

NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

JOHN WESLEY'S EARLIEST DEFENCE OF THE EMERGING REVIVAL IN BRISTOL

Introduced, Transcribed, and Annotated by
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One of the realities of publishing the collected writings of an author as prolific as John Wesley is that additional items may be discovered following a volume's appearance, such as anonymous letters published in newspapers. Recently, two such Wesley letters, which were not unearthed by Frank Baker as he prepared volume 25 of what is now known as the 'Bicentennial Edition' of *The Works of John Wesley*, have come to light.¹ While they will eventually appear in a set of additions and corrections to the Bicentennial Edition,² they are worth contextualizing and bringing to the attention of scholars immediately, as they constitute John Wesley's first published defence of the Methodist revival as it was igniting in Bristol.

¹ Frank Baker, ed. *Letters I, 1721-1739*, vol. 25 of The Bicentennial Edition of The Works of John Wesley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980). Hereafter, the Bicentennial Edition will be cited as *Works*.

² In volume 31, the last volume of the letters, which will be published several years from now.

The revival in the Bristol area was sparked by George Whitefield's preaching in February and March 1739. In a private conversation on 30 March, Whitefield drew a stark contrast between his earlier *supposed* religious life and what he had experienced through the new birth. One of those present recounted this conversation to Josiah Tucker, a minister at All Saints church in Bristol.³ Tucker requested a transcription of Whitefield's claims and had Whitefield verify their accuracy. He then published the transcription in mid-April; this broadsheet circulated in Bristol. It read as follows:⁴

Bristol, March 30, 1739

Before I went to the university I led, as I thought, a very religious life. I constantly attended the public service of the Church, received the sacrament, gave alms, fasted frequently six and thirty hours, and in short practised every moral and Christian duty, insomuch that all that knew me looked upon me as a saint. I then went to the university, where I began my studies in the usual manner, applying myself to the mathematics and classical learning; and as God had given me a fruitful genius, a ready wit, and great sagacity, the college conceived great hopes of my making a pretty scholar. I also dedicated proper seasons to the reading of the sermons of our best divines: Sharp, South, Calamy. And some of Mr. Tillotson's I have read since; Mr. Wesley has read him more. But his [i.e. Tillotson's] works I now look on only as a system of moral ethics, but think he knew no more of true

³ Josiah Tucker (1713–99) received his B.A. from St John's College, Oxford, in 1736 and was appointed curate at St Stephen's in Bristol in 1737. By early 1739 he was serving at All Saints, where he was formally inducted as rector on 22 July (Wesley attended the induction; see his diary for this day in *Works*, 19:399), shortly after receiving his M.A. from Oxford. Tucker would eventually be named Dean of Gloucester, in part because of his staunch defence of the Thirty-Nine Articles during the subscription controversy. He was also a distinguished economist and defender of the American colonists.

⁴ At least one copy of the original broadsheet survives, in the Lambeth Palace Library, Secker Papers, vol. 8, fol. 165 (which includes no significant variants from the copies noted below in newspapers). In this and subsequent transcriptions I follow the precedent of the Bicentennial Edition in updating archaic spellings, expanding contractions, and adapting to modern principles of capitalization and punctuation.

Christianity than Mahomet. During this time I knew nothing of true Christianity. Nor was I informed what it was till I had read a book entitled *The Life of God in the Soul of Man*,⁵ a book worth its weight in gold. I now began to see the necessity of the new birth, and immediately changed my manner of life. And as I had before made the dry sciences the chief of my study, I now applied myself wholly to the Scriptures, and read other books only by the by. The college, seeing my course of life thus changed, began to despair of me as a person disordered in my senses. For two years I underwent a series of temptations and continual buffetings of the devil, which have, in a high degree, qualified me for the ministerial office—in that I have experimentally tried all things, and having suffered every sort of temptation, can suit my advice to the different states and conditions of other people's souls. Not to mention my being better qualified than other people for the composing my sermons, for I never preached anything but what I have experimentally felt. And whereas other people are forced to plod and rack their brains whole weeks in compiling a discourse, I am enabled to compile as fast as I can write.

Mr. Whitefield further affirms that the Holy Ghost first appeals to the understanding, then over-rules the will; that its experiences are not to be described to an unregenerate person, any more than colours to a man born blind.

George Whitefield

April 16, 1739

This abstract of the life of Mr. Whitefield, with his tenets of the new birth and principles of religion (being the substance of what he was endeavouring to propagate in private, and instill into some of my parishioners) was told me by a gentleman present at the conversation, who drew it up at my desire, as

⁵ Henry Scougal, *The Life of God in the Soul of Man* (London: T. Pridden, 1677).

verbatim as he could recollect. The contents I afterwards carried to Mr. Whitefield, to know from his own mouth if he did maintain such positions; who acknowledged them to be his doctrine and set his hand to the paper, of which this is a true copy.

Josiah Tucker

The text of the broadsheet was reproduced in several newspapers and magazines over the next month.⁶

About the same time he released the broadsheet, Tucker penned a set of 'Queries to Mr. Whitefield', highlighting his discomfort with Whitefield's emphasis on 'extraordinary' operations of the Spirit. When Tucker tried to publish the 'Queries' in the *Bristol Journal*, Whitefield (or some supporters) apparently intervened.⁷ Nonetheless he clearly found another outlet, since the 'Queries' were soon reproduced in a number of newspapers and magazines.⁸

Queries to Mr. Whitefield

Sir,

There is no need of any other *preface* or *apology* for my desiring a *solution* of the following queries than that the *principle* on which they depend is by you *maintained* to be of the *utmost importance*, such as no Christian should be *ignorant* of, especially as

⁶ *Gentleman's Magazine* 9 (May 1739), 238–39; *London Magazine* 8 (May 1739), 240; *Scots Magazine* 1 (May 1739), 209; *Weekly Miscellany* (12 May 1739), 2; and *Political State of Great Britain* 57 (1739), 385–86. It likely also appeared in the *General Evening Post*, but a surviving copy of the relevant issues has not been located (these issues are missing in the Burney Collection at the British Library).

⁷ See Tucker's letter of 14 June 1739, transcribed below.

⁸ Tucker may have issued the queries as a broadsheet too, though no copies have been located. Wesley had the queries in hand by at least 19 April. By early May they were appearing in such settings as *Gentleman's Magazine* 9 (May 1739), 242–43; *London Magazine* 8 (July 1739), 340; *Scots Magazine* 1 (May 1739), 201–2; and *Weekly Miscellany* (5 May 1739), 1–2. The text and italicization are the same in each of these settings, showing dependence on one another or a common source.

a *professed teacher* and *instructor* of others. This therefore being a sufficient reason to apply for information from a person so readily disposed to bring mankind out of *darkness* and *error*, I proceed to acknowledge:

That I do not perceive in myself those *operations of the Spirit* which you discover *within*, and experimentally *feel*.

