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The Conversion of a Cork Candle-Maker:
An Account by Hester Ann Rogers (1788)

Abstract

In 1788, a Cork candle-maker called Cadwallader Acteson was driven to repent of his sins by a host of otherworldly visitants. The story was recorded and circulated in manuscript, almost certainly by the Methodist writer Hester Ann Rogers. This article is an edition of the copy, ascribed to Elizabeth Ritchie, that resides at the Methodist Archive and Research Centre, John Rylands Research Institute and Library, Manchester. Cadwallader's idiosyncratic story offers a window into gender roles and conceptions of agency in the late eighteenth century. It also sheds light on how Methodist notions of the conversion experience might fuse with the beliefs of local communities.

Keywords: Hester Ann Rogers, supernatural, gender, ghosts, Devil

Historical Introduction

In 1788, a Cork candle-maker called Cadwallader Acteson had a series of extraordinary experiences. After several years of getting drunk, attacking his wife, and having extramarital

affairs, Cadwallader was driven to repent by a host of otherworldly visitants. They included the ghost of his deceased mistress, a fiery monster with menacing claws, and a 'sweet voice' that promised redemption. The story was recorded and circulated in manuscript, almost certainly by Hester Ann Rogers (née Roe), who was then helping her husband to develop the Methodist community in Cork.[1] In some respects, Cadwallader's account follows a familiar template for Methodist conversion narratives: a wicked man realizes the errors of his ways, and redeems himself through prayer and reliance on Methodist divines.[2] But Cadwallader's colourful encounters are idiosyncratic, perhaps representing a fusion between popular belief and Methodist models of communion with the supernatural world. Notable, too, are the ways in which the account reflects on gender, virtue, and personal agency. Cadwallader's interactions with his wife, his various mistresses, and Hester Rogers offer a window into the roles of men and women in late eighteenth-century religious society. This edition introduces

[1] Methodist Archive and Research Centre, John Rylands Research Institute and Library, Manchester, Fletcher-Tooth Collection, MAM/FL/33/1/4. We are grateful to the archive for permission to publish this edition. We are also grateful to this journal's anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments, and to Jessica Barton, Serena Gupta, Eddie Kaye, Dan Smith, and Martyna Wrona for stimulating discussion of the manuscript. The manuscript is explored through blog posts, a podcast, and creative outputs at Jessica Barton et al., *The Georgian Ghosts Project* (University of Warwick, 2021), https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/applyingtostudy/currentstudents/studentresearchportfolio/georgianghosts/, accessed 25 June 2021. This resource does not include a scholarly edition.

[2] On this genre, see esp. D. Bruce Hindmarsh, *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative: Spiritual Autobiography in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

Cadwallader's story, and makes a case for its significance as an illustration of Methodist customs and values.

Authorship and Context

The account of Cadwallader Acteson resides in the Fletcher-Tooth Collection at the John Rylands Research Institute and Library in Manchester, England. The name of the collection derives from Mary Bosanquet Fletcher (1739–1815), a Methodist preacher who accumulated an assortment of letters, diaries, and other documents. This collection was then preserved by Mary Tooth (1777–1843), another Methodist and Fletcher's close friend.[3] As Rachel Cope and Bradley Kime note, the gathering and sharing of such texts was 'an evangelistic act'.[4] Fletcher kept accounts like Cadwallader's in the hope that they would spur other sinners to repentance and conversion.

[3] Andrew O. Winckles, '"Pray for the Unworthy Scribbler": The Textual Cultures of Early Methodist Women', in Rachael Scarborough King (ed.), *After Print: Eighteenth-Century Manuscript Cultures* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2020), 27–51, at 35.

[4] Rachel Cope and Bradley Kime, '"The Vision": A Dream Account Collected and Preserved by Mary Bosanquet Fletcher', *Wesley and Methodist Studies*, 8 (2016), 52–66, at 54. This article presents another manuscript from box 33 of the Fletcher-Tooth Collection. For more on the circle of women with whom Fletcher and Tooth might have shared such manuscripts, see John Lenton, '"Labouring for the Lord": What Was the Calling of the Early Methodist Women Preachers 1760–1820?', in John Lenton, Clive Murrary Norris, and Linda A. Ryan (eds), *Women, Preachers, Methodists* (Oxford: Oxford Centre for Methodism and Church History, 2020), 125–51.

The manuscript was most likely transcribed by Elizabeth Ritchie (1754–1835). The archival notes attribute it to her, and it seems to be in her hand.[5] Ritchie was a class-leader and biographer of John Wesley's last days, as well as one of Fletcher's coterie of correspondents.[6] However, the original author was writing from Cork, and there is no evidence that Ritchie ever stayed in the city. She had recently travelled to Dublin, but returned to England in August 1786.[7] The obvious candidate for the original authorship is instead Hester Ann Rogers (1756–94), a Methodist writer. She built a close connection with John Wesley in her youth, and married James Rogers, an itinerant Methodist preacher, in August 1784. They left for Dublin soon afterwards, then relocated to Cork in 1787.[8] There

[5] See further notes under 'Description of Manuscript', below. Ritchie's letters are collated in the Fletcher-Tooth collection at MAM/FL/6/6 and MAM/FL/6/7.

[6] E. Dorothy Graham, 'Ritchie [*married name* Mortimer], Elizabeth (1754–1835), Biographer', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (ODNB)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/63471, accessed 12 June 2021.

[7] Methodist Archive and Research Centre, John Rylands Research Institute and Library, Manchester, catalogue summary of Elizabeth Ritchie to Mary Fletcher (MAM/FL/6/6/9), 11 August 1786, https://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/data/gb133-mam/fl/mam/fl/6/6/9, accessed 12 June 2021.

[8] E. Dorothy Graham, 'Rogers [*née* Roe], Hester Ann (1756–1794)', *ODNB*, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/63470, accessed 12 June 2021. See also Vicki Tolar Burton, *Spiritual Literacy in John Wesley's Methodism: Reading, Writing, and Speaking to Believe* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2008), 197–232; Anna M. Lawrence, *One Family Under God: Love, Belonging, and Authority in Early Transatlantic Methodism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 60–4.

was a strong bond between Hester Rogers and Elizabeth Ritchie. They maintained an intimate correspondence, with Hester once remarking that 'I never felt such love for one unseen before—my soul is knit to hers'.[9] While in Dublin in June 1786, Elizabeth Ritchie lodged with James and Hester Rogers, and assumed some of the latter's evangelical duties when she was unwell.[10] In November 1790, Elizabeth Ritchie similarly replaced Hester Rogers as one of Wesley's carers before his death.[11]

There are other suggestions in the manuscript that Hester was the original author. The author comments that 'Mrs Acteson meets in my class'. Methodist women usually attended classes led by other women, so the author was probably female.[12] In January 1788, only a few months before Cadwallader's conversion, Hester claimed that she led two separate classes each week and was deeply attached to their members, whom she described affectionately as 'our dear friends'.[13] The author is also several times cited in the company of James Rogers.

