

MS Death of Hannah Dewal¹

(Drafts 1 & 2)

Hannah Dewal² was a member of the Methodist society in Lewisham, Kent. She lived her last years at The Limes, a manor that had been formerly owned by Mrs Jane Sparrow, another Lewisham Methodist. When Mrs Jane Sparrow died in 1748, the banker Ebenezer Blackwell was her executor and sold The Limes to Hannah Dewal (a widow). Blackwell immediately bought back a major share of the manor. It became a home for the Blackwells, but Hannah Dewal resided with them until her death.³ It is unclear whether there were family connections, in addition to their Methodist connections, between Jane Sparrow, Hannah Dewal, and the Blackwells.

The Wesley brothers frequently retired to The Limes for renewal and (John in particular⁴) for concentrated time on publishing projects. As a result, they became very close to Mrs. Sparrow, Mrs. Dewal, and the Blackwells, as is evident in John's reflections after Ebenezer Blackwell's death.⁵ The close relationship of Charles with the residents at The Limes is reflected in his choice of Mrs Dewal and Mrs Blackwell as confidants in his deliberation over whether to marry Sarah Gwynne (see the introduction to MS *Deliberative Hymns*). It also found expression in the manuscript hymn that he wrote to commemorate Hannah Dewal on the occasion of her death (November 12, 1762), as well as the similar offerings for both Ebenezer and Elizabeth Blackwell found elsewhere in this collection.

Two manuscript drafts of Charles Wesley's hymn for Hannah Dewal survive. The draft that was surely the earliest (with the most corrections) is held by the Bridwell Library at Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas. A more polished draft is present in the collection in the Methodist Archive and Research Centre, The John Rylands Library, The University of Manchester.

(The drafts are presented below in consecutive order—draft 2 beginning on overall page 9).

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. Last updated: August 1, 2010.

²This is the spelling used consistently by the Wesley brothers. Other sources spell the last name as Dewell.

³See John Biddulph Martin, "*The Grasshopper*" in *Lombard Street* (London: Leadenhall, 1892), 52.

⁴Cf. September 29, 1747 in his *Journal*.

⁵Recorded in his *Journal* on July 24, 1782.

**On the Death
of Mrs Hannah Dewal.¹**

[draft 1]

[Part I.]

- [1.] Farewell, thou² best of friends, farewell
(Since God revokes his richest loan)
Return, with kindred souls to dwell,
As pure and upright as thine own!
No longer could our prayers detain
The pilgrim from her heavenly rest:
Go, blessed Saint, with Jesus reign,
And lean for ever on his breast.
2. In hope to share thy happiness,
We check th' unruly selfish³ sigh,
Restraining nature's soft excess,
The tears commanding from our eye:
When Jesus to Himself doth take
A vessel of his glorious love,
Tis sacrilege to wish her back,
And rob the sanctuary above.
3. Yet will we on her image dwell
The pattern fair she left behind
Her genuine faith, and temper'd zeal,
Her noble, free, Berean mind,
Her diligence to search the word,
"If man his pardon'd sin may know,"
She sought, till there she⁴ found her Lord,
And held, and never let him go.

¹Appears also in draft 2 (below) and MS Funeral Hymns, 42–48. Published posthumously in *Poetical Works*, 6:318–23. This draft is part of the Charles Wesley Manuscript Letters and Documents in the Special Collections of the Bridwell Library at Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University. Bridwell has made a digital copy of the manuscript available in the ATLA Cooperative Digital Resources Initiative. See <http://www.atla.com/digitalresources/searcha.asp> (search for "Death of Hannah Dewal" under title). The transcription here is provided with permission of the Bridwell Library.

²Ori., "my."

³"Contemplating" is suggested in the margin as an alternative to "unruly selfish."

⁴Ori., "there her L[ord]."

