

MS Courtship¹

This slim octavo notebook volume (about 6 in. by 9 in. in size) is clearly dependant upon MS Deliberative Hymns, reproducing ten of the seventeen hymns in the larger collection. The introduction to the former volume applies to this one as well. As Sarah Wesley Jr. inscribes at the front of the present volume: "These Hymns & Prayers were written by the Revd C. Wesley, when he had thoughts of marrying Miss Sarah Gwynne, who became his wife afterwards." There is no indication of a specific occasion for this separate collection of selected hymns.

MS Courtship is part of the collection in the Methodist Archive and Research Centre, accession number MA 1977/583/4 (Charles Wesley Notebooks Box 4). 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.
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[I.]²

- [1.] All good, all wise, almighty Lord,
Supremely just and true,
I cast me on thy faithful Word,
And wait thy Will to do:
Thy Will concerning me reveal,
Thy Heavenly Light impart,
And speak by Signs infallible
The Answer to my Heart.
2. Thee, Lord, in all my Ways I own,
My Counsellor and Guide,
I hang upon thine Arm alone,
And in thy Love confide;
Ah! do not then my Soul reject
But all my Paths attend,
But all my Works and Thoughts direct
To thine appointed End.
3. Thou readst th' unutterable Care
That labours in my Breast,
And knowst, till Thou the Mind declare
I know not what is best.
A Sinner, doubly dark and blind,
A foolish foolish Worm,
O how shall I the Secret find,
And all thy Will perform.
4. I would not my own Soul deceive,
My own Designs pursue,

²Appears also in MS Deliberative Hymns, 1–2; and MS Occasional Hymns, 4–6. Published posthumously in *Unpublished Poetry*, 1:217–18.

I can no more an Heart believe
Which never yet prov'd true.
Death in the Error of my Life
I would not fondly find;
Declare, O Lord, to end the Strife,
The Thing by Thee design'd.

5. For thy Determining Command
I at thy Footstool lie,
Intent to mark the Pointing Hand,
To catch the Guiding Eye.
To Thee with meek submissive Fear
Th' Important Doubt I leave,
Till Thou in Heavenly Light appear,
Till Thou the Fiat give.

6. Jesus, thro' thine orepowering Grace
I every Wish resign,
Nor can I, till Thou shew'st thy Face,
To This or That incline;
Thy Face *conceal'd*, thy Mind *unknown*
Preserves the Balance even,
And makes me cry Thy Will be done
On Earth, as tis in Heaven.

II.³

[1.] Heavenly Counsellor Divine
Waiting for thy Will I stand,
Both mine Eyes, Thou knowst, are Thine,
Reach me out an Helping Hand:
Thou my faithful Pilot be
While these threatenng Billows roar,

³Appears also in MS Deliberative Hymns, 3–4; and MS Occasional Hymns, 13–14. Published posthumously in *Unpublished Poetry*, 1:218–19.

Guide thro' Life's tempestuous Sea,
Land me on the Happy Shore.

2. In this howling Wilderness
Lo! I trust on Thee alone,
Thee in all my Ways confess
Sole Disposer of Thine own;
Sure to err without thy Light,
Sure to contradict thy Will,
Guide my wandring Footsteps right,
Bring me to thy holy Hill.
3. Wilt Thou, Lord, Thine own forsake,
Stop thine Ears against my Cry,
Let me fatally mistake
Who on Thee for Light rely?
Canst Thou (while for Help I pray,
While my Soul on Thee I cast)
Turn the Blind out of the Way,
Leave me to Myself at last?
4. Surely, Lord, the Fear is vain;
Thou art Merciful and True,
Thou shalt make thy Counsel plain,
Thou shalt teach me what to do,
On my Heart the Answer seal,
Signify thy Love's Decree,
Shew me all thy Blessed Will—
When, and how I leave to Thee.

III.⁴

1. GOD of Universal Nature,
Author of my Life and End,
My most merciful Creator,
Still thy weakest Child defend,
Guard thro' Life's Important Hour,
Till my Eden I regain,
Quit the Desart for the Bower,
Die from Earth in Heaven to reign.

2. If I ever felt thy Drawing,
Give me, Lord, to feel it still,
Now to feel thy Love or' eaving
All the Motions of my Will:
Now, that most I need assistance
Will my GOD his Ear avert?
Canst Thou keep an angry Distance,
Leave me to my wretched Heart?

3. If Thou gav'st the Piercing Fear
Which I every Moment find
Least my Heart should linger here,
Leave a Single Wish behind;
Guide me by thy Love's Direction
From all earthly Passions free,
Seize, O GOD, my whole Affection,
Swallow up my Soul in Thee.

4. Place me in that happiest Station
Where I most may taste thy Grace,
Most advance my own Salvation,
Most display my Maker's Praise:

⁴Appears also in Letter to Sarah Gwynne Jr., November 12, 1748; and MS Deliberative Hymns,
4. Published posthumously in *Poetical Works*, 13:271–72.