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[9] Quoted in Phyllis Mack, *Heart Religion in the British Enlightenment: Gender and Emotion in Early Methodism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 155.

[10] Methodist Archive and Research Centre, John Rylands Research Institute and Library, Manchester, catalogue summary of Elizabeth Ritchie to Mary Fletcher (MAM/FL/6/6/8), 10 July 1786, https://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/data/gb133-mam/fl/mam/fl/6/6/8, accessed 12 June 2021.

[11] Graham, 'Ritchie, Elizabeth'.

[12] John C. English, '"Dear Sister": John Wesley and the Women of Early Methodism', *Methodist History*, 33 (1994), 26–33, at 31.

[13] Hester Ann Rogers, letter to John Wesley, 24 January 1788, in *Life and Correspondence of Mrs. Hester Ann Rogers*, ed. Thomas O. Summers (Nashville: E. Stevenson and F. A. Owen, 1854), 233.

On one occasion, the author notes that Cadwallader told his story 'to Mr Rogers, Mr Roberts and myself'. James Rogers and Thomas Roberts were the two itinerant preachers assigned to Cork; Hester was the other figure of significance within Methodism then in the city.[14] At another point, it is implied that the author was in James Rogers's company early on a Saturday morning: 'she . . . advised him to come immediately to Mr Rogers—He did so, early on Saturday morning 27th and we have cause to believe kept nothing secret'. In light of her connection to Elizabeth Ritchie, affiliation with James Rogers, and role as a Methodist leader in Cork, the identification of Hester Rogers as the author seems next to certain, and we assume it in the following.

Travelling as it did from Hester Rogers to Elizabeth Ritchie, the manuscript was part of the rich culture of textual exchange amongst Methodists. Methodist women across the transatlantic world used manuscripts to create a spiritual community, in which connections could be made and experiences could be shared.[15] Manuscripts were usually a confidential medium, tailored rather for a close clientele than for the public, but the intended audience varied.[16] Andrew O. Winckles has explored Hester's careful navigation of manuscript culture. The original 1782 text of her diary was deeply personal and was likely distributed to only a limited audience, whereas the edition from 1789 was revised for broader circulation.[17] By sending the account to Elizabeth Ritchie, Hester may have been requesting critical comments

[14] On Roberts see below, footnote 59.

[15] Andrew O. Winckles, *Eighteenth-Century Women's Writing and the Methodist Media Revolution: 'Consider the Lord as Ever Present Reader'* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2019), 61.

[16] Winckles, '"Pray for the Unworthy Scribbler"', 28.

[17] Winckles, *Eighteenth-Century Women's Writing*, 122.

from a trusted correspondent. Her account also served to inform Ritchie and potential wider audiences about Cadwallader's experiences, their Methodist undertones, and the evangelical climate in Cork.

Methodism reached Cork in the early 1740s. By the end of the decade, it was sufficiently influential—and divisive—to trigger a spate of anti-Methodist riots.[18] This precipitated a visit from John Wesley himself in May 1750, and another in September 1752, when the local Methodist society decided to construct a chapel in Hammond's Marsh.[19] Over subsequent decades, Methodism was gradually incorporated as one of the city's various Protestant denominations. By 1782, one of Wesley's correspondents was describing a 'revival' of Methodism in Cork, such that the chapel could hardly accommodate its audience.[20] On a 1787 visit, Wesley himself observed that 'the preaching-house would ill contain the congregation'.[21] He was given an audience with the mayor, and commented that 'the chief of the city [were] no longer bitter enemies, but cordial friends'.[22] James Rogers

[18] Simon Lewis, '"Five Pounds for a Swadler's Head": The Cork Anti-Methodist Riots of 1749–50', *Historical Research*, 94 (2021), 51–72. See also Dudley Levistone Cooney, *The Methodists in Ireland: A Short History* (Blackrock, County Dublin: Columba Press, 2001), 36–7.

[19] Ibid., 68. On Methodism in Ireland, see also David Hempton, *Religion of the People: Methodism and Popular Religion 1750–1900* (London: Routledge, 1996), 29–48.

[20] M. Ward, letter to John Wesley, 28 October 1782, *Arminian Magazine*, 13 (November 1790), 609–10, at 609.

[21] John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley, Volume 24: Journals and Diaries VII (1787–91)*, ed. W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater (Nashville: Abingdon, 2003), 23.

[22] Ibid., 374.

reported that when he and his wife arrived in 1787, they were 'gladly received by an affectionate people'.[23] There is evidence that earlier tensions persisted. A Methodist sermon preached in 1789 clearly sought to alleviate local divisions, stressing that the Cork Methodist society was respectful of the Church of England. This sermon was also published in the *Arminian Magazine* for a wider audience, implying that such disputes were troubling for the overall movement.[24] But despite the efforts of 'a few troublesome spirits' from the Church, membership of the Cork Methodist society reportedly grew from 397 to 660 during James and Hester's two years of residence.[25] Cadwallader's experiences, which apparently 'made much noise' in the city, were part of this broader picture of local growth, and may have enhanced the conditions for further 'revival' in advance of Wesley's final 1789 visit.

Gender and Agency

Deciphering the dynamics between the various characters in the account requires an understanding of Methodist concepts of virtue and agency. Cadwallader is described as a 'man of good sence and natural abilities', but given to a host of 'outward sins', including anger, drunkenness, and adultery. The account explains how the death of his mistress, and an ensuing series of supernatural encounters, steer him from a life of debauchery to 'a peace of mind he never knew before'. Along the way Cadwallader is frequently 'overcome' or 'led' into sin and left weeping, unsure of his own ability to resist temptation. He thus appears as a

[23] James Rogers, *A Short Account of Mr. James Rogers, Written by Himself* (London: [n. pub.], 1792), 61.

[24] 'Sermon LVII', *Arminian Magazine*, 13 (June 1790), 286–90, at 289.

[25] Rogers, *Short Account*, 61.

powerless and pitiable figure, held at the mercy of Christ and Satan, not to mention several women more resolute than him. While Wesleyan Methodism maintained the importance of works as well as faith in Christian life, humans remained dependent on the grace of the Holy Spirit for redemption. The ultimate goal was to escape the shackles of the corrupt self and be refashioned into a vessel for the divine will.[26] This did not necessarily imply a loss of personal agency. Phyllis Mack has outlined that while modern secular society defines agency as the freedom to do what one wants, Methodists considered it rather 'the freedom to want and to do what is right'.[27] Cadwallader is helpless when he remains overpowered by sinful impulses; his conversion is not so much self-negation as self-actualization.