But though I am hitherto unacquainted with this *extraordinary* and *supernatural* light, and therefore will not pretend to determine anything about the *reality* or *evidence* of its *operation* in you, yet I think my natural reason will suggest thus far, that if there is such a light *vouchsafed from heaven*, it must certainly tend very much to the *benefit* and *advantage* of those *happy chosen few* who enjoy this *signal characteristic* of *divine favour*; as it will give them the *clearest* and most *perfect* knowledge of their duty, and a *suitable power* of performing it; which seems to me the greatest blessing we can enjoy in our present state of probation, because it would render us easy under all circumstances here and happy hereafter.

Be pleased therefore to specify,

1. What are those *principles, doctrines, articles of faith, motives*, etc. which this *extraordinary light* reveals; after *what manner* they come into the mind; and by what *mark* or *character* you *distinguish* them from the *delusions of fancy*, or worse, *temptations*?

2. What are those *particular duties* you are enabled to perform, which all others must leave *undone* till they obtain the same means of performing them, *namely, an extraordinary intercourse with the deity*? Or

3. If I am mistaken in my conjectures 'that if it doth exist it must exist for such ends and purposes', be so kind as to mention in a *particular* and *determinate* manner for what *other* uses it is *given*, to what *purposes* you *apply* it, or it *applies you*, and for what *special ends* desirable, which ends could not be attained without it?

Here then you have ample room of being serviceable to mankind. For as you will allege that all men might enjoy this *signal blessing*, were it not for their *sins*, which either withhold or withdraw it, so you must allow that if a precise and exact summary were given us of those several doctrines and duties or advantages

that cannot be known or performed or received without this *divine assistance*, it would greatly alarm, and make us more sensible of our dangerous situation. A good step this towards repentance and amendment of life; or (if you please) toward *regeneration* and a *new birth*.

Nor will it take up much of your time in vouchsafing a *distinct answer* to *every particular* in this request. For as I do not desire a *philosophical account* what this *Spirit* is, whether the *same with the Quakers* or a *different one*, or how it *actuates*, or how consistent with the *natural powers of the understanding* and *moral agency*, but only of what benefit and advantage it is, and wherefore desirable, I apprehend it can be considered as a matter of *fact*, and expressed in a *few words* with little or no trouble. If I am guilty of any impropriety in my manner of speaking about this *mysterious* subject, it is a mistake unavoidable in my present circumstances, and therefore beg leave to repeat my desire of a *clear and explicit answer*—an answer not made up of *general terms* and *phrases* of an *unsettled meaning*, but *pointing* and *particular*, whereby I may perceive *the usefulness of this light within*, and the extreme danger of being unconcerned about it. And in the meantime do engage to give to all you advance a *fair and impartial* reception, according to the apostolical rule of ‘proving all things, in order to hold fast that which is good’.⁹

I remain, yours, etc.

When Tucker circulated the broadsheet and his ‘Queries’ in Bristol in mid April 1739, George Whitefield was no longer in town. He had travelled to London to extend the scope of the revival. Prior to his departure, Whitefield recruited John Wesley to come to Bristol and assume leadership there. Wesley arrived on 31 March, and immediately began speaking in society meetings and (by 2 April) proclaiming the gospel in ‘the highways’.¹⁰ Therefore, Wesley was

⁹ 1 Thess. 5:21

¹⁰ See Wesley’s account in his published *Journal* (31 March–2 April 1739), *Works*, 19:46.

among those in Bristol most likely to be confronted with Tucker's 'Queries' as they became public. This was likely the topic of conversation on 13 April, when Wesley noted in his diary that he was at 'Mr. Tucker's'.¹¹ The next day Wesley began composing a piece that he identified in his diary on 19 April as an 'answer to Mr. Tucker's *Queries*'.¹² The following day, Wesley noted that he had completed this response. It seems plausible that he then circulated the document among colleagues for feedback, since no evidence of immediate publication exists.

By mid-June, however, a formal 'Answer' to Tucker's 'Queries' had appeared in print.¹³ Although published anonymously—even Tucker was uncertain of the identity of the writer—there is little question that Wesley had drafted this answer. Whitefield had declined to make a public reply himself, and the tone of the 'Answer' is very different from the remarks that Tucker reports that John Hutchings, Whitefield's other main colleague in Bristol had circulated.¹⁴ The style and central themes in the letter are consonant with Wesley's other defences of the early Methodist revival. While in later years he almost always put his name on published tracts and letters, during this earliest stage of the revival Wesley issued other items anonymously.¹⁵ It is particularly understandable that Wesley would do so with this letter, since he wrote it in an attempt to defend emphases of the revival which he shared with Whitefield; he had just published in May

¹¹ Wesley, *Works*, 19:385.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ We know from Tucker's reply that the letter was in print by 14 June; apparently in the *General Evening Post*, though no surviving copies of the relevant issues have been located. It was reprinted in the *Gloucester Journal* (19 June 1739), 4; *Gentleman's Magazine* 9 (June 1739), 292–94; and *Scot's Magazine* 1 (June 1739), 264–65. There are no significant variants among these settings.

¹⁴ On both points see Tucker's letter of 14 June 1739, transcribed below. A search of Eighteenth Century Collections Online yields no mentions of Tucker in Whitefield's writings.

¹⁵ See particularly, *Doctrine of Salvation, Faith, Good Works: Extracted from the Homilies of the Church of England* (London: R. Hawes, 1780); and *An Abstract of the Life and Death of . . . Tho[mas] Halyburton* (London: John Oswald, 1739).

1739 his sermon *Free Grace*, directly challenging Whitefield's stance of predestination.¹⁶

An Answer to the Queries sent to the Rev. Mr. Whitefield, from the Rev. Mr Tucker, Minister of All-Saints, Bristol; in a letter to the Querist

Had not the Bristol 'Queries' been said to be written by the Reverend Mr. Tucker, I should have imagined they come from one who had no manner of notion of divine revelation. But as you are a *reverend minister*, I must suppose you to be a Christian, though you have given great room to think that you believe nothing of the operations of the Holy Spirit by owing that you do not 'perceive them in yourself, and are hitherto unacquainted with any extraordinary and supernatural light'. You will not allow the Holy Spirit necessary either to enlighten our minds, that we may know our duty, or to give us any assistance to perform it. And you seem to intimate pretty strongly that the operation of the Spirit is *inconsistent with the natural powers of the understanding and free agency*. The most *errant* deist could not have gone lower in his notions in this particular than you have, to the great dishonour of your ministerial character.

Though you do not argue *expressly* against *feeling* the operations of the Spirit, yet by putting that word in *italics* you no doubt intended a *sneer* at Mr. Whitefield, who you say pretends to *feel* them experimentally. I remember the *weak remarker* on Mr. Whitefield's *Journal* pretended to triumph much in his arguments against this *feeling* the Spirit, etc.¹⁷ And it is generally, I suppose, thought a mark of *enthusiasm* if one say he has a feeling, or an inward sensation or perception, of the effect of the Spirit's operations in his soul. But some are so unhappy in their reasonings as to *attack the Scriptures themselves* in the very books they write on

¹⁶ Sermon 110, *Free Grace*, *Works*, 3:542–59.