Chuse on Earth my whole Condition
Only give my Spirit Rest,
Fill at last my Soul's Ambition,
Take me, Father, to thy Breast.

IV.⁵

- [1.] GOD of my Life, I seek thy Face,
By Thee preserv'd throughout my Days,
By Thee sustain'd, and fed;
Preserv'd from twice ten thousand Snares,
Mine inmost Soul thy Love declares,
And asks thy Present Aid.
2. My Father's Hope, my Father's Fear,
In this important Hour be near,
And to my Rescue come;
Be Thou my Counciller and Guide
And with ONE AWFUL DOUBT decide
Mine Everlasting Doom.
3. On This depends our Weal or Woe,
Our All in Earth and Heaven I know,
And dread to fix my Choice,
In Just Anxiety I stand
And see display'd on Either Hand
Eternal Grievs and Joys.
4. Merciful GOD, what shall I do?
The Counsel of thy Goodness shew,
And order Thou the whole,
Direct my Work, inspire my Thought—
Or cut th' Inextricable Knot,
And NOW require my Soul.

⁵Appears also in MS Deliberative Hymns, 9–10; and MS Occasional Hymns, 14–16. Published posthumously in *Unpublished Poetry*, 1:219–21.

5. By Death prevent the Evil Day,
Nor let me live to fall away
 Thro' this deceitful Heart,
But rather let it cease to beat;
Extinguish, Lord, the Vital Heat,
 And bid me Now depart.

6. I would not live to cross thy Will,
And frowardly my own fulfil
 In Quest of Comfort here:
With Pity see the Pangs I feel
And save me, save me from the Ill
 Which next to Hell I fear.

7. I can thro' Thee the World resign,
No Creature-Happiness be mine,
 So Thou Thyself impart:
Vouchsafe the Blessing from above,
And let thine all-sufficient Love
 Possess, and fill my Heart.

8. For this alone on Earth I wait,
Till Thou to its unsinning State
 My newborn Soul restore,
By Sufferings perfected beneath,
Victorious brought thro' Life, thro' Death
 To that Eternal Shore.

V.⁶

- [1.] Lord, if Thou knowst it good for me
Friendless, and alone to be,
While in the Vale I live,
Do Thou supply my every Want,
And still unto thy Servant grant
Thy Saying to receive.
2. Far from the chearful Ways of Men
Lead me in a Path unseen,
To All but Thee unknown;
Fast by the Silent Waters lead,
And let me find whate'er I need
In thy pure Love *alone*.
3. Thy only Love sufficient is,
Perfect Love is Perfect Bliss;
And All, to whom tis given,
Thy Love to taste, thy Face to see,
They want no Other Good but Thee,
They want no other Heaven.
4. Yet if thy wise Eternal Will
Foreordain'd me to fulfil
The SOCIAL CHARACTER,
A Ray of Heavenly Light impart,
And speak thy Counsel to my Heart,
And all thy Mind declare.
5. O for thy Truth and Mercy sake
Do not leave me to mistake
My own weak Will for Thine,

⁶Appears also in MS Deliberative Hymns, 11–12. Published posthumously in *Unpublished Poetry*, 1:221–22.

Thou all my Thoughts direct, controul—
Or let me now give back my Soul
Into the Hands Divine!

6. In jealous self-mistrusting Fear
Least my Heart should settle here,
And cleave to Things below,
I pray Thee end the doubtful Strife,
And kindly cut the Knot of Life,
And let my Spirit go.
7. If thy Decree, which rules our Mind,
Be by Human Prayer inclin'd,
O let me deprecate
The thing which more than Death I fear,
And send the Fatal Messenger
To snatch me from my Fate.
8. Ah! Lord, I know not what to say:
Help my Feebleness to pray
According to thy Will;
Chuse Thou, for O, thy Choice is best,
But let me gain that Final Rest,
And meet Thee on the Hill.
9. Whate'er my Lot or State below,
Give me, Lord, Thyself to know,
Unite my Soul to Thee,
Dispose of All I have or am,
As most may glorify thy Name
Thro' all Eternity.

VI.⁷

1. Guide of my early thoughtless Days,
 When young in Nature's Paths I ran,
Whose Hand unseen, and secret Grace
 Has gently led me up to Man,
Attentive to my Father's Fears,
Observant of my Mother's Tears;
2. Pierc'd with the Sense of Mercies past,
 Incourag'd thus to hope for more,
On Thee, O GOD, my Soul I cast,
 Thy kind continued Aid implore,
My few remaining Days t' attend,
And bless me with a peaceful End.
3. Ah! Lord, depart not far from me,
 When Trouble is so near at hand,
Thy Will my sure Direction be,
 My Shield the Shadow of thy Hand,
And still my helpless Spirit hide,
And into thy whole Counsel guide.
4. Thou knowst my neverceasing Care,
 To walk becoming thy great Name,
Thou seest the Load of Fear I bear,
 Of Fear least I thy People shame,
Out of the Way the Weak ones turn,
Or make them for my Folly mourn.
5. Mine inmost Soul to Thee is known,
 Mine anxious Heart's extreme Desire,

⁷Appears also in MS Deliberative Hymns, 17–18. Published posthumously in *Unpublished Poetry*, 1:223–24.