The idea that agency stemmed from virtue is reinforced in the stories of the various women in the account.[28] On one end of the moral spectrum we find the women who tempt Cadwallader to sin. After the death of his first mistress, Cadwallader commences an affair

[26] For a thorough survey of the role of the Spirit in Wesleyan theology, see Joseph W. Cunningham, *John Wesley's Pneumatology: Perceptible Inspiration* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014). For more concise summaries, see Henry Abelove, *The Evangelist of Desire: John Wesley and the Methodists* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 74–95; Jason E. Vickers, 'Wesley's Theological Emphases', in Randy L. Maddox and Jason E. Vickers (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to John Wesley* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 190–206, at 199–205.

[27] Mack, *Heart Religion*, 9.

[28] On the women in the account, see also Jessica Barton, 'Mothers, Mistresses and Maids: Women in the Acteson Manuscript', *The Georgian Ghosts Project*, https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/applyingtostudy/currentstudents/studentresearchportfolio/georgianghosts/gender, accessed 25 June 2021.

with a maidservant who urges Cadwallader to murder his wife and set up house with her. While the account is sympathetic to Cadwallader, the same lenience is not extended to the maid, who is perhaps the more reprehensible for her attempt to upset social order. She is described as a 'vile woman', a 'wicked strumpet', and a 'wretched monster of woman kind'. When Cadwallader begins to reform, other 'strumpets' try to seduce him. The manuscript diverts moral responsibility for Cadwallader's sinful impulses onto these various women. But they are themselves figures lacking meaningful agency—anonymous women in subordinate social positions, with power to better themselves only through dependence on men. They are framed, moreover, as mere conduits for diabolic influence; one 'woman of vile practices' is described as 'a snare of Satan'. While the wicked maid seems a more forceful character than Cadwallader, hers remains the more hopeless position.

The other women in the account fare better. Mary Creed, the daughter of a merchant, married Cadwallader in 1774, and subsequently had five children. Though not initially a Methodist, Mary was pious, and bore with patience Cadwallader's violence and drunkenness. She remained a model of wifely devotion even when Cadwallader revealed his extramarital affairs and impulses to murder her. Abuse and adultery within marriage were by no means uncommon, and unhappy women had few opportunities to escape. Sarah-Anne Buckley notes that the Irish parliament granted only eleven divorces between 1730 and 1800.[29] Consistory courts offered legal separations, but women were disadvantaged in the proceedings: men could apply if their wives were adulterous, but women were required to prove not only that their husbands were adulterous, but also that they were guilty of cruel treatment, or sins such

[29] Sarah-Anne Buckley, 'Women, Men and the Family, c.1730–c.1880', in James Kelly (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Ireland, Volume 3: 1730–1880* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 231–54, at 251.

as incest or 'unnatural practices'.[30] Meanwhile, the law commonly 'declined to sanction' men who assaulted their wives.[31] There was an expectation that women should avoid provoking the anger of their husbands. In notes for sermons, Mary Bosanquet Fletcher wrote that it was the 'duty' of a wife to 'be meek and gentle that she will labour to remove every occasion that would stir [her husband] up to anger and passion'.[32] Women were also expected to encourage their spouses to be virtuous, all the while avoiding being domineering.[33] Mary treads a careful balance between overseeing Cadwallader's moral reformation and submitting both to his will and to God's. To keep Cadwallader from killing himself or her, she locks up his sword and musket, throws out one dose of arsenic, and watches him dispose of another. However, she does these things only on Cadwallader's bidding. She is more proactive when he tries to burn his religious books, snatching them from the fire; in this instance her duty to God perhaps overrides her duty to her husband. Mary is constrained by societal expectations for wives, but when spurred by her righteousness, she is capable of taking decisive action in a way that Cadwallader is not.

Sarah Harris, Cadwallader's first mistress, is the archetypal fallen woman redeemed.[34] When stricken by illness she achieves what Cadwallader cannot: she recognizes the weight of her sins, repents wholly and irreversibly, and obtains 'a clear sence of pardon'. She subsequently takes Cadwallader's conversion in hand, first making him 'solemnly promise he

[30] Maria Luddy and Mary O'Dowd, *Marriage in Ireland, 1660–1925* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 383. See also 260–82 (on adultery), 311–49 (on abuse).

[31] Buckley, 'Women, Men and the Family', 247.

[32] Quoted in Mack, *Heart Religion,* 149–50.

[33] See Hempton, *Religion of the People,* 191.

[34] On this archetype see Mack, *Heart Religion*, 128.

would never again be guilty of adultry', then materializing post-mortem to threaten him with damnation when he breaks this vow. Her transformation is clear; she appears as 'a beautiful form, array'd in white—The countenance serene, and heavenly, but in it a look of holy displeasure'. Of all the voices that emerge from the account, Sarah's is the most authoritative: '"You are lost,—Repent! Repent!—Or the gulf is ready to receive you—You promised me, to live no more in these sins … But you have broke your promise . . . I tell you again If you proceed in what you intend your damnation is sealed"'. Her state of assurance allows Sarah a power over Cadwallader that is denied Mary, who makes no similar attempts to pronounce judgement or extract promises.

The other woman with whom Cadwallader has sustained dealings is Hester herself. Her position as a woman of grace permits Hester significant influence: alongside her husband, she advises Cadwallader, and on one occasion she sits alone with him for an hour and a half. She also exerted power over Cadwallader by framing and circulating his story. In some ways, Cadwallader's experiences were typically masculine. Mack notes that women's conversion accounts generally focused on their 'inborn malformation of character', and men's on outward sins.[35] The account of Cadwallader falls into the latter category. His blasphemy and drunkenness are primarily men's crimes, while his encounter with an invisible Satan who strikes him in the jawbone draws on a masculine notion of what it meant to combat an enemy. But it seems probable that Hester also took some authorial privilege in shaping the account. Cadwallader's interior experiences are explored in a degree of detail that is relatively unusual in third-party accounts of conversions.[36] Hester writes at one point: 'he

[35] Mack, *Heart Religion*, 64, 67–8 (quotation at 67).

[36] On the absence of 'subjective interiority' in men's accounts of women, see Andrew O. Winckles, 'Drawn Out in Love: Religious Experience, the Public Sphere, and Evangelical

never felt such inward peace for four years past,—Though he finds many suggestions from Satan he has power to lift up his heart in prayer, and they are gone'. On another occasion she records: 'He was in agonies . . . and a thousand times tempted to put an end to his wretched life—but cried to God and in the evening was more at ease.' While Cadwallader may have relayed these thoughts and feelings, the inclusion of this material could also reflect an urge, on Hester's part, to adapt his idiosyncratic account to the norms of Methodist conversion accounts. However faithful she might have been as a scribe, Hester remains an arbitrator of Cadwallader's experiences and a judge of his character.

While not condoning domestic violence, Wesley believed that it was the role of the husband to rule a household.[37] At the same time, eighteenth-century Methodism offered women the opportunity to take positions of authority within their communities, leading classes and potentially even preaching. John C. English suggests that by allowing women equivalent religious status to men, Wesley 'weakened the power of patriarchy and tried to mitigate its effects'.[38] In a discussion focused on Ireland, David Hempton highlights both the

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Lay Women's Writing in Eighteenth Century England', PhD diss. (Wayne State University, 2013), 170.