¹⁷ T. Gib, *Remarks on the Reverend Mr. Whitefield's Journal* (London: for the author, 1738).

purpose to defend them. When St. Paul said, 'The God of peace fill you with all joy in believing',¹⁸ surely he imagined that by *this* they would *feel* the power of their faith when, by the grace of the Spirit of God, it was productive of 'all joy' in them.¹⁹ How many texts might be produced to the same purpose!

But let us come to your *Queries*, the first of which is: 1. 'What are those *principles, doctrines, articles of faith*, etc., which this *extraordinary light* reveals; after *what manner* come they into the mind; and by what *mark* or *character* do you *distinguish* them from the *delusions of fancy* or *worse temptations*?'

Answer. Those *principles, doctrines, articles of faith*, etc. we will suppose be such as are contained in the Scripture, and such as are effectual to convey so much divine knowledge as is necessary to salvation. If you should object that if these things are in Scripture what need is there of *extraordinary light* to reveal them, I should desire you to consider that a man cannot have a *right* faith in any *one* doctrine of Christianity but he must be beholden for it to the Spirit of God: 'No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Spirit' (1 Cor. 12:3). This *extraordinary* and *supernatural light* which the Holy Spirit pours into our minds appears to be absolutely necessary for us from many other places of Scripture.

As to the *manner* these *principles, doctrines*, etc. come into the mind (you might have better said the manner in which we are *enabled to discern, believe, and embrace* them), I answer, I know not. But will it follow, because we *cannot* explain the *manner* of any thing being done, that therefore it is *not* done? When you tell me after what manner a *thought* comes into the mind, I will undertake to tell you how these *principles*, etc. come into it. I recommend to your consideration John 3:8.

If the *mark* or *character* by which these principles, etc. are distinguished from the *delusions of fancy*, or *worse temptations*, is the

¹⁸ Rom. 5:13

¹⁹ This defence of *feeling* the operations of the Spirit bears strong echoes of John Wesley's earlier debate with his older brother Samuel Jr. See John's letter to Samuel Jr., 30 October 1738 (*Works*, 25:575–78); and Samuel's response, 15 November 1738 (*Works*, 25:578–79).

Word of God, or their being contained in the Word of God, I hope you will have more prudence than to deny this to be a *satisfactory* and *certain* criterion.

Your next query, which is a very *dark* one, is: 2. 'What are those *particular duties* you are enabled to perform, which all others must leave undone till they obtain the same means of performing them, *namely, an extraordinary intercourse with the deity?*'

Answer. The duties I suppose are not *particular*, they are *general*, the duties of every true regenerate Christian. A man *unregenerate* may do the *external* part of many duties, but still the right Christian principles, upon which they are to be done, may be wanting in him; and consequently, in *that respect*, they may be left undone by him. The attainment of these principles supposes a spiritual intercourse with the deity. I will suppose the word 'extraordinary' to be of no signification to the *intercourse* you are speaking of, since if there is an intercourse with the deity such as a Christian ought to have, we have no occasion to call it 'extraordinary'.²⁰ If you *deny* an intercourse with the deity to be a thing necessary to the Christian life, I must pity that man's condition which has nothing to do with God, and in which God, in the way of salvation, has nothing to do with him. Is there not an intercourse on man's part with God, when man prays to him fervently and exercises himself in humble devout acts of faith, hope, and love toward him; and is there not an intercourse on God's part with man, when God assists us in these holy exercises, when he draws our hearts to him and confirms our faith and confidence in him?

I proceed to your last query, which is: 3. 'If I am mistaken in my conjectures that if it doth exist it must exist for such ends and purposes, or²¹ be so kind as to mention in a *particular determinate* manner for what other uses it is given, to what purposes you *apply*

²⁰ In his defences of the early Methodist revival Wesley frequently insists that they are emphasizing the 'ordinary operations' of the Holy Spirit, not extraordinary operations. See particularly *A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*, Pt. I, V.1-7, *Works*, 11:138-46.

²¹ Tucker pointed out in his reply that the original query did not include the word 'or'.

it, or it *applies* you, and for what special ends desirable, which ends could not be attained without it?’

Answer. Here again you express yourself very oddly. But it is no wonder, for as you seem not to have a very clear head, much perspicuity cannot be expected from your diction. However, as this query is grounded on a supposition of your being mistaken in the two first, there seems no necessity, considering what has been said already to *them*, to make any reply to it.

If I have mistaken *you*, please to let me know it, and tell me both what you mean by the expressions in which you oppose Mr. Whitefield’s notions of *supernatural light* and *assistance*, and what your own notions are of these things.

I am, sir, etc.

Comparing Wesley’s ‘Answer’ to Tucker’s ‘Queries’ with the original broadsheet on Whitefield provides a sense of the misunderstandings and divergent fears that would eventually split the revival and alienate many Anglican clergy. Is ‘experimental feeling’ the highest qualification for preaching? Or is it a potential delusion to be warned against? Is our spiritual renewal an ‘ordinary’ operation of the Spirit, engaging our natural powers? Or is it a miraculous infusion that over-rules our corrupt nature? While Wesley defended Whitefield on some of these points, he often nuanced or challenged the dichotomy in the process.

Josiah Tucker replied to Wesley’s ‘Answer’ soon after reading it in the *General Evening Post*; he described the reply as less a formal answer than ‘observations on the affair’, which he documented with several footnotes (reproduced and identified in footnotes here).²²

Oxon, June 14, 1739

Sir,

²² While no surviving copy has been located, we know from the citation in the *London Magazine* reprint that this letter appeared in the *General Evening Post* on 19 June 1739. The transcription follows identical reprints in the *Gloucester Journal* (26 June 1739), 4; *Gentleman’s Magazine* (June 1739), 294–97; and *London Magazine* 8 (July 1739), 340–43.

Being come to the university on some urgent business,²³ I have not leisure to return a formal answer to the letter printed in your paper against my queries, but shall beg leave for the present to put together some few observations on the affair; which, if shown to be not satisfactory, shall be followed by a fuller reply.

Mr. Whitefield having boasted that he received *extraordinary illuminations* and *surprising influxes* of the Holy Spirit.²⁴ That it not only appealed to his understanding, but even *over-ruled* and *forced* his *will*. That he could no more describe its operations to an unregenerate person than he could describe colours to a man born blind. That nevertheless the best way of conveying his meaning was to compare them to a flame of fire, hot water, or the motions of the foetus in the womb.²⁵ These I say, and many other the like blasphemous and enthusiastical notions, having been propagated with too much success among several well-meaning but *ill-judging* people, I thought it my duty as a clergyman and a Christian to prevent, as far as was in my power, the spreading of such dangerous principles, which strike at the root of all religion and make it the jest of those 'who sit in the seat of the scornful'.²⁶

But how to compass my design was the great difficulty, for to *reason* and *dispute* with them, I very well knew, was to no purpose. They saw, and heard, and felt, or fancied that they did so, and there was no persuading them to the contrary.

