the king's army who portrays a significant figure of civil disorder. Kirkham's apparent meaning is 'Do not refer to me as dishonourable'.

³Robert's sister, Elizabeth Kirkham.

⁴Sarah (Kirkham) Chapone, who was expecting a child.

⁵Transcription published in *Works*, 25:231–32.

From Susanna (Annesley) Wesley

Epworth [Lincolnshire]
August 12, 1728

Dear Jacky,

I had not failed to give you advice of your box sending, but that I have been ill ever since you went hence. Within these few days the fever left me, and now, I thank God, I'm pretty well. ... My sickness, and somewhat worse, has made our work here go on very slowly; and when you return you'll not find the house much better than you left it.

I am glad you met with so good a reception at London, and that the place of your residence is so pleasing to you. Whatever my circumstances are, or wherever it seems good to Infinite Wisdom to cast my lot, I am greatly delighted to hear that others are more easy in their fortunes, company, or habitation; and have as true a taste of what they enjoy as they have themselves. Were it in my power to make all men happy I should not fail of being so too. Though, blessed be God, as it is I am far from miserable.

You did well to visit poor Tim;¹ 'tis a little hearty mortal, and I dare say was very glad to see you. If you happen to see him again, pray return his services. ... (Recipes for syrup of mulberries, mulberry wine, or wine and shrub). If there be anything else in which I can serve you, let me know. I beseech Almighty God to bless thee!

Source: abridged manuscript transcription; JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 61–62.²

¹This is likely Timothy Wesley (1659–1729), brother of Samuel Sr. JW's diary for this period does not survive, but he does record visiting his uncle Tim on July 31, 1729.

²Transcription published in *Works*, 25:232; and Wallace, *Susanna Wesley*, 139.

From Susanna (Annesley) Wesley

[Epworth]
September 1728

Dear Jacky,
 (Of my brother Charles's coming to Epworth)
 If he come, he must not think of returning till after winter.

Source: abridged manuscript transcription; JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 62.¹

¹Transcription published in *Works*, 25:233; and Wallace, *Susanna Wesley*, 139–40.

From the Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.

Epworth
September 5, 1728

Dear Son,

Your mother had yours¹ yesterday, as I suppose you have ere this hers, and mine with the certificate. Yours brought the good news of Charles's recovery, which will supersede his country-journey, and help him to regain the time he has lost in his studies.

(Of his [[wants]], and [[borrowing money²]])

N[ancy]³ has been again upon me several weeks, her mistress being sick, but returned to Thorne last Sunday. M[olly] miraculously gets money, even in Wroot, and has given the first-fruits of her earnings to her mother, lending her money, and presenting her with a new cloak of her own buying and making—for which God will bless her. When we get to Epworth she will grow monstrously rich, for she will have more work than she can do, and the people are monstrously civil.

God has given me two fair escapes for life within these few weeks: the first when my old nag fell with me, trailed me by my foot in the stirrup about six yards (when I was alone, all but God and my good angel), trod on my other foot, yet never hurt me.

The other scape was much bigger. On Monday sennight⁴ at Burringham Ferry we were driven down with a fierce stream and wind, and fell foul with our broadside against a keel. The second shock threw two of our horses overboard, and filled the boat with water. I was just prepared to swim for life when John Whitelamb's⁵ long legs and arms swarmed up into the keel, and lugged me in after him. My mare was swimming a quarter of an hour, but at last we got all safe to land. Help to praise him 'who saves both man and beast'.⁶

I write with pain; therefore nothing else but love and blessing from,
Your affectionate father,

Sam. Wesley

Dick's just Dick still; but I hope Suky is not Suky.⁷

Source: abridged manuscript transcription; JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 67–68.⁸

¹This letter, sent c. Sept. 1, is not known to survive.

²This and prior case in cipher.

³I.e., Anne (Wesley) Lambert.

⁴I.e., Aug. 30, 1728.

⁵John Whitelamb (c. 1708–69), son of Robert Whitelamb of Hatfield, Yorkshire, had taken over as Samuel Sr.'s amanuensis on the departure of John Romley. Whitelamb went on to study at Lincoln College, wed Samuel's daughter Mary in Dec. 1733 (who unfortunately died the next year in childbirth), and accepted from Samuel the living at Wroot in Nov. 1734, where he served until his death.

⁶Cf. Ps. 36:6.

⁷Referring to Richard Ellison and Susanna (Wesley) Ellison.

⁸Transcription published in *Works*, 25:232–33.

From William Wright

[London¹]
September 19, 1728

Dear Brother,

This comes to let you know that my wife is brought to bed and is in a hopeful way of doing well. But the dear child died—the third day after it was born—which has been of great concern to me and my wife. She joins with me in love to yourself and brother Charles.

From your loving brother, to command,

William Wright

P.S. I've sent you some verses that my wife made of dear lamb. Let me hear from one or both of you as soon as you think convenient.

Tender softness, infant mild,
Perfect, purest, brightest child!
Transient lustre, beauteous clay,
Smiling wonder of a day.
Ere the last convulsive start
Rend thy unresisting heart;²
Ah, regard a mother's moan,
Anguish deeper than thy own.
Fairest eyes whose dawning light
Late with rapture blest my sight,
Ere your orbs extinguished be,
Bend their trembling beams on me.
Drooping sweetness, verdant flower,
Blooming, withering in an hour,
Ere thy gentle breast sustains
Latest, fiercest mortal pains,
Hear a suppliant! let me be
Partner in thy destiny.
That whene'er the fatal cloud
Must thy radiant temples shroud;
When deadly damps, impending now,
Shall hover round thy destined brow,
Diffusive may their influence be,
And with the blossom, blast the tree!

¹William and Mehetabel (Wesley) Wright were living in Westminster, near Soho Square; cf. CW to JW, Jan. 20, 1728 above. Their newborn daughter Ursula was baptized at St. Anne's Soho, on Sept. 4, 1728.

²Mehetabel added two lines at this point, when she published this poem in *Gentleman's Magazine* 3 (1733), 542.

Ere the long-enduring swoon
Weigh thy precious eyelids down.

Address: 'To / The Revd. Mr. John Wesley / Fellow / in Christ Church / College Oxon'.³

Postmark: '19/SE'.

Source: holograph; MARC, WCB, D6/1/172.

³Wright had either forgotten or had not been told that JW had moved to Wroot, to serve as his father's curate, in Aug. 1727.

From Charles Wesley

[Christ Church, Oxford]
January 5–22 [1729]

Dear Brother,

I have been so entirely taken up with my collections that I could not write sooner. At present I am head of the third class, and shall be of the table this term, and then there will be brave living for me!

Tis in your fate surely to have to do with disputants; as soon as one drops his disputatiousness another catches it up. Bob¹ is what I was. No wonder he and I made such rare work on it. If you two make no better, I pity you, for I know him! But as you brew you must bake; so then² make your most of him now you have him.

I'm much of your opinion as to Molly's³ design upon me, but can't imagine the mother would purvey no better for her daughter, if she wasn't in a desperate condition indeed. To do the old lady justice, she *did* give us opportunities enough, could I but have had the grace to have laid hold on them; and but for my strange college dullness Molly *might* have made something of me. [Stephen] Lushington would have made a better use of his time, or I'm mistaken, but hints were *lost* upon so dull, stupid a fellow as I was; and as such no doubt I have been since sufficiently laughed at.

After such a slight put upon her it would be impudence in me ever to look her in the face again, unless in the playhouse, and I believe I durst venture *there*, so the music-box was between us, and you on one side of me. I can't imagine, by the by, why you should mistrust her abilities. She's never the less qualified for the stage for being a whore, sure! Warter, an eye-witness, commends her capacity in spite of the villainous words Barford had put into her mouth.⁴ After all, I don't take her frailty much to heart, as I can without any regret resolve never to [ex]change another word with the pretty creature; which I can the more easily refrain from as my eyes were partly opened by my last saving journey to London, and I trust I shall keep them open, and see the clearer by it, all the days of my life. One benefit I'm sure to get by the bargain, from henceforth *peculiarem habito nominem*.⁵ I shall be far less addicted to gallantry, and doing what sister Nutty⁶ with less justice said you did—liking woman merely for being woman.

Since I began this I have picked up another scrap of intelligence about the dear creature at Lincoln's Inn.⁷ You must know, living near a seat of the Duke of Richmond,⁸ his grace did her the honour of taking a fancy to her when about 13 years old. From his hands she passed through several others before she came into happy Mr. Thompson's. She had once set up for a milliner! But it would not do, nature and her stars (I think tis very gallant in me to lay the blame upon *them*) having designed her for the stage. But enough of her. I'll blot my brain and paper no longer with her.

I can't take so long views as to foresee for a whole life, but could manage a month perhaps, or a year, and shall be glad of your advice how I may make my best use of the following. What I propose myself is to lay in a good stock of Latin and Greek against [when] I'm examined for my degree, which at

¹Robert Kirkham, who was visiting JW in Wroot/Epworth.

²Orig., 'so'n'.

³Mary Buchanan, an actress who was appearing in plays at the Theatre Royal in Lincoln's Inn, London.

⁴Buchanan had apparently appeared in Richard Barford's *The Virgin Queen: A Tragedy*, first staged in 1728.

⁵'I must live with the reputation for being peculiar.'

⁶The family nickname for Ursula (Berry) Wesley.

⁷Mary Buchanan.

⁸Charles Lennox (1701–50), 2nd Duke of Richmond and grandson of King Charles II.

present terminates my prospect. Suppose for Latin I read Tully,⁹ Terence, and Horace; for Greek, Xenophon? Prose is more serviceable than verse, and I don't know a man fitter for my purpose than he. I expect you should either approve my choice or direct me to a better. And if you'd send a paragraph about what particular seasons are best for what particular studies it would save me a great deal of trouble, and cost you but little.

Our dean has narrowly missed of preferment of late, and through his own refusal too.¹⁰ He had the proffer of the bishopric of Peterborough but would not accept it without the deanery of Windsor annexed. However, he *will* be removed speedily, the Queen having promised to prefer him for the good of Christ Church. *Amen!*

It would be an easy matter for me, as the dean is now at London and will be till September, to get leave out of town. But how shall I get to Epworth? Answer me that. Or how back again? My standing *here* is so very slippery, no wonder I long to shift my ground. Christ Church is certainly the worst place in the world to begin a reformation in. A man stands a very fair chance of being laughed out of his religion at his first setting out, in a place where tis scandalous to have any at all. Was the damning others the only means of saving themselves, they could scarce labour more heartily! I need say no more of them; you partly know them, and are got out of their cursed society. I wish to God I was, and shall be, I'm confident, when he sees it best for me!