[37] On Wesley's views of marital hierarchies, see Bufford W. Coe, *John Wesley and Marriage* (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 1996), 100–5.

[38] English, '"Dear Sister"', 27. On women in Methodism see also John Kent, *Wesley and the Wesleyans: Religion in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 104–39; Brett C. McInnelly, '"I had rather be obscure. But I dare not": Women and Methodism in the Eighteenth Century', in Diane E. Boyd and Marta Kvande, *Everyday Revolutions: Eighteenth-Century Women Transforming Public and Private* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2008); idem, 'Mothers in Christ: Mary Fletcher and the

opportunities and the limitations for women in Methodism: evangelical religion allowed women to move 'from more confined to more expansive circles of influence', but without fundamentally altering the conventional dynamics of male/female relationships.[39] Cadwallader's story illustrates the tensions between women's social subordination and their potential for religious authority. As a man and her husband, Cadwallader commands Mary, and both she and the Methodist divines are swift to forgive his abuse. The maidservant is treated more harshly for her share in Cadwallader's crimes, and her attempts to escape the limitations of her station are unsuccessful. But if the account reveals the constraints under which women operated, it also shows them imbued with moral clout. Sarah, Mary, and Hester share responsibility for Cadwallader's reformation, demonstrating the centrality of women in promoting the cohesion of the Christian community. As beacons of virtue and piety, the account implies, women could assert agency and speak with authority. In recording and circulating the story, Hester not only made a case for the saving work of Methodism, but also set out a blueprint for women's social and religious roles.

Experiencing the Supernatural

While in some respects grounded in the realities of community life, Cadwallader's story also contains fantastical elements. The account is unusual in its focus on dramatic, external experiences of the supernatural. Cadwallader comes to know otherworldly forces through his

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Women of Early Methodism', in Geordan Hammond and Peter S. Forsaith (eds), *Religion, Gender, and Industry: Exploring Church and Methodism in a Local Setting* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2011), 123–37.

[39] Hempton, *Religion of the People*, 179–96, esp. 180, 185.

bodily senses. He sees Sarah Harris's heavenly ghost, and encounters what is presumably the Devil in the form of both a 'gentleman elegantly dressed', and a 'hellish monster of a fiery red coulour with three long claws'. He hears a battle for the command of his soul waged between a 'terrible voice' that promises to plague him, and a 'sweet voice' that comes to save him in Christ's name. Smell and touch are involved as well. On one occasion, Cadwallader's room is so 'filled with flames and a sulphurious stench, that he could hardly breathe and thought he must be suffocated'. At another point, Cadwallader encounters an invisible assailant who gives him a blow on his jaw 'so that at first he thought it was broken, and for many days felt the pain'.

A century earlier, reports of physical encounters with supernatural forces had some sway within intellectual society. Following in the footsteps of the Cambridge Platonist Henry More, various philosophers and ministers recorded stories of ghosts, devils, and witches in the latter half of the seventeenth century, using these accounts to refute atheism or materialism by demonstrating the reality of a world of spirits.[40] This trend died away in the

[40] See Jo Bath and John Newton, '"Sensible Proof of Spirits": Ghost Belief during the Later Seventeenth Century', *Folklore*, 117 (2006), 1–14; Sasha Handley, 'Reclaiming Ghosts in 1690s England', in Kate Cooper and Jeremy Gregory (eds), *Studies in Church History, Volume 41: Signs, Wonders, Miracles: Representations of Divine Power in the Life of the Church* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2005), 345–55; Martha McGill, *Ghosts in Enlightenment Scotland* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2018), 49–84. The trend was not as marked in Ireland, but was recognised by Irish intellectuals; see Andrew Sneddon, *Witchcraft and Magic in Ireland* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 41.

early decades of the eighteenth century.[41] For Michael Hunter, a brand of scepticism first championed by humanist freethinkers became dominant in educated society, leading to a widespread 'decline of magic'.[42] Other scholars have suggested that stories of apparitions migrated into the realm of fiction, or became a matter of private rather than public belief.[43] The latter half of the eighteenth century saw a resurgence of publications about the supernatural, and periodicals and debating societies increasingly discussed the reality of apparitions.[44] The evangelical revivals also played a role in redeeming supernatural experience for certain sectors of society. However, there remained widespread scepticism about encounters with external supernatural forces. Revivalist leaders, wary of accusations of enthusiasm, often emphasized that supernatural forces such as the Devil or the Holy Spirit

[41] See Jonathan Barry, 'News from the Invisible World: The Publishing History of Tales of the Supernatural c.1660–1832', in Jonathan Barry, Owen Davies and Cornelie Usborne (eds), *Cultures of Witchcraft in Europe from the Middle Ages to the Present: Essays in Honour of Willem de Blécourt* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 179–213, at 188–96.

[42] Michael Hunter, *The Decline of Magic: Britain in the Enlightenment* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020).

[43] See Jonathan Barry, *Witchcraft and Demonology in South-West England, 1640–1789* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 165–205; Alexandra Walsham, 'The Reformation and "The Disenchantment of the World" Reassessed', *The Historical Journal*, 51 (2008), 497–528, at 518–21.

[44] Barry, 'News from the Invisible World', 196–212; Owen Davies, 'Wesley's Invisible World: Witchcraft and the Temperature of Preternatural Belief', in Robert Webster (ed.), *Perfecting Perfection: Essays in Honor of Henry D. Rack* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2015), 147–72, at 164; McGill, *Ghosts in Enlightenment Scotland*, 107–9.

were experienced internally with the 'eye of Faith', rather than externally through the bodily senses. Conversion was an inward transformation by which the heart turned to Christ; there was no need for outward manifestations like visions or voices.[45] Experiences such as Cadwallader's were therefore liable to raise some eyebrows within educated society. Hester notes that the Cork clergy were displeased by the spread of the story, and after conversation with Cadwallader, one minister 'preached against such delusions'.

Methodists were often more tolerant of external experiences of the supernatural than other evangelicals. Writing in 1972, E. P. Thompson offered a scathing assessment of Wesleyanism as 'explicitly a movement of counter-enlightenment'. In his desire to appeal to working people, John Wesley ended up 'reaffirming scores of superstitions' about healing practices, divination, diabolic possession and divine providence.[46] More recently, Jonathan I. Israel has framed Wesley as 'a leading precursor of Counter-Enlightenment', citing his 'fervent' belief in 'miraculous healings as well as providence, visions, witchcraft, and ghosts'.[47] But scholarship of the last few decades has generally adopted a more nuanced position on Wesley's beliefs. His personal attitudes were grounded in a (by no means unenlightened) commitment to Lockean empiricism that led him to value eyewitness

[45] See Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Holy Fairs: Scotland and the Making of American Revivalism*, 2nd edn (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2001), 145–53, esp. 148. See also Ann Taves, *Fits, Trances, and Visions: Experiencing Religion and Explaining Experience from Wesley to James* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 47–75.

