CHARLES WESLEY, EVANGELIST: THE UNPUBLISHED NEW CASTLE JOURNAL

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Charles Wesley (1701-1788) is remembered as one of the patriarchs of the Methodist tradition and the host of modern denominations that sprang from those Eighteenth Century beginnings. Although he was an able and tireless evangelist, Charles' hymns have remained his most enduring contribution. The dimensions of his hymnological output was astonishing; as George Findlay wryly observed: "There are two marvels—one that Charles' pen should be so ready . . . and the other that it should have written so much of permanent value." Even into our own day as many as 400 of his compositions adorn the worship of various Christian communions, but these are merely a token representation of his entire hymnological corpus of over 9,000 hymns and sacred poems.

While several critical issues emerge when one attempts to fix the precise number of Charles' compositions, 9,000 hymns and sacred poems seems to be a reasonable estimate. Whatever the exact number of his hymns, it is clear that Charles Wesley wrote regularly and often. If he did write approximately 9,000 hymns and poems, the younger Wesley penned at least a hymn a day everyday for twenty-five years of his adult life. This pace was maintained in the midst of a frantic public life that often included four or five sermons and extensive travel each day. Charles' journal sets his hymns in the context of daily ministerial duties. The precise estimate of the extent Charles' hymnological corpus runs as low as 6,000 if one excludes the lyric poems which were rarely if ever sung. Baker's figure of 9,000 is slightly higher than the traditional estimates (compare J. E. Rattenbury, Evangelical Doctrines of Charles Wesley's Hymns (London: Epworth, 1948), 19-20, who suggests 7,300 as an apt ascription). But recent documentary evidence supports Baker's larger figure; 9,000 may in fact be a conservative figure. As many as 2,000 of Charles' hymns remain in manuscripts penned in his own hand, unpublished in any form. Other issues, like distinguishing the compositions of Charles from those of John Wesley, also have direct bearing on one's estimate of Charles' hymnological corpus. I have given the matter of authorship and ascription thorough treatment in the first chapter of my unpublished dissertation, "Charles Wesley's Theology of the Cross: An Examination of the Theology and Method of Charles Wesley as seen in his Doctrine of the Atonement," (Drew University, Madison, N.J., 1983). Thomas Jackson, A Life of Charles Wesley, 2 Vols. (London: J. Mason, 1862), I, 332. John R. Tyson and Douglas Lister, "Charles Wesley, Pastor: A Glimpse Inside His Short-hand Journal," Quarterly Review, Vol. 4, No. 1, (Spring 1984), 9-22.

preaching services and often treated the same biblical passage as the sermon. They also enhanced the fellowship of the Methodist societies, and were an aid for personal devotions. Wearisome travel by horse, coach, or foot was made more pleasant by bellowing a few Wesley hymns; as Charles wrote, "We sang and shouted all the way to Oxford." The process of singing and composing hymns made familiar journeys pass at unexpected pace: "I crept on, singing or making hymns till I got unawares to Canterbury."

In Charles' own day he was known primarily as a preacher and evangelist. The Methodists attested the popularity of his pulpit work by making his sermon, "Awake, Thou That Sleepest," the best seller among their tracts. So also did the folk who crowded the town squares and village greens to hear him preach. But like his brother John, the younger Wesley was a reluctant revivalist. Converted on Whitsunday (Pentecost Day), May 21, 1738, he remained bed-bound and timid, sharing his faith with his brother John and a few friends. It was nearly two months before Charles began to preach again. By August 31, 1738 his work was beginning to cause concern, and eventually opposition, from the Anglican religious establishment. His journal record for the fall of 1738 reports Charles' strained interview with the Dean of his college and the Bishop of London. He met twice with each supervisor, and in each case the agenda was remarkably the same; they questioned the orthodoxy of Charles' message ("Salvation by faith only"), and his "regularity" or fidelity to the Church of England.

Soon the established churches began closing their doors to Wesleyan evangelism; by December 21, 1738 the clerk of St. Antholin's Church had orders to forbid any Methodist to preach there, and not long after the Church Wardens at Islington Church guarded the pulpit stairs to prevent

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6Jackson, ed., Charles Wesley's journal, I, 95; 100; 131; 139; 145; 150; 154.

7Ibid., 131; cf. 101, 145.

8Ibid., II, 214.


10June 24, 1739, 10,000 stood at Moorfields to hear Charles cf. Journal, I, 155; several thousand at Kennington-Common, Aug. 26, 1739 (Ibid. 165); 5,000 at the Rose-green, Sept. 3, 1739 (Ibid. 167).

11Ibid., I, 115.

12Ibid., I, 129.

13Ibid., I, 129, 133, 135, 137.

14Ibid., I, 139.
Charles from entering the pulpit. As their situation became more and more desperate the Wesleys were prevailed upon to follow George Whitefield's example in field-preaching and mass evangelism. Open air preaching was, as Frank Baker has described it, "a heavy cross, an affront to [Charles'] health, his temperment, and to his ecclesiastical propriety." Excluded from the churches, Charles resolved to "break down the bridge, and become desperate" finally preaching in Whitefield's pattern on June 24, 1739. His journal reports the event:

I found near ten thousand helpless sinners waiting for the Word in Moorfields. I invited them in my Master's words, as well as name: 'Come unto me all ye that travail, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' the Lord was with me, even me his meanest [i.e., least] messenger according to his promise.

Six days later Wesley once again arrived in the office of the Dean of his College, "who spoke with usual severity against field-preaching and Mr. Whitefield; . . ." Charles' reluctance regarding open air evangelism was not easily overcome, and as late as August 10, 1739 he intimated to George Whitefield "I am continually tempted to leave off preaching and hide myself . . . I cannot expect that [God] should long employ one who is ever murmuring to be discharged." But as Charles continued in the work he grew into the tasks set before him and the Methodist revival grew at a pace that he could scarcely comprehend.

