

MS Death of John Matthews¹

(Drafts 1 & 2)

John Matthews was a London Methodist who was a particular confidant and supporter of John Wesley. John's esteem for Matthews is evident in the tributes published in his *Journal* during Matthews' final illness (August 27, 1764) and death (December 28, 1764). Charles Wesley voiced his esteem with a three-part manuscript hymn at Matthews' death.

There are two looseleaf drafts of this hymn extant, as well as a polished draft in MS Funeral Hymns. The drafts are filed together in the Methodist Archive and Research Centre, accession number MA 1977/583/20 (Charles Wesley Notebooks Box 4). These transcriptions are given with permission of the Librarian and Director, The John Rylands Library, The University of Manchester.

(The drafts are presented below in consecutive order—draft 2 beginning on overall page 12).

¹This document was produced by the Duke Center for Studies in the Wesleyan Tradition under the editorial direction of Randy L. Maddox, with the diligent assistance of Aileen F. Maddox, and Dr. Timothy Underhill consulting on the shorthand. Last updated: August 20, 2010.

**On the Death of
John Matthews.²**

[draft 1]

[Part I.]

- [1.] Blessing and thanks and power, and praise
 Jesus is worthy to receive,
Who keeps his saints throughout their days,
 And doth the final vict'ry give!
He hath his faithful mercies shown
 To Him, whose loss we now deplore
Safe entred on that land unknown,
 To weep, and fret, and die³ no more.
2. A servant in his earliest years
 After the hidden God he griev'd,
Till from his Saviour's messengers
 The welcom⁴ tidings he receiv'd:
His alms and prayers were not in vain,
 But rose acceptable to heaven;
And God assur'd the pious man
 His sins were all thro' Christ forgiven.
3. O what a mighty change was wrought
 By Jesus in his heart reveal'd!
Tis past the reach of human thought
 That peace which spoke his pardon⁵ seal'd:
As quite exempt from sin and care,
 He feasted with the saints above;

²Appears also in draft 2 (below) and MS Funeral Hymns, 21–31. Published posthumously in *Poetical Works*, 6:308–15; but missing verses 8–10 of Part I. Thus Part I is published also in its entirety in *Unpublished Poetry*, 3:335–37.

³Ori., “sin.”

⁴Ori., “joyful.”

⁵Ori., “pardon’d.”

And all his life was⁶ praise and prayer
And all his soul was⁷ joy and love.

4. On Tabor's top he long abode:
His Pattern there and Patient Head
The perfect way thro'⁸ sufferings show'd,
And to the cross his servants⁹ led:
'Twas there he learn'd¹⁰ with Christ to die,
And daily languish'd on the tree,
And echoed back the plaintive¹¹ cry
"Why hath my God forsaken me!"
5. Yet not forsook, but sorely tried,
And pain'd throughout his evil day,¹²
And fashion'd like The Crucified
He never cast his shield away:
Chose in the furnace of distress,
Kept by the power of Jesus Name
He thank'd him for the passive grace
And prais'd his Saviour in the flame.
6. Witness his old companions there,
How close in Jesus steps he trod,
The man of diffidence¹³ and prayer
The humble, upright man of God!
Happy, if all their faith could prove
Like him; like him their Lord confess
By every¹⁴ work of genuine love,
By¹⁵ mercy, truth, and righteousness!

⁶Ori., "soul is" changed to "life was."

⁷Ori., "life is" changed to "soul was."

⁸Ori., "of."

⁹"Servants" has "follower" written above it as an alternative.

¹⁰Ori., "languish'd."

¹¹Ori., "his Saviour's" changed to "the plaintive."

¹²Ori., "But pain'd throughout the evil day" changed to "And pain'd throughout his evil day."

¹³Ori., "confidence." Next changed to "modesty," and finally changed to "diffidence."

¹⁴Ori., "all the" changed to "every." Along with this change, Wesley undoubtedly also meant to change "works" to "work," as he used in MS Funeral Hymns, 21–31. We have made that correction in the text above to agree with his change to "every."

¹⁵Ori., "Of false."

7. A doer of the word he heard,
 He liv'd¹⁶ Israelite unseen,
And always blest, who always fear'd
 Not the reproach, but praise of men:
Not all the favours from his Lord
 Not all the gifts or grace bestow'd
Could tempt to one vain-glorious word,
 Or make him witness "I am good!"

8. FIVE HUNDRED witnesses arose,
 In proof of Instantaneous grace;
And each his own perfection knows,
 And *simply* utters his own praise:
Th' impeccable, immortal band¹⁷
 Intirely pure, intirely new,
His sudden, full assent demand,
 "And he shall then be perfect too!"