I have just got Hutchinson¹¹ [and] come home, but haven't had time to read him yet, as I design to do with great diligence. I have got Collier's *Essays*¹² too, and like them exceedingly. I'm sorry I can have no assistance from Epworth, but have thence one more reason to rely upon providence. For I don't yet see the human means of getting clear of debt, which I must inevitably run farther into every day. But I shall say no more of this than needs must. You know my condition, and that's enough.

I here send the programma you asked for.¹³ There were but five against it, among whom was our dean, who opposed it with might and main on very slender reasons and to very little purpose. However, to show his dislike, he entered his protest against it by not letting it be put up in our hall, as it was in most of the halls in town besides.

Whereas there is too much reason to believe that some members of the university have of late been in danger of being corrupted by ill-designing persons, who have not only entertained wicked and blasphemous notions contrary to the truth of the Christian religion but have endeavoured to instill the same ill-principles into others, and the more effectually to propagate their infidelity have applied their poison to the unguarded inexperience of less-informed minds,

⁹I.e., Cicero.

¹⁰The Dean of Christ Church at the time was William Bradshaw (1671–1732).

¹¹This was likely John Hutchinson, *Moses's Principia* (1724), where Hutchinson attempts to develop an alternative to Newton's physics, based on a suggested reading of the Hebrew Bible ignoring the Masoretic vowel points.

¹²Jeremy Collier, *Essays Upon Several Moral Subjects*. 2nd edn., enlarged (London: R. Sare, 1697).

¹³A programma was "a written notice, proclamation, or edict" (*OED*). This specific edict was occasioned by the suicide in May 1728 of Robert Jennens (c. 1707–28), a former student at Trinity College, Oxford. Two letters criticizing orthodox Christianity that were deistic in tone were found in his writing desk. The letters were written by Nicholas Stevens (b. 1703), another former student of Trinity College who had completed his MS in 1727. The letters were in public circulation, and Samuel Wesley Jr. soon undertook to publish a rebuttal of the argument in them: *Two Letters from a Deist to his Friend ... with Remarks* (London: James Roberts, 1730). See L. S. Sutherland and L. G. Mitchell, eds., *The History of the University of Oxford: V. The Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 435–37.

where they thought it might operate with the better success, carefully concealing their impious tenets from those whose riper judgment and more wary conduct might discover their false-reasoning and disappoint the intended progress of their infidelity. And whereas therefore it is more especially necessary at this time to guard the youth of this place against these wicked advocates for pretended human reason against divine revelation, and to enable them the better to defend their religion and to expose the pride and impiety of those who endeavour to undermine it, Mr. Vice-Chancellor, with the consent of the Heads of Houses and Proctors, has thought fit to recommend it as a matter of the utmost consequence to the several tutors of each college and hall in the university that they discharge their duty by a double diligence in informing their respective pupils in their Christian duty, as in explaining to them the Articles of Religion which they profess and are often called upon to subscribe to, in recommending to them the frequent and careful reading of the Scriptures and such other books as may serve more effectually to promote Christianity, sound principles, and orthodox faith. And farther Mr. Vice-Chancellor with the same consent does hereby forbid the said youth the reading such books as may tend to the weakening their faith, subverting the authority of the Scripture, and introducing deism, profaneness, and irreligion in their stead.

Edward Butler, Vice-Chancellor¹⁴

Jan. 22

Your last is now come to hand. [Stephen] Lushington is not come to college yet, though there has been a terrible uproar about his *not* coming. He's expected very shortly now, and as soon as he is visible depend upon it I'll solicit your business *very faithfully!*

By what I can pick up from my mother's and your account I find poor Bob hangs upon your hands a small matter, and is likely so to do unless the other string is better than what you mention to me. There's old consultations in my mother's chamber, 'What's to do?' I don't question! But you don't tell me what Bob says to the matter, and how he likes his company and place of abode, which was what I most wanted to know. I prophesy though, however he may like them *now*, he will hanker after Oxford sometime before he gets at it, and without the help of a collation too. He must be going to Epworth, must he? And now he's in for it, let him get out how he can. It was an easier matter, he'll find, to sink than to emerge; the business is

*revocare pedem superasque evadere ad auras.*¹⁵

I have sent him a few lines of comfort by this post.

In my pursuit of knowledge I own I have the advantage of you in some things. My brothers were born before me; I start at twenty. But then I'm sure I'm less indebted to nature than you. I'm very *desirous* of knowledge, but can't *bear* the drudgery of coming at it near so well as you could. In reading anything difficult I'm bewildered in a much shorter time than I believe you used to be at your first setting out. My head will by no means keep pace with my heart, and I'm afraid I shan't reconcile it in haste to the extraordinary business of thinking.

I would willingly write a diary of my actions, but don't know how to go about it. What particulars am I to take notice of? Am I to give my thoughts and words, as well as deeds, a place in it? I'm to mark all the good and ill I do, and what besides? Must not I take account of my progress in learning as well as religion? What cipher can I make use of? If you would direct me to the same or a like method with your own, I would gladly follow it, for I'm fully convinced of the usefulness of such an undertaking. I shall be

¹⁴Edward Butler (1686–1745), served as Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University, 1728–32. The programma was dated Dec. 2, 1728; a copy remains in the Bodleian Library, Oxon.b.1.11, fo. 39.

¹⁵'To recall your step and return to the upper air'; cf. Virgil, *Aeneid*, vi.128.

at a stand till I hear from you.¹⁶

God has thought fit (it may be to increase my wariness) to deny me at present your company and assistance. Tis through him strengthening me I trust to maintain my ground till we meet. And neither before or after that time shall I, I hope, relapse into my former state of insensibility. Tis through your means, I firmly believe, God will establish what he has begun in me, and there is no one person I would so willingly have to be the instrument of good to me as you.

I verily think, dear brother, I shall never quarrel with *you* again till I do with my religion. And that I may never do *that* I am not ashamed to desire your prayers. Tis owing in great measure to somebody's [prayers] (my mother's, most likely) that I am come to think as I do, for I can't tell myself how or when I first awoke out of my lethargy—only that it was not long after you went away.

Write soon. I am,

Your truly loving brother,

Charles Wesley

Address: 'To / the Revd. Mr. John Wesley / to be left at the Post-house / in Gainsborough / Lincolnshire'.

Postmarks: 'OXFORD', '26/IA'. *Charges:* ((3)), 'In all 7'.

Endorsement: by JW, 'C. Janu 5, 1729'.

Source: holograph; MARC, DDCW 1/2.¹⁷

¹⁶JW taught CW how to keep a diary that included evaluation of one's spiritual state, like the one JW had been keeping since April 1725. CW in turn taught it to Benjamin Ingham and others, and they shared their diaries with one another. Unfortunately none of CW's diaries in this form survive. See Richard P. Heitzenrater, ed. *Diary of an Oxford Methodist: Benjamin Ingham, 1733–34* (Durham, Duke University Press, 1985), 122–23, 189.

¹⁷Transcription published in *Works*, 25:233–36.

From Charles Wesley¹

Christ Church, Oxford
May 5 [1729]

Dear Brother,

What y^{ou} say abo^{ut} coldness has put me upon considering whence mine can proceed and how it may be remedied. I think I may truly esteem it the natural and just consequence of my past life. One who like me has for almost 13 years been utterly inattentive at public prayers can't expect to find there that warmth he has never known at his first seeking. He must knock oftener than once before tis opened to him, and is (I think) in some measure answerable for a heartlessness of which he himself is the cause. Be that how it will, I resolve that my falling short of my duty in one particular shan't discourage me from vigorously prosecuting it in the rest. I look upon this coldness as a trial and that, unless I sink under it, it will in the end greatly contribute to my advantage. I *must*, I *will*, in spite of nature and the devil, take pains. While my strength lasts I *will* put it to the utmost stretch, for a day's relaxing throws me back to my first setting out. I won't give myself *leisure* to relapse, for I'm assured if I have no business of my own the devil will soon find me some. You may show this if you think proper to my mother, for I would gladly have a letter from her upon this subject.

Providence has at present put it in my power to do some good. I have a modest, humble, well-disposed youth lives next me, and have been (I thank God!) somewhat instrumental in keeping him so.³ He was got into vile hands and is now broke loose. I assisted in setting him free, and will do my utmost to hinder his getting in with them again. He is already content to live without any company but Bob's and mine. He was of opinion that passive goodness was sufficient, and would fain have kept in with his acquaintances and God at the same time. He durst not receive the sacrament but at the usual times for fear of being laughed at. I have persuaded him to neglect censure on a religious account, and thereby greatly encouraged myself to do so. By convincing him of the duty of frequent communicating I have prevailed on both of us to receive once a week. He has got Nelson⁴ upon my recommendation, and is resolved to spare no pains in working out his salvation. Ought I not to give God the glory? Ought I not to despise the hard constructions people put upon our acquaintance, even though they should say and think what I am far from judging they do, that he is a cully and I a sharper?⁵ Ought I not to seek opportunities of appearing in public with him, if for no other reason yet because I am averse to it? He is an object worthy your charity and acquaintance; how far he deserves either you'll be better able to judge when we meet. Meantime let me hear what you say to him.

Would to God I could give you a like account of Bob [Kirkham]! But I'm afraid, so he can but get to heaven any way, the less pains, he thinks, the better. I'm not uncharitable in my opinion. You can't imagine how wretchedly lazy he is, and how small a share of either learning or piety will content him. Four hours a day he *will* spare for study out of his diversions, not so many hours for diversion out of his studies! What an excellent inverter! Nay, and to my knowledge he is not so scrupulous but half the four will serve his turn at most times. What is to be done with him, think ye? He's past my skill. I wish he mayn't be beyond yours too. You might have spared your line to him, for you couldn't think me so mad,

¹Replying to a letter of JW, c. Apr. 30, that is not known to survive.

²A fragment of the letter is torn off; the missing text is fairly obvious.

³This is one of the few appearances in CW's letters of William Morgan (c. 1712–32), who had matriculated at Christ Church the previous year, and would join CW in the early rise of the Oxford Methodists.

⁴Robert Nelson, *The Great Duty of Frequenting the Christian Sacrifice, and the Nature of the Preparation Required; with Suitable Devotions* (London: Churchill, 1706).

⁵That is, he is one easily duped and I am a scoundrel who takes advantage of him.

sure, as to show it him, unless I had a mind he should plague my heart out to see all the rest. He went from me lately in a furious chafe on my refusing to show him a letter I was so imprudent as to tell him I had received from sister Patty,⁶ wherein she let me into some secrets of Epworth economy. What therefore you may have to say to him, or what to me that he may see, write on the first half-sheet; what's between you and I only, on the second.