As Charles preached and sang his way across the English countryside in the autumn of 1742, he came to understand the Methodist revival as a divinely kindled conflagration. When it first began it was "small and feeble," but "Now it wins its widening way." Unfortunately his published journal record of this important period of growth is scant, but one of Charles' journal-letters has survived.

Charles wrote the letter to his brother John as a sort of progress report on his evangelistic work in Newcastle during the autumn of 1742. Precisely

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15Ibid., I, 149.
17Ibid., I, 155. Emphasis added.
18Ibid., 156.
19Ibid., 158-159.
20This verse is from Charles' hymn "See how great a flame aspires." The hymn is extant in manuscripts Clark and Chestnut which both connect it with several others "Written at Leaving ye Staffordshire Colliers." But Charles' published Hymns and Sacred Poems (1749) links the composition with his work among the Newcastle Colliers (cf. PW, V, 120-121). Thomas Jackson, a Methodist chronicler of the second generation, mused, "the imagery was suggested by the large fires connected with the colliers, which illuminate the whole of that part of the country in the darkest nights." The fourth verse moves from Newcastle's flames to the prophet Elijah's experience on Mt. Carmel (I Ki. xviii. 44-45) connecting the fire of revival and the "spark of grace" with the "Spirit of His love." It continues in modern Methodist hymnals without alteration. In The Book of Hymns (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1964), this hymn is #464.
why it was not carried in Charles’ published journal is not clear; perhaps it was lost or misplaced before Thomas Jackson prepared Wesley’s papers for publication.21 A penciled notation on the manuscript indicates it was once located at “The Orphan House.” It now resides in the British Methodist Archives.22

The manuscript selection which follows gives the fullest report of Charles’ evangelistic strategy which is now extant. It is particularly interesting because of the way it reveals his combining open-air evangelism with spiritual conservation as instruments of renewal. Charles’ typical pattern was established by the fall of 1742; mass evangelism by day, and soul-searching interviews by night. Persons of awakened faith were shepherded into the Methodist societies and classes where the process of spiritual formation was begun.

The letter makes it clear that Charles was preaching “salvation by faith” constantly. He was still being accused of doctrinal innovation, and, hence forced to defend both his gospel and his ecclesiology by appealing to the Anglican standards. The hymns written in this same period of ministry are full of fervor. They echo the same excitement Charles’ letter conveys, as well as Wesley’s own amazement at the great work Christ was working through him.

The correspondence concludes with a personal note to John Wesley, which reflects Charles’ concern over the well-being of the infant society at Newcastle and shows how the brothers shared ministerial responsibilities for the growing movement. The letter is published here, for the first time, by permission of the British Methodist Archives and History Committee. Several of Charles’ hymns which were written in the same historical context as the journal-letter are appended to complete the record.

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Newcastle, 5th Journal, Sept. 23, [1742]

Several of our dissenting Brethren23 would needs speak with me after the Company was gone; most of them were open hearted and ready to

21Thomas Jackson, editor of Charles’ published journal, recalled a gross mishandling of Wesley’s papers just prior to their publication: “... [the journal] was in great danger of being irrecoverably lost. It was found among some loose straw on the floor of a public house in London, where the furniture of the owner was for a time deposited; several leaves in the volume being cut from the binding, and yet not removed.” Journal, I, v.

22The Wesleys began building an orphanage in Newcastle, with John laying the corner-stone December 20, 1742. The manuscript is now located in Charles Wesley Folio IV, The Methodist Archives and Research Center, John Rylands Library of the University of Manchester, Manchester, England.

23“Dissenters” were those Protestants (Puritans and Presbyterians) who, for reasons of conscience, did not conform to the theology and practice of the Anglican Church. Their non-
part with their Idol adherence but one was much disturbed that I should differ from the Church of Scotland. This cursed Devilish National Faith! How inacceptible is a man of Satan's Election! There is more hope of a Deist than of him.

**Thurs. Sept, 23.** Expounded the Woman of Canaan to a vast multitude this morning. Glory be to God, who still ministers to send the Saviour and Bread to the eaters. We had many women of Canaan among us, who, I trust, will never cease crying after Him; till Jesus answers, ["Be it unto thee even as thou wilt."]

The morning would not suffice to speak with Those who came to me. By 12 o'clock I got to Isahwall a populous town 3 miles from Newcastle. Found about 1000 people gathered in a meadow made almost for the purpose. I stood under a large Tree, on the Top of a green Hill, of an easy assent. I could not help asking as the People flocked from all sides, "Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as Doves to their windows?"

Before we had done [sic] the Hymn, I thinkest there could not be fewer than 8000 poured in upon us. I showed them (God being my strong Helper), their damnable estate, and the only possible salvation from Hosea 13.9 ["O Israel, thou has destroy'd thyself, but in me is thy Help."] I am sure it was glad tidings to these poor Colliers, for the Word shall not return void. — Promised to see them again next Wednesdays, and rode back to Newcastle.

Having sent away my Transcribers this morning, commended to the grace of God, I was employed all the afternoon writing in my Journal myself. Just called at Newgate whence the Prisoners sent me a Petition to visit them and appointed Tuesday. Drank tea with your B. Robinson's mother. Saw a Dancing Room which we have thoughts of buying for our Society, and met them tonight at B. Robinson's [house].

It was a meeting indeed! For our Lord was in the midst of us. Never have I felt stronger faith for others. My Tongue was loosed to proclaim the Love of Christ crucified. I called upon the poor, and lame, the halt

conformity brought persecution (Conventical Acts of 1664) and eventually separation from the Established Church. While the term refers to quite a variety of theological perspectives, the dissenters quite typically were staunch Calvinists and therein was Charles' point of contention with them.