[46] E. P. Thompson, 'Anthropology and the Discipline of Historical Context', *Midland History*, 1 (1972), 41–55, at 54.

[47] Jonathan I. Israel, *Democratic Enlightenment: Philosophy, Revolution, and Human Rights 1750–1790* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 43.

testimonies of ghosts and devils.[48] He published stories of apparitions and special providences in his journals and in the *Arminian Magazine*.[49] However, he also cautioned his followers against over-reliance on 'dreams, visions, or revelations', which he noted were 'of a doubtful, disputable nature: they might be from God, and they might not'.[50] According to

[48] On Wesleyan Methodism and the Enlightenment, see David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 97–143; Frederick Dreyer, 'Faith and Experience in the Thought of John Wesley', *American Historical Review*, 88 (1983), 12–30; David Hempton, *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 32–54; Timothy Wayne Holgerson, 'The Wesleyan Enlightenment: Closing the Gap between Heart Religion and Reason in Eighteenth Century England', PhD diss. (Kansas State University, 2017); Peter Lineham, 'Methodism and Popular Science in the Enlightenment', in *Enlightenment and Dissent* 17 (1998), 104–25; Henry D. Rack, 'A Man of Reason and Religion? John Wesley and the Enlightenment', *Wesley and Methodist Studies*, 1 (2009), 2–17; idem, *Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism*, 3rd edn (London: Epworth Press, 2002); Robert Webster, *Methodism and the Miraculous: John Wesley's Idea of the Supernatural and the Identification of Methodists in the Eighteenth-Century* (Lexington: Emeth Press, 2013).

[49] See Liam Iwig-O'Byrne, 'How Methodists were Made: The *Arminian Magazine* and Spiritual Transformation in the Transatlantic World, 1778–1803', PhD diss. (University of Texas, 2008); Robert Webster, 'Seeing Salvation: The Place of Dreams and Visions in John Wesley's *Arminian Magazine*', in Cooper and Gregory (eds), *Signs, Wonders, Miracles*, 376–88.

[50] Taves, *Fits, Trances, and Visions*, 73. See also Davies, 'Wesley's Invisible World'; Isabel Rivers, *Reason, Grace and Sentiment: A Study of the Language of Religion and Ethics in*

Wesley, humans were possessed of a spiritual sense that offered a more reliable guide to spiritual matters than the bodily senses.[51] In a letter to Conyers Middleton written in January 1749, Wesley explained that faith 'gives a more extensive knowledge of things invisible, showing what eye had not seen, nor ear heard'. He continued:

> I have sometimes been almost inclined to believe, that the wisdom of God has, in most later ages, permitted the external evidence of Christianity to be more or less clogged and incumbered for this very end, that men (of reflection especially) might not altogether rest there, but be constrained to look into themselves also, and attend to the light shining in their hearts.[52]

Without rejecting stories of external supernatural encounters altogether, Wesley did suggest that they were not necessarily reliable.

Beyond Wesley, the Methodist response to the supernatural involved a degree of compromise with the folkloric traditions of local communities. Sasha Handley has explored how early Methodism 'had some kinship with the spirituality of ordinary men and women, which initially enabled this new brand of Protestantism to gain a foothold among the people'.

England, 1660–1780: Volume I: Whichcote to Wesley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 205–53.

[51] Dreyer, 'Faith and Experience', 18–20; D. Bruce Hindmarsh, *The Spirit of Early Evangelicalism: True Religion in a Modern World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 126–7.

[52] John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, ed. John Emory, 7 vols (New York: J. Emory and B. Waugh, 1831), vol. 5, 759.

While acknowledging eighteenth-century scepticism and attacks on religious enthusiasm, she suggests that some clergymen from varied denominations accepted ghost stories as a 'theological compromise' that might advance anti-Catholic agendas and promote religious values.[53] Owen Davies argues that 'Methodism made theology relevant once again to the lives of the poor for whom the preternatural was fundamental to understanding and dealing with the harsh, chaotic world in which they lived'. For Davies, Wesleyan Methodism was probably not sufficiently popular to impact in any noticeable way on supernatural beliefs of society at large, but there was influence in the other direction: popular belief in the supernatural encouraged the spread of early Methodism.[54] Methodists benefited from the societal belief in apparitions, which perhaps made them more ready to countenance stories of dubious orthodoxy.

The account of Cadwallader offers insight into how this process of compromise might operate. Hester was sympathetic towards stories of supernatural visitations. She had her own encounter with the ghost of her husband's former wife, who appeared as a 'beautiful corpse'

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[53] Sasha Handley, *Visions of an Unseen World: Ghost Beliefs and Ghost Stories in Eighteenth Century England* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2007), 144, 161.

[54] Davies, 'Wesley's Invisible World', 153; idem, 'Methodism, the Clergy, and the Popular Belief in Witchcraft and Magic', *History*, 82 (2002), 252–65, at 260, 265. See also Clive Murray Norris, *Thomas Wride and Wesley's Methodist Connexion* (London: Routledge, 2020), 178–98. With reference to Ireland specifically, see John Fulton, 'Clerics, Conjurors and Courtrooms: Witchcraft, Magic and Religion in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Ireland', PhD thesis (Ulster University, 2016), 171–213; idem, 'Methodism, Magic and Popular Supernatural Beliefs in Ireland, 1750-1850', *Bulletin of the Methodist Historical Society of Ireland*, 24 (2019), 41–65.

to assure Hester that she had 'acted [her] part aright' since becoming James's second spouse.[55] However, in this case the ghost appeared in a dream, so the experience remained an inward one. In the manuscript, Hester carefully balances internal and external evidence for supernatural intervention. In a discussion of Cadwallader's experience of diabolic and angelic voices, she notes both that Cadwallader found new peace of mind after the episode, and that his room retained a smell of sulphur for several days. Her descriptions of Cadwallader's meetings with embodied emanations of the Devil sit alongside the statement, commonly found in spiritual writing about the Devil's inward influence, that Cadwallader was 'full of Satan'.[56] Hester observes obliquely that 'some minds' continue to entertain 'fears' about Cadwallader, and seems to acknowledge that this stems from the external nature of his experiences and conversion. While there is a great 'outward change' in Cadwallader, she writes, 'we wish to see a deeper inward work'. She comforts herself with the reflection that 'the same God of Love can easily effect this also, and I trust will'. When it comes to Mary, she reasserts the importance of experiencing grace internally, concluding that 'the Lord seems to be leading her to the experimental knowledge of his Love'.

Hester is thus careful to highlight the importance of internal transformation, but with these disclaimers attached, she avows that 'I no more doubt of the truth of all I have now related, than I can of my own existance'. Her faith seems to stem in part from the story's

[55] *The Experience and Spiritual Letters of Mrs Hester Ann Rogers: With a Sermon Preached on the Occasion of Her Death* (London: published by the booksellers, 1841), 282–4.