One more word of the commentators, though I'm quite sick of them. I must own I don't conceive how what brother Sam says is so little to the purpose as you imagine: 'Wells⁷ is an honest man, and one of sound principles, which none could ever say of Dr. Whitby.'⁸ Now in my apprehension his meaning is as obvious and apposite as heart can wish! To caution me against understanding what he said of aught but the commentary had been as absurd as though he should have warned me not to think 'honest' meant either Whig or Tory.

I'm so far from expecting but small satisfaction at Stanton that all I fear is meeting too much. Indeed I durst on no account trust myself there without you, for as I take it strong pleasure would be dangerous to one in my unconfirmed condition. They have had the good fortune there to have a couple of aunts die and leave the three girls £200 apiece.⁹ There's news for you, you rogue! I'm heartily glad for poor Bett, and not a little for poor Damaris, because I believe it may help her to a husband the sooner. Tis well you at last own Sally not infallible. Though she is so, I verily believe, for all your suspicions. All the business is, she is *not* changed; but Chapone is Chapone still.

How shall I dispose of Lushington's money now I have got it, as much (I mean, now you have turned over)¹⁰ as I ever shall. You may set your heart at rest about it, for I'm confident your creditor has taken his final leave of Oxford. He has been guilty of such wretched extravagancies lately (his half year at Chester cost him £130) that his mother will never venture him here again, but chain him up at home till she can send him away for good and all. So all your hopes of payment depend solely now upon his honour. He borrowed a shirt and half a guinea of me a little before his departure; the shirt I have recovered, but the money is safe—with yours. Bob contributed his half-crown too, and so—exit Lushington. Will I ever trust a friend again that has no religion? I *did* think our friendship would have lasted for *this* life, but what intimacy can I ever have hereafter with a man of his morals and his gratitude? God be praised he has¹¹ robbed me of nothing but my money!

I earnestly long for and desire the blessing God is about to send me in you. I am sensible *this* is my day of grace and that upon my employing the time before our meeting and next parting will in great measure depend my condition for eternity.

An accident (if it may be called so) has lately happened to me, which has made me resolve never upon any account to omit or defer my prayers. Last Saturday, being upon a design to do Lushington a piece of service, I could not come home till eight at night. I then found myself utterly averse to prayers and spent half an hour in vain in striving to recollect my dissipated thoughts. Upon this I gave out, and passed the whole night in the utmost trouble and discomposure of mind. I rose in the morning two hours later than usual, in utter despair of receiving the sacrament that day, or of recovering myself in less than two or three. In this condition I went immediately to church. On my way a thought came across me that it might be less sin to receive even without the least immediate preparation (for the whole week till Saturday evening I had spent to my satisfaction) than to turn my back upon the sacrament. I accordingly

⁶Martha Wesley; this letter does not survive.

⁷I.e., Richard Kidder, Bishop of Bath and Wells, *A Commentary on the first Five Books of Moses* (London: Heptinstall, 1694).

⁸Daniel Whitby, *A Paraphrase and Commentary on the New Testament* (London: Bowyer, 1700).

⁹Robert Kirkham's sisters: Sarah (Kirkham) Chapone, Mary Elizabeth, and Damaris.

¹⁰Charles had just turned over the sheet of paper, beginning with the words 'as much'.

¹¹Orig., 'has has'.

resolved, if I found myself anything affected with the prayers, to stay and communicate. I *did* find myself affected, and stayed. I not only received the sacrament at that time with greater warmth than usual but afterwards found my resolutions of pursuing considerably strengthened. This wasn't all. On Sunday night I received a great blessing from God, and have continued since in a better frame of mind than I have yet known. Dear brother remember and pray for me when you receive this. I am,

Yours entirely,

Ch. W.

I *did* design to write to my sisters this post, but can't. Give my love, pray, and duty to father and mother.

Address: 'For / The Revd Mr Jno Wesley at / Epworth, to be left at the / Post-House in Gaines / borough / Lincolnshire'.

Postmarks: 'OXFORD', '6/MA'. *Charges:* ((3)), 'In all 7'.

Endorsement: by JW, 'C. May 5, 1729'.

Source: holograph; MARC, DDCW 1/3.¹²

¹²Transcription published in *Works*, 25:237–39.

From Charles Wesley

Westminster
Saturday [May 24, 1729¹]

Dear Brother,

I yesterday found a letter of mine designed to be sent you above a week ago, but forgot. And glad am I, at second reading, that it was. It may be necessary to tell you some of it at least, before we meet: As that I was seven days almost upon the road, and consequently had I not met with the luckiest company twas possible, should not now have had aught remaining of the nine shillings I brought into town with me. That there has been a Latin play acted at the college² with a farce at the tail on it for the entertainment of Prince William,³ who was present with half the nobility in town. That my Lord Charles's presence was wanting there for many reasons a person of your sagacity may easily guess at—supposing for want of a coat or a shirt, such accidents aren't the first of the kind his Lordship has met with at Westminster, though he may have the wit to say they shall be the last.

I met with exceeding agreeable company in my journey. What my entertainment here has been I shan't say at present, though very welcome I was without doubt to my sister,⁴ for I have lost my stomach. There are so many and so surprising particulars in my reception that I can tell you none of, unless face to face; or at least till you assure me I may do it with safety. If anything can prevent my ever disagreeing with you it will be somebody's indignation that we agree so well. I long to be at Oxford but am under an uneasy necessity of staying from it. I can't help running into particulars ere I'm aware, and shall therefore make as short work as I can. You'll stir a little about my clothes. My mother needs no remembrances. My duty, pray, to my father and her and love to the rest. I shall deliver my aunt her letter as soon as may be. She's at Hack[n]ey and will continue there.⁵

They wonder here I'm so strangely dull (as indeed mirth and I have shook hands and parted) and at the same time pay the compliment of saying I grow extremely like you—you know who this comes from.

[Stephen] Lushington is returned to college and now at Westminster. I have so many things to say to you that I'm resolved I'll say no more but that I am

Your loving brother,

C.W.

I have a reason for desiring you should keep this and burn all the rest you shall receive from me.

Address: 'For / the Revd Mr John Wesley / at Epworth to be left / at Bawtry / Yorkshire'.

Endorsement: by JW, top left margin of first page, '1729'.

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 2008/015.⁶

¹The year is given in JW's endorsement. Frank Baker suggests the specific date.

²St. Peter's College, Westminster.

³Augustus William (1721–65), son of George II.

⁴I.e., his sister-in-law, Ursula Wesley.

⁵Anne Annesley (1661–1734), sister of Susanna (Annesley) Wesley.

⁶Transcription published in *WHS* 2 (1900): 222–23.

From Kezia Wesley

Lincoln
July 12, 1729

Dear Brother,

I should not have writ[ten] so soon, but that you threatened to deprive me of the satisfaction of hearing from you any more except I did. Not that I should have been hindered by multiplicity of business, or by the amusements of this place,¹ but that I could not have imagined that it would be any pleasure to a person of sense to hear from such an illiterate person, had I not had it under your own hand and seal. Amongst unequals, what society [can exist]?

I have heard from my mother lately, she was as well as usual. And father and sisters are very well, except poor Sukey.² She is very ill. People think she is going into a consumption and will soon be 'where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest'.³

Miss Whiteley likes Lincoln as well as might be expected from one that had her will in everything at home; she stays no longer than summer. She and I have parted beds. It was her desire, occasioned by her cousin's coming. Civility is worth the world. Betty Dixon went home eight weeks ago. I was really surprised at her going, because she said her eyes were so tender she could not work! And neither I nor any one at the school had ever perceived it before she told us!

I am glad to hear you are so easy, and I wish you could continue to be so, when you get on⁴ our side again; but that is a vain wish.

To our new court sad thought does still repair,
And round our whiten'd roof hangs hov'ring care.⁵

I desire you will tell brother Charles I cannot excuse him from writing always, though I do it now. I am very sorry he meets with so many misfortunes, and wish it was in my power to alleviate any of them. I should be very glad if we could all follow his example of faith and patience. But you know our sex have naturally weaker minds than yours—not that I bring this as any excuse for my particular case, for I own I have been very defective in both faith and patience.

I cannot say I thought those evils imaginary that I meet with at home, if they may be called so. My mother's ill health, which often was occasioned by her want of clothes or convenient food, and my own constant ill health these three years last past, weighed much more with me than anything else.

... For who can undergo the force
Of present ills, with fear of future woe?

I am sorry you have such an ill opinion of me, as to think I should have pressed upon you so to write, if I had not desired to hear from you. Pray believe me next time. Nothing should have made me write, but the fear of disoblighing a person from whom I have received so many obligations.

I am much easier here than if I were at home. If there be any who have such large souls, and are blessed with that composure and evenness of temper, that their multiplicity of affairs destroys not their concern for eternity, nor is an hindrance in the just discharge of their duty—if there be any such, then

¹Kezia was employed as an assistant at Mrs. Taylor's school in Lincoln.

²Susanna (Wesley) Ellison.

³Job 3:17.

⁴Orig., 'of'.

⁵Matthew Prior, *Solomon*, ii.53–54.

they are fit to teach a school. When I have it in my choice either to get my living by teaching school or by any other way of business, then it will be seen what I shall choose.

I have told you my mind as freely as I have sister Patty, and have only time to return you thanks for the many favors you have conferred on,

Your loving sister,

Kezia Wesley

Poor Nanny Robinson is dead. I desire you will always write three letters to my one. Your goodness will excuse all faults. Dear Jacky, adieu. Pray write as soon as possible.⁶

Source: published transcriptions; Clarke, *Memoirs* (1836), 2:379–81; and *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* 68 (1845): 779–80.

⁶The postscript appears only in the *WMM* transcription.

From Susanna (Annesley) Wesley¹

[Epworth]
August 11, 1729

Dear J[acky],

I need not tell you I should be glad to see you, because you know it already; and so I should to see poor Charles too; but what to say to his coming I know not. J[ohn] L[ambert], h[is] w[ife] and ch[ild],² we are still like to keep, for we hear no news of a place for h[im]; though I would fain hope it would please God to provide for h[im] some way ere winter, and take off their weight, which really grows very heavy.

I wrote with some earnestness to your brother Sam[uel] Wesley, to persuade him to come to Epworth. But I find I can't prevail. ... He will be here toward the end of the month. ... He sent me a pound of Bohea tea and two pounds of chocolate, which were very acceptable; for none could I buy, and I was somewhat ill for want of tea. ...

I think you had better contrive to meet your brother at Lincoln, and then come all together. ... I have a bad arm, and write in much pain, or I have a deal to say else. ... Perhaps I may live to see you.

May Almighty God bless and preserve you!

Source: abridged manuscript transcription; JW, Letter-book (1724–29), 62.³

¹Replying to his of Aug. 6.