9. Cautious their saying he receiv'd,
 Nor fondly fed their secret pride,
Nor weakly every spirit believ'd
 Till in the sacred balance tried:
The language of their lives he heard,
 Their sufferings, and their tempers prov'd,
And waiting till the fruit appear'd,
 He saw them short—yet still he lov'd.

10. His wary, quick, judicious eye
 Look'd every self-deceiver thro',

¹⁶Ori., "A real" changed to "He liv'd."

¹⁷Ori., "Intir[e]ly Th' infallible, immortal band" changed to "Th' impeccable, immortal band."

But pass'd the imperfections by
Of people and of teachers too;
Paternal faults he would not see,
O're follies in a saint indeed,
O're wrinkles of infirmity:
His¹⁸ pious love the mantle spread.

Part II.

- [1.] Nor less the Christian husband shone,
With steady, strong affection kind,
Wisdom and love he join'd in one,
The pastor's and the father's mind:
A drop from the pure Fount above
Did all his heart and life inflow,
Whose only labour was to prove
How Jesus lov'd his church below.
2. Freely his all for her he gave
(Whom Mercy had on him bestow'd,)
Her soul, her pretious soul to save,
And without spot present to God:
For this alone he toil'd and liv'd
Her burthens on himself to take,
Calmly¹⁹ in her afflictions griev'd,
And suffer'd all things for her sake.

¹⁸Ori., “~~But~~.”

¹⁹Ori., “~~Only~~.” Next changed to “~~Gladly~~,” and finally changed to “Calmly.”

3. Oppression laid her iron yoke
 (By²⁰ Satan's choicest messenger)
And bruis'd with many a cruel stroke,
 And gaul'd²¹ his generous soul sincere:
In²² wrongs that might the wise confound
 His Father's gracious hand He sees,
Nor murmurs at the treacherous wound,
 But still maintains his soul in peace.

4. The tempter all his wiles essay'd,
 A servant of the Lord t' o'rethrow:
His eye in garb angelic clad
 Discern'd the soft malicious foe:
The most perverse of human race
 Might, leagued with hell, his caution try;
He never to the fiend gave place,
 Or once believ'd their smoothest lie.

5. His love endur'd the fiery test:
 Unfeign'd, impartial, unconfin'd,
His love receiv'd the worst and best
 As due to all the ransom'd kind:
If some well-meaning kindness show,
 If others spitefully intreat,
He could not recollect a foe,
 He never could a friend forget.

²⁰Ori., "As."

²¹Ori., "~~vex'd~~." "Gaul'd" has "prov'd" written above it as an alternative.

²²Ori., "Thro'."

6. His friends and partners in distress
With warmest charity he held;
Affliction could not make it less,
When all the powers of nature fail'd:
Worn out with lingring, lasting pain
Ready, and longing to depart,
In confidence to meet again,
He bore them on his faithful heart.
7. The object of his kindest love
His Father to the utmost tries,
And calls a favourite child to prove
A thousand deaths, before he dies:
The strength, but not the joy of grace
He doth in largest measure give;
Yet still he seems to hide his face
Yet still he seems his own to leave.
- 8.²³ Did such a soul the Witness want,
Tho' not in formal words exprest?
He knew his Father's love woud grant
Whate'er his wisdom counted best:
He cannot once mistrust that Care
Throughout his life of mercies shown,
Or doubt his sure admission there
Where Jesus prays before the throne.

²³Stanzas 8–10 appear in shorthand at the bottom of page 6. We have inserted them where Wesley intended, adding page 6a to accommodate the expansion.

9. His soul doth on the Rock remain,
Within the veil his anchor's cast
Thro' many a night of [²⁴] pain
Till pain extreme hath brought the last;
He now on Christ his Life relies,
Nor can the King of terrors fear,
While calm in Mercy's arms, he cries
"The Lord protects for ever near!"
10. Nor yet the Lord his light imparts,
Or comes, on his own work to shine,
Nor yet the sinner saved exerts
That reflex act of faith divine:
Quite ready for celestial bliss
His gasping soul on Christ he stays,
But never challenges²⁵ for his
The perfect, or the pardning grace.
- 11.²⁶ Above all sin, and doubt, and fear,
While prov'd with²⁷ agonies unknown,
To faith's almighty Finisher
He cleaves by naked²⁸ faith alone:
Stranger to sensible delight,
Still his own grace he cannot see:
Tis hidden from a sinner's sight,
Whose soul is all humility.

²⁴The shorthand word here is uncertain. It does not appear to be "hallow'd," though this is the word that Wesley uses in draft 2 and MS Funeral Hymns.