- [4.]⁵ On Him she fix'd her single eye,
And steady in his steps went on,
Studios by works to testify
The power of God in weakness shown:
A quiet follower of the Lamb,
She walk'd in Him she had receiv'd,
And more, and more express'd⁶ his name,
And more, and more like Jesus liv'd.
- [5.] No sudden fits of raptious⁷ love,⁸
No instantaneous starts⁹ she knew,
But shew'd her heart was fix'd above,
And poorer still, and poorer grew:
The seed increas'd, she knew not how,
Nor aim'd her Saviour's work t' explain,
Nor tempted Him by nature's *NOW*,
But waited all his mind to gain.
- [6.] Transparent as the chrystal stream
Her life in even tenor flow'd,
Careful to be, and not to seem,
Whate'er she was, she was to God:
Superior to reproach, and praise,¹⁰
By no fantastic impulse driven,
As unperceiv'd she ran her race,
As rapid as the orbs of¹¹ heaven.

⁵On turning to a new page, Charles mistakenly repeats “3” in numbering this stanza, casting the following stanzas in the Part off by one.

⁶“Confess'd” is suggested in the margin as an alternative to “express'd.”

⁷“Transient” is suggested in the margin as an alternative to “raptious.”

⁸Ori., “No fits and starts of raptious love.”

⁹Charles has crossed out an earlier word here, rendering it illegible.

¹⁰Ori., “shame.”

¹¹Ori., “in.”

- [7.] Thither her godlike spirit soar'd¹²
Above all pride, all wrath, all fear,
She held communion with her Lord,¹³
Yet suffer'd with his members here;
At every shape of woe distrest,
How did her yearning bowels move!
Soft pity fill'd her generous breast,¹⁴
And mix'd the eagle with the dove.
- [8.] For friendship form'd, her swelling heart
With pure, intense affection glow'd,¹⁵
She could not give her friend a part,
Because she gave the whole to God:
She grasped¹⁶ her friend she with love¹⁷ intire,
Inkindled at the Saviour's Throne,¹⁸
A spark of that celestial Fire,
A ray of that Eternal Sun!
- [9.] Could actions, words, or looks express
How warm, how boundless her esteem?
Her soul's delight to oblige¹⁹ and please,
Bliss to impart, her joy supreme.²⁰
Say you, who shared that Angel²¹ here,
Whom neither life, nor death disjoin,
Was ever transport more sincere,
Was ever friendship more divine?

¹²This line went through at least three revisions, to its present form, with the markouts obscuring most of the earlier versions.

¹³In the margin, in shorthand, Charles suggests the alternative: "She triumph'd with her glorious Lord."

¹⁴Ori., "~~True gentleness~~ filled her ~~tender~~ breast."

¹⁵Ori., "~~Intarged~~ with pure affection glow'd."

¹⁶"Clasp'd" is suggested in the margin as an alternative to "grasp'd."

¹⁷Ori., "~~heart~~."

¹⁸Ori., "~~With love~~ inkindled at the Throne."

¹⁹Ori. "aid."

²⁰Ori., "~~Imparting~~ bliss her joy supreme."

²¹Ori., "~~shared the blessing~~."

Part II.

- [1.]²² Celestial charity expands
The heart to all the ransom'd race:
Tho' knit to one in closest bands,
Her soul doth every soul embrace;
She no unkind exception makes,
A childlike follower of her God
The world into her heart she takes,
The purchase dear of Jesus blood.
2. She lov'd even that most straiten'd sect
Who every other church²³ disown,²⁴
Who all besides themselves reject,
As heaven were bought for them alone:
With noble frankness she confest
Good out of Babylon might²⁵ come,
And cherish'd in her candid breast
The warmest partizan of Rome.
3. But number'd with the British sheep,
She priz'd, and held the blessing fast,
Resolv'd her privilege to keep,
Till all the storms of life were past;
She kept the faith at first receiv'd,
(Not judging those who turn'd aside)²⁶
A daughter of our Zion liv'd,
A mother of our Israel died.

²²Charles begins this stanza with what are now lines 3–4, crosses them out, and starts over.

²³“Sect” is suggested in the margin as an alternative to “church.”

²⁴In the margin, in shorthand, Wesley suggests the alternative: “Who deem all churches but their own.”

²⁵Ori., “may.”