I therefore resolved to allow them their own terms, not denying their principles and pretensions, but only enquiring what *advantage* or *benefit* they received by them, hoping by this means either to draw them out of their unintelligible jargon, and to show

²³ Tucker received his MA from Oxford in 1739; this visit was likely part of that process.

²⁴ Tucker note: 'See his "Character signed by himself," the original now in my custody; the contents whereof I was apprized of long before, except the part relating to his own *wit* and *sagacity*. Compare it with his last *Journal* [(London: Hutton, 1739)], 81[-82], namely, Mr. Seward's Case.'

²⁵ Tucker note: 'These are Mr. Whitefield's own similes; and it is very true, as my antagonist smartly observes, "I have not a clear head" in these matters.'

²⁶ Cf. Psalm 1:1

the world they had not meaning under these pompous sounds, or if they really had, to give them an opportunity of convincing mankind, in a speedy and concise way, that they actually did enjoy *somewhat superior* to the rest of their fellow Christians, who pretend to no more than the *ordinary* and *common assistance* of the Holy Ghost.

Accordingly I drew up my queries in the civilest terms I was master of, using no *personal reflexions* or uncharitable expressions, but desiring a plain narrative of the effects and benefits arising from these *extraordinary impulses*; concluding with a promise of being myself a convert if they could convince me it would better my condition and convey any spiritual advantages which I do not enjoy already.

But it seems great was my crime in daring so much as to doubt of these things. For Mr. Whitefield first of all, by his friends, prevented the printing of them in the *Bristol Journal*;²⁷ and next would not vouchsafe any reply, but wrote a letter wherein he tells me very *lordly* and *laconically*, 'My motto is, "Answer him not a word"'—applying the expression of Hezekiah against the *blasphemous* Rabshekah to his own case and mine.²⁸ He has likewise pronounced sentence against me, 'That while I continue in this way of thinking, he absolutely despairs of meeting me in heaven.'²⁹

Agreeable to this, his friend and assistant at Bristol, the Rev. Mr. Hutchins,³⁰ put out some remarks on my queries, wherein, with the *usual Christian spirit* and meekness of the sect, he affirms 'That I have cast a slur upon my gown, . . . that I ought to quit the

²⁷ Tucker note: 'This attempt of the Methodists to take away the liberty of the press shall be proved upon them, if denied.'

²⁸ Cf. Isa. 36:21

²⁹ Tucker note: 'Some of Mr. Whitefield's followers have insulted and reviled me in passing along the streets, and declared that they looked upon me as the enemy of God and his religion. This was owing to Mr. Whitefield's pointing at me so often in his prayers and describing me in his harangues to the populace.'

³⁰ I.e. John Hutchings (b. 1716), a classmate of Whitefield at Pembroke College, Oxford, who worked closely with him in Bristol in 1739. He later joined the Moravians.

ministry, . . . and that I got it by downright falsehood and equivocation.' With a great deal more that favoured strongly of *absolute* predestination and reprobation.³¹

The next whose vengeance I have drawn down upon me is the gentleman in print. He indeed has not thought proper yet to proceed to the *grand anathema*, but out of his abundant goodness directly concludes, 'That I have done great dishonour to my ministerial character, and am an errant deist', because I dispute the necessity of an *extraordinary effusion* of the Holy Ghost in this age of the church, and because I cannot believe that in *influencing* and *disposing* us to good actions, and checking us from bad ones, *he doth over-rule and force the will*. Happy is it for us that the Methodists, with their allies the field-preachers in Scotland,³² have not yet the power in their hands of destroying all whom they weakly imagine to be *God's enemies*.

But setting aside these, their very gentle *reproofs*, let us come to their *reasonings*:

This gentleman is pleased to call his letter an answer to my queries, and the title bespeaks it so. But the contents have no other relation to them than a *wilful perverting* of their meaning. For I ask about one thing and he answers about another. My queries are concerning those *extraordinary* and *surprising effusions*, or the *new birth* these people pretend to in *particular* and maintain to be *absolutely necessary* to salvation.³³ And this gentleman is so

³¹ These reflections by Hutchings were likely circulated as a broadsheet or in a published letter. No record of them has been found beyond this summary by Tucker.

³² Tucker note: 'See a letter from a Scotch field preacher in his late *Journal*. See likewise his associating with the Welsh itinerant Howell Harris.' The letter is from Ralph Erskine, and appears in *A Continuation of the Rev. Whitefield's Journal* (London, 1739), 97–98.

³³ Tucker note: 'I have been credibly informed from several eye-witnesses, friends to Mr. Whitefield, that at the societies in Bristol Mr. Wesley has prayed "That God would visibly manifest some token of his favour". And presently after that there were persons that screamed out, and put their bodies into violent agitations and distortions, seeming all over convulsed, to the fright and amazement of several people. But upon others offering their assistance, Mr. Wesley called out, "Let them alone, *they can no more help it than the sun cease to shine*." And then they went to prayers and sung an hymn, invoking the Holy Ghost to *come down upon them*; and afterwards returned thanks that he *was come*, singing another hymn.

good as to inform us what are those *ordinary* and *common assistances* of the Holy Spirit, which are communicated to all good Christians in *general*. In this I really think he has succeeded pretty well. But this was not the question asked him. Thus he goes on quoting texts of scripture, and seems vehemently moved against an antagonist that nowhere exists but in his own imagination.

For if he will call the *ordinary* operations of the Holy Ghost whereby 'we hope to have our minds enlightened, that we may know our duty and be assisted in performing it'; I say, if he chooses to call it *extraordinary*, rather than join with the common and usual manner of speaking (whereby in calling it *ordinary* we distinguish it from the *extraordinary* and *miraculous* effusions in the apostolical times and infancy of the church), he may be as singular as he pleases for me. I will not contend with him about words and names. Though indeed he seems not determined with himself whether he will call it so or not, for in his pretended answer to my second query he says, 'If there is an intercourse with the deity, such as a Christian ought to have, we have no occasion to call it "extraordinary".' His cavilling therefore was only to serve a *present turn*.

But the true state of the case was this: Mr. Whitefield had advanced notions that could not possibly be defended.³⁴ He had pretended to have received into his soul *extraordinary influxes* of the deity, the *use* and *benefit* of which neither he nor his friends have yet been able to make out, though these queries were put to him for that very intent. He had represented the *regenerate* as mere machines, being actuated by the Spirit to such a degree as to have their wills *over-ruled*, and consequently to be no more *moral*

This being ended, these enlightened persons were placed on an eminence for the rest to behold.' Tucker may be hinting that he suspects Wesley is the author of the 'Answer'.