²John and Anne (Wesley) Lambert had a son John, now three years old.

³Transcription published in *Works*, 25:239–40; and Wallace, *Susanna Wesley*, 140.

From the Rev. Dr. John Morley¹

[Scotton, Lincolnshire?]

[October 21, 1729]

At a meeting of the society, just before I left college, to consider the proper method to preserve discipline and good government, among several things agreed on it was, in the opinion of all that were present, judged necessary that the junior fellows who should be chosen moderators shall in person attend the duties of their office, if they do not prevail with some of the fellows to officiate for them. We all thought it would be a great hardship on Mr. [Lewis] Fenton to call him from a perpetual curacy or donative, yet this we must have done had not Mr. [Richard] Hutchins been so kind to him and us as to free us from the uneasiness of doing a hard thing, by engaging to supply his place in the hall for the present year. Mr. [Michael?] Robinson would as willingly supply yours, but the serving of two cures about fourteen miles distant from Oxford, and ten at least as bad as the worst of your roads in the Isle, makes it, he says, impossible to discharge the duty constantly. We hope it may be as much for your advantage to reside at college as where you are, if you take pupils, or can get a curacy in the neighbourhood of Oxon. Your father may certainly have another curate, though not so much to his satisfaction; yet we are persuaded that this will not move him to hinder your return to college, since the interest of college and obligation to statute requires it.

Source: published transcription; Whitehead, *Life*, 1:415–16.

¹This letter from the Rector of Lincoln College brought about JW's return from Lincolnshire to Oxford, where he eventually arrived on Nov. 22.

From Emilia Wesley

Lincoln

Old Year's Day [i.e., December 31], 1729

Dear Brother,

This is the first time in my life that I answered a letter before I read it. But Kezia having lost the letter you sent me last Saturday,² I being from home when it came, I can only guess what was in it. So if I do not answer every particular, you will, I hope, excuse me and only blame the carelessness of Kez.

First, then, I suppose you express a great concern for my health, because you left me much out of order,³ and an extraordinary impatience to hear of my recovery. For all which kindness I return you thanks, and assure you I had written to Oxford long since if sickness had not prevented, my old companion the fever having confined me to my chamber since I saw you. It left me so many illnesses behind that I have not enjoyed six hours' health together since you were at Lincoln. And had not Dr. Greathead been very careful to preserve a worthless and unfortunate life, you and I had met no more in this world.⁴

Secondly, I presume you want to be informed concerning my father's affairs at Epworth. He was here before Christmas, little to my satisfaction by the way. He seemed very reserved to me, and I the same to him, only I inquired about your being concerned with the tithe. He renounces any suffering you to be tenant, which was all I wanted to know, for without you there is not the least temptation in Epworth to draw me thither. He is inclined to take the tithes. I frankly gave my opinion against it, but that may make him do it the sooner. He said nothing to me of my going home, and I was too stout, you may think, to ask him; but that's all one. He thought fit to speak his mind before he went out of town to a friend of his, who told his wife and, according to old laudable custom, she told me their conference. But let them think what they please. 'Tis now impossible for me to move, since I have not time to give Mrs. Taylor fair notice, and without that even Leybourne⁵ himself should not stir me from hence. I fear this last speech is not altogether true; but none else should, that's certain. And now I think I have sufficiently answered you, considering I never saw your letter. But for fear something should be omitted, I desire in your next you will let me know what really was in your last.

'Tis not impossible but you might have the goodness to see the unhappy Leybourne, since you went from hence, and on account of a sister dearer to you than all the rest, to come to an explanation concerning those imputations laid to his charge by the malice of N. Wesley.⁶ You are not ignorant of my thoughts on that subject, and how earnestly I desire a good correspondence between you two. If anything of joy can enter into a heart so lost in melancholy as his; if the deep sadness which has seized that excellent man, and has clouded the highest understanding, and changed the sweetest temper in England, could admit of any alleviation; sure I am it will be from your friendship. I hope you have been together since you were at Oxford. Sure my opinion in any indifferent matter should weigh with you more than any sister-in-law's, or own sister, or anybody's except my mother's. Let then my desire, once for all, prevail with you never to break off acquaintance with him. I shall take this as the test of your love to me, and conclude with the poet,

²This letter, dated Dec. 22–23, 1729 in JW's diary, is not known to survive.

³JW had left Wroot and returned to Lincoln College, Oxford in Nov. 1729.

⁴Edward Greathead, M.D. (1673–1745), of Lincoln; Emilia spelled it 'Greatehead'.

⁵Robert Leybourne, a suitor with whom Emilia had broken about five years previously.

⁶I.e., Samuel Wesley Jr.'s wife Ursula, who was nicknamed 'Nutty'.

Friendship, take heed ; if L[eybour]n[e] interfere
Be sure the hour of thy destruction's near.⁷

I hope you got well to Oxford. Sam has not writ[ten] to me since he left the country. Pray tell brother Charles Mrs. Taylor⁸ gives her service to him, not excluding you, and wishes me to tell him that her daughter Peggy has had the toothache ever since he went away. Miss Kitty⁹ is here by me, and says he is a saucy cur, and she will turn him off because he never went to see her at Gainsborough. Mrs. Taylor desires him the next time he is here to let his eyelids fall a little lower, which, she thinks, will become him better than his staring. Pray write as soon as you can. Kez shall not be troubled with the care of your second letter. I think you are not well rewarded by my father for all you have done. He thinks you not a good son or friend. Take what care you can of your own interest. Our family are full of fine, sanguine dreams. Belief yet remains that my father will never be worth a groat, as the saying is, and we of the female part of the family be consequently left to get our bread or starve, as we see fit. But life will be over in a few years, and then sure all sorrow will end, I hope, with me. No more shall I regret the ruin of my fortune, and those fatal accidents yet worse than that. It is not possible at a distance to know what our thoughts of death will be when it approaches near. Now indeed, to die seems not only tolerable, but desirable—that it is, as Hamlet says, 'A consummation devoutly to be wished'. But perhaps, when I know that I have but a few hours of life remaining, dread of eternity may make me desire longer time. This, at least, I am certain of, that while life remains, if it be not your fault, I shall continue to be,

Your most affectionate sister,

Emilia Wesley

Address: 'To Mr. John Wesley / Fellow of Lincoln Coll: / Oxford / by way of London'.

Postmarks: 'LINCOLN', '2/IA'.

Endorsement: by JW, 'S[ister] Em[ilia] Dec 31. 1729'.

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWF 6/2.¹⁰

⁷Cf. John Vanbrugh, *The False Friend*, Scene I, which reads 'if woman interfere'.

⁸The woman running the school in Lincoln where Emilia and Kezia were teachers.

⁹Kitty Hargreave, who was also serving as a teacher in Mrs. Taylor's school.

¹⁰Transcription published in Stevenson, *Memorials*, 265–67.

From Martha Wesley¹

Epworth
January 10, 1730

Dear Brother,

I received your kind letter with a great deal of satisfaction, and 'twas not for any want of kindness that I have not answered it before now. But I have had so much business that I have not really had time to answer it sooner. Nor that I can be so vain as to think you are much concerned for not hearing from me, since I am sensible my letters are so worthless that nothing but love, even like myself you have for me, can make them pleasing to you, that are so good a judge of writing and can write so much better yourself. For which reason I think I might have spared my apology for not writing sooner.

I was very agreeably surprised to find several of your thoughts so exactly agree with my own, and had I but your command of words I should say a great deal to you. But I find the same inconvenience in writing to you which I do in speaking. In conversation with most of my acquaintance I have very little occasion for sense or learning, but when I speak or write to you I always find my want of both. However, you must accept the will for the deed. Many of your correspondents may be better able to entertain you agreeably, but none more willing than myself.

I have indeed frequently been disquieted with those thoughts which you say 'have often bewildered you. If' (as you say) 'God sees I sincerely desire devotion in prayer, and that I can do no more than desire it, why does not he do the rest?' Why indeed! We cannot certainly know the reason why he does not till the next life. This affliction is so vastly different from any other that 'tis a comfort to me that you share it with me. If God's withholding that grace from a person he sees they earnestly desire were always a mark of his displeasure, sure he would not withhold it from you. We very often, even in this world, see reason to admire the goodness and wisdom of God in denying us what perhaps we once passionately desired, so 'tis likely in the next we may find reason to admire the divine goodness and wisdom in denying us even that progress.

Upon that very principle I have accounted for almost all the uneasiness I have met with, and when I was capable of attending to reason it has always satisfied me, particularly when I have met with what I thought unkindness from you. I then considered that he who has the hearts of all men entirely in his disposal certainly knew that had he permitted you to have returned my love with equal tenderness I should have been a loser by it, or, to use your own beautiful expression, I 'should probably have set up my rest, and have been content with using, not enjoying religion'. I can give no reason why it necessarily should be so, but I don't think that any pleasure upon earth is so apt to take the mind off of God as a very strict friendship with anyone! The mind is insensibly taken off of better things and (except we take a vast deal of care) by degree grows cold and indifferent to the thoughts of another world, when we find so much happiness in this.

I have lamented the poor unfortunate young lady you told me of almost ever since. There's the mischief of being pretty, and living at Court. Had she had less beauty, and lived at Wroot, she might have been alive and innocent to this day.

My father has got a curate! John Lambert heard of him when he was surveying some miles off. He was a perfect stranger to my father, and my father to him. I can't tell you exactly what sort of a man he is, because I have not yet found him out, though he has been a fortnight with us. But by the best judgment I can make of him I shall be in no danger of running into one extreme you warned me of, liking him too well. Most of our town people fancy him to be like Mr. [John] Pennington; indeed he's not unlike him in shape, and at least as genteel. But you will cease to wonder I should not like him very well when I tell you he thinks as differently from you as light from darkness—or else he is one of those cunning gentlemen that think fit to dissemble their own sentiments till they have tried those of others.

¹Replying to JW's letter of Dec. 5–6, 1729, which is not known to survive, except as quoted in Martha's response.

Dick² is (if possible) 'tenfold more the child of hell'³ than he used to be. He took it into his head the other night almost to beat out his wife's brains for taking his man off of him that was going to murder him—at least that made him cry out he had killed him.

Last Tuesday I received a letter for you (and made a shift notwithstanding my poverty to pay 6d for it), which I have sent you, but could not help making you pay for a double letter.⁴ I thought at first I had known the hand, but I can't say I do, and 'tis the most incomparable seal I ever set eyes on. Dear brother, pardon the length and tediousness of my epistle, and believe me to be with the utmost tenderness,

Your affectionate friend and sister,

M. Wesley

I hope you'll let me hear from you again, and let me know how all Mr. [Lionel] Kirkham's family do.