24National Church of Scotland was Presbyterian in polity and rigorously Calvinistic in doctrinal perspective.

25"Satan's election" is a theological polemic against the dissenters' doctrines of absolute predestination and unconditional election whereby some people were thought to be chosen by God to salvation, whereas others were elected to damnation. On other occasions Charles called this doctrine "the horrible decree."

26Hymn, "See how great a flame aspires," #3, v. 1, below.

27Newgate was a prison in the vicinity of London. The Wesleys often ministered to the prisoners there (cf. C. W. Journal, I, 190, 191, 210, 221, 243). John Wesley described the place as one of the darkest "seats of woe this side of hell."
and the blind; and even compelled them to come in [Lk. 14:23f]. Every
time we prayed, some or other received Forgiveness. Two of them gave
 glory to God below as two more declared to me that they have found the
Peace which passeth knowledge. All rejoiced in hope of the grace which
shall be brought unto them at the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

Fri. Sept. 24. Began our Lord’s discourse with the Woman of
Samaria, but could not get half through it. Never have I seen a more doubly
attentive audience, no not in Kingswood. 28 Breakfasted with Mrs. R.[obin-
son]’s. One of them would be a righteous Person, who, if as they imag-
ined, needed no repentance. I excluded the righteousness of myself, my
Parents and others, who have profited in the Jewish Religion beyond our
equals. 29 And she was by a miracle of grace convinced. H. Y. [a] woman
who lay a dying at the house door, but would not hear of having me [in],
was not overruled to send for me, and we all adjoined thither. She hoped
to be saved (as they all tell me on their death beds) because she had done
no harm. God gave me convincing words (to ship wreck her own
righteousness) which struck them at the bottom [?]. The mother and both
the daughters are now, I trust poor Publicans [e.g., repentant as in Lk.
xviii.13].

Conferred with several others who earnestly desired to be taken into
our society. I could not reject them, for they see themselves fit for nothing
but Hell.

Rode to Tanfield and preached the gospel from that most compas-
sionate Word, [“] It is finished! [”] [Jn. xix. 30] I trust some found it ap-
plied to their hearts. Described His sufferings again at the Publick House
from Is. 63, [“] Who is this that cometh from Edom in died garments from
Boash?[”]

Sat. 25. Expounded the Paralytic Healed, and spake searching
words to the unredeemed. Accepted the repeated Invitation of a neighbor-
ing Farmer and passed the morning at his House. There were 3 or 4
Families [who] lived together in an old family sect. One of the women
had been a constant Hearer of us in Moorfields, and tasted that the Lord
is gracious. She received us gladly, as they did all. An old Dissenter desired
me to tell him the meaning of I Jn. 3.9, [“] Whosoever is born of God
doth not commit sin for his seed remaineth in him, and cannot sin, because
he is born of God,[”] I expounded the whole chapter but gave not the
full license to Sin. 30 He took it with marvelous patience. In discourse he
brought the old plea for sin that St. Paul was carnal and sold under it.

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28Kingswood was the location of the Methodist preaching room and school in Bristol. It
was one of Charles’ regular pulpits and a place where the people flocked to hear him.
29The “Jewish Religion” here is a metaphor for a process of self-justification through good
deeds or works of the Law.
30Charles’ exposition of I Jn. 3:9 typically stressed salvation from all sin and hence pressed
on towards a Christian Perfection which did not give sin full reign or “license.”
I show[ed] him that the apostle could not possibly speak of himself in that chapter [Rom. vii]. He was convinced and gave up that stronghold likewise. I have not met with his Fellow [i.e., "equal"] among all the men of Adherence [to the dissenters' doctrines]: He is a prodigy of Tractableness; and surely not far from the Kingdom of Heaven.

My host made me promise to come to his House myself, and send my brother or whosoever of our Friends should ever visit his country. We took sweet counsel together, after dinner I visited a poor sick man, who hopes to be saved for his repentance, but gladly heard of a true and better way through faith in the Blood of Jesus. At 2 [o'clock] my appointment with a house full of Colliers and others, and joining in Prayer and Singing till it was time to preach. There was a vast concourse of people whom I laboured to convince of Sin and of Righteousness from 1 Cor. 8.9, ["Know ye not that the unrighteousness shall not inherit the kingdom of God! Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor adulterers, —nor Thieves, nor Covetous, nor drunkards, shall inherit the Kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God."] My mouth was opened to preach both Law and Gospel. 2 Ministers were to hear me at the house whence I lodged. Some in their room laughed and made great disturbances for a time. After preaching J. Jackson spoke to them very plainly and by her rebuke stopt their mouths. By 6 [o'clock] we got back to N[ew]c[astle].

At 7 [o'clock] I met the Society at my lodgings (now increased to 70). The great Power of God was among us as I have seldom known. I had just read strong attestation from the letter of a Friend, whom I now commended to the constant prayers of the Infant Society. John Kitchen just before we met had come desiring to be (as he said) with the Christians. I asked him concerning his state and he only answered me, "I am a poor sinner!" This he spoke in great simplicity, without that great affectation of the still Brethren. Another of the Society, he came and told me he had been struck blind as he was first in the room so that for a quarter of an hour he could see nothing in it, when in a moment the Sun of Righteousness arose upon him with healing in His wings. His gesture explained his words, for he appeared full of all Peace and Joy in Believing.