³⁴ Tucker note: 'To gain credit with the populace, when he was upon the *marvelous* he often had in his mouth at Bristol this *dreadful imprecation*, "If what I say be not strictly true, may all that ever heard me, may you that now hear me, and all that shall hear me hereafter, *rise up in judgment* against me, and *rejoice* at my *damnation*.'"'

agents than a piece of clock work.³⁵ This his friend seems aware of, and therefore shifts the question instead of answering it, a usual artifice in a bad cause.

His next attack is on my phrase and diction. Here he says I ought not to have asked, 'After *what manner* they come into my mind, but after what manner we are *enabled to discern, believe, and embrace* them'. This I think is not worth disputing about; as he likes his own style best, let him please himself. But my reason of inserting it was to find out after what *unusual* manner Mr. Whitefield came by his *extraordinary* principles, etc., if he had any—namely, whether or no by immediate inspiration, as some of his followers believe concerning him, and as his *Journal* in many places seems to imply.³⁶

On the third query the gentleman is a little severe, for it seems he had met with a copy (not one of those printed in Bristol) which had a small particle (i.e. 'or') inserted in, greatly injuring and obscuring the sense. And this is the beginning and ending of his triumph.

But before I take my leave of him, I would desire him to consider that if I really was a deist, as he represents me, I should not have been such a strenuous opposer of Mr. Whitefield. No, the deists seem strongly inclined to favour his cause, and foment the division.³⁷ They in particular are highly delighted with his *shocking* scheme for confessing the women—the *graver* part with the *abuse* and miserable *perversion* of Scripture sentences, and the more *dissolute* with his *indecent* and *loose* interrogations. This is a

³⁵ Tucker note: 'See his "Character, signed by himself," and many parallel places throughout his *Journals*.'

³⁶ Tucker note: 'Witness a stupid printed paper in doggerel verse by one "Jacques, a glover" in Bristol:

He doth not *premeditate*,
For the Spirit doth to him *dictate*.

And Mr. Whitefield says himself, "He can produce two cobblers in Bristol that know more of true Christianity than all the clergy in the city put together." Query, whether these *cobblers* are *inspired*?'

³⁷ Tucker note: 'See some late pamphlets from that quarter'.

scheme so *evidently* calculated to *promote* vice and lewdness that many people still *persist* in thinking it is only a waggish *sneer* put upon him. But the gentleman need not be told the contrary. As he appears to be Mr. Whitefield's friend, he must know that it is a genuine and real piece, approved and recommended by the *heads* of the sect, and actually put in *practice*, both in London and Bristol. Since therefore he has taken upon him to vindicate Mr. Whitefield's *principles* and *conduct*, he is here called upon publicly to defend it.

I think I have nothing more to do than to add for this gentleman's further satisfaction, according to his request, my own notions about the operations of the Spirit, or *regeneration* and a *new birth*. And this I shall transcribe out of a discourse preached at Bristol,³⁸ with a view to stop the *epidemical enthusiasm*:

That there is an *ordinary*, constant, and regular operation or providence of the deity, *concurring* with and *aiding* our weak endeavours, *checking* evil thoughts and *inspiring* good and virtuous, is a fundamental principle of all religion, natural and revealed.³⁹ It is indeed what every man, *good* and *bad*, has *experimentally felt within himself*. And none, not even an infidel, if he believes there is a God at all, will dispute this instance of his care and providence.

Nay, every orthodox Christian will affirm farther that this *preventing assistance* is promised in a greater degree to all within the pale of the Church, provided they improve their ten talents proportionably than to those who are *strangers* to the *covenant of grace*; being what is styled the 'ordinary gift' of the Holy Ghost.⁴⁰

³⁸ It does not appear that Tucker ever published this sermon.

³⁹ Tucker note: 'See Woollaston, pages 106–7' [i.e. William Wollaston, *The Religion of Nature Delineated*, 6th edn. (London: Knapton, 1738)].

⁴⁰ Tucker note: 'See [Elisha Smith,] *The Cure of Deism* [(1736)], Vol. 2, Chap. 15. This book, with Mr. Hart's *Sermon on the Harmony of Natural and Revealed Religion*, [John] Conybeare's *Defence [of a Revealed Religion (1732)]*, and Bishop [Joseph] Butler's *Analogy [of Religion (1736)]*, Mr Whitefield told me himself "were only *defences* of the *outward* or *historical part* of religion,

The person therefore who is baptized into the Christian faith, and endeavours to live a life answerable to his holy profession, recommends himself by *these means* to the divine favour and assistance, is enabled to go on from strength to strength, to cast off by degrees original corruption of his nature, and so *progressively*, according to the nature of *free agents* and *probationary creatures*, has his inward constitution (all the faculties and powers in his mind, *impaired* and *degenerate in themselves*) thus recovered, rectified, and improved. And this great change, or rather this *changing state*, commencing at our baptism and gradually increasing with our own endeavours, is by a figurative way of expression very frequent in the Holy Scriptures called 'regeneration' or a 'new birth'.

To this I shall beg leave to subjoin another passage in the same discourse. *Speaking of the unreasonableness of those persons who blamed the clergy for denying their pulpits*, I observed

that long and loud have been the cry of the infidels against *priestcraft* and *enthusiasm*, and the clergy of the Established Church have been always pointed at as the avowed patrons and promoters of them. But when there has been any *real priestcraft* and *enthusiasm* (suppose which you will) spreading, all others of *what sect and denomination soever* have either been silent in the affair or abettors of it. And the clergy, the only persons who have risen up in vindication of men's rights and liberties of *reasoning* and *judging* for themselves, they have endeavoured to pluck off the vizard—when it was their *interest*, if they acted upon *bad principles*, to have *kept it on* and *encouraged* the infatuation.

and that the authors know nothing of the *internal* and *saving faith*". See his character of Archbishop Tillotson [in the broadsheet]. (Note, Tucker seems to be confusing the author in his second reference; intending Thomas Curtis, *The Harmony between Natural and Revealed Religion, asserted in a Sermon* [London: Parker, 1731].)

For any person who will think at all may easily perceive that this *new set of principles* is capable of great *improvements*, and might be made a *growing fund* of secular power and greatness to the clergy. It is but the priest's assuming to himself the prerogative of *conveying* these *trances, enlargements, and experiences*, and of judging whether *genuine* or *spurious* (a privilege the *unwary multitude* would readily consent to); and then, if the *plot succeeds, all is his own*. For having thus the *keys of heaven* in his keeping, he would soon be master of the *treasures on earth*.

J. Tucker

Tucker's central response to Wesley's 'Answer' suggests that it purposefully downplayed the extent to which Whitefield emphasized *extraordinary* operations of the Spirit and *unusual* practices. One practice that Tucker specifically challenged is Whitefield's '*shocking* scheme for confessing the women'. This requires some explanation and further reflection. Indeed, many of the newspapers that reprinted Tucker's transcription of Whitefield's original claims in Bristol and his 'Queries to Mr. Whitefield' published in close connection the following piece:

A Method of Confession, drawn up by Mr. Whitefield, for the Use of the Women belonging to the Religious Societies—Taken from the Original, under Mr. Whitefield's own Hand⁴¹

The design of our meeting together is to obey the command of God, 'Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for the other, that ye may be healed.'⁴² To this end we intend:

⁴¹ This is the longest title, as found in *Gentleman's Magazine* 9 (May 1739), 238. It appeared under shorter titles (but no other significant variants) in *Weekly Miscellany* (12 May 1739), 2; and *London Magazine* 8 (July 1739), 343–44.