²⁵Ori., "~~Now ever ch[allenges].~~"

²⁶Wesley renumbered his original stanzas 8–10 to 11–13, after adding the three stanzas in shorthand.

²⁷Ori., "by."

²⁸Ori., "simple."

12. Come, see in this pale shadowy form
A spectacle to Gods and men,
And learn from a frail dying worm
The wonders of the world unseen!
His flesh, and heart, and spirit faints;
His life is safe conceal'd above:
Here is the patience of the saints!
Here is the power of Jesus²⁹ love!
13. Poor, meek, and patient to the end,
One even man in life and death,
He doth the humble grace commend,
And breath it with his latest breath;
“My dearest friends, whom now I leave,³⁰
“Your charity in prayer be show'd
“I never may³¹ my soul deceive,
“Or vainly think, that I am good!”
- 14.³² He speaks, and rend'ring up his breath,
Without a parting sigh or groan,
[³³] suffers death,
Appears before the final throne!
He still instructs us how to live,
Our Saviour how to testify,
Till all his fulness we receive,
And perfected thro' sufferings die!

Part III.

- [1.] O that a portion of his grace
Might on his old companions rest
Who the same pretious Christ embrace³⁴
With pardon and salvation blest!
O that his meek and lowly mind
His wise discerning love were given
To men, instructors of the blind,
Our patterns, and our guides to heaven!
2. We want the Spirit of humble fear,
Our fleshly confidence to stay,

²⁹“Jesus” has “perfect” written below it as an alternative.

³⁰Ori., “My friends, whom ~~I this moment~~ leave.”

³¹“I never may” has “Lest I at last” written above it as an alternative.

³²Stanza 14 is in shorthand.

³³The shorthand appears to be {pfis}, which would need to expand into a five-beat word or phrase. Wesley completely revises the line in draft 2 and MS Funeral Hymns.

³⁴Ori., “~~Or all~~ who the same pretious Christ embrace.”

Lest swift to speak, and slow to hear
We miss the true celestial way,
In error's endless mazes rove,
As fancy, self, and Satan guide,
And take our grace for perfect love
When Jesus sees³⁵ it perfect pride.

3. Jesus, thy ministers inspire,
Thy people with the knowing zeal;
We then shall quench wild nature's fire,
And Satan's flaming darts repel,
Retract our confidence in men
(The men we worship'd heretofore)
No more on Verbal goodness lean,
And trust to broken reeds no more.

4. O that we might our faith sincere
By doing, not by talking, show,³⁶
(While all the fruits of grace appear,
And tell the tree on which they grow)
Our Saviour, not ourselves, commend,
His sole perfection testify;
Or bid the world our works attend,
And hearken to our life's reply!

5. Partakers of thy nature made,
Thy tempers, Lord, we long t' express,
And show throughout our lives display'd
The power of real godliness
As followers of the silent Lamb
To breathe thy meek humility,
And always feel "I nothing am
^l"But a poor worm redeem'd by Thee!"

³⁵Ori., "God accounts" changed to "Jesus sees."

³⁶Ori., "prove."

6. What have I else whereof to boast?
A sinner by myself undone,
Without thine utmost³⁷ mercy lost
I glory in thy cross alone:
Conform'd to my expiring Head,
I share thy passion on the tree:
And now I to the world am dead,
And now the world is dead to me.

7. As pilgrims poor, to³⁸ man unknown
Acknowldg'd by the sinners Friend,
Jesus, the Lover of thine own,
Wilt thou not love us to the end?
No help in our weak selves we have,
But in thy strength, and yearning zeal,
Mere sinners by thy blood to save,
And stamp us with thy Spirit's seal.

8. In lowly confidence divine
That thou wilt never let us go,
We now into thy hands resign
Our souls, so dearly bought below;
With Thee we trust them to that day
When summon'd from the flesh we³⁹ part,
And⁴⁰ drop our corruptible clay,
And soar to see thee as thou art.

³⁷Wesley suggests the alternative beginning for this line “And still without thy” in shorthand in the margin. This alternative is adopted in MS Funeral Hymns.

³⁸Ori., “by.”

³⁹Ori., “to.”

⁴⁰Ori., “we.”

**On the Death of
Mr. John Matthews,
Dec. 28, 1764.¹**

[draft 2]

[Part I.]

