

The Letters of Charles Wesley: A Critical Edition, with Introduction and Notes: Volume 1 (1728-1756)

Kenneth G. C. Newport, Gareth Lloyd



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This first volume of a two volume edition contains letters written between 1727 and 1756 by the famous hymn writer, poet, and co-founder of Methodism, Charles Wesley (1707-1788), Volume 2 will contain letters written between 1757 and 1788. The edition brings together texts which are located in libraries and archives from across the globe and here presents them as a complete collection for the first time - many of the letters have never been previously published. The appended notes help the reader locate the letters in their proper historical and literary context and provide full information regarding the location of the original source and, where possible, something of its provenance.

These texts provide an intimate glimpse into the world of early Methodism and Charles' own struggles and triumphs as a central figure within it. They collectively document the story of Charles Wesley's early experiences as he sought to find his own place in Methodism and, of key importance for Charles, Methodism's place in the wider purposes of God. Here are letters of a theological kind, letters that reflect on his experiences as an itinerant preacher, letters that show something of his rather unsettled personality and letters that relate to his own personal and domestic circumstances. Here we see something of the inner workings of a nascent religious group. These are not sanitised accounts written by those looking back, but first-hand accounts written from the heart of a lived experience.

While this book will naturally appeal to those who have a specialist interest in the early history of Methodism, for others there is much to be gained from the picture it gives of the wider eighteenth-century world in which Charles and his co-religionists worked and lived.

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