[56] See Michelle D. Brock, 'Internalizing the Demonic: Satan and the Self in Early Modern Scottish Piety', *Journal of British Studies*, 54 (2015), 23–43; Nathan Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 107–41.

value in advancing the Methodist cause locally: 'If [Cadwallader] does live for God, O how will the riches of his grace be magnified,—several have attended preaching since this happened, who never did before.' We see here a degree of pragmatism: Wesley's 'spiritual sense' remains important, but bodily experience of the supernatural is permissible as well, so long as it offers a compelling narrative that can attract more local converts. Scholarship on eighteenth-century Methodism and the supernatural often focuses heavily on Wesley's theoretical positions, but the manuscript is valuable in offering a detailed illustration of how orthodoxy could be negotiated at the community level, between established locals and itinerant divines.

Conclusion

Cadwallader Acteson's unconventional conversion narrative is a rich source that deserves to be more widely known. It offers a window into Methodist culture in 1780s Cork, and reflects more broadly on gender dynamics, conceptions of agency, and ways of understanding and experiencing supernatural forces. Although the account centres around a male protagonist, the dominance of women is notable. Mary, Sarah, the maid, and Hester each assume distinct and important roles in Cadwallader's conversion. On one hand, the account demonstrates the limited options for women within Irish society in the late eighteenth century. Married to an abusive and adulterous husband who fantasises about murdering her, Mary can do little but pray for his redemption. The maidservant takes a more proactive role in chasing social advancement, but her efforts are in vain, and the manuscript condemns her as an evil temptress. On the other hand, the manuscript demonstrates the Methodist conception of religious devotion as a form of agency. Mary's piety and virtue become sources of strength for her, while the spiritual advancement of Sarah and Hester allows both to assume positions

of moral authority. The manuscript reflects how the development of Methodist culture in Cork had the potential to reshape the dynamics of established relationships within the community.

The manuscript also explores the possible modes of communion between humans and supernatural forces. Cadwallader encounters crudely personified forms of good and evil, an experience mediated through his bodily senses. This was at odds with the common evangelical emphasis on inward experience of supernatural forces, understood through spiritual senses. While Hester acknowledges that Cadwallader should ideally undergo a 'deeper inward work', she remains confident in his experiences and potential to reach a sanctified state. This hints at how Methodist culture might incorporate or reframe communities' conceptions of supernatural forces in order to attract new converts. Overall, the manuscript has much to inform scholars about gender roles and visions of the supernatural world, as well as about how Methodism operated at the local level.

Description of Manuscript

The account spans four sides of paper measuring 24 cm by 38.5 cm. There is a margin of 2.5 cm at the top of the first two sides; otherwise margins are minimal, and the writing is close. While the italic script closely resembles that which Elizabeth Ritchie employed in her correspondence, it is rather more elegant in style, with more marked flourishes. This suggests that Ritchie intended that the manuscript should be preserved for posterity. The manuscript is generally clean, with few insertions or deletions.

Editorial Methodology

Original spelling and punctuation have been retained. However, Elizabeth Ritchie's lower-case and capital letters are frequently impossible to distinguish; attempting to reproduce her capitalization would involve making many subjective judgements about which words were 'supposed' to be capitalized. Capitalization has therefore been modernized throughout.

As the text is a copy, the (infrequent) deletions and insertions offer no insight into the original process of writing. Deletions have been removed and insertions incorporated. Contractions, which Ritchie uses chiefly for days of the week and months of the year, have been silently expanded. Words repeated on the transition between two pages have been given once only.

Edition of Manuscript

Cadwallader Acteson is of a reputable family, his father a clergyman, and so were others of his ancestors,—A man of good sence and natural abilities, but always given to drunkenness and other outward sins, especialy violent anger. He married the eldest daughter of Mr Creed, merchant;[57]—A maid who lived nine years in the family being chief confident

[57] Cadwallader Acteson and Mary Creed married at the Diocese of Cork and Ross in 1774. Record viewable via 'Ireland, Diocesan and Prerogative Marriage License Bonds Indexes, 1623-1866', digitised database of records held at the National Archives of Ireland, Dublin, available on *FamilySearch* (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints),

while this connection was carried on.—When married the father behaved very well to them both, and they set up in the business of a chandler.—His wife proved a very prudent industrious careful woman and bore her scene of affliction; caused by his wickedness with amazing patience and fortitude. He would often go out in a morning with several guineas in his pocket, and return next day, or next but one, without a farthing—Yet she endured all patiently; though she and five small children could hardly obtain necessaries, and tho' unaquainted experimentaly with heart religion, yet having been educated among professors, she used to acknowledge God as her only refuge, and made her request known unto him.—Latterly he grew worse and worse in all wickedness especially his unkindness to her, and many times very cruel treatment, such as beating her when with child—throwing knives at her—especially once, when the knife missing her, stuck into the wall.—But the whole scene of his vile conduct was not laid open, 'till on Saturday morning September 27th[58] Mr Acteson came to the preaching house, and enquiring for Mr Rogers, in a kind of desperation and horror, not to be expressed reveal'd to him his almost unparrelled wickedness, and truly miraculous interposition of a God of Love, to snatch him from ruins brink.—The same morning Mr Rogers went by his desire to see Mrs Acteson, who told him corrobarating circumstances, tho' she had been wholly ignorant 'till now of the cause of them, and on Sunday 28th he and she togeather came again and related the whole over again to Mr Rogers, Mr Roberts[59] and myself—the particulars I now enter upon

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https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QSQ-G94X-YGVV?cc=3460239, accessed 12 June 2021.

[58] 1788.

[59] From July 1788, Thomas Roberts preached alongside James Rogers in Cork. See James Buckley, 'Biography', *The Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine*, 16 (January 1837), 1–15, at 9.

In the beginning of the year 1784. Mr A– fell into company with one Harris, who formerly lived with Andrew Laffan,[60] but now kept a porter house being lately married—His wife[61] who was a pretty kind of a young woman, soon attracted Mr Actesons notice, so that he freguented the house more and more, and tho' 'till now a modest woman, he found an oppertunity in the abscence of her husband, to gain her over to his vile purposes, and commenced a criminal connection with her, which continued for two years, but was carried on with such care and precaution, that it was never known or suspected by any, and least of all by her husband or Mrs A.—In the beginning of the year 1786 Sarah Harris was seized with an impostume in her side,[62] and was soon deem'd irrecoverable by the physician, and on account hereof was seized with horrible fears of death and Hell—and with deep contrition of soul, she repented as in dust and ashes before God—sent for Mr A—told him of her misery because of her past sinfulness, and that if spared, she would see <u>him</u> no more. Exhorted him earnestly to repent, and warn'd him to break off all his sins, but especialy that, of which they had been equally guilty.—Once when he had viseted her and she had obtain'd a hope of

[60] Andrew Laffan led Methodist classes in Cork. Trained as a gardener, he managed a local nursery business. His absence from the story was likely due to sickness. His health had declined after a bout of influenza in 1775, and he suffered a paralytic stroke in 1788. He died in 1790. See M. Ward, 'An Account of Andrew Laffan', *Arminian Magazine*, 14 (June 1791), 299–302, at 301, 302.

