

## **MS Prayer for Truth (drafts)<sup>1</sup>**

This file contains rough drafts of the first three hymns in MS Prayer for Truth (see the introduction there for context). They are looseleaf and unpaginated, intermixed with the more polished draft in the collection at the Methodist Archive and Research Centre, accession number MA 1977/583/25(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.

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<sup>1</sup>This 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.

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**The Prayer  
of One Seeking the Truth<sup>2</sup>**

- [1.] O Thou that dost in darkness shine,  
With clearest evidence divine  
    Inform me who Thou art,  
    Appear the true, and living Way,  
    That Thee I simply may obey,  
        And love with all my heart.
2. This earnest wish if Thou bestow  
Thy nature and thy will to know,  
    With heavenly wisdom bless,  
    That taught by thy unerring light  
To serve, and worship God aright,  
        I may my Maker please.
3. A thousand different paths I view,  
But which to shun and which pursue  
    Still unresolv'd I stand  
Till Thou thy secret counsel show,  
Direct me after Thee to go,  
        And reach me out thy hand.

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<sup>2</sup> Published posthumously in *Unpublished Poetry*, 3:205–206.

4. Thou know'st my feebleness of mind,  
My<sup>3</sup> will perverse, my passions blind,  
    My reason immature;  
But Thou, O God, if Thee alone  
My Guide infallible I own,  
    Shalt make my footsteps sure.
5. Wherefore in self-mistrust I flee,  
My Guide Infallible, to Thee,  
    To Thee my soul resign,  
And while for light I humbly pray,  
Thou wilt not let me miss my way  
    Who woud be led in thine.
6. Or if thro' self-presuming pride,  
I *have* mistook, and turn'd aside,  
    Misled by my own will,  
I now thy Spirit's voice would hear  
Till following Him with faith sincere  
    I reach the heavenly hill.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Ori., “Thy.”

<sup>4</sup>There are some shorthand phrases at the bottom of the page, many crossed through, which may have been primers for these hymns but do not represent draft lines.

**[Hymn] II.<sup>5</sup>**

- [1.] Father, that I thy child may be,  
That I may thy salvation see,  
    Assist me to stand still,  
Thy kind instructions to receive,  
What to reject and what believe,  
    And how perform<sup>6</sup> thy will.
2. From Thee this good desire proceeds  
To follow truth where'er it leads,  
    While open to the light  
All things impartially I weigh,  
Made willing<sup>7</sup> God, not man, t' obey  
    And judge, and act aright.
3. I trust thy mercy to restrain  
My blind, implicit faith in man  
    My rash, prejudging haste,  
And every hindrance to remove,  
That fully I may all things prove,  
    And find the Good at last.
4. Fast let me hold the Good I find,  
No longer lost with every wind,  
    With every specious tale,  
But built on the Foundation sure,  
The WORD that always shall endure,  
    The ROCK that cannot fail.

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<sup>5</sup>Published posthumously in *Unpublished Poetry*, 3:206–207.

<sup>6</sup>Ori., “to do.”

<sup>7</sup>Ori., “Determin’d.”

5. The Word proceeding from that Rock,  
Which Jesus, God incarnate spoke  
    And his Apostles too,  
Can it not save and sanctify,  
If He th' ingrafted word apply,  
    And prove the record true?<sup>8</sup>
  
- 6.<sup>9</sup> The word in which I woud believe,  
Thou didst<sup>10</sup> by inspiration give;  
    And if thy Spirit given  
Again, with faith inspires my heart,  
I know Thee, Saviour, who Thou art,  
    And find my way to heaven.

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<sup>8</sup>An initial draft of stanza 5 is written in shorthand at the top of the page. In this draft line 2 reads: “A word which God incarnate spoke”; line 5 reads: “If Thou the incarnate word supply.”

<sup>9</sup>Wesley drafted stanza 6 in shorthand, with several cross outs and corrections, at the bottom of the page before writing the final version as it appears here in longhand.

<sup>10</sup>Ori., “dost.”

[Hymn III.]  
Before reading the Scripture.<sup>11</sup>

- [1.] O God, to whom for light I look  
How shall I know this ancient book,  
    If it indeed be thine,  
Unless thy Spirit breaks the seals,  
And to my heart the Truth<sup>12</sup> reveals  
    As oracles divine.
2. The Church that did from Christ proceed  
Whose many parts and members spread  
    Throughout the Earth I see,  
Not one, but all in every age  
Bear record to sacred page,  
    And hand it down to me.<sup>13</sup>
3. Not one particular alone  
The universal Church I own  
    But all with one accord<sup>14</sup>  
The Church diffus'd from east to west  
Conspire unanimous t' attest  
    The heaven-descended word.
4. The fact<sup>15</sup> historical is plain  
But standing<sup>16</sup> on the words of man  
    I am not satisfied,  
I want a more substantial ground,  
A Rock on which my faith to find  
    Which always shall<sup>17</sup> abide.

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<sup>11</sup>Published posthumously in *Unpublished Poetry*, 3:172–74.

<sup>12</sup>“Sense” is written in the margin as an alternative to “Truth.”

<sup>13</sup>Wesley supplies an alternative for the last two lines in the margin, in shorthand: “Have safe preserved the sacred page / And hand it down to me.”

<sup>14</sup>Ori., “But all who call thee Lord.”

<sup>15</sup>“Proof” is suggested in the margin as an alternative to “fact.”

<sup>16</sup>Ori., “building.”

<sup>17</sup>“May” is suggested as an alternative for “shall.”

5. What is that Rock, but Christ alone:  
O were He to my soul made known  
    The Truth infallible,  
    Son of the living God supreme!  
The faith, the Church that's built on Him  
    Defies the gates of hell.<sup>18</sup>
6. His Spirit in these mysterious leaves  
Unerring<sup>19</sup> testimony gives  
    To Christ the Lord most high:  
O woud He take of Jesus blood,  
    Blood of the true, eternal God,  
    And to my heart apply!
7. The Witness of thy truth I need  
(Which whosoe'er believes indeed  
    Doth in himself possess)  
To certify, that I am thine,  
To fill with righteousness divine  
    And love, and joy and peace.
8. Possest of Him I doubt no more,  
But God in spirit and truth adore  
    My Father and my Friend,  
Till the bright Image of his Sire  
I see with all his angel-quire,  
    My glorious Lord descend!<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>The first draft of this stanza, crossed out, read as follows:

What is that Rock but Christ Alone?  
My faith, if Him my Lord I own,  
    The Truth infallible.  
Built on a power deriv'd from Him  
Son of the living God supreme  
    Defies the gates of hell.

<sup>19</sup>Ori., "Authentic."

<sup>20</sup>At the bottom of the page are several phrases in shorthand, some obscure, but portions of which were incorporated into stanza 8.