31 The Still Brethren were "Moravianized Methodists" who turned from the Wesleyan program of constant communion and social holiness toward a more mystical and privatized gospel. The "still brethren" adopted the practice of waiting in stillness for God's direction through the inner voice; the Wesleys reacted strongly to their depreciation of outward means like prayer, Bible study, and the sacraments, as well as to their pious language which was not actualized in deeds of Christian service. The Wesleys formally separated from Molther, Simpson, and James Hutton on June 11, 1740—"gathering up their wreck," as Charles put it, to reorganize Methodism apart from the "still brethren." Cf., C. W. Journal, 1, 205-240.
Sun. Sept. 26. Met a still larger congregation, I think, than ever as thousands and thousands listened to my exposition of Ezekiel's vision of Dry Bones [Ezek. 37]. There were many in the open valley and they were also very dry; but the breath of the Lord was present to quicken them. Lord, open the graves of all the people and put Thy Spirit within us, and bring us into our own Land.32—Visited 3 sick women which received my saying; one of them was above 90 years old.

Rec[ieve]d the sacrament at Andrews. Dined with one B. Wilkson, the first fruits of Newcastle. His wife also grows in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Tis very remarkable that in this place the husband and wife are generally called [to faith] together.

Walked to S[L]angslide[?]; but such a sight. Mine legs have never failed. The usual congregation at Kennington [Cross] an handfull in comparison.33 I stood on the highest point of the Hill so as to command the whole assembly, which was extended in a semi-circle on either hand of the hill, and the rise before was so thronged, yet was quiet, that my soul was filled with awe at the sight. The sun shone in a little brightness, but without his strength and fierceness. God opened my mouth so that I verily believed the very most of them heard. Tis hardly to be believed, but yet with God all things are possible. I preached the law and Gospel about half an hour each from 1 Cor. 6:9, ["] and Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God?—and such were some of you: but ye are washed, &c.["] Their God was a Fire, and as an Hammer, as be unto the Lord worship, and Power. After speaking an hour to the almost extent of my voice, I felt no more pain or weakness than if I had said nothing; but walked or rather ran quite around the town as it were, to Mrs. J's. —It is God that girdeth me with strength of War. He maketh my feet as Hart's feet, and settest me up on high. He makest mine hands to fight and mine arms shall break even a band of steel.

Went with my old Friend (who is become a little child [i.e., humble in spirit]) to his society of Pharisees. Their spokesman a schoolmaster, made me a Bow and a Speech wherein he gave me to know as soon as I came in, that they were not unanimous about it, and therefore could not receive me; so (in effect) I might go about my business. I told them I did not mean to obtrude myself upon them but only came to join with them in Prayer: but if they refused to let a Minister of the Church of England pray with them I had no more to do but to take my leave. They answered I might pray, if I would pray by a Form [i.e., a standard prayer].

32 Resuscitation of Ezekiel's "Dry Bones" was allegorized and combined with the prophecies of the restoration of the nation to the land of promise to create a metaphor for redemption.
33 The congregation of several thousand which Charles routinely met at Kennington Cross, or Commons looked rather small as compared to the huge crowds that assembled in Newcastle. Cf. C. W. Journal I, 157; 160; 165.
I replied that was my design, for I know no Prayers and Church like our own. That I was a True Son and servant of the Church, and such I should live and die. That I had baptized many into our communion, and t'was my constant Business so to do, but that I could meet with exceeding few Church of England men any where; most of her children having forsaken their Mother both in principle and in practice, and turned back to Popery, even its worst error — Justification by Works; and refusing all obedience to her Injunctions. "You who call yourselves of the Church (I added) do you not hear the Church? She commands you to fast every Friday in the year. Do you obey her? If not you are no true members of the Church of England. She teaches that we are justified by faith only, without works, and that we are to expect the inspiration the Holy Ghost, yea and to be filled with the Holy Ghost. Do you agree to these fundamental doctrines? If not ye are no Church of England men. Mr. Steward answered He had heard and read our most famous Divines and they never taught any other [doctrine] than I said. As to their Preaching, I answered, I myself since I came hither, had heard one of their preachers say we were saved by the merit of our repentance. And of our Writers I asked if he had heard of Archbishop T[illotson] "Yes, sir, we have his works." Then you have never read them; for he has Ten Sermons to prove the Popish Doctrine of Justification by Faith AND works, and their title is 'Regeneration the condition of Justification.' — Our Church calls all that teach such doctrine Antichrists, and enemies of Christ and his Gospel. Her homilies on salvation are the most excellent writings of any but the inspired, and I earnestly recommend them to your most serious perusal. Her definition of faith is . . .

Again Mr. Howard interposed, to mend her definition by taking in good works. I told him I found he had not so much as read our Homilies and knows nothing of the Doctrines of our Church, or he would have remembered she had sufficiently guarded her meaning concerning the consequent necessity of good works. Yes he had read them, he said, for they had the very full edition of Mr. Norris'. I asked him to show me these good homilies on Salvation by faith. He brought the book but to his great surprise, found his editor had even left them out; which I knew, though he did not. Well, Sir, said I, you see your famous divines do not all preach justification by faith. No; they have no occasion for faith; they build without a foundation. — When he had taken breath, he fell abruptly upon my holding assemblies contrary to the Church. I asked why he fancied Religious Societies contrary to the Church, for how then could he vindicate his own? "O but, said he, you do not use the prayers of the Church." "Sir, you are mistaken; we DO use the some of them." "But why not the whole service?" "Because that would be contrary to an order of our Church, namely that this service be only used in consecrated places; that would be giving occasion to them that seek occasion, and would im-
mediately cry out that we had set up a separate Communion. ["""] — He then talked of some of the Canons, [i.e., Church laws] which he said, I broke; but I cut him short by desiring him first to prove that those Canons bound ME. Again he was stuck on an heap;[; he cries we deny First Principles. I begged him to tell me by what act of parliament they were ratified; and yet, I added, because they lov'd the show of authority, my brother and I have observed and do observe MORE of them than any two clergymen in England. — I exhorted them all to learn and practice the doctrines of their own Church, and parted civilly. Three or 4 of their pillars came out from among them and desired to be admitted into our Society, finding that we ARE what their brethren PROFESSED to be, in a man, true Church of England men.