[61] Possibly the John Harris and Sarah Williams who married at the Diocese of Cork and Ross in 1783. 'Ireland, Diocesan and Prerogative Marriage License Bonds Indexes, 1623-1866', *FamilySearch*, https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QSQ-G94X-Y21R?cc=3460239, accessed 12 June 2021.

[62] The medical term 'impostume' refers to a swelling or abscess on the body.

mercy, she made him solemnly promise he would never again be guilty of adultry—she lingered some months, but after obtaining, thro' boundless mercy a clear sence of pardon and witnessing to all around her, that God had forgiven all her sins, and changed her heart by grace she died, to live forever.[63] A monument of redeeming love and the willingness of Jesus to save. Mr Acteson was sober and much reformed for a season—But after some months, came acquainted with the same maid servant who formerly lived with Mr Creed—this vile woman was now kept by a wicked man as his mistress, yet she received Acteson also, who constantly attended her lodgings from this time, and lived with her in the sin of adultry—gave her money and cloaths—drank with her and her company 'till two, three, or four o'clock in a morning,—then spent the time 'till day with her.—Yet still his wife[64] was ignorant of his unfaithfulness to her.—after some time this wretched monster of woman kind proceeded farther, and finding him just a fit tool for Satan—she told him to deal hardly and use cruelty with his wife, whom she knew to be seven months advanced in her pregnancy, to the end it might kill her,—this was the cause of his throwing the knife at her (as before) for he joind in wishing her out of the way—But God wonderfully strengthen'd this poor afflicted one—and she was safely delivered to the great disapointment of those who sought her death,—when they found she was speedily recovering this vile creature took an oath, (the

[63] Sarah Harris's burial was recorded on a register for St Finbarr's South Parish on 17 February 1786. See 'Irish Parish Register Burials, ffolliott Collection', digitised database of records collected by Rosemary ffolliott, available on *Findmypast* (Findmypast Limited), https://search.findmypast.com/search-world-Records/irish-parish-register-baptisms-and-confirmations-ffolliott-collection, accessed 6 April 2021. We are grateful to Dan Smith for this reference.

[64] End of folio 1r.

better to accomplish her purpose) to admit Mr A– no more to her adulterous bed, ‘till by some method he had murder’d his wife and made her mistress of his house.—He consented to do it.—and she bought poison and gave it to him, which he brought home in his pocket, intending to give it, in his wife’s tea if posoble next morning,—In this determination he went to bed (about the middle of August last)[65] but, was no sooner laid down, than he heard a rustling, and a foot in the room—He hastily cried (who’s there?—and turning to look at the same moment, beheld a beautiful form, array’d in white—The countenance serene, and heavenly, but in it a look of holy displeasure and he was answer’d—“Do you not know me? I am Sarah Harris”—he instantly knew her to be the very person, but horror and astonishment render’d him speechless, while she continued You know all that passed between you and me, How we lived in sin two years—But I repented and you know I found mercy—These robes were washed in the blood of the Lamb,[66] and see (pointing to them) there is no spot left,—I am come to warn you—If you accomplish your horrid intention, you are lost,—Repent! Repent!—Or the gulf is ready to receive you—You promised me, to live no more in these sins, (puting him in mind of the time and place he did so). But you have broke your promise and are living in that very sin, and I tell you again If you proceed in what you intend your damnation is sealed: But if you repent speedily you will find mercy, as I have done, and your robes will be washed in the same blood.—After this she disappear’d—He was left in horror and astonishment and sleep departed from him—Yet he did not even pray!—But as soon as morning came, went again to that wicked strumpet, and continued to go as before,—Only she continued to refuse his cohabiting with her ‘till he had murdered his wife—to which she was ever urging him. At last he resolved once more he would do it, the first oppertunity—That

[65] 1788.

[66] Recalls Rev. 7:14.

night he came home early, and went to bed (viz five weeks after Harris first appeard to him) The candle was burning (as it was also before) The door open'd and he saw Sarah Harris enter a second time—She looked more displeased than before, walked to the bed side and said sternly, "You have not repented You are going on to destruction—I am come again to warn you—Repent—or vengeance will seize you speedily, and your damnation is sure.—When she was gone, he arose and thought to go down stairs, being afraid to stay alone, but was met by a hellish monster of a fiery red coulour with three long claws, extended, and aiming at him—He started back and sunk down into the bed, and his wife coming up just at the time it disappeared, but she found him almost breathless and bathed in sweat, so that his shirt, his pillow, and the sheets, were as if dipped in hot water—Yet he would not tell her the cause, and went again the next day to the same woman, and drank with her, hoping to shake off his terrors, and that he should see such appearances no more—The next night (viz., Friday September 26th—He went early to bed and left his wife below and the candle was burning as before.—Again the door opened, Sarah Harris entered as before—walked towards him—But looked far more displeased than ever, and said, "You have not regarded me and this is the last warning—the last trial you will have—If you do not take this warning; you will have no more; and you have no[67] more time than next Sabbath allow'd—If you do not repent before next Sabbath day, your damnation is sealed"—she spoke this last with peculiar emphasis and then disappeared,—He now roared out in anguish of soul, and thought the jaws of Hell were ready to receive him—He beleived it would be the last warning, and those words "before next Sabbath day" rang in his ears, and now he was constrained to open the whole scene black as it was to his wife—she wept and pray'd with him, and advised him to come immediately to Mr Rogers—He did so, early on Saturday morning 27th and we have cause to believe kept

[67] End of folio 1v.

nothing secret—nor spoke any thing contrary to truth—but appeard fully resolved to forsake his sins, and turn to God with all his heart—Tho' the motive appeard at that time to be slavish fear only.—On Sunday 28th he came in the morning and said he had been strangly harrass'd and tempted all night by Satan, who appear'd to him as a gentleman elegantly dressed, and told him to look in a particular drawer in his desk and under some papers which he described to him, he would find some arsenic (NB. That which he had from the wicked woman he had before this given to his wife who destroyed it) Which he told him to put in his wife's tea, and to send her into the shop while he effected it—As soon as the morning light appeared he arose—went to the drawer pointed out, and there found under those very paper mentioned by Satan, the arsenic of which he told him,—he took it out and though even then; powerfully tempted to use it for her destruction, he brought it to his wife, and in her presence destroyed it—telling her all that had passed.—They recollected this poison was bought eight or nine years ago to destroy rats,—But he and she had both quite forgotten that such a thing remained in the house—While he repeated this to us, his mind seemed in great agitation, and a something I can not express, a kind of wild horror sat on his countenance—He could not pray, and he feared he must expect no hope of mercy—that the temptation to poison his wife was continually suggested, and sometimes was so powerful he could hardly resist; and feared being overcome.—We begged of him to fall on his knees before God, on his return home (though speechless) and groan to him, if it were for hours togeather, 'till he obtained victory over the Temptor; and some ray of hope,—Repeated to him how Jesus cast a legion out,[68] and no evil spirit could ever stand befor him, that he is still the same, and will deliver all who seek deliverance in his name,—He seemed a little revived,—And at one o'clock same day came again and brought his wife—He had taken our advice, and was then much more