Rather at once to fall alone,
Rather this Instant Now expire,
Than live to taint them by my Breath,
Or drag down One with me to Death.

6. But wilt Thou, O my Trust, my Fear,
Thine Help to the Distrest deny?
Or hearst Thou, Lord, the silent Tear,
And now observ'st th' imperfect Sigh⁸
That struggles in my aching Breast,
And pines, and pants for endless Rest.

7. Not all Thou canst in Life bestow,
Is half so dear as Death to me:
O woudst Thou let my Spirit go,
From every Dangerous Blessing free,
Now, Father, now thy Child remove
From all I fear, and All I love.

8. In that Oblivious Land of Rest,
Where all my Hopes and Joys are fled,
No Grief shall vex, nor Pain molest,
Nor Shame orewhelm my sinking Head,
Nor Sense of Evil's Growing Load,
Nor Horror of Suspected Good.

9. Peace, lasting Peace inhabits there,
And pure Eternal Righteousness,
No Fiend to tempt, or Sin t' insnare,
Or pining Want, or fond Excess,
But Heavenly LOVE its Sway maintains,
And GOD before his Antients reigns.

⁸Ori., "Groan."

10. O could I that Asylum find,
Shake off th' Impediment of Clay,
Leave all my Ills and Goods behind,
Break loose, ascend, and soar away,
Now, now regain my Native Place,
And stand before His Glorious Face.

VII.⁹

- [1.] O the Tormenting Doubt
I every Moment feel!
How shall I find his Counsel out
By Proofs Infallible?
Who shall discover? who
Declare my Lord's Design?
What must an anxious Sinner do
To know the Will Divine?
2. Long have I wept, and pray'd,
And earnestly implor'd
In sore Perplexity the Aid
And Guidance of my Lord:
To all my Prayers and Tears
I find no Answer given,
And not one Ray of Light appears
From any Point of Heaven.
3. Is there in my Distress
No Guardian Angel nigh
On this distracted Heart t' impress
The Counsel of the Sky?

⁹Appears also in MS Deliberative Hymns, 32–34. Published posthumously in *Unpublished Poetry*, 1:225–26.

Will no Departed Saint
Our Maker's Mind reveal
Or now, to banish my Complaint,
The Heavenly Secret tell?

4. My Earthly Father's Shade,
If sent from Paradise
Would He deny his needful Aid,
Refuse his Child Advice?
And shall I dare suspect
My Heavenly Father's Care,
As GOD would finally reject
A weeping Sinner's Prayer!
5. No, my most gracious GOD,
For whom I ever grieve,
Thou wilt not leave, beneath his Load
Thy Son Thou wilt not leave:
Thy Providence Divine
Its own Intent shall shew,
I know not now the Will Divine,
But shall hereafter know.
6. If still my Faith to prove,
Thou hid'st thy radiant Face,
Thou wilt at last the Clouds remove,
And shine on all my Ways;
The Clouds of Grief and Fear
Before thy Face shall fly,
And not one gloomy Doubt appear
Throughout the joyous Sky.

7. The Sun of Righteousness
Shall quickly rise on me,
And I in Thee shall then have Peace,
Light in thy Light shall see:
Gracious, and wise¹⁰ and just
Thee I shall then declare,
And never never more mistrust
My Heavenly Father's Care.

8. For this in quiet Hope
I at thy Footstool lie,
Till Thou in faithful Love lift up,
And guide me by thine Eye:
And I the Truth shall feel,
And I shall taste the Love,
And do on Earth thy perfect Will
As Angels do above.

VIII.¹¹

- [1.] Thou GOD, whose Will to know
Is Comfort, Life, and Peace
Who didst with *Abraham's Servant* go,
And crown him with Success,
Me, O my Father, me
In this my Deed attend,
My Shield, and sure Director be,
And Everlasting Friend.

2. Thine Overruling Hand
In all my Ways I own,
And to thy sole Decision stand,
And say Thy Will be done:

¹⁰Ori., "good."

¹¹Appears also in MS Deliberative Hymns, 34–35. Published posthumously in *Unpublished Poetry*, 1:227–28.

But make thy Counsel plain,
That I may run and read,
And cry, whate'er thy Love ordain,
It is my Father's Deed.