⁴² James 5:16.

- [1.] To meet twice a week.
- [2.] To come punctually at the hour appointed, without some extraordinary reason.
- [3.] To begin (those of us who are present) exactly at the hour, with singing and prayer.
- [4.] To speak each of us in order, plainly and freely, the true state of our hearts, with the faults of thought, word, and deed, and the temptations we have been in since our last meeting.
- [5.] To end every meeting with singing and prayer, suited to the state of each person present.
- [6.] To desire some person among us to speak her own state first, and then to ask the next in order, as many and as searching questions as may be concerning their state, sins, and temptations.

Some of those questions proposed to every one, before she is admitted among us, may be to this effect:

- [1.] Have you the witness of God's Spirit with your spirit, that you are a child of God?
- [2.] Have you joy in the Holy Ghost?
- [3.] Is the love of God shed abroad in your heart?
- [4.] If not, have you the forgiveness of your sins?⁴³
- [5.] Has no sin, inward or outward, dominion over you?
- [6.] Have you peace with God through Jesus Christ?
- [7.] If not, do you see yourself a lost sinner?
- [8.] Do you know you deserve to be damned?
- [9.] Do you despair of being saved, either by your own works, or by your own righteousness, and hope for forgiveness of sins and justification only through a living faith in Christ Jesus?
- [10.] Do you desire to be told of your faults?
- [11.] Do you desire to be told of all your faults, and that plain and home?

⁴³ This seems to suggest one could have 'forgiveness of sins' without having 'the love of God shed abroad in your heart'.

[12.] Do you desire that we should tell you whatever we think, whatever we fear, whatever we hear concerning you?

[13.] Do you desire that in doing this we should come as close as possible, that we should cut to the quick, and search your heart to the bottom?

[14.] Is it your desire and design to be on this and on all occasions entirely open, so as to speak everything that is in your heart without exception, without disguise, and without reserve?

[1.] Are you in love?

[2.] Do you take more pleasure in anybody than in God?

[3.] Whom do you love just now better than any other person in the world?

[4.] Is not the person an idol? Does he not (especially in public prayer) steal in between God and your soul?

[5.] Does any court you?

[6.] Is there anyone whom you suspect to have any such design?

[7.] Is there anyone who shows you more respect than to other women?

[8.] Are not you pleased with that?

[9.] How do you like him?

[10.] How do you feel yourself, when he comes, when he stays, when he goes away?

The last ten questions may be asked as often as occasion offers.

These four following at every meeting:

[1.] What known sin have you committed since our last meeting?

[2.] What have you said, thought, or done, of which you doubt whether it may be a sin?

[3.] What temptations have you felt? How was you delivered from them?

[4.] What comforts or communications have you had from God since our last meeting?

This document will be of significant interest to Methodist scholars. It is clearly related to John Wesley's 'Rules of the Band Societies'.⁴⁴ While the first print edition of Wesley's 'Rules' was published in 1744,⁴⁵ they are labelled there and in all succeeding editions as 'drawn up Dec. 25, 1738'. This dating has been challenged by Colin Podmore on the grounds that Wesley would have no reason to compose the 'Rules' until December 1739, when he began to prepare for separation from the Fetter Lane Society.⁴⁶ However, Kevin Watson recently mustered four contextual reasons for affirming the 1738 date.⁴⁷ This document seals Watson's case, demonstrating that a list similar to that later printed by Wesley was in use among Methodists in early 1739.

Methodist scholars will be just as interested in the differences between this list and Wesley's later published set of 'Rules of the Band Societies'. Differences are minimal in the first set of numbered items in each list, which are mainly rearrangements. But there are four items in the second set of the list attributed to Whitefield (items 4, 7, 8, and 9) that do not appear in Wesley's published 'Rules'. If the original manuscript was indeed in Whitefield's hand (it is not known to survive), he may have added these items. Or they may be another example of how Wesley's initial disparagement of 'works' after Aldersgate moderated as he became more concerned about the dangers of quietism. The third set of numbered items in the list attributed to Whitefield is the most striking, because it is totally missing in Wesley's later printed 'Rules'. Therefore, it is important to note that Wesley's printed edition left nearly two pages blank immediately after the second set of items, so that additional rules

⁴⁴ See 'Rules of the Band Societies, Drawn up Dec. 25, 1738', *Works*, 9:77–78. I added numbering to the transcription to make comparative reading easier.

⁴⁵ See *Works*, 9:550

⁴⁶ See Colin Podmore, *The Moravian Church in England, 1728–1760* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 66, including footnote 211.

⁴⁷ Kevin M. Watson, 'The Early Methodist Band Meeting: Its Origin, Development, and Significance', Ph.D. diss. (Southern Methodist University, 2012), 157–60.

could be added as appropriate.⁴⁸ Whitefield may have made these additions, but it seems more likely that they were drawn up under Wesley's direction, since he describes the first gathering of a women's band in Bristol as taking place on April 4, 1739, after he arrived.⁴⁹ The other option, which Tucker rejects, is that they were a spurious insert into an otherwise Methodist document.

In other words, Wesley may have been the one responsible for the '*shocking* scheme for confessing the women' that Tucker pilloried. This would make it even more appropriate for him to reply to Tucker's rebuttal of his 'Answer'. While there is no mention this time in his diary of composing a reply, there is little doubt that Wesley was again the author of the following anonymous reply that appeared in the *General Evening Post* in mid July.⁵⁰

**An Answer to Mr. Tucker's Defence of his Queries,
in a Second Letter to that Gentleman**

Sir,

The *few* observations you have put together on my letter in answer to your queries have taken up four columns in this paper; and yet you say if they are not satisfactory they shall be followed by a *fuller* reply. Was I to enlarge proportionably as you have done, there would be no room for me in a newspaper. But prolixity in writing is what I never loved, and therefore I will be as concise as I can, to give my readers as little trouble as possible.

The substance of what you say in answer to my letter is,

That I have mistaken your meaning, your queries being concerning those *extraordinary* and *surprising effusions*, or the *new birth* these people (those called *Methodists*) pretend to;

⁴⁸ See *Works*, 9:78, n.7.

⁴⁹ See Wesley's *Journal* (4 April 1739), *Works*, 19:47.

⁵⁰ *General Evening Post* (12–14 July 1739), 1. Unlike its predecessors, this letter does not appear to have been reprinted in other newspapers and magazines.

and I informing you of the ordinary and common assistances of the Holy Spirit.

That the true state of the case is this: Mr. Whitefield has pretended to have received into his soul *extraordinary influxes* of the deity, the *use* and *benefit* of which neither he nor his friends have yet been able to make out, though your queries were put to him for that very intent.