²⁶In the margin, in shorthand, is suggested the alternative: “Nor fiercely judg'd who turn'd aside.”

4. Warn'd of her dissolution near,
By waning strength and lingring pain,
She bless'd the welcome messenger,
(To live was Christ, to die was gain)
Made ready for her heavenly Lord
Who came his servant to release,
Her lamp with holy oyl was stor'd,
Her mind preserv'd in perfect peace.

5. She cast the tempting foe behind
Who preach'd in her last sacred hours
"Now, now, believe again, and find
"Sensations new, and rapturous powers:"
In vain to *instantaneous* pride
He urg'd a saint of Christ possest;
With ease she turn'd the dart aside,
And closer clave to Jesus breast.

6. Her humble confidence she held,
Built on a Rock that could not move,
And conscious of her pardon seal'd,
And fill'd with purity of love,
The world with wide-spread arms embrac'd,
Partaker of her Saviour's mind,
And dying, all her soul confess'd
Alike drawn out to all mankind.

7. To bear her to those endless joys
While Israel's flaming car attends,

The pretious moments she employs
In dealing blessings to her friends,
In counsels kind, as each had need,
In witnessing the truth of grace,
While angels croud around her bed,
And heaven is open'd in her face.

8. “My Master calls! at his command
“Joyful I drop this earthly clod,
“My roll I carry in my hand,
“Tis wrote, and sign’d, and seal’d with blood:
“My way, she cries, is strew’d with flowers,
[“My pleasant path²⁷ before me lies!^[’]”]
And leads to amaranthine bowers,
And leads to Christ in paradise.
9. When language fail’d, her silence spoke
In²⁸ meekest majesty of love;
On opening heaven she fixt her look,
Like angels worshipping above;
Full of unutterable awe
Her look th’ Invisible declar’d
As bringing, in the Sight she saw,
Her weighty²⁹ crown, her vast³⁰ reward.
10. That vision of the One in Three³¹
Sweetly dissolves the human shrine,
It³² swallows up mortality
In joy ineffably divine;

²⁷Ori., “way.”

²⁸Ori., “With.”

²⁹Ori., “glorious”; then, “righteous”; and finally “weighty.”

³⁰Ori., “full.”

³¹Ori., “Three in One.”

³²Ori., “And.”

That Sight too strong for life to bear
Her true eternal Life displays,
And, eagle-like, she cleaves the air,
And mingles with the Glorious Blaze!

**On the Death of
Mrs. Hannah Dewal.¹**

[draft 2]

[Part I.]

- [1.] Farewell, thou best of friends farewell
 (Since God revokes his richest loan)
Return, with kindred souls to dwell,
 As pure and upright as thine own!
No longer could our prayers detain
 The pilgrim from her heavenly rest:
Go, blessed saint, with Jesus reign,
 And lean forever on his breast.

2. In hope to share thine happiness
 We check th' unruly, selfish sigh,
Restraining nature's soft excess,
 The tears commanding from our eye:
When Jesus to himself doth take
 A vessel of his glorious love,
Tis sacrilege to wish her back,
 To rob the sanctuary above.²

3. Yet should we on her memory dwell,
 The pattern fair she left behind,
Her genuine faith, and temper'd zeal,
 Her noble, true, Berean mind,
Her diligence to search the word
 “If man his pardon'd sin may know:^[2]
She sought, till there she found her Lord,
 And held, and never let him go.

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²Wesley proposed an alternative in the margin (in shorthand): “Tis robb’ry of the Church above.”

4. On Him she fixt her single eye,
And steady in his steps went on,
Studious by works to testify
The power of God in weakness shown;
A quiet follower of the Lamb,
She walk'd in Him she had receiv'd,
And more and more declar'd³ his name
And more and more like Jesus liv'd.

5. No sudden fits of transient love,
No instantaneous starts she knew,
But show'd, her heart was fixt above,
And poorer still, and poorer grew:
The seed increas'd, she knew not how,
Nor aim'd her Saviour's work t' explain,
Nor tempted him by nature's *Now*,
But waited all his mind to gain.

