

MS Six¹

MS Six takes its name from the shelf marking on its cover for its place in the Methodist Archives when they were located in London. It is a bound volume originally containing some 200 pages (3.75 x 6.25 inches in size), of which practically all have been cut out. It is unclear why these pages were removed. Many of the remaining stubs are large enough to reveal fragments of writing in Charles Wesley's hand. On the inside of the front cover is the beginning of a table of contents in Charles Wesley's hand (reproduced below). It covers poems through page 44, the remainder of the list being torn out. Of the poems listed in this table of contents, ten were published in *Funeral Hymns* (1759)—shown in blue font. The remaining items on the list occur in MS Miscellaneous Hymns or MS Richmond. Pages 21–26 are all that remain within MS Six now, and they are transcribed below.

On the inside back cover of MS Six there are two additional hymns, written in shorthand. The first of these hymns was published, with minor variants, in *Family Hymns* (1767), 124–25. The second appears, with minor variants, in longhand in MS Matthew, 371. Readers are referred to these locations, where they will find annotations of the few variants.

MS Six is part of the collection in the Methodist Archive and Research Centre, accession number MA 1977/569 (Charles Wesley Notebooks Box 2). The transcription below is provided with permission of the Librarian and Director, The John Rylands Library, The University of Manchester.

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: January 12, 2021.

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[Desiring Death]
[Hymn II.]³

- [1.] Ah, whither, or to whom
Should the afflicted fly?
Beyond the storm, beyond the tomb,
To Jesus in the sky!
Above these tents of clay,
Above these clouds of care,
To mansions of eternal day,
To our Redeemer there!
2. Safe on that happy shore
From sorrow, sin, and strife!
The bitterness of death is or'e,
The bitterness of life:
The grief with all to part
(While grace and nature strove)

²Pages 1–20 are missing from the manuscript, but p. 20 is recreated here (as in MS Richmond) to provide continuity for page 21.

³Appears also in MS Richmond, 35–36. Published posthumously in *Unpublished Poetry*, 3:362–63.

The achings of a broken heart,
The pangs of dying love.

3. Tis there my soul shall rest
From all its misery,
Reclining on his loving breast
Who bore the cross for me,
Fainted beneath my load,
With sinless passions torn,
And groan'd in death "my GOD, my GOD,"
That I might cease to mourn.
4. Come then, my only Hope,
My only constant friend,
And dry these briny rivulets up
And bid these conflicts end;
Pour in thy mercy's Balm
The pangs of loss to ease,
The rage of stormy passions calm,
And give me back my peace.
5. O for one cordial drop
Of pure celestial love
To sweeten life's afflictive cup,
Till Thou from earth remove,
Till Thou, my GOD, receive
Thy wandring exile home,
Where pain and loss can never grieve,
And sin can never come.
6. Thou once a man of woe,⁴
Indulge my sad request,
Cut short my suffering days below,
And give the weary rest;

⁴Ori., "grief."

For this, this only good⁵
I ever ever cry,
Ah! let me feel thy sprinkled blood,
Ah! let me love, and die.

Hymn III.⁶

- [1.] On Thee, omnipotent to save,
Thy creature, tottering o're the grave
Thy dear-bought creature I
For mercy and salvation call,
Jesus, redeem me from my fall,
And suffer me to die.
2. Warn'd to put off this mouldring Clay,
I bless thee for my strength's decay,
And sink into the tomb:
Welcom infirmities and pains,
Welcom whate'er my God ordains
To bring his servant home.
3. My days are as a shadow fled:
And let me bow my weary head,
Thine open Face to see:
I ask no Temporal reprieve,
I only long in Thee to live,
And then to die in Thee.
4. O woudst Thou, Lord, thy blood apply,
My heart to calm and purify,
My poor unhallow'd heart!
Thou knowst, I only wait for this,
To gain the reconciling kiss,
And then with joy depart.

⁵Ori., "~~Cut short my suffering days below.~~" I.e., Wesley rewrote line 3 of stanza 6 from the previous page above line 5 and then struck the repeated line out.

⁶Appears also in MS Miscellaneous Hymns, 25–27. Published posthumously in *Unpublished Poetry*, 3:355–56.

5. O might my useless warfare end
O might my struggling Spirit ascend
 And spurn the earth I leave!
Regard my struggling Spirit's groan,
Pleading in me regard *thy own*,
 And now my soul receive.
6. A wretched, weak, intangled thing,
To Thee my last distress I bring,
 Grace, only grace implore
Plunge in the fountain of thy blood
And bear me thro' the purging flood
 To that eternal shore.
7. Appear, and chase these endless sighs,
Appear before my streaming eyes,
 And wipe these tears away,
Thy presence is my heavenly Light,
Thy presence swallows up my night
 In everlasting Day.