While I rested at B. Jackson's, several came to speak with me about their souls, some who have found Rest and more who are sincerely seeking it. Of the former were Marg. Hart (an old believer), John Bowmen (Mr. G's son in law), W. Todd, and Jane Dent. This last informs me she has been seeking Christ above 30 years, being the strictest professor [of faith], but never able to find rest. God by his Word, which I minister, concluded her in unbelief, and then had mercy upon her, "On Thurs[day], Night (she said) I was waked out of sleep by those words, "My Spirit beareth witness with thy Spirit that Thou are a child of God." "From that time I have been filled with peace and joy unspeakable. Such inexpressible pleasure I have in reading, praying and hearing as I thought was not on this side of heaven. My eyes are strangely enlightened, so that all things appear quite different to what they did before. I am full of consolation, and yet I find there is something behind, I have fears now and then that I shall not hold out, or shall not so always. I want that Perfect Love which casts out fear.”

Met the society at my lodgings, and the great Power of God was with us. I asked them [unclear] and all, ["""]who had found it present to heal [unclear]?["""] Several bore witness to the increase of their faith, and one that she had now found [unclear] the unspeakable gift. We had most SENSIBLE fellowship with our absent brethren and rejoiced as if we had seen them all before us. I marvelled at the power of His grace. How does he finish His Word and cut it short! A short work does He make with this People, indeed I never saw such simple-childlike souls. We prayed most earnestly for labourers, and surely the Lord will not leave them as sheep without a Shepherd.

Mon. Sept. 27. Finished my discourse on the Woman of Samaria. The hoar-frost did not lessen my audience. I trust we shall quickly have among us many handy soldiers of Christ.

Rejoiced this morning with more who have now received the atonement. Cha[rel]s Thaffo, Haner Wanlas, Christian Gibson, and Ch[arle]s Coldwall were added to the little children whose sins are forgiven. Isab.
Jackson received faith last night at the Society, and all her language is 
["]My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoiceth in God my 
Saviour."[
]

My audience at Tames was twice as large as before. I opened the book
on Isa. 43.23 "I come, I am he that blotteth out thy transgression for my
own sake, and will not remember thy sins. Put me in remembrance, let
us plead together: declare Thou that Thou mayst be justified." Received
great power to preach the gospel to the poor. Some of the rich of this
world stood—at a distance from the vulgar and SEEMED to listen to the
truth. Squire Rows staid [sic] some time, But when I mentioned Hell to
ears polite—the Hon Worldly, Mr. _____, took his leave abruptly. [I]
Returned to town, and called (at the Rich-men's hospital) in the Name
and Words of the universal saviour, "Look unto me, and be ye saved all
the end[s] of the earth" [Is. 45:221]. Employed all the evening in
Conference.

Tues. 28. Preached again in at the hospital. It rained hard in the
night and so continued like I began. Then God stayed the bottles of heaven.
The weather hither unto has been so remarkably favourable that it is almost
a proverb here: "There will be no rain this evening, for Mr.[Wesley] is
to preach." How pitiable are those who exclude the particular Providence
of God from such little things, as they call them. In all my ways I will
acknowledge Thee and Thou shalt direct my paths.

Preached repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ, from Acts
3.19 ["]Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted
out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the
Lord."["] Near 2000 heard me patiently. Visited the sick in the hospital.
Received at my lodgings more names for the Society. Call'd on Mr. B.,
the most moderate of the dissenting preachers, and went with him to the
Newgate [prison]. Preached there to the debtors and felons from Is. 61.
["]The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me &c.["] That Spirit was
mightily among us, and shook the foundation of their Prisons. O that every one's
Bands might be loosed!

Dined at Mr. B.'s and came to a meaner [i.e., "little"] agreement.
I rejoiced at his uprightness of heart. Related my own conviction of
unbelief and the manner in which faith came. His heart seemed to knit
to us. Lord what we know not, show Thou us.

At 3 [o'clock] met all the Family [i.e., the Methodist Society] of near
300 in their large room at the hospital, and exhorted and prayed with them
till preaching time. They received me gladly; spake with much affection
of my brother [Westley] Hall, whose memory is dear to them. 34 I was quite
spent by speaking to them when I went to preach on the hill. The con-
gregation was vastly increased by our nearness to the town; but my body
for once failed me; having been speaking or preaching almost without in-
terruption from 5 in the morning. Yet our Lord could not fail His prom-
ise: ("Lo I am with you always") and directed me to Ezek. 16. 1. Preached with great weakness, yet my hearers, I believe, were not so sensible to it as myself, for my voice held out 3 quarters of an hour. Visited one in the hospital, then walked (but sprained my foot by the way) to Mr. J.’s. Thence to my Inn; where a servant of Squire B.’s came to confer with me, who fights my battles against the whole family. He rejoiced exceedingly in the glad tidings I brought[,] that Jesus Christ hath purchased for us the power over all sin. I sent by him a few of our treatises to the young Ladies. Walked with his help and Brother Jackson’s to our Dancing-room, whence the Society was met, now increased to 200. It was excessive[ly] hot, all the windows being shut; but I received extraordinary strength to exhort them for 3 hours. The enemy raged without (and not without provocation) that Christ should be preached in his [the devil’s] School and Synagogue. His children broke the windows and attempted to break open the door. Our Lord was greater and wrought more mightily among us. One was quite overpowered through vehemence of desire, as she told those who thought her in a fit. By 9 [o’clock] we had parted, and I dragged to B[rother] J[ackson]’s a body only not so weak as my soul.