6. Transparent as the chrystal stream,
Her life in even tenor flow'd,
Careful to be, and not to seem,
Whate'er she was, she was to God:
Superior to reproach and praise,
By no fantastic impulse driven,
As unperceiv'd she ran her race,
As rapid as the orbs of heaven.

³Ori., "show'd forth."

7. Thither her godlike spirit soar'd,
 Above all pride, all wrath, all fear,
She triumph'd with her glorious Lord,
 Yet suffer'd with his members here:
At every shape of woe distrest,
 How did her yearning bowels move?
Soft pity fill'd her generous breast,
 And mixt the eagle with the dove.

8. For friendship form'd, her constant heart
 With pure, intense affection glow'd,
She could not give her friend a part,
 Because she gave the whole to God:
Her friend she clasp'd with love intire
 Inkindled at the Saviour's throne,
A spark of that celestial fire,
 A ray of that eternal Sun!

9. Could actions, words, or looks express
 How warm, how boundless her esteem?
Her soul's delight T' oblige and please,
 Bliss to impart her joy supreme:
Say you, who shared that angel here,
 Whom neither life nor death disjoin;
Was ever transport more sincere,
 Was ever friendship more divine?

Part II.

- [1.] Celestial charity expands
The heart to all our ransom'd race:
Tho' knit to One in closest bands,
Her soul doth every soul embrace;
She no unkind exception makes,
A childlike follower of her God,
The world into her heart she takes,
The purchase dear of Jesus blood.
2. She lov'd ev'n that most straiten'd sect,
Who every other sect disown,
Who all besides themselves reject,
As heaven were bought for them alone:
With noble frankness she confess'd
Good out of Babylon might come,
And cherish'd in her candid breast
The warmest partizan of Rome.
3. But numbred with the British sheep,
She priz'd, and held the blessing fast,
Resolv'd her privilege to keep,
Till all the storms of life were past:
She kept the faith at first receiv'd,
Nor fiercely judg'd who turn'd aside,
A daughter of our Zion liv'd,
A mother of our Israel died.

4. Warn'd of her dissolution near,
By waning strength, and lingring pain,
She bless'd the welcom messenger,
(To live was Christ, to die was gain)
Made ready for her heavenly Lord,
Who came his servant to release:
Her lamp with holiness was stor'd,
Her spirit kept in perfect peace.
5. She cast the tempting fiend behind,
Who preach'd, in her last sacred hours,
"Now, Now, believe again, and find
"Sensations new, and rapt'rous powers!"
In vain to instantaneous pride
He urg'd a saint of Christ possess;
With ease she turn'd the dart aside,
And closer clave to Jesus' breast.
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Built on a Rock that could not move,
And conscious of her pardon seal'd,
And fill'd with purity of love,
The world with wide-spread arms embrac'd,
Partaker of her Saviour's mind,
And dying, all her soul confess'd
Alike drawn out to all mankind.

7. Her Convoy to those endless joys,
While Israel's flaming car attends,
The precious moments she employs
In dealing blessings to her friends,
In counsels kind, as each had need,
In witnessing the truth of grace,
While angels croud around her bed,
And heaven is open'd in her face.

8. "My Master calls! at his command
"Joyful I drop this earthy clod;
"My roll I carry in my hand,
"Tis written, sign'd, and seal'd with blood
"My way, she cries, is strew'd with flowers,
"A pleasant path before me lies,
"And leads to amaranthine bowers,
"And leads to Christ in paradise.^[3]

9. When language fail'd, her silence spoke
In meekest majesty of love,
On opening heaven she fixt her look,
Like angels worshipping above;
Full of unutterable awe
Her look th' Invisible declar'd,
As bringing, in the Sight she saw,
Her weighty⁴ crown, her vast reward.

⁴Ori., "mighty."

10. That Vision of the One in Three
 Sweetly dissolves the human shrine,
It swallows up mortality
 In joy ineffably divine:
That Sight too strong for life to bear
 Her true eternal Life displays,
And eagle-like she cleaves the air,
 And mingles with the Glorious Blaze!