

## MS Death of John Matthews<sup>1</sup>

(Drafts 1 & 2)

John Matthews was a London Methodist and supporter of John Wesley, who became his son-in-law, on marrying Jeanne Vazeille on July 24, 1757. 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). John also wrote his brother Charles Wesley on the afternoon of Matthew's death, encouraging Charles that Matthews' would be a fitting subject for his pen. Charles obliged with a three-part manuscript hymn.

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).

---

<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.

**On the Death of  
John Matthews.<sup>2</sup>**

[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 die<sup>3</sup> no more.
2. A servant in his earliest years  
    After the hidden God he griev'd,  
Till from his Saviour's messengers  
    The welcom<sup>4</sup> 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 pardon<sup>5</sup> seal'd:  
As quite exempt from sin and care,  
    He feasted with the saints above;

---

<sup>2</sup>Appears 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.

<sup>3</sup>Ori., “sin.”

<sup>4</sup>Ori., “joyful.”

<sup>5</sup>Ori., “pardon’d.”

And all his life was<sup>6</sup> praise and prayer  
And all his soul was<sup>7</sup> joy and love.

4. On Tabor's top he long abode:  
His Pattern there and Patient Head  
The perfect way thro'<sup>8</sup> sufferings show'd,  
And to the cross his servants<sup>9</sup> led:  
'Twas there he learn'd<sup>10</sup> with Christ to die,  
And daily languish'd on the tree,  
And echoed back the plaintive<sup>11</sup> cry  
"Why hath my God forsaken me!"
5. Yet not forsook, but sorely tried,  
And pain'd throughout his evil day,<sup>12</sup>  
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 diffidence<sup>13</sup> and prayer  
The humble, upright man of God!  
Happy, if all their faith could prove  
Like him; like him their Lord confess  
By every<sup>14</sup> work of genuine love,  
By<sup>15</sup> mercy, truth, and righteousness!

---

<sup>6</sup>Ori., "soul is" changed to "life was."

<sup>7</sup>Ori., "life is" changed to "soul was."

<sup>8</sup>Ori., "of."

<sup>9</sup>"Servants" has "follower" written above it as an alternative.

<sup>10</sup>Ori., "languish'd."

<sup>11</sup>Ori., "his Saviour's" changed to "the plaintive."

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

<sup>13</sup>Ori., "confidence." Next changed to "modesty," and finally changed to "diffidence."

<sup>14</sup>Ori., "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."

<sup>15</sup>Ori., "Of false."

7. A doer of the word he heard,  
    He liv'd<sup>16</sup> 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 band<sup>17</sup>  
    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',

---

<sup>16</sup>Ori., "A real" changed to "He liv'd."

<sup>17</sup>Ori., "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:  
His<sup>18</sup> 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,  
Calmly<sup>19</sup> in her afflictions griev'd,  
And suffer'd all things for her sake.

---

<sup>18</sup>Ori., “~~But~~.”

<sup>19</sup>Ori., “~~Only~~.” Next changed to “~~Gladly~~,” and finally changed to “Calmly.”

3. Oppression laid her iron yoke  
    (By<sup>20</sup> Satan's choicest messenger)  
And bruis'd with many a cruel stroke,  
    And gaul'd<sup>21</sup> his generous soul sincere:  
In<sup>22</sup> 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.

---

<sup>20</sup>Ori., "As."

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

<sup>22</sup>Ori., "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.<sup>23</sup> 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.

---

<sup>23</sup>Stanzas 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 [<sup>24</sup>] 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 challenges<sup>25</sup> for his  
The perfect, or the pardning grace.
- 11.<sup>26</sup> Above all sin, and doubt, and fear,  
While prov'd with<sup>27</sup> agonies unknown,  
To faith's almighty Finisher  
He cleaves by naked<sup>28</sup> 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.

---

<sup>24</sup>The 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.

<sup>25</sup>Ori., "~~Now ever ch[allenges].~~"

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

<sup>27</sup>Ori., "by."

<sup>28</sup>Ori., "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 Jesus<sup>29</sup> 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,<sup>30</sup>  
“Your charity in prayer be show'd  
“I never may<sup>31</sup> my soul deceive,  
“Or vainly think, that I am good!”
- 14.<sup>32</sup> He speaks, and rend'ring up his breath,  
Without a parting sigh or groan,  
[ <sup>33</sup> 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 embrace<sup>34</sup>  
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,

---

<sup>29</sup>“Jesus” has “perfect” written below it as an alternative.

<sup>30</sup>Ori., “My friends, whom ~~I this moment~~ leave.”

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

<sup>32</sup>Stanza 14 is in shorthand.

<sup>33</sup>The 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.

<sup>34</sup>Ori., “~~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 sees<sup>35</sup> 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,<sup>36</sup>  
(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  
<sup>l</sup>"But a poor worm redeem'd by Thee!"

---

<sup>35</sup>Ori., "God accounts" changed to "Jesus sees."

<sup>36</sup>Ori., "prove."

6. What have I else whereof to boast?  
A sinner by myself undone,  
Without thine utmost<sup>37</sup> 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<sup>38</sup> 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 we<sup>39</sup> part,  
And<sup>40</sup> drop our corruptible clay,  
And soar to see thee as thou art.

---

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

<sup>38</sup>Ori., “by.”

<sup>39</sup>Ori., “to.”

<sup>40</sup>Ori., “we.”

**On the Death of  
Mr. John Matthews,  
Dec. 28, 1764.<sup>1</sup>**

[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;

---

<sup>1</sup>Appears 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,<sup>2</sup>  
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,

---

<sup>2</sup>Ori., "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 gratitude<sup>3</sup> he held;  
Affliction could not make it less,  
When all the powers of nature fail'd:

---

<sup>3</sup>Ori., "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.<sup>[b]</sup>”
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,  
    <sup>[“]</sup>But a poor worm, redeem'd by Thee.<sup>[”]</sup>
  
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.