Wed. 29. I live by the gospel; and renewed my strength to preach it this morning. Many poor people stood like lambs in the rain (the first we have had) while I declared my mission to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of satan to the power of God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among all those that are sanctified. Breakfasted with a constant hearer of the Word, and several of those poor Keelmens (Keel-women I should say) flocked to us. They related some instances of their zeal which pleased them more than me. As that [instance when] a gentleman happening to say while I was preaching[,] that I ought to be sent to Bedlam [a mental hospital], a stout woman collared and kicked him down the hill. More of her fellows joined in the pursuit, so that he was forced to fly for his life. Another poor scoffer they put into the pond. I do indeed believe that were any to offer me violence, the people would stone them; but by and by I trust they will learn to suffer for wrong and turn the other cheek. — Already there is,

34Westley Hall was one of Charles’ students from the early days at Oxford, who married Wesley’s sister Martha. He had caused a great deal of hurt at the Epworth homestead by courting another Wesley woman (Kezia) after his engagement to Martha. Increasingly fickle in the ways of love and theology, Hall accompanied the Wesleys on the Georgia mission, and later successively became a Moravian, a Quietist, and a Deist. He openly preached and practiced polygamy in his later years. Cf. Telford, Charles Wesley’s Journal: The Early Journal, p. 281-282.

35“Keelmen” refers to those who worked the keelboats up and down the rivers of this mining district. The keelboats were a sort of freight barge, typically used for transporting coal. They had a hull or keel instead of a flat bottom; the “Keel” as a measurement for coal came directly from the standard capacity of one of these boats. Charles’ phraseology here probably suggests that the wives of the boatmen were present.
I am told, a visible attraction at Sunday sacrament, and drinking is no more. They bring forth fruits meet for repentance. O that they may attend to the Gospel in all things. — Conferred with more candidates for the Society, which is now augmented to 250. Marg. English gives God the glory and informs me that while I was speaking last night in the Society of the Blood of Jesus, the Spirit bore witness with that Blood, and applied it to her heart. She felt her sins forgiven and is now in her first joy.

Rode, for my\textsuperscript{36} in the hard rain to Swainswell for my Wordsake, not expecting a congregation, but many were gathered together, and waited quietly for my coming. They would not go, they said, but stay all day, in the driving rain if I would but preach at last. I put them under the trees; stood upon some steps myself, and preached through this man[ner] forgiveness of sins. The rain gave over and near 2000, I believe[,] heard me patiently, and among them was a gentleman and an officer. They all stood like men that waited for the salvation of God.

Returned to town and preached at the hospital. It rained hard when I began, but none stirred while I urged our Lord's invitation, ["]Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.["] The power of the Lord was mightily among us. To him be the glory.

Called at his desire on Mr. W. one who had been with my brother in Georgia, and accompanied him to our Society. Several strangers had broke in, so that I thought of going away, but it was immediately suggested to me that I ought rather, to stay and preach. I did so and set the terrors of the Lord in among them. After I preached, I received more strength from God; many a Felix [Acts 23.24f] humbled (I more than hope) and the poor mournful sinners were more disposed for their Comforter. To them I divided the Word of grace, and expect to hear that some of them are come to Mount Sion.

\textbf{Thur. 30.} The rain did not lessen my congregation, to whom I cried, "Verily, Verily, the hour cometh and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of Man and they that hear shall live." — My morning visitants so increase upon me that I have scarcely time to eat: but man doth not live by bread alone. Mary M. informs me that while I was speaking against robbing the King of his custom [tax], she found herself under condemnation and cried out of the deep to Jesus till she received forgiveness of that and all her sins. Cath[erine] Hales on Monday night sunk in self-despair, and immediately Jesus Christ was evidently set forth before her as crucified; and that the same time those words were spoken to her soul, ["]Thou hast chosen the better part.["] Marg. Kilpchick tells me that for some time she was struck blind. Then the scales fell from her eyes, and she saw the Lamb standing before her cloth[e]d with His vesture.

\textsuperscript{36}In the manuscript the words "for my," are written and then lined through as Charles edited his letter while he wrote.
dipped in blood; in the same view she beheld all her sins laid upon Him. I cannot doubt that our Lord has in this manner manifested Himself to them, but their fruits will more evidently show it. —Amongst those that came this morning to seek the law at my mouth were 4 soldiers who appear deeply convinced of sin, and groaning for redemption.

Half an hour past 11 [o'clock] I set out for Righton. Four[sic] several times as I was taking the wrong way, some one called after me and set me right. I preached in the street on the first words offered, ["] Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.["] The Lord gave me convincing words. I was surprised to see several ladies [i.e., aristocrats] stand all the hour in the rain. While I was returning home, Mr. Humble sent after me. It was of his (supposed) desire I had came; some telling me he had promised to bring his colliers to hear me. I drank tea at his house. His wife seemed of a Lydia-like spirit [Acts xvi.14]. They told me my old Christ-Church [College] friend, John Lloyd was minister at the place, and would be glad to see me. —I was over persuaded at least to preach here again on Saturday.

As soon as I got to town, the Church warden of the Parish came to see me, an honest orthodox convinceable Pharisee, full of good will, and good wishes toward me, and very inquisitive after the faith.