[68] Mark 5:6–10.

composed,—Monday 29th He came in the morning with a countenance quite changed—quite serene.—He told us, he took the Bible the last night, read several chapters to his wife, and then prayed ernestly to God, for mercy and for his protection against the power of the Enemy in the night season (which he dreaded much)—and the Lord gave him comfortable rest,—This answer to prayer, had given him much encouragement, and he never felt such inward peace for four years past,—Though he finds many suggestions from Satan he has power to lift up his heart in prayer, and they are gone, and is resolved to seek Jesus 'till his soul is fully saved,—Tuesday 30th He was again sorely assaulted and temp[t]ed of Satan to give up all hope—and to put and end to his life,—but after flying to God in prayer,—He gave his sword and his musket to Mrs A and begged of her to lock them up, and keep all instruments of destruction out of his way.—He continued in deep distress all the day,—the sins of his whole life being brought in dreadful array to his remembrance, but in the evening was a little comforted,—Wednesday October 1st He took a private walk, in order to meditate, and was greatly surprized by a person who called after him by name,—He soon perceived it to be—A woman of vile practices, whom he had not seen or conversed with for some years,—She pressed him to go into the house and drink, or into her garden and get apples,—But he was aware it was a snare of Satan, and broke from her, resisting every intreaty,—A companion of his late wickedness since called on him, to go to the house of another strumpet, but he rejected this also,—Friday October 3rd He met in class with Mr Howe,[69] and was much comforted, and afterwards spent the whole night in prayer, and reading the scripture and

[69] George Howe was a member of the Methodist society in Cork. He assisted the itinerant preachers who visited the city, and was also involved in the rehabilitation of local patients and prisoners. See John Stuart, 'Obituary', *The Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine*, 10 (March 1831), 207.

found much peace.—[70] Thursday October 9th He came and told me, that he was so overcome on the Monday before as to go into a public house,—after doing some business at the custome house—but intended at first only to have got a pint of porter—but when he had taken that, was led to drink more, and then becoming compleatly miserable thought all was lost, and being ashamed to return home, continued there ‘till his poor wife, almost distracted sent for him.—He came home full of Satan, went up stairs and got all the books, which before had been a comfort to him, and threw them in a heap into a large fire,—His wife snatched them out again and they received no harm, and though he horridly blasphemed even as a fiend of Hell, she bore all with patience—After some time he sat down, a little more calm,—when he was suddenly stricken a blow on his jaw bone, by an invisible agent; so that at first he thought it was broken, and for many days felt the pain.—He got up, raged, and thought it was some person in the room, and swore he would kill them but when convinced that no one had touched him, he rushed up stairs, lay down upon the bed and roared for some time, then burst into tears, fell on his knees and cried for mercy,—Begged of his wife to sit up by him, which she did ‘till three in the morning, and while she prayed with him, he obtained a ray of comfort.—He was in agonies all the next day, and a thousand times tempted to put an end to his wretched life—but cried to God and in the evening was more at ease. Wednesday, his mind was a little comforted, ‘till in the evening—He was tempted, to think his wife had prejudiced one of her relations against him,—and fell into a violent passion took his hat and went out to go to the vile woman, he had so long followed,—but suddenly made a stop—(Sarah Harris coming to his mind, and the last warning she gave him.)—Returned back—fell on his knees, and received some power from God,—He then came to the prayer

[70] End of folio 2r.

meeting, where Mr Rogers read the account of Arundel Hill's conversion,[71]—This proved to be just in season, and was made a blessing to Mr A.—He returned home with revived hopes, and fully determined to follow, and seek the Sinners Friend,—The next Sabbath he received the sacrament, and was enabled to be watchful and resist temptation;—Wednesday 15th He told us that the evening before, he retired early to his room, and after spending much time in prayer, he got into bed, but took the Bible with him and sat up to read the 51st Psalm, and was praying for the contrite spirit David felt and the mercy David found, when suddenly to his great horror and astonishment the door flew open, and the room was filled with flames and a sulphurious stench, that he could hardly breathe and thought he must be suffocated he cried aloud; 'Lord Jesus save me or I am gone! Lord Jesus have mercy on me! Christ save me! Jesus I am perishing if thou save not! None but thee can save me in this hour!'—A terrible voice said I <u>will</u> go on with my work and not give thee up;—But he called on Jesus yet more vehemently and in an instant a sweet voice seemed to rush forward between him and the terrific voice and, "said <u>fear not</u>! that Jesus on whom thou hast called, has sent me, and <u>he</u> will save thee <u>Arise</u> and wash away thy sins"[72]—In a moment he was deliverd from extreme agony, and filled with an eaqual transport of joy, so that throwing himself out of bed, he ran down stairs—His wife was greatly terrified—But he cried, Fear not,—Fear not, and sitting down speachless with joy, wept a flood of tears, and after about ten minuets [sic], repeated the wonderful deliverance,—they sent for a pious neighbour and continued many

[71] We have not found any record of this conversion experience. There was a notable family called the Hills of Doneraile, County Cork, which included several men by the name of Arundel. See Bernard Burke, *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Landed Gentry of Great Britain & Ireland, Volume 1*, 5th edn (London: Harrison, Pall Mall, 1871), 628.

[72] Acts 22:16.

hours in prayer and praises,—But the room had still such a smell of sulpher, that they could not, or at least dared not to sleep in it for several days. Since this he expresses a confidence in God, and a peace of mind he never knew before, and the outward change is great indeed, and though we wish to see a deeper inward work, yet the same God of Love can easily effect this also, and I trust will—I would sometimes hope that many of the fears suggested to some minds respecting him, are from Satan only to hinder these from helping him forward.—The affair has made much noise at Cork, the clergy are not pleased, One of them came to talk with him, to whom he related the whole, but he has since preached against such delusions However, I no more doubt of the truth of all I have now related, than I can of my own existance; Nor do I fear so much as some do, his future steadyness, this day my hope concerning him was much confirmed, he sat with me alone an hour and half; and appears to be gaining ground speedily—If he does live for God, O how will the riches of his grace be magnified,— several have attended preaching since this happened, who never did before.—Mrs Acteson meets in my class, and the Lord seems to be leading her to the experimental knowledge of his love.—