That Mr. Whitefield had represented the *regenerate* as mere machines, being actuated by the Spirit to such a degree as to have their wills *over-ruled*, and to be no more *moral* agents than a piece of clock-work.

Though you say I have mistaken your meaning in your queries, I would observe to you that I gave you proper answers to most things in them, of which you prudently take *no notice*; and [answers] which were just and pertinent, whether I understood you or not, in regard to your expressions of 'extraordinary light', and 'extraordinary intercourse'. I will give you only *one* instance, and the reader, if he pleases to look over my answer, will find many more of the same kind. Your first query begins thus, 'What are those *principles, doctrines, articles of faith*, etc. which this extraordinary light reveals?' The answer was, 'Those principles, doctrines, articles of faith, etc. we will suppose to be such as are contained in Scripture, and such as are effectual to convey so much divine knowledge as is necessary to salvation.' Do you not see that this is a proper answer to your query, however we understand the words 'extraordinary light', etc.? For whether the light Mr. Whitefield has received be extraordinary or not, the faith wrought in him by the Holy Spirit is, we must reasonably imagine, a faith only in the *essential written* doctrines of Christianity. Methinks it was a *strange* query, and what would hardly have entered into any head but your own. For what *reason* had you to ask, 'What are those principles, doctrines, etc.?' Did Mr. Whitefield ever preach any doctrine but what either *was* in

Scripture or what he *thought* was there?⁵¹ Did he ever pretend to have any *new* doctrines, or *new* articles of faith *revealed* to him? If not, how *impertinently* was such a query put to him?

If your meaning in your queries was, as you now explain it, concerning those *extraordinary* and *surprising effusions*, etc., how unhappy were you in expressing yourself in this manner: 'Though I am hitherto unacquainted with extraordinary *and* supernatural light'. Do not these words imply that extraordinary light and supernatural light are the samething, and that, consequently, you are unacquainted not only with an *extraordinary* but with a *supernatural* light? But is not the light given us by the Spirit of God a supernatural light, or a light which our natural powers are incapable of giving us? They who pretend to be *disputants* should be both *clear* and *accurate* in their expressions.

What you mean by 'extraordinary effusions' will appear from what you say in the next paragraph: 'In calling it (the ordinary operations of the Spirit) *ordinary*, we distinguish it from the extraordinary and *miraculous* effusions in the apostolical times and infancy of the church.' 'Extraordinary' then is the same with you as 'miraculous', and consequently the *extraordinary* effusions you say Mr. Whitefield pretends to are *miraculous* effusions. But did Mr. Whitefield ever pretend that he had received any *miraculous* effusions of the Spirit? You ought to know that a miracle is not only something supernatural but what *appears* to be so. But does Mr. Whitefield anywhere say that any extraordinary *miraculous* manifestations of the Spirit have been vouchsafed in him? However *extraordinary* and *surprising* those operations of the Spirit Mr. Whitefield pretends to may seem to you, and all others unacquainted with them, they are no more than what may be granted in all ages of the church to persons rightly disposed and

⁵¹ Note how carefully Wesley expresses himself here; he had just released his sermon *Free Grace*, arguing that the doctrine of unconditional reprobation (which he claimed was a necessary concomitant of Whitefield's affirmation of 'predestination to life') was not found in Scripture.

qualified for the reception of them. You must *prove* that such sort of *experiences* as Mr Whitefield mentions are not the operations of the Holy Spirit. Your having *no notion* or *experience yourself* of such things can never be made an argument against others having a notion and experience of them. You may, if you please, laugh and make yourself merry with them. And with some persons this may be thought *arguing* against them. But, in my opinion, you had much better take into your serious consideration the many texts of Scripture relating to the operations of the Holy Spirit. And then perhaps you may not wonder as you do at Mr. Whitefield speaking so much of his holy influences, or at the experiences of those who are under his guidance and direction, and who, as St. Paul says in a very strong expression, πνεύματι Θεοῦ ἄγονται (Rom. 8:14).⁵² Let me recommend another place of the same apostle to you, 1 Cor. 2:14.⁵³

When you come to your true state of the case you say, 'Mr. Whitefield had pretended to have received into his soul extraordinary influxes of the deity, the use and benefit of which neither he nor his friends have yet been able to make out.' In answer to this let me observe to you that the operations of the Spirit upon his soul, which Mr. Whitefield pretends to or says he experiences, are attended with a very *extraordinary* use and benefit, both with regard to himself and others, in encouraging and assisting him in that strict exemplary way of holy living which makes him so bright an ornament to the Christian profession, and in keeping up that zeal and fervency in his heart which makes him so wonderful and successful an instrument in the conversion of souls. How strangely do you deceive yourself when you think Mr. Whitefield and his friends unable to answer such trifles as these!

In the last place you say, 'That Whitefield has represented the regenerate as mere machines, being actuated by the Spirit to such

⁵² 'being led by the Spirit of God'.

⁵³ 'Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God's Spirit . . .'

a degree as to have their wills over-ruled, and to be no more *moral agents* than a piece of clock-work.' In proof of which assertion you particularly refer to his 'Character, signed by himself', where I find these words, 'Mr. Whitefield further affirms that the Holy Ghost first appeals to the understanding, then over-rules the will.' Does not what Mr. Whitefield observes here plainly relate to what is done by the Holy Spirit *at the time of a sinner's conversion*?⁵⁴ How came you then to make it *general*, or to intimate that the regenerate, *as long* as they are actuated by the Spirit, *continue* to be no more than mere machines, etc.? I doubt not but here you think anyone incapable of giving you an answer, or that it cannot reasonably be supposed that the Holy Spirit at *any* time, not even when he *begins* the work of a sinner's conversion, over-rules the will. And yet nothing is more plain, that either the will must then be over-ruled or the sinner must remain unconverted. 'No man can come unto me', says our Lord, 'except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him.'⁵⁵ 'It is God', says St. Paul, 'that worketh in you both to *will* and to do of his good pleasure'.⁵⁶ If then we have not a will of our own to do good, our evil or corrupt will must consequently be over-ruled before we can have a will to do it. If God gives us a will to do good, so far are we (*after* we have received that will from him) from being machines or clock-works that we have a greater freedom than we had before, a freedom or power to do good, and are consequently more free agents, by the help of his grace, than ever we were. If you need any more to be said, I recommend to your consideration the case of St. Paul's conversion, the circumstances of which may help you to a little better way of thinking upon this head.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Throughout his life Wesley allowed that God may work irresistibly *for a time* in human life, but not at all times; see especially Sermon 63, 'The General Spread of the Gospel', §12, *Works*, 3:489–90.

⁵⁵ John 6:44.

⁵⁶ Phil. 2:13.

⁵⁷ Cf. Acts 9.