At 4 [o'clock] Preached at the hospital on the Pool of Bethesda, never with more assistance. The water was troubled; and some I know[,] stepped into the Pool [Jn. 5:2f]. Mr. Br. was of my audience, I am pleased with him more and more, O that all predestinarians were like him! My strength was still continued or rather restored to exhort and comfort the Society of mourners. One of my old colliers found power to lay hold on his Saviour, and bore witness of the truth. Chs. Biggot is also enlightened to see her instance in Christ. She was (like some others) stuck blind as she calls it, for half an hour and then suddenly great light shined into her heart. There are diversities of opinion, but the same Spirit.

Oct. 1 At 5 [o'clock] this morning began family prayers in the hospital. The whole house was present and received me for their Chaplain. I told them in sincerity that I had rather be the Keelmen's chaplain than the King's. There was no expressing their love for me. They would even pluck out their eyes and give them to me; I am so canny a creature! The very tiller of the colliers! [I] Preached in the square on the grand promise of the Father [Lk. xxiv.49]. Breakfasted at Mrs. Hall's, a sincere follower of the Lord, and then proclaimed liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to those [who] are bound: God made bare His arm before them; His righteousness did He openly show in the sight of those poor heathen.

Called with my old Friend on poor Mr. Y., whom his blind Leader, the Steward of the Society, has again turned out of the way. I spake a strong word, which I pray God he may never forget. Got an hour and
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a half for Conference, and rejoiced with Cath. Brown, whose heavy burthen [sic] our Lord relieved in private prayer. Now she fears neither Death nor Hell.

At noon preached at Wickham on ["] Beware of false Prophets — by their fruits ye shall know them."] The Curate last Sunday preached on the same text, a sermon composed by the Rector. The only man that has filled up his cup of the Faith. The other clergymen desired to take Gamaliel’s counsel [Acts v. 34]. I gave the scriptural marks of faith and God's prophets, (by their fruits ye shall know them, their doctrines and lives). I then declared my doctrine and manner of life. I know not where our Lord has so opened my mouth. What is the chaff for the wheat? Saith the Lord: “it is not my Word as a fire, and as a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?” There was a vast increase of people, it being a bright sunshining day. Found the end of my discourse that the curate, who is also schoolmaster, sent all of this boys to make as much noise as they could. But they did not (I believe) hinder one person from hearing. Drank tea at Mrs. Rawkins, the Churchwarden and returned to town in the tranquility of the Spirit. — Visited a poor sinner of fourscore who, when I asked a reason of the hope that was in her, answered as usual, she hoped to be saved because she had never wronged any one. Another I found patiently waiting for their salvation of God through faith in Jesus Christ. Called on my towardly churchwarden and walked with him to Tangate[?]. One informed me that a minister out of the country was among my hearers. I had thought of explaining the Beatitudes, but my Book opened on John 3, and I saw immediately that was my subject. I never yet found greater, hardly so great, Freedom. The Word was sharper than a two-edge sword. Lord beget us all again by the word of thy Truth.

Another minister, heard me earnestly, (I am told) and wept all the time. Glory be to Thee O Lord! Teach me to cast the net at the right side (Lk. v. 2f), and I shall catch the Fisher.

The Society, when I came was exceptionally crowded. No door[,] no window could be opened for the howling wolves [detractors] without. Such heat I never felt, neither in Georgia, nor under the Tropick [sic]. The candles went out for want [lack] of air. I knew none except myself, could bear the intense heat for many minutes, and therefore spake a few words (in the Name of Jesus and therefore not in vain) and used a short prayer and was pronouncing the blessing: when some without threw in fire and smoke among the people, and others within cried out “fire!” In the same moment the windows were all mashed to pieces, the stones poured in on all sides, the people skreamed [sic] out. And the room was like a sacked city. Many caught hold of me to save themselves or me, so that out of love I was almost torn to pieces. My soul was full of peace and power[,] I laboured to quiet them for some time in vain, but with much ado I beat down their fears and clamours, and made my way to the door where I
stood and put all them out [of the room] before me. The enemy quitted the field; we sang a verse and gave thanks to God who givest us the victory.

Spake at Mr. J.’s with a poor G. Casturs, bred a gentle Quaker, and now a confirmed Deist, so far I gained upon her that she desired to talk with me again.

**Sat. Oct. 3.** Prayed with and exhorted my Family [congregation] at the hospital. Then began expounding the Beatitudes in which our Lord assisted me greatly. Dined at my new friends’ Mr. H. and waited upon my old one [John Lloyd] of Christ Church. But the sword of division, I found, has quite cut him off! He laid many things to my charge, which I defied him and all mankind to prove. My soul was grieved, but not despairing [unclear] of the extraordinary power of God, and His strength, went into the streets and lanes of the city to bring in the poor and maimed, the halt, and the blind. Twice as many as before both poor and rich, were assembled when I called them to the Gospel Feast: “Come for all things are NOW ready.” My tongue was loosed and my heart. I besought and urged them with many tears to accept . . . the invitation. They were much affected, as well as myself; even the rich could not refrain from tears. I experienced extraordinary assistance; and yet the God would take me up because my friend had cast me off. Did ever anyone trust the Lord and was confounded? [I] Returned to the hospital and finished the Beatitudes. Rejoiced in the Lord with my landlady, now a confessor of Christ. The minister of Tanfield and her wicked husband set upon her [the landlady] with Pharoah’s accusation; that she neglected her worldly affairs. She stooped the minister’s mouth with “[‘]tis better to be dead to the world than to God.[‘]” Again when he blamed me for preaching in his parish, she silenced him with, “If you laboured MORE, he need not labour so much.” Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings has Thou ordained strength!

The poor people were not disheartened from meeting in the usual place; and for an hour and a half we had sweet fellowship in speaking, and praying, and praising God.