Address: 'To / The Revd Mr John Wesley / Fellow of Lincoln College / Oxford / by way of London'.

Postmark: '16/IA'. *Charges:* ((IN)) 'in all IN 9'.

Endorsement: by JW, 'S[ister] P[atty] / Jan 1730'.

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWF 12/3.⁵

²I.e., Richard Ellison, husband of their sister Susanna.

³Cf. Matt. 23:15.

⁴Until near the end of the eighteenth century, the cost of letters was paid by the recipient (unless mailed with a frank).

⁵Abridged transcription published in *Works*, 25:242–43.

From Kezia Wesley

[Lincoln]
January 26, 1729[/30¹]

Dear Brother,

There is no occasion for your asking pardon for so small an omission as not writing sooner, of one who has been faulty in an instance of much greater moment. Indeed, I was a little inclining to be of my sister's opinion, that it is not in the nature of man to value a woman after he perceived she had any respect for him. If one could have been false, which was of so good a temper and had so much religion as you, I should not have wondered at finding any so hereafter. Certainly it is a very good way for any that enter into friendship to make this article in their agreement, that they will mutually reprove each other; by which means it will become such an avowed part of their friendship that it can never be mistaken by the reprov'd for censoriousness or unkindness. Not that there will be any occasion for me to practice this doctrine. But there will be enough for you. Therefore, I desire you will tell me of anything that you think amiss in my conduct, and I will endeavor to reform.

I am very glad to hear my brother Charles is so rich. Any good fortune that happens to my relations affords me great satisfaction. You need not be apprehensive of the news going further. Anything you desire me not to speak of, you may be sure is safe.

If I was inclined to enter into the holy estate of matrimony, I can't say but the man you are acquainted with might be worthy of love.

But to a soul whose marble form
None of the melting passions warm,²

all his good qualities would appear lighter than vanity itself. It is my humble opinion I shall live the life of a nun, for which reason I would not give one single farthing to see him this minute. But if the young man was ever to have an inclination for any of our family, there is a certain lady at Epworth³ who would make a very good wife and seems not averse to marriage, that would be worth his acceptance; besides, it would make her amends for a sort of balk which I fancy she has had lately. There is but one objection against it, which is that it is twenty to one he will never see her.

There is no danger of any one's being fit for death too soon, it being a sufficient work for a whole life. Certainly I shall not think any pains too great to use that will be any help to me in so great a work—and it would be less excusable for me to be unprepared than others, because it always was, and is, my persuasion that I shall die young. I am at present fearful of death. But I hope it will please God to make me willing and ready to die before he calls me out of the world.

None know what death is but the dead;
Therefore we all by nature dying dread,
As a strange, doubtful path, we know not how to tread.⁴

There is no need of any apology for the serious part of your letter. It was very agreeable. But there was one passage in it which I disliked. If you meant it as a banter it was not kind, because nobody is worthy such a one for not having a beautiful face or a fine shape, it being only the gift of nature and not to

¹Kezia is using old-style dating. JW did not return to Oxford until Aug. 1729.

²Cf. Isaac Watts, 'Few Happy Matches', st. 5, *Horae lyricae*, 2nd edn. (London: Cliff, 1709), 225.

³I.e., Martha.

⁴Wentworth Dillon, 'A Prospect of Death', st. 1.

be acquired. If you intended it for a compliment, it was still unkind. Perhaps you might think it would please the vanity of our sex to be flattered. Know then that I am not yet vain enough to be pleased with flattery. I hope your goodness will pardon my freedom. I should not have told you what I disliked, only by way of prevention, that you might not write after the same manner for the future. You may certainly be a great help to me, in improving me in virtue, by giving me good advice and telling me of my faults, when we meet again or when you have reason to believe I am guilty of any. There cannot be a greater instance of friendship than praying for our friends. Nor can I be more agreeably employed than in performing a duty which I think is incumbent on all friends.

There has nothing happened since you left Lincoln that has had much effect on my mind, except Dick's quarrel with his wife.⁵ There is no need of giving you a particular account of it. I do not doubt but you have had one before now. As to my own affairs, there is nothing remarkable, for want of money and clothes was what I was always used to. Indeed, it is rather worse to want here than at home. But there were other inconveniences that weighed more with me than want of clothes. Those are but the trappings and the suits of woe. If I had my choice, I should like to stay here, suppose it were only for education. It would be no great matter if my father was to find me in clothes for three or four years, since he pays nothing for my board. There is one comfort, which is that I can't be blamed if I go home because it is not possible for me to stay without necessities. Suppose my sister would find me in clothes, which I have no reason to expect, nor do I believe it is in her power, if it was in her will. I could not be tolerably easy to be kept by any relation but my father or mother, while they live. I believe it is chiefly owing to pride, and a little to the shyness of my natural temper. It was always pain to me to ask for my own, and it would be much worse if I knew I was a burden to any of my relations. I shall endeavor to be as easy as possible,

Nor think it chance, nor murmur at the load;
For, know, what man calls fortune is from God.⁶

I shall trouble you with the length of my letter, and therefore conclude, as I really am,
Your sincere friend till death,

Kezia Wesley

[P.S.] I should be glad if you would not let brother Charles see my letters. For I am sure none but a friend can overlook and excuse the impertinence and simplicity of them. Pray write as soon as possible.

[On cover:] Mr. Orry is dead,⁷ and Mr. John Pindar is married to Mrs. Medley.⁸ Poor soul! I don't envy her choice.

Address: 'To Mr. John Wesley, Fellow / of Lincoln College / Oxon'.

Postmark: '9/FE'.

Endorsement: by JW, 'S[ister] K[ezia] 1729'.

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWF 13/1.⁹

⁵I.e., Richard and Susanna (Wesley) Ellison.

⁶Nicholas Rowe, 'The Golden Verses of Pythagoras', in Andre Dacier, *The Life of Pythagoras* (London: Jacob Tonson, 1707), 157.

⁷Robert Orry died in Coningsby, Lincolnshire in late Nov. 1729.

⁸John Pindar (1702–76), son of Robert Pindar of Owston, Lincolnshire, was a contemporary of JW at Oxford. He married Anne Medley on Jan. 25 in Hackthorne, Lincolnshire.

⁹Transcription published in Clarke, *Memoirs* (1836), 2:376–79.

From Emilia Wesley

[Lincoln]
February 9, 1730

Dear Brother,

I thank you for your obliging letter,¹ which would sooner have been answered by me but for the old cause, the fever. When I write to other relations several reasons move me: prudence (gratitude that is, letter for letter, no otherwise), desire to make them easy, etc. To you, far otherwise. Now I am gratifying my own inclinations in the highest degree. Methinks you are nearer related to me than the rest of my brothers and sisters, the tie of friendship being far preferable to that of blood. Now I fancy myself with the brother I so dearly love that I am talking with him, and enjoying all the pleasures of his conversation. Vain, but pleasing, delusion. Far from me is placed that companion who could render life pleasing, even after the loss of unhappy [Robert] L[eybourne]. But be it as it may, life will shortly be over, and then all grief I hope will be so too.

Perhaps you are not fully informed of our Epworth affairs. Dick has beat Suky almost to death, who is again with child.² My father has taken the tithe for himself and Charles Tate. O brother, might you not have expected the refusal? Dick owes him £140, which if he does not pay (as is most probably he will not) my father says he must come to Lincoln jail once more—my father, I mean. A comfortable assurance that to me, but while I live here I must never be free from that dread. Whether I shall continue in the school all this summer or no, I am not yet determined. But I believe I shall not. Though I do not design to go home neither. But when I know my own mind, I will tell you more. Sam [Jr.] indeed is all for my continuing here. What likelihood there is of his ever assisting me, should I need it, is easy to guess from his present tenderness. He who will not bestow half a sheet of paper on me, will to be sure lend me £100 to buy the goods here, should I have occasion. I never have heard from him since he was at Lincoln. I writ before Christmas, but alas he is too busy to answer. So I must take care to be troublesome no more.

My father, I believe, goes on well with his subscriptions.³ Several here subscribed on account of charity. O heavens, that a man so beneficed should ever be looked upon as an object of charity. If he escapes jail, he thinks of going to London about his book. I will tell you my thoughts freely of that matter. The subscriptions money I believe (or rather, am sure) will be spent as it comes in, and the book will either never be finished or never printed for want of money. I wish I may prove a false prophetess.

I thank you for the trouble you gave yourself of enquiring after [Robert] L[eybourne]. He shifts place so quick that it is hard to find him, but not impossible.

If it were not for the hope of happiness after this life ended, it would be very difficult for people in my circumstances to preserve any tolerable tranquillity of mind. You say every branch of our family prospers when out, except yourself. Now I fancy you and I are about the same pitch of wealth; not poor, a little behind hand, but with a prospect of better. Indeed, had you stayed at college, and I had let Kez[ia] alone, we might have been in better circumstances. Sickness has run away with the profits of one half year, and my father does not seem disposed to pay the allowance agreed on, but once in three or four months perhaps will send her £20. At May Day, which will soon be here, there will be £5, one-half of which I have already been obliged to lay out for her. And the remainder will be little enough to clothe her for summer. But I do not expect ever to see so considerable sum come from Epworth.

I wish I could come to Oxford this spring on horseback. I believe it would contribute more to my recovery than all of the physic in Lincoln. But such rambles, however they might agree with my health, would be very pernicious to my purse, so that thought must keep at present. It is for you boys to enjoy

¹This letter, dated Jan. 5–7, 1730 in JW's diary, is not known to survive.

²Susanna (Wesley) Ellison would bear a son, Richard Annesley Ellison, baptized on Sept. 8, 1730.

³For his massive project *Dissertationes in Librum Jobi*, which would be published in 1735.

those pleasures. One great satisfaction however fortune does not forbid me, that of assuring you that I am,
Your most affectionate sister,

E. Wesley

Pray [give] my love to brother Charles. When I am got well I will write to him.

Address: 'To Mr. John Wesley / Fellow of Lincoln Coll: / Oxford / by way of London'.

Postmark: '11/FE'.

Endorsement: by JW, 'Feb. 1739 S[ister] Em[ilia]'.

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWF 6/3.

From Martha Wesley

[London]
March 10, 1730

[Dear Brother John,]

I intended to have wrote sooner to my dear brother, but I have had such an indisposition as, though it has not made me what one may call sick, it has made me almost incapable of anything.

My uncle¹ is pretty well recovered again. I heartily join with you in wishing you may have a conference with him. Who knows but he might be better for it; at least, it is not impossible. I have indeed a vast concern for him, and an accident of his life which I lately heard has, if possible, increased it. He had several years ago a violent fit of illness, seemed wondrous serious, and sent for a clergyman, who stayed with him several hours, and when he came from him, told my grandmother² if it pleased God to spare his life, he believed he would be a good man. But when he did recover again, and got among his companions, all his good resolutions vanished immediately!