- [1.] Blessing, and thanks, and power, and praise
 Jesus is worthy to receive,
Who keeps his saints throughout their days,
 And doth the final vict'ry give!
He hath his faithful mercies shown
 To Him whose loss we now deplore,
Safe entred on that land unknown,
 To weep, and fret, and die no more.
2. A servant, in his earliest years,
 After the hidden God he griev'd,
Till from his Saviour's messengers
 The welcome tidings he receiv'd:
His alms and prayers were not in vain,
 But rose acceptable to heaven;
And God assur'd the pious man,
 His sins were all thro' Christ forgiven.
3. O what a mighty change was wrought
 By Jesus in his heart reveal'd!
Tis past the reach of human thought
 That peace which spake his pardon seal'd:
As quite exempt from sin and care,
 He feasted with the saints above;

¹Appears also in MS Death of John Matthews (draft 1); and MS Funeral Hymns, 21–31.
Published posthumously in *Poetical Works*, 6:308–15; but missing verses 8–10 of Part I. Thus Part I is
published also in its entirety in *Unpublished Poetry*, 3:335–37.

And all his life was praise and prayer,
And all his soul was joy and love.

4. Long he on Tabor's top abode:
His Pattern then, and patient Head
The perfect way thro' sufferings show'd,
And to the cross his follower led:
'Twas there he learn'd with Christ to die,
And daily languish'd on the tree,
And echoed back the plaintive cry
"Why hath my God forsaken me?"
5. Yet not forsook, but sorely tried,
But pain'd throughout his evil day,
And fashion'd like the Crucified,
He never cast his shield away:
Chose in the furnace of distress,
Kept by the power of Jesus' name,
He highly priz'd the passive grace,
And prais'd his Saviour in the flame.
6. Witness his old companions there,
How close in Jesus' steps he trod,
The man of diffidence and prayer,
The humble, upright man of God!
Happy, if all their faith could prove
Like him, like him their Lord confess
By every work of genuine love,
By mercy, truth, and righteousness.

7. A doer of the word he heard,
 He *lived* an Israelite unseen,
And always blest, who always fear'd
 Not the reproach, but praise of men:
Not all the visits from his Lord,
 The favors or the grace bestow'd
Could tempt to one vain-glorious word,
 Or make him witness—"I am good!"

8. FIVE HUNDRED Witnesses arose
 In proof of Instantaneous grace,
And each his own perfection knows,
 And *simply* utters his own praise!
Th'impeccable, immortal band,
 Intirely pure, intirely new
His sudden, full assent demand,
 "And he shall then be perfect too!"

9. Cautious, their saying he receiv'd,
 Nor fondly fed their secret pride,
Nor weakly every spirit believ'd,
 Till in the sacred balance tried:
The language of their lives he heard,
 Their sufferings, and their tempers prov'd,
And waiting till the fruit appear'd,
 He saw them short; yet still he lov'd.

10. His wary, quick, judicious eye
 Look'd every self-deceiver thro',

But pass'd the imperfections by
Of people, and of teachers too:
Paternal faults he would not see;
O're failings in a saint indeed,
O're wrinkles of infirmity
His pious love the mantle spread.

Part II.

- [1.] Nor less the Christian Husband shone:
With steady, strong affection kind,
Wisdom and love he join'd in one,
The pastor's and the father's mind:
A drop from the pure Fount above,
Did all his heart and life o'reflow,
Whose only labour was to prove
How Jesus lov'd his church below.
2. Freely his all for her he gave,
(Whom Mercy had on him bestow'd)
Her soul, her precious soul to save,
And without spot present to God:
For this alone he toil'd, and liv'd,²
Her burthens on himself to take,
Kindly in her afflictions griev'd,
And suffer'd all things for her sake.
3. Oppression laid her iron yoke,
By Satan's choicest messenger,

²Ori., "liv'd, and" "toil'd" changed to "toil'd, and liv'd."

And bruise'd with many a cruel stroke,
And gaul'd his generous soul sincere:
In wrongs that might the wise confound
His Father's gracious hand he sees,
Nor murmurs at the treacherous wound,
But still maintains his soul in peace.

4. The tempter all his wiles essay'd
A servant of the Lord t' or'ethrow:
His eye, in garb angelic clad
Discern'd the soft, malicious foe:
The most perverse of human race
Might, leagued with hell, his caution try,
He never to the fiend gave place,
Or once believ'd their smoothest lie.
5. His love endure'd the fiery test:
Unfeign'd, impartial, unconfin'd,
His love receiv'd the worst, and best,
As due to all the ransom'd kind:
If some well-meaning kindness show,
If others spitefully intreat,
He could not recollect a foe,
A friend he never could forget.
6. His friends and partners in distress
With warmest gratitude³ he held;
Affliction could not make it less,
When all the powers of nature fail'd:

³Ori., "charity."