I have now, I think, done with you, and would advise you as a friend to meddle no more with *controversy*, for that sort of writing seems not to be your talent. You will only entangle and bewilder yourself the more, the further you proceed in it. If you are resolved to defend yourself again, I will not promise to take any notice of you, because there is no great pleasure in being engaged with one who has not a head turned for the management of a dispute. You will probably, however, conclude that if you have the *last* word you must have routed your antagonist. And some weak readers may think the same. But I regard not the *opinion* of those who have not *judgment*. Horace says excellently:

*Sumite materiam vestrīs, qui scribitis, aequam
Viribus, et versate diu quid ferre recusent,
Quid valent lumen.*⁵⁸

By that little notion I have of the turn of your genius, I should think it advisable for you to write something of this title: 'An Historical Account of the Private Practices and Proceedings of the Methodists. To which is added, several copies of private conversations of the Rev. Whitefield, etc., etc., etc., taken down in writing, brought to them, and signed by them, at the request of the Rev. Mr. Tucker, Minister of All-Saints, Bristol.'

I am, sir, etc.

P.S. I will not trouble you with the reasons of my not answering sooner. I doubt not but you will excuse me.

The first thing to notice about this reply to Tucker's defence of his 'Queries' is that it totally ignored Tucker's negative portrayal of the 'scheme for confessing the women'. This may be explained by the fact that the author (Wesley) knew that the scheme was not Whitefield's to defend. It is also striking how gingerly Wesley

⁵⁸ Cf. Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 38–40; which reads 'umeri' in place of 'lumen'. (Loeb Classical Library [1926]: 'Take a subject, ye writers, equal to your strength, and ponder long what your shoulders refuse, and what they are able to bear.')

deflected Tucker's charge that Whitefield and his colleagues in this new 'sect' affirm 'absolute predestination and reprobation'.

The postscript mentioned having reasons for not responding sooner. Wesley's *Journal* and diary shed some light on these reasons. He made a brief trip to London in mid June, leaving on June 18 to return to Bristol, just before Tucker's letter was printed in London. He confronted on his return both pressing disputes to settle among his followers and a heavy schedule of preaching. But on July 6 Whitefield came through Bristol on a preaching tour, taking over the primary preaching role for the next week. This respite allowed Wesley to catch up on several writing tasks (though he does not mention answering Tucker specifically).⁵⁹

Tucker did not reply to Wesley's second letter. Instead, he followed Wesley's closing advice about writing an 'historical account' of the Methodists. His first work in this genre was almost certainly *The Life and the Particular Proceedings of the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield*, which was published in late August 1739.⁶⁰ In the midst of its larger narrative, this work reprinted Tucker's queries to Whitefield (pp. 13–16), the scheme for confessing women (pp. 17–20), Wesley's initial reply (pp. 36–40, not listing an author), Tucker's response (pp. 41–51), and Wesley's second letter (pp. 51–58, again without identifying the author). Tucker followed this with *A Brief History of the Principles of Methodism*, released in July 1742, to which Wesley replied later that year in *The Principles of a Methodist*.⁶¹

⁵⁹ See Wesley's *Journal* beginning 18 June 1739 (*Works*, 19:71ff.) and the mentions of writing that crop up in his diary starting 6 July 1739 (*Works*, 19:397).

⁶⁰ An Impartial Hand, *The Life and the Particular Proceedings of the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield, from his going to Crisp School in Gloucester to his embarking for Pensilvania* (London: J. Roberts, 1739). This anonymous work is widely ascribed to Tucker and there is little reason to question this identification; its publication was first advertized in the *London Evening Post* (25–28 Aug. 1739), 4. This work should be distinguished from another anonymous tract that is occasionally credited to Tucker, titled *A Compleat Account of the Conduct of that Eminent Enthusiast Mr. Whitefield* (London: C. Corbett, 1739). The latter work includes the items prior to Wesley's second letter (because it was published in June 1739), but is much more caustic in tone than Tucker. It was likely compiled by Charles Corbett (1710–52), the publisher.

⁶¹ See Josiah Tucker, *A Brief History of the Principles of Methodism, wherein the Rise and Progress, together with the Causes of the Several Variations, Divisions, and Present Inconsistencies of this Sect*

Finally, some comments may be in order about the tone of this initial encounter between John Wesley and Josiah Tucker, and the longer scope of their interaction. While the closing section of Wesley's second letter can be read as sarcastic in tone, it might also be read as paternalistic advice from a more seasoned priest, addressed to one who is ten years his junior and newly ordained.⁶² Wesley was clearly uneasy with Tucker at first, even raising questions about the orthodoxy of one of Tucker's sermons with his bishop.⁶³ But his estimate soon began to shift, with Wesley praising Tucker's sermon on Good Friday 1740 as 'according to the truth of the gospel'.⁶⁴ Wesley's reply to Tucker's *Brief History* in 1742 was equally cordial, beginning: 'I doubt not but the writer's design was good, and believe he has a real desire to know the truth.'⁶⁵

Over time Wesley came to appreciate that Tucker and he shared a range of theological convictions. For example, when a broadsheet that Tucker published in 1757 on the doctrine of justification was attacked as advocating 'works righteousness' by the evangelical Anglican William Romaine, Wesley came to Tucker's defence.⁶⁶ And in 1775 Wesley wrote to his close associate John Fletcher praising a book that Tucker had published recently for its convincing criticism of the biblical and historical warrant for the doctrine of unconditional

are attempted to be traced out, and accounted for (Oxford: James Fletcher, 1742); and Wesley, *Principles of a Methodist*, §§1–10, *Works*, 9:50–53.

⁶² Wesley often adopted such a paternalistic tone with George Whitefield, who was also ten years his junior.

⁶³ An account of this complaint and debate survives in a fragment of Wesley's manuscript *Journal* for 18 August 1739; see *Works*, 19:473.

⁶⁴ Wesley, *Journal* (4 April 1740), *Works*, 19:143. It should be added that the author who Wesley quotes appreciatively in his *Journal* on 31 July and 1 November 1739 is *not* Josiah Tucker (as suggested in *Works*, 19:86 n.72 and 113 n.50); in both cases he is quoting Thomas Andrews (1710–39)—cf. *Works*, 20:264 and 25:697–98.

⁶⁵ Wesley, *Principles of a Methodist*, §1, *Works*, 9:50.

⁶⁶ See Randy L. Maddox, 'Josiah Tucker on Justification: Source for a Wesley Letter', *Methodist History* 44:3 (2006), 166–69; and Wesley, *Letter to a Gentleman in Bristol* (1758), in *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley*, John Telford, ed. (London: Epworth, 1931), 3:244–50.

election.⁶⁷ In this praise Wesley reflects a significant revision of his initial estimate of the limited 'turn' of Tucker's genius.

⁶⁷ See Wesley, letter to John Fletcher (18 August 1775), *Letters* (Telford), 6:174–75; referring to Josiah Tucker, *Letters to the Reverend Dr. Kippis occasioned by his treatise entitled 'A Vindication of the Protestant Dissenting Ministers'* (Gloucester: R. Raikes, 1773).