Was almost anybody else in my place, they would think themselves very happy. I want neither money nor clothes. Nay, I have both given me in the most obliging manner; and yet I am not so. I not only want the most rational part of friendship, but I see a person whom I can't help loving very well (to say nothing of my sister³) going on in the way which I think the wrong way, without being able to persuade him to turn into the right. I cannot do the good I fain would, and I am continually in danger of doing the evil I would not.

O might I, but like to the seraph Abdiel, 'faithful stand among the faithless'!⁴ I am persuaded I shall not want my dear brother's prayers to enable me to do it.

I go sometimes to Westminster. But I am afraid 'twill be impossible for me ever to make a friend of my sister.⁵ She fell upon me the last time I was there, for giving myself such an air as to drink water, though she told me she did not expect that I should leave it. I told her if she could convince me that there was any ill in it, I would, and thank her for telling me of it. But I desired her, in the first place, to tell me what she meant by the word 'air', which she did not choose to do, I believe for a very good reason. So our dispute ended.

My brother [Samuel] said he would go to Oxford this Easter. I asked him if he would take me with him? He seemed pretty willing to do it, but I fancy his wife will hardly let him. Indeed, if he should give me twenty shillings, it would be such a thing as he never did yet. Nor indeed did I ever desire it before. I should be pleased if he would, because it would give me the pleasure of seeing my dear brother at his own habitation, and of telling him by word of mouth how much I am,

His faithful friend, and affectionate sister,

Martha Wesley

[a short letter to CW follows]

Address: 'To / The Revd Mr John Wesley / Fellow of Lincoln College / Oxford'.

Endorsement: by JW, 'S[ister] M[artha] March 10. 1730 / Acct of m[y] U[n]cle'.

Source: holograph; MARC, WCB, D6/1/174.⁶

¹Matthew Wesley (c. 1664–1737), Samuel Sr.'s brother.

²The wife of John Westley (1636–71), mother of Samuel and Matthew, who died about 1720.

³Mehetabel (Wesley) Wright, who was now living in London.

⁴Milton, *Paradise Lost*, v.897: 'Among the faithless, faithful only he'.

⁵I.e., her sister-in-law Ursula, wife of Samuel Jr.

⁶Abridged transcription published in Clarke, *Memoirs* (1823), 515–16; and Stevenson, *Memorials*, 363–64.

From Mary (Granville) Pendarves¹

[Gloucester]
August 28, 1730

Sir,

I think myself extremely obliged to you for the favour of the sermon, and those letters that alone were worthy of the correspondence they maintained. I received them safe last week, and should sooner have made my acknowledgements for them, but that I have been engaged with so much company since my return from dear delightful Stanton that till this moment I have not had time to express my gratitude for the elegant entertainment I have had, not only from the manuscripts, but in recollecting and repeating the conversation you and your brother made so agreeable, which I hope will soon be renewed. If you have any affairs that call you to Gloucester, don't forget you have two pupils who are desirous of improving their understanding, and that friendship which has already taught them to be, sir, your most sincere, humble servants.

My companion² joins with me in all I have said, as well as in service to Araspes.³

Address: by Sarah (Kirkham) Chapone, 'To / The Revd. Mr. John Westley / Fellow of Lincoln College / Oxon / Post Paid 3d'.

Endorsement: by JW, 'Aug 28', and 'Aug. 38. [sic] 1730'; in a later hand, 'Mrs Delany'.

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/610/54.⁴ JW manuscript copy; 'Aspasia' Letter-book, 2–3.

¹Mary Granville (1700–88), her widowed mother (also Mary) and her sister Ann lived for a time at Buckland in the Cotswolds, where they became friends of the Kirkhams of Stanton, especially Sarah. Mary was probably the instigator of the many nicknames used by the literary circle into which JW found himself drawn through his friendship with Robin Griffiths. But by this time the Granvilles had moved on to Gloucester and Mary had already been forced in marriage to the wealthy and elderly Alexander Pendarves, who left her a widow in 1725. While JW had known of Mary (Granville) Pendarves through Sarah Kirkham by 1726, the first time they met was apparently during the summer of 1730, when Mary heard JW preach at Stanton on Aug. 2 (no record of the sermon, or his text, survives). Mary asked for a copy of the sermon, which JW transcribed and sent in a letter dated Aug. 14. Thus began an extended correspondence between the two, which JW transcribed into a notebook (like the earlier collection of letters from his family). In 1743 Mary (Granville) Pendarves became the second wife of Patrick Delany, a close friend of Jonathan Swift.

²Her sister, Ann Granville.

³CW's literary nickname in the Cotswolds group.

⁴Transcription published in *Works*, 25:248.

[From Sarah (Kirkham) Chapone]

[Stanton, Gloucestershire]
September 9 [1730]

This letter was sent round this way, Aspasia¹ not knowing how to direct to Cyrus.² I believe she will soon go to the Bath for a few days upon business. If Cyrus designs waiting on her, I think he had best write to her to know when she will be absent from Gloucester. Varanese³ sent a letter by the carrier about a fortnight ago.⁴ If it is received, an information that it is safe would be very agreeable.

I hope to see that beautiful hymn in verse according to a promise I had from Cyrus. I take this to be a plain translation, as near the author's sense as the language will bear, but that I submit to his better judgment, from whom I expect to see it in as great perfection as in the original.

The little religion, and the redundance of ill-natur(e),⁵ that abounds in the conversation of mankind, makes me w(ell) pleased to spend many hours alone, since it is not often my happy fate to pass them with those who are as gentle in their censures of the mistakes of others as they are severe to themselves, and as they are blind to their own excellencies. Cyrus and Araspes⁶ will come into my mind upon this occasion, and upon every other when I am thinking of those persons whose principles are not of this world, and whose hope and expectation shall not perish forever.

Source: holograph; MARC, MA 1977/610/54 (added on p. 3 of the previous letter).⁷

¹Mary (Granville) Pendarves' literary nickname.

²JW's literary nickname.

³Sarah (Kirkham) Chapone's literary nickname.

⁴This letter is not known to survive.

⁵A small portion on the edge of the letter is torn away, but can be reconstructed with confidence.

⁶CW's literary nickname.

⁷Transcription published in *Works*, 25:248–49.

From the Rev. Samuel Wesley Jr.

[Westminster]
September 19, 1730

Dear Brother,

Your question concerning the eternity of hell torments¹ may do me good in considering it, if not you in my answering; and therefore I would not have you be sparing on such occasions, provided you always remember how much it has lain out of my way to study.

1. I own I think the *similis ratio*² seems not strong enough to bear the weight of infinite punishment; yet, though the argument from thence be metaphysical, I know not how to answer it. If offences rise in guilt in proportion to the dignity of the person offended, shall we only deny it when against God? Or, because he is infinite, must there be no proportion, which there undeniably is, in all other cases?

2. Necessity of nature I think much stronger, and, indeed, sufficient to make the scale even, at least, if not to cast it. Every fault is not only in some sort, but in fact, infinite, that is, in duration; for guilt is indelible without atonement, as men have formerly universally acknowledged, which appears by their expiatory sacrifices.

There is no regard, even in human punishments, to the continuance of suffering, or at least no proportion ever aimed at between the duration of the crime and of the punishment. A thief at fifty shall have ten years of life cut off for a felony done in a quarter of an hour, and a thief at twenty shall lose twenty or thirty years for a less theft. I own Draco's excuse comes in here that the least deserved death, and he had no further punishment for the greatest crime;³ yet still this shows there is a difference allowed between the two, merely because their punishments would be of a different length, which is of no concern to the lawgiver, though of very great to the offender.

But there is one consideration which I think of great weight. Supposing it unjust to punish a short life of sin with eternal torments, it does not follow that eternal punishments are unjust in another world, because this short life is not *the only* ground of that punishment, since there is repetition of sin to all eternity, which *must necessarily* occasion repetition of sufferings. There is no preventing grace to hinder it beforehand, and no propitiation to atone for it afterward.

3. I own, I think immortality of both kinds was brought to light by the gospel, and therefore that natural reason is no further concerned than to clear it from contradiction. The *worm* we may find out even by that reason; though revelation shows us *the fire* which is not quenched. Indeed, it is very remarkable in Virgil, that he puts an end to the joys of Elysium, but not to the torments of Tartarus. To those who do or may embrace the gospel, choice seems to be clear; and as for others, we have a general rule. Only we may argue, that as in heaven there are many mansions, so there are in hell likewise: and he who knew not his Lord's will shall be beaten with few (that is, comparatively few) stripes.

I am,

Your affectionate friend and brother,

S. Wesley

Source: published transcription; *Arminian Magazine* 1 (1778): 127–29.

¹JW's diary notes writing Samuel Jr. on this topic Sept. 7, but the letter is not known to survive.

²'Parallel reasoning'.

³Draco was an Athenian legislator who promulgated a legal code in 621 BCE, imposing the death penalty for relatively minor crimes. This is the source of the adjective 'Draconian'.

From the Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.

[Epworth]
September [28,¹] 1730

And now as to your own designs and employments, what can I say less of them than *valde probo*;² and that I have the highest reason to bless God that he has given me two sons together in Oxford to whom he has given grace and courage to turn the war against the world and the devil, which is the best way to conquer them. They have but one more enemy to combat with, the flesh, which if they take care to subdue by fasting and prayer, there will be no more for them to do but to proceed steadily in the same course, and expect the crown which fadeth not away. You have reason to bless God, as I do, that you have so fast a friend as Mr. [William] Morgan, who I see in the most difficult service is ready to break the ice for you. You do not know of how much good that poor wretch who killed his wife has been the providential occasion. I think I must adopt Mr. Morgan to be my son, together with you and your brother Charles; and when I have such a ternion to prosecute that war wherein I am now *miles emeritus*,³ I shall not be ashamed when they speak with their enemies in the gate.

I am afraid lest the main objection you make against your going on in the business with the prisoners may secretly proceed from flesh and blood. For who can harm you, if you are followers of that which is so good, and which will be one of the marks by which the Shepherd of Israel will know his sheep at the last day? —Though if it were possible for you to suffer a little in the cause you would have a confessor's reward. You own none but such as are out of their senses would be prejudiced against your acting in this manner, but say, 'These are they that need a physician.'⁴ But what if they will not accept of one who will be welcome to the poor prisoners? Go on then, in God's name, in the path to which your Saviour has directed you, and that track wherein your father has gone before you. For when I was an undergraduate at Oxford I visited those in the Castle⁵ there, and reflect on it with great satisfaction to this day. Walk as prudently as you can, though not fearfully, and my heart and prayers are with you.