3. Forth in thy Name I go,
 With calm Submission wait¹²
Thine Acceptable Will to know
 Determining my Fate;
 On Thee I still rely,
 With thy Commission sent
Sedate to mark the Pointing Eye,
 And watching each Event.

4. If first thy Wisdom prove
 My Faith, and patient Hope,
Thou wilt at last the Cloud remove,
 And clear the Counsel up:
 Thy Light, for which I look
 On all my Ways shall shine,
And point me to the Opening Book
 Of Providence Divine.

5. To check my forward Will,
 To mortify my Sense,
If still Thou dost thy Face conceal,
 And hold me in suspense,
 The Silence speaks to me,
 And bids my Soul attend
Thy Purpose Manifest to see,
 And calmly wait the End.

¹²Ori., "haste."

6. Wherefore on Thee alone
 I cast my solemn Care,
Till Thou thy full Design make known,
 And seal my ceaseless Prayer;
 Assur'd I cannot stray,
 Or cross my Lord's Design;
For never Soul mistook his way,
 Who would be led in Thine.

IX.¹³

- [1.] O Thou, whose Pointing Hand
 I ever wait to see,
In this tremendous Crisis stand
 Betwixt Myself and me,
 Who cannot shun the Ill,
 Or chuse the Better Part,
If biass'd by a Selfish Will,
 And a deceitful Heart.
2. O for a Steady Mind
 (Till Thou remove the Veil)
To this, or that alike inclin'd,
 And pois'd in even Scale!
 Into my Soul infuse
 The sacred Unconcern,
Or let me rather die than CHUSE,
 Till I thy Pleasure learn.
3. My Duty, Wisdom, Gain
 Is simply to depend
On Thee the Friend of helpless Man,
 The neverfailing Friend;

¹³Appears also in MS Deliberative Hymns, 36–38. Published posthumously in *Unpublished Poetry*, 1:228–29.

Who carest for Thine own
With wise Paternal Zeal,
And sittest on thy Gracious Throne,
And rulest all things well.

4. What then have I to fear
 Of Trouble, Grief, or Loss?
No Room for Disappointment here,
 When GOD maintains my Cause:
 He knows the Things I need,
 His Supplicating Son
But will not hear me cry for Bread,
 And mock me with a Stone.

5. But if what I think Best
 My Future Bane He sees,
He will not suffer me to rest
 In Fancied Happiness,
 He will not give me up
 To what I always fear,
But tear away my desperate Hope
 Of Lasting Comfort here.

6. O tear it now away
 The Possible Offence,
Spite of Myself, I beg, I pray
 Thy Zeal to tear it hence!
 Defeat my Fond Desire,
 My surest Counsels blast,
But snatch the Brand from out the Fire,
 And save my Soul at last.

X.¹⁴

- [1.] Thou Awful GOD, whose Smile or Frown,
Is Man's Irrevocable Fate,
On us with pitying Love look down,
Who humbled at thy Footstool wait,
Till Thou declare thy welcom Will,
And bid our trembling Hearts be still.
2. The Hearts of All are in thy Hand,
Submissive to thy Wise Decree,
They rise, or sink at thy Command
Turn'd as the Rivers of the Sea,
Where'er thy Will appoints to go,
The Heaven-directed Waters flow.
3. All Power in Heaven and Earth is Thine,
Omnipotent Eternal Lord,
Nature observes the Nod Divine,
And conscious of thy powerful Word
The Rock dissolves into a Rill,
The Mountain flies, the Sun stands still.
4. Thy Love is equal to thy Power,
Thy Love on every Soul descends
A Gracious neverfailing Shower
Pour'd out on Enemies and Friends,
But most on Those, who watch thine Eye,
And grasp in Thee to live, and die.
5. Such Strength of Sanctified Desire
Thou hast, O Lord, on Us bestow'd,

¹⁴Appears also in MS Deliberative Hymns, 38–40. Published posthumously in *Unpublished Poetry*, 1:230–31.

Who Thee beyond thy Gifts require,
Our Chief Delight, our Sovereign Good,
Our Fear, and Trust, our Joy and Love,
Our Heaven on Earth, our Heaven above.

6. And wilt Thou leave us in Distress,
Who seek for Help to Thee alone,
Our All-sufficient Happiness!
Can the Good GOD forsake His own,
Himself deny, his Grace forget,
Or spurn us weeping at his Feet?
7. No, Lord, thy Bowels answer No!
Thy Love forbids our needless Fear,
Thy Love the Hidden Path shall shew,
In calm convincing Light appear,
And lead into thy whole Design,
And mould us to the Will Divine.
8. For This with meekest Awe we wait,
Till Thou display thine utmost Will,
Restore us to our First Estate,
And then thy Heavenly Light reveal,
Shine forth in thy full Round of Rays,
And plunge us in the Glorious Blaze.