Worn out with lingring, lasting pain,
Ready, and longing to depart,
In confidence to meet again,
He bore them on his faithful heart.

7. The object of his kindest love
His Father to the utmost tries,
And calls a fav'rite child to prove
A thousand deaths, before he dies:
The strength, but not the joy, of grace
He doth in largest measure give;
But still He seems to hide his face,
But still He seems his own to leave.
8. Did such a soul the Witness want,
Tho' not in formal words exprest?
He knew, his Father's love would grant
Whate'er his wisdom counted best:
He cannot once mistrust that Care
Throughout his life of mercies shown,
Or doubt his sure admission there,
Where Jesus prays before the throne.
9. His soul doth on the Rock remain,
Within the veil his anchor's cast
Through many a night of hallow'd pain,
Till pain extreme hath brought the last:

He now on Christ his Life relies,
Nor can the king of terrors fear,
While calm in Mercy's arms he cries
"The Lord protects, forever near!"

10. Nor yet the Lord his light imparts,
Or comes on his own work to shine,
Nor yet the sinner sav'd exerts
That act reflex of faith divine:
Quite ready for celestial bliss,
His gasping soul on Christ he stays,
But never challenges for his
The perfect, or the pardning grace.
11. Above all sin, and doubt, and fear,
While prov'd with agonies unknown,
To faith's Almighty Finisher
He cleaves by naked faith alone:
Stranger to sensible delight,
Still his own grace he cannot see;
Tis hidden from a sinner's sight,
Whose soul is all humility.
12. Come, see in this pale shadowy form
A spectacle to Gods and men,
And learn from a frail dying worm
The wonders of the world unseen!

His flesh and heart and spirit faints,
His life is safe conceal'd above:
Here is the patience of the saints!
Here is the power of perfect love!

13. Poor, meek, and patient to the end,
One even man in life and death
He doth the humble grace commend,
And breathes it with his latest breath,
“My dearest friends, whom now I leave,
“Your charity in prayer be show'd
“Lest I at last my soul deceive,
“Or vainly think, that I am good.^[b]”
14. He speaks, and yielding up the ghost
Without a parting sigh, or groan,
Escorted by th' angelic host
Appears before th' eternal throne!
He still instructs us how to live,
Our Saviour how to testify,
Till all his fulness we receive,
And perfected thro' sufferings die.

Part III.

- [1.] O that a portion of his grace
 Might on his old companions rest,
Who the same precious Christ embrace,
 With pardon and salvation blest!
O that his meek, and lowly mind,
 His wise, discerning love were given
To men, instructors of the blind,
 Our patterns and our guides to heaven!

2. We want the Spirit of humble fear,
 Our fleshly confidence to stay,
Lest swift to speak, and slow to hear
 We swerve from the celestial way,
In error's endless mazes rove,
 As fancy, self, and Satan guide,
And take our grace for perfect love
 When Jesus sees it perfect pride.

3. Jesus, thy ministers inspire,
 Thy people, with the knowing zeal;
We then shall quench wild nature's fire,
 And Satan's flaming darts repel,
Retract our confidence in men
 (The men we worship'd heretofore)
No more on Verbal Goodness lean,
 And trust to broken reeds no more.

4. O that we might our faith sincere
By doing, not by talking, show,
(While all the fruits of grace appear,
And tell the tree on which they grow)
Our Saviour, not ourselves, commend,
His sole perfection testify;
Or bid the world our works attend,
And hearken to our life's reply.

5. Partakers of thy nature made,
Thy tempers, Lord, we long t' express,
And show throughout our lives display'd
The power of real godliness,
As followers of the silent Lamb,
To breathe thy meek humility,
And always feel "I nothing am,
^[“]But a poor worm, redeem'd by Thee.^[”]

6. What have I else whereof to boast?
A sinner by myself undone,
And still without thy mercy lost,
I glory in thy cross alone;
Conform'd to my expiring Head,
I share thy passion on the tree;
And now I to the world am dead,
And now the world is dead to me.

7. As pilgrims poor, to man unknown,
 Acknowledg'd by the sinners Friend,
Jesus, the Lover of thine own,
 Wilt Thou not love us to the end?
No help in our weak selves we have,
 But in thy strength, and yearning zeal
Meer sinners by thy blood to save,
 And stamp us with thy Spirit's seal.

8. In lowly confidence divine
 That Thou wilt never let us go,
We now into thy hands resign
 Our souls, so dearly bought below;
With Thee we trust them to that day
 When summon'd, from the flesh we part,
And drop our corruptible clay,
 And soar to see Thee as Thou art.