Your first regular step is to consult with him (if any such there be) who has a jurisdiction over the prisoners, and the next is to obtain the direction and approbation of your bishop. This is Monday morning, at which time I shall never forget you. If it be possible, I should be glad to see you all three here in the fine end of the summer. But if I cannot have that satisfaction, I am sure I can reach you every day, though you were beyond the Indies. Accordingly to him who is everywhere I now heartily commit you, as being,

Your most affectionate and joyful father.

Source: quoted by JW in an Oct. 1732 letter to Richard Morgan Sr., Morgan MSS, 19–21.⁶ Published by JW in *Journal* 1, Preface.⁷

¹The *Journal* dates the letter (probably incorrectly), Sept. 21, 1730.

²'I greatly approve'.

³'A worn-out soldier'.

⁴Cf. Matt. 9:12 and parallels.

⁵One of the prisons in Oxford.

⁶Transcription published in *Works*, 25:337–38.

⁷*Works*, 18:125–26.

From Mary (Granville) Pendarves & Ann Granville

Gloucester
October 12, 1730

Sir,

I am almost afraid to own my having had both your letters,¹ lest I should forfeit that good opinion that I extremely desire Cyrus should always have of Aspasia. I must farther confess that had I not received the second letter I should not have had courage to have wrote. I am but too sensible how unequal I am to the task. Could I, like our inimitable dear Varanese, express my sentiments, with what pleasure should I agree to the obliging request you make! But why should I be afraid of your superior understanding, when I know at the same time the delight you take in not only entertaining but improving all those you converse with? Then take me into your protection! Look on me as one surrounded with infirmities and imperfections, who flies to you for assistance against the assaults of vanity and passion. If you are desirous I should think you my friend, let this be the trial of it, not to leave any of my follies unreprieved. I shall not scruple to discover to you those many defects which on a longer acquaintance with me your own observation must have pointed out to you; and it is no small argument of the great desire I have of improvement that I will run so great a hazard; for certainly you will value me less when you know how weak I am.

You have no reason to make an apology for recommending the book you mention (which I suppose was the Bishop of Cork's).² I have not yet read it, but I shall wait with impatience for the abstract you promise me, which I am sure will very well deserve the time I shall bestow in reading of it. My stay in Gloucester is uncertain; but when we go to town we shall call at Oxford, where we shall not fail of inquiring after Cyrus and Araspes.

Aspasia is called away before she has finished her letter, and has not said one word for Selima,³ who thinks of Cyrus and Araspes with that esteem their merit justly claims; desires always to be thought their friend, and wishes she was worthy of it. When we go to Oxford, we don't know at what college to inquire after our agreeable friends.

Source: JW manuscript copy; 'Aspasia' Letter-book, 7–8.⁴ Cf. 'Selima' Letter-book, 1.

¹Of Sept. 12, and Oct. 3.

²JW had recommended Peter Browne, Bishop of Cork, *The Procedure, Extent, and limits of Human Understanding* (1728), which he glanced at Aug. 30, 1729, but 'read over' in Sept. 1730. A copy of JW's abstract still survives, and it was published in his *Survey of the Wisdom of God in the Creation*.

³The nickname of Ann Granville, Mary's sister.

⁴Transcription published in *Works*, 25:251–52.

From Emilia Wesley

[Lincoln]
October 15, 1730

Dear Brother,

I thank you heartily for your speedy answering my last letter,¹ and would have followed your example had not several accidents prevented me. First, Mrs. Taylor was out of town near a month and left me her house to keep and school to teach, and what is worse—money to seek for the most of the time. Now you must know it is my opinion that it is time enough to be put to one's shifts, as the saying is, when I am a housekeeper myself. Vexation for her leaving so threw me down. A fit of the stone lasted me three weeks. And ever since Dr. Greathead² has been setting me up again. I am now got very well again, and laugh at those things which disturb me when I am sick.

You I believe to be my friend. Note, I take 'friend' in a much stricter sense than most in the world do; namely, for one who partakes in all my fortunes, who mourns when any trouble seizes me, who rejoices when any good comes to me, and thinks himself happy when in anything he can contribute to my satisfaction. Such a friend I enjoy in Emery. Such a one *was* unhappy [Robert] Leybourne. Such I now take you to be. How long you may continue so, God only knows. But gladly would I flatter myself that your friendship for me would last as long as your immortal soul.

I shall therefore tell you, you seem a little mistaken in your opinion of brother Sam. How firmly did you believe that he has so much respect for me that, to use your own words, 'should I only tell him £40 would be of service to me, he would immediately lend me *that* or *more*, to do me a kindness'. Now see the trial. All this summer he has been labouring to keep me at Lincoln, and to keep Kezia with me, in *both* which I have obliged him, very much to my own loss. You know my father's pay is stark naught. All this summer I have not received one penny of her allowance. Sam [Jr.] sent her 40 shillings, which paid for some linen and furnished her with some small necessities. What else she wanted I was obliged to supply. Mrs. Taylor is much such another paymaster as my father, that between both I have a fine time on it. And it is no wonder my health is so indifferent. This I represented to brother Sam (not till he had voluntarily offered to lend me money at any time neither), when see the event! It is a month since I writ, but he is as dumb³ as William the Conqueror; and I daresay will either never answer my desire or not till some civil acquaintance here has supplied me. Note, I do not believe Dick Ellison,⁴ with all his barbarity, would have denied me such a kindness as I asked of Sam, had I sent the letter to Hurst instead of Westminster. I am not in the least concerned at him, but bless myself that I am under no greater necessity. Had Mrs. Taylor been dead, and I (with more faith than wit) leaning to his promises had taken the house, entered on the boarders, and sent to him for £10 or £20 to keep house with; so had I been served, and *then* indeed I had been in a fine condition. Whereas now I only desired his assisting me that I may pay my apothecary (who I am sure will never ask me for a farthing) and some small debts for Kezia. But the first loss is the best after this year. For which, observe, you have post your word. All the fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters in the world shall not prevail with me to keep her one week. Except her allowance be paid exactly at May Day, poor Kezia must and shall the second week in May return to Epworth. And this is my unalterable resolution. For since no relation will help me, I will take care (if I can) that they shall not ruin me.

I am glad your wants were supplied when you was on the road, but must still take the liberty to say you ought not to have run that hazard. And if ever you serve me so again, I shall never forgive you.

¹JW's diary records writing Emilia most recently on Sept. 14; this letter is not known to survive.

²Apparently Dr. Edward Greathead of Lincoln; Emilia spelled 'Greaththead'.

³I.e., 'silent'.

⁴Her brother-in-law, husband of Susanna, who had inherited a property in Hurst (apparently the hamlet in Yorkshire).

I incline to your opinion that sin is the most pitiable thing in the world. But then there are abundance of the actions of our neighbours not sinful which are justly ridiculous and may be laughed at, I think, without harm. For instance, one will set up for a wit, who perhaps is but once removed from a fool. Another sets up for learning, and pours you out hard words in abundance without knowing the meaning of one of them or ever reading better than a twelve-penny author. Now who can forbear smiling on such occasions? Truly not I, nor can I think it want of goodness.

Whoever it be who is so much prejudiced against me, as you told me several were, does not much concern me to know. I am not conscious of having given reason to any; and if people will be peevish for naught, let them look to that. It is none of my business.

Though you are neither dead nor married yet, in that particular wherein I fancy you err, I am satisfied you are as unalterable as if you had been buried this seven years; and while this is my persuasion, silence is best.

Whereas you fancy had providence permitted Leybourne and I to have met on earth it would have made me miserable either here or hereafter, I cannot be of your mind. It is barely possible that some afflictions incident to a married state might have outweighed the happiness of his company, but a possibility of it is the utmost. No, then should I have escaped those many ills which attend a woman who has her livelihood to seek. Nay, did strict honour now but permit a correspondence, how light would any troubles seem. But even that last comfort is taken from me, and I must wander through this ^{life} unaided by any, unregarded till in the quiet grave I bury the thought of the loved and lost Leybourne. The subject moves me so much I must say with Lee:

To my sad heart no news of woman tell
Talk not of woman and I shall be well.

I am,

Your friend and sister,

Emilia Wesley

[a short letter to CW follows]

Address: 'To Mr. John Wesley / Fellow of Lincoln College / Oxford / by the way of London'.

Postmark: '15/OC'.

Endorsement: by JW, 'S[ister] Em[ilia] Oct. 15 1730'.

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWF 6/5.

⁵This is the likely word, obscured by the wax seal.

From Mary (Granville) Pendarves

Gloucester
October 26 [1730]

Sir,

We have determined to leave this place on Monday the 9th of November, and hope to see you on Tuesday at Oxford. Perhaps the weather and your inclinations may be so favourable to us that we may meet sooner. (Of hiring a coach.¹)

You are very just to those friends you have lately obliged with your company when you seem assured of their good wishes. The success that attended your journey was certainly owing to yours and Araspes' merit: your guardian angels would not forsake a charge so worthy of their care. Happy should we be could our intercession secure you from accidents.

The pleasure you gave us in your conversation we think of daily with thankfulness, and hope nothing will happen to prevent your making the visit you have promised us in January. My mother charges me with her particular compliments to you and your brother. Selima says she will not be contented with my making a bare compliment for her. If time would permit, I would gladly say more for her as well as for myself; but I have been in a hurry all this day. When shall I be worthy to subscribe myself, what I very sincerely desire to be,

Cyrus's friend, and most faithful servant,

Aspasia

Source: JW manuscript copy; 'Aspasia' Letter-book, 10.²

¹JW's diary shows that he met them at Burford on Nov. 9, and traveled in the coach with them to Oxford. Cf. Mary's letter to JW of Nov. 19.

²Transcription published in *Works*, 25:253–54.

From Kezia Wesley

[Lincoln]
[October 28, 1730]

Dear Brother,

I suppose one of the company you have so lately been engaged with is the wonderful bright lady you spoke of in your last letter.¹ I shall be glad to know what they are, and where they come from, and whether you think I shall ever have the satisfaction of seeing them or no. It is impossible to express how much you obliged me in writing so kind a letter before I had answered your last. And I heartily wish I could transfer the obligation in writing a pleasing a letter to you as yours was to me. If you pity all who are of Norris's opinion, you must pity me, for it is certainly my persuasion all human passions must be limited since all human minds are so.² Nor can we love or hate infinitely when we ourselves are finite. Nor can we love twenty people with the same degree of affection that we can one. Indeed Christian charity may embrace all the world, but that's quite another thing and proceeds from other causes. The love of benevolence is not what we are now speaking of. If we consider friendship, which is surely the highest degree of love, and trace it up to its original, we shall find it proceeds always from that sympathy of minds which is as hard to meet with as an exact likeness between two faces. And this I take to be the cause why it is so rarely found. And we may justly complain with Herbert that

[...] the way of friendship's gone
Though David had his Jonathan, Christ his John.³

I presume since you have heard so often from home there is no need of the information I can give relating to Epworth or Hurst.⁴ I have heard but once from home since I came from thence, and that was from sister Patty.⁵ I confess I was uneasy about the soul called Mr. Johnson when I thought there was danger of his having her, because she seemed to hate him, rather than have any degree of affection for him. But that uneasiness was removed when she assured me that she truly believed that if ever they were married she should be very happy.