Hymn IV.⁷

- [1.] Come, let us join our friends above
 That have obtain'd the prize,
And on the eagle-wings of love
 To joy celestial rise;
Let all the Saints terrestrial sing
 With those to glory gone:
For all the Servants of our King
 In earth and heaven are one.
2. One family we dwell in Him,
 One Church above beneath,
Tho' now divided by the stream,
 The narrow stream of death.

⁷A precursor of the first four stanzas of this hymn appears in MS Richmond, 157. The full hymn as here is found in MS Spencer, 1–2; and was published in *Funeral Hymns* (1759), 1–2.

One army of the living GOD
To his command we bow:
Part of his host hath crost the flood,
And part is crossing *Now*.

3. Ten thousand to their endless home
This solemn moment fly!
And we are to the margin come
And we expect to die:
His militant embodied host
With wishful looks we stand,
And long to see that happy coast,
And reach that heavenly land.
4. Our old companions in distress
We haste again to see,
And eager long for our release,
And full felicity:
Ev'n now by faith we join our hands,
With those that went before,
And greet⁸ the blood-besprinkled bands
On the eternal shore.
5. Our Spirits too shall quickly join
Like theirs, with glory crown'd,
And shout to see our Captain's Sign,
To hear his Trumpet sound:
O that we now might grasp our Guide,
O that the word were given!
Come, Lord of hosts, the waves divide,
And land us all in Heaven.

⁸Ori., "grasp." Then changed to "clasp," and finally changed to "greet."

**Epitaph⁹
for Mrs. Lunell.¹⁰**

A Follower of the bleeding Lamb
Her Burthen here laid down,
The Cross of Jesus' Pain and Shame
Exchanging for the Crown.

True Witness for her pardning Lord,
Whose Blood she felt applied,
She kept the faith, obey'd the word,
And liv'd a Saint, and died.

Reader, her life and death approve,
Believe thy sins forgiven,
Be pure in heart, be fill'd with love
And follow Her to heaven.

**Epitaph
for Mrs. Popkin.¹¹**

A Christian here her glorious journey ends,
Caught from her earthly to her heavenly friends;
Mature for GOD below, her work fulfill'd,
Her prayers accepted, and her pardon seal'd,
The spotless Soul, a Native of the sky,
Has paid her visit, and return'd on high.

Mourner, to heaven thy earnest wishes breathe,
And live her life that thou mayst die her death;
Silent and sad, pass thro' the weeping vale,
With arms divine the glorious throne assail;
Assur'd the crown of life shall then be given,
And GOD shall wipe away thy tears in heaven.

⁹Ori., "Hymn."

¹⁰Appears also in Letter to William Lunell (August 21, 1748); and MS Richmond, 89. Published posthumously in *Poetical Works*, 8:436. This is for Lunell's second wife, Anne (*née* Gratton), who died in August 1748.

¹¹Appears also in MS Richmond, 91. Published posthumously in *Poetical Works*, 8:426–37. Justina [Stepney] Popkin died June 28, 1749. She was the wife of Thomas Popkin (b. 1719), a son of Rebecca [Evans] Popkin, who was a sister of Sarah [Evans] Gwynne—Charles Wesley's mother-in-law.

**Epitaph
for Miss Molly Leyson.**¹²

Beneath a Daughter of affliction lies,
The tears forever banish'd from her eyes:
Wash'd in the laver of atoning blood
The Spirit here hath dropt her earthy load,
Fulfill'd her visit, and return'd to GOD. }
O that *our* flesh, like hers, might rest in hope
Till earth and ocean give their prisoners up,
Till the great Object of our love and fear, }
With myriads of his shining friends appear,
And all with shouts proclaim the heavenly Bridegroom here. }

The funeral Hymn.
[On the Death of Miss Molly Leyson.]¹³

- [1.] Fly, happy Spirit, fly
Beyond this gloomy sky!
Thee our prayers no more detain,
Thee our grief recalls no more:
Leave a while thy friends in pain,
Land on that eternal shore.
2. Tis done! the Soul is fled,
The earthy Part is dead!
Dead is that which wish'd to die,
That which gaul'd the soul within:
Dead the Sense of Misery
Dead the seed of death and sin!
3. No pangs of loss or care
Shall now thy bosom tear,
Anguish, and severe disease,
Agony and death are past;
Now the weary is at peace,
Peace that shall forever last.

[remainder of pages missing]

¹²Appears also in MS Richmond, 127. Published posthumously in *Poetical Works*, 8:436. Mary Leyson (1721–50) was a cousin of Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley. She died April 12, 1750.

¹³The complete version appears in MS Richmond, 139–41. Published in *Funeral Hymns* (1759), 22–23.