Dear Brother,

This people whom our Lord has gathered will be scattered again, if left in their infancy. Tomorrow I am bound, by my word, to set out for Yorkshire. Our brethren Lee and Emingloy I shall station here till Brother Maxfield or Richards can relieve them. London requires 2 men. Bristol I could look after alone for a month. [One entire sentence is thoroughly lined out.] On my return we must forthwith extract a 2nd hymn book out of each of the 9 volumes of manuscript poems. 2000 [copies] I could just now dispose of here. Neither London nor Bristol will yield me such a harvest of souls as the rude populations North. Most [hymnbooks] might come by ship. Write to me under cover to our friend, I shall return by Leistershire. — The Lord strengthen us for the work where unto He hath appointed us. My love to all. Adieu.

Sun. Afternoon.
Charles’ hymns from this period reflect the evangelistic agenda and excitement of the letter above, continuing its phraseology and allusions. In both instances his proclamation of the gospel cure was received by “the poor and lame, the halt and the blind,” who flocked to the word of forgiveness and freedom like Doves to the open skies.

“After Preaching To The Newcastle Colliers”
Hymn #1 (Hymns and Sacred Poems, 1749)

1 YE neighbors, and friends Of Jesus, draw near; His love condescends, By titles so dear To call, and invite you His triumph to prove; And freely delight you In Jesus’ love.

2 The Shepherd who died His sheep to redeem, On every side Are gather’d to Him, The weary and burden’d, The reprobate race, And wait to be pardon’d Through Jesus’ grace.

3 The publicans all, And sinners draw near, They come at His call their Saviour to hear, Lamenting and mourning, Their sin is so great, And daily returning, They fall at His feet.

4 The poor, and the blind, The halt, and the lame, Are willing to find In Jesus’s name Their help and salvation; Which still they retrieve: There’s no condemnation For them that believe.

5 The drunkards, and thieves, And harlots return; For Him, that receives Poor sinners, they mourn: The common blasphemer On Jesus doth call, His loving Redeemer Who suffer’d for all.

6 The outcasts of men Their Saviour pursue; In horror and pain The profligate crew Cry out for a Saviour, A Saviour unknown, And look to find favour Through mercy alone.

7 They seek Him, and find, They ask and receive The Friend of mankind, Who bids them believe: On Jesus they venture, His gift they embrace, And forcibly enter His kingdom of grace.

37PW, 115-116.
The blind are restored Through Jesus’ name,
They see their dear Lord, And follow the Lamb;
The halt they are walking, And running their race;
The dumb they are talking Of Jesus’s praise.

The deaf hear His voice, And comforting word,
It bids them rejoice In Jesus their Lord,
“Thy sins are forgiven, Accepted thou art,”
They listen, and heaven Springs up in their heart.

The lepers from all Their spots are made clean,
The dead by His call Are raised from their sin,
In Jesus’s compassion The sick find a cure,
And gospel salvation Is preach’d to the poor.

To us, and to them, Is publish’d the word;
Then let us proclaim Our life-giving Lord,
Who now is reviving His work in our days,
And mightily striving To Save us by grace.

O Jesus, ride on Till all are subdued,
Thy mercy make known, And sprinkle Thy blood,
Display Thy salvation, And teach the new song
To every nation, And people, and tongue.

* * * *

“The Same”—Hymn # 3.38
(Hymns & Sacred Poems, 1749)

WHO are these that come from afar,
Swifter than a flying cloud!
Thick as flocking doves they are,
Eager in pursuit of God:
Trembling as the storm draws nigh,
Hastening to their place of rest,
See them to the windows fly,
To the ark of Jesu’s breast!

2 Who are these but sinners poor,  
   Conscious of their lost-estate,  
   Sin-sick souls, who for their cure  
   On the Good Physician wait;  
   Fallen who bewail their fall,  
   Proffer'd mercy who embrace,  
   Listening to the gospel-call,  
   Longing to be saved by grace.

3 For his mate the turtle [dove] moans,  
   For his God the sinner sighs;  
   Hark, the music of their groans,  
   Humble groans that pierce the skies!  
   Surely God their sorrows hears,  
   Every accent, every look,  
   Treasures up their gracious tears,  
   Notes their sufferings in His book.

4 He who hath their cure begun,  
   Will He now despise their pain?  
   Can He leave His work undone,  
   Bring them to the birth in vain?  
   No; we all who seek shall find,  
   We who ask shall all receive,  
   Be to Christ in spirit join'd,  
   Free from sin for ever live.

*    *    *    *    *

CXCIX. “The Same.”—Hymn #4
   (Hymns and Sacred Poems, 1749)

1 SEE how great a flame aspires,  
   Kindled by a spark of grace!  
   Jesu's love the nations fires,  
   Sets the kingdoms on a blaze.  
   To bring fire on earth He came;  
   Kindled in some hearts it is;  
   O that all might catch the flame,  
   All partake the glorious bliss!

Footnote:

39PW. V, 120-121. Cf. Note #20 above for fuller description of the context and imagery of this hymn.
When He first the work begun,  
Small and feeble was His day;  
Now the word doth swiftly run,  
Now it wins its widening way,  
More and more it spreads, and grows,  
Ever mighty to prevail,  
Sin's strongholds it now o'erthrows,  
Shakes the trembling gates of hell.

Sons of God, your Saviour praise,  
He the door hath open'd wide,  
He hath given the word of grace;  
Jesu's word is glorified:  
Jesus mighty to redeem,  
He alone the work hath wrought,  
Worthy is the work of Him,  
Him who spake a world from nought.

Saw ye not the cloud arise  
Little as a human hand?  
Now it spreads along the skies,  
Hangs o'er all the thirsty land!  
Lo! the promise of a shower  
Drops already from above;  
But the Lord shall shortly pour  
All the Spirit of His love.