It is true I have endured some pain since you left Lincoln, for I have scarce had a day's health this two months. But whether sickness be an affliction or no must be judged by the effect. For if by it we arrive at a greater degree of humility and patience, surely we must account it a blessing. Now I find I have rather more of the latter than before. I am much easier of the want of necessaries than I should have ever been, had I enjoyed an uninterrupted state of health. But there was another reason which made me choose to part, brother, with the greatest satisfaction I have here for a time than put my sister to any charge that could possibly be prevented.

Dear brother, I am sensible that there is nothing in my person that can incite any to love. Nor in my mind.

¹Likely Mary (Granville) Pendarves.

²John Norris (1657–1711) was a philosopher associated with Cambridge Platonism. Among his works that JW had read was *The Theory and Regulation of Love* (1698), which stresses regulating human passions.

³George Herbert, *The Church Porch*, 'Friendship', st 1.

⁴The current residence of Richard and Susanna (Wesley) Ellison.

⁵Martha Wesley; see her comments on Mr. Johnson in a letter to JW, Mar. 30, 1731.

If pois'd aright in reason's equal scale
Light fly my merits, and my faults prevail.⁶

But if the loving any person can entitle one to a share of their affections, I think I may challenge your heart. There are two instances of love: one is pleasure in conversing with any; the other is pain if one be obliged to part with them. Now if you will own these to be marks of love, you will not impute my not writing to want of affection, when I assure you I received a great deal of pleasure when you was here, and great pain when you left me. Even greater than at my parting with Miss Peggy, whom I must ever love and ever mourn.

My sister⁷ is going to Epworth and intends to stay the winter. I have three or four letters to write home, which is the reason that I can't write to brother Charles, till my sister is gone. As to my present employment, there is no need of a more particular account than that I work from morning till nine at night, and a little dancing for diversion. The rest of our time is wasted in sleep.

I am in great haste, so must conclude.

Your sincere friend,

Kezia Wesley

Miss Kitty [Hargreave] gives her service. Thanks for the verses.

Address: 'To / the Reverend Mr. John Wesley, fellow of / Lincoln College / Oxon'.

Postmark: '28/OC'.

Endorsement: by JW, 'S[ister] K[ezia] Oct. 1730'.

Source: holograph; MARC, DDWes 6/2.

⁶Cf. Matthew Prior, 'Henry and Emma', ll. 186–87.

⁷Emilia Wesley.

From Mary (Granville) Pendarves

New Bond Street [London]
November 19 [1730]

The pleasure you and your brother gave us of your conversation at Burford, the entertainment we had upon the road to Oxford,¹ which neither the dirty way nor rattling wheels could entirely deprive us of, the book² to which we owe many agreeable hours, and the great consolation and civility which my mother received from you (which she has not failed to inform us of) after we left her; are favours that ought to be acknowledged with the utmost gratitude. You might reasonably have expected this small return much sooner, but we have been in a perpetual hurry since our arrival. I have not had time even to write to Varanese. You are inclined to think favourably of Selima and Aspasia; therefore I believe you will not easily accuse them of ingratitude. They are sensible of the advantage your friendship will be to them, and desire more than to be worthy of it. Nor is this a small ambition, for you cannot place your esteem but where there is the appearance of some perfection. Your example and instruction may in time make so great an impression on them as that they may challenge your favour as their due. At present they look on it as an obligation.

Our journey ended with as good success, though not altogether so much satisfaction, as it begun. The company in the coach were tolerably entertaining, and very complaisant. We got to town by six o'clock, and were not at all fatigued, nor have we caught any cold since we came. The life of noise and vanity that is commonly led here cannot possibly afford any entertainment for you. When we have an opportunity of conversing with a reasonable friend we wish that Cyrus and Araspes were added to the company. I have been at two operas, and very much delighted. I hope it is not a fault to be transported by music; if it is, I will endeavour to correct it. I am ashamed of sending you so blotted a piece of paper, but I am in haste, and must trust to your partiality to excuse the faults of,

Your most obliged humble servant.

Araspes may assure himself of the good wishes of Selima and Aspasia.

Source: JW manuscript copy; 'Aspasia' Letter-book, 12–13.³

¹Cf. her letter to JW, Oct. 26, 1730.

²Cf. her letter to JW, Oct. 12, 1730.

³Transcription published in *Works*, 25:255.

From the Rev. Samuel Wesley Sr.

[Epworth]
[December 1, 1730]

This day I received both yours,¹ and this evening in our course of reading I thought I found an answer that would be more proper than any I myself could dictate, though since it will not be easily translated I send it in the original. 2 Corinthians 7:4. Πολλή μοι καύχησις ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν· πεπλήρωμαι τῇ παρακλήσει, ὑπερπερισσεύμαι τῇ χαρᾷ.² What would you be? Would you be angels? I question whether a mortal can arrive to a greater degree of perfection than steadily to do good, and for that very reason patiently and meekly to suffer evil. For my part, on the present view of your actions and designs, my daily prayers are that God would keep you humble, and then I am sure that if you continue to suffer for righteousness' sake, though it be but in a lower degree, the spirit of grace³ and of glory shall in some good measure rest upon you. Be never weary of well-doing; never look back, for you know the prize and the crown are before you. Though I can scarce think so meanly of you as that you would be discouraged with the crackling of thorns under a pot. Be not high-minded, but fear. Preserve an equal temper of mind under whatever treatment you meet with from a not very just or well-natured world. Bear no more sail than is necessary, but steer steady. The less you value yourselves for these unfashionable duties (as there is no such thing as works of supererogation), the more all good and wise men will value you, if they see your actions are of a piece; or which is infinitely more, he by whom actions and intentions are weighed will both accept, esteem, and reward you.

I hear my son John has the honour of being styled 'the father of the Holy Club'. If it be so, I am sure I must be the grandfather of it; and I need not say that I had rather any of my sons should be so dignified and distinguished than to have the title of 'His Holiness'.⁴

Sources: Whitehead, *Life*, 1:425–27 is a transcribed excerpt from the holograph; Morgan MSS, 22–23 gives a briefer excerpt as quoted by JW in an Oct. 1732 letter to Richard Morgan Sr. Published by JW in *Journal* 1, Preface (*Works*, 18:127).⁵

¹JW's diary records a letter to Samuel Sr. written on Nov. 23; it is not known to survive.

²'Great is my glorying of you. I am filled with comfort. I am exceeding joyful.'

³Whitehead and *Journal* read, 'God'.

⁴The last paragraph appears only in Whitehead.

⁵Collated transcription published in *Works*, 25:338–39.

From the Rev. Richard Hutchins¹

Lincoln College [Oxford]
December 14 [1730]

Dear Sir,

Many thanks to you for the favour of your last.² I do not know how it is, but I observe that no letters give me a greater satisfaction than your own. And I observe likewise that your letters are never more agreeable than when the writer of them is in Gloucestershire, or has been lately there. Whether the pretty conversation you meet with there gives a particular turn to your way of writing, or whether the news of the country excite in me a particular curiosity, or whether there be not a particular satisfaction in hearing a certain person mentioned, I do not presume to say. I leave that to yourself to determine.

But notwithstanding the great pleasure it gave me to see your handwriting, and the vast impatience I was under of reading the contents, (would you think it possible!) I received other letters by the same post and read yours the last of all. Why this is still more unaccountable, I cannot tell what reason to give for it. Nay, I do assure you I did not consult my reason about it. It was the result of pure instinct, which seemed to direct me to suspend the enjoyment of a very great pleasure till I could have an opportunity of enjoying it more perfectly.³ Why this was certainly the case. Letters of business may be hurried over, a cursory view is sufficient for them. But when Gloucestershire is the theme, this is a subject deserves to be dwelt upon. One would not willingly be interrupted in the midst of so agreeable an entertainment. Business at such times would be altogether as impertinent as a visit from a man with a red face. You remember that story well. I am sure it made such an impression upon me that I shall not easily forget it.

I cannot say but I was much disappointed at the first opening your letter, when instead of that agreeable entertainment that I expected, I came to read over the history of your own misfortunes. They gave me a great deal of concern, but I was unwilling to dwell long upon so disagreeable a subject, therefore read it over with hurry and impatience. But as soon as the sun began to shine out again, and Miss Fanny's⁴ name was mentioned—every syllable had its weight! *It is a strange girl, that's sure, and has such ways with her* that one cannot hear of her without being sensibly affected. The sending her service lays upon me vast obligation, but the *becoming eagerness* with which it was sent is really intolerable.

What news shall I send you from hence? Mr. Medley is expected here tomorrow night. I hear he designs to make but a short stay in Oxford, which makes me believe that he intends to be happy in a little time. Mr. sub-rector Isham⁵ has received yours,⁶ and designs in a little time to acknowledge the favour.

¹Richard Hutchins (c. 1698–1781), became a fellow of Lincoln College in 1720, earning his M.A. in 1723. He would go on to receive both the B.D. and D.D. degrees, and serve as Rector of Lincoln College from 1755 until his death.

²This letter is not known to survive.

³Hutchins adds in the left margin: 'Query: Whether this be not a rule proper to be observed in the greater concerns of life'.

⁴Frances ('Fanny') Tooker (c. 1704–84) was the daughter of Rev. Trethewy Tooker (c. 1675–1747), rector of Buckland, Gloucestershire, and his wife Frances (Horsington) Tooker. She appears as a correspondent in JW's Letter-book (1724–29).

⁵Euseby Isham (c. 1698–1755), would become Rector of Lincoln College in 1731, on the death of John Morley.

⁶This letter is not known to survive.

Mr. Vone makes frequent visits to Dolly Freeman,⁷ which occasions great speculation. If you have any pretensions there (I tell you as a friend), it is high time to put in your claim; if you defer it long, in all probability it will be too late.

Yours affectionately,

Richard Hutchins

Source: holograph; MARC, WCB, D6/1/212.

⁷Possibly a sister of Richard Walker Freeman (born c. 1710), who matriculated at Lincoln College, Oxford in Jan. 1726.