

“Hymn for Mary Langson” (1770)¹

[cf. Baker list, #318]

Editorial Introduction:

In the last third of the eighteenth century it became increasingly common for the Wesley brothers and those in their movement to publish accounts of the “good death” of Methodist members. These accounts often opened with a summary of the conversion of the person involved, but focused on their last days and how they witnessed to a sense of peace as they neared the end of their life. Exhortations of others to find similar peace and pursue a holy life were also typical.

In 1770 Thomas Olivers, one of John Wesley’s assistants, drew together and published (under the sponsorship of John) such an account about the death of Mary Langson. At the end of his account there were two hymns. The first was a hymn Charles Wesley had published in *HSP* (1749) titled “For One Departing,” which is identified as having been sung at the time of her departure. The second hymn is unknown in any other published setting to this time.

Some later works that adopt this second hymn from Oliver’s account have attributed the hymn to him. Oliver did publish a few hymns, but comparison will show that they are more ornate in style and never use the metre of this hymn. By contrast, the metre is a common one for Charles Wesley, as are phrases in the hymn. Since Wesley frequently contributed funeral hymns to such accounts published under the brothers’ sponsorship, it seems much more likely that this second hymn was from his pen.

Editions:

[Charles Wesley.] “Hymn.” In [Thomas Olivers.] *A Short Account of the Death of Mary Langson, of Taxall, who died January 29th, 1769*, 12. [np] 1770.

np, 1771.

Bristol: Pine, 1772.

London: Hawes, 1775.

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**An Hymn
Sung at the Time of Her Departure.²**

- 1 Happy soul, thy days are ended,
All thy mourning days below:
Go, by angel guards attended,
To the sight of Jesus go!
Hallelujah, Amen.
- 2 Waiting to receive thy Spirit,
Lo! The Saviour stands above,
Shews the purchase of his merit,
Reaches out the crown of love.
- 3 Struggle through thy latest passion
To thy dear Redeemer's breast,
To his uttermost salvation,
To his everlasting rest.
- 4 For the joy he sets before thee,
Bear a momentary pain,
Die, to live the life of glory,
Suffer, with thy Lord to reign.

²“For One Departing,” *HSP* (1749), 2:75.

Hymn II.

- 1 O thou God of my salvation,
My Redeemer from all sin;
Mov'd by thy divine compassion,
Who hast died my heart to win:
I will praise thee,
Where shall I thy praise begin.
- 2 Tho' unseen, I love the Saviour,
He hath brought salvation near,
Manifests his pard'ning favour,
And when Jesus doth appear
Soul and body
Shall his glorious image bear.
- 3 While the angel choirs are crying
Glory to the great I AM,
I with them will still be vying,
Glory, glory to the Lamb.
O how precious
Is the sound of Jesu's name.
- 4 Now I see with joy and wonder,
Whence the gracious spring arose;
Angels' minds are lost to ponder
Dying love's mysterious cause;
But the blessing
Down to all, to me, it flows.
- 5 This has set me all on fire,
Strongly glows the flame of love;
Higher mounts my soul, and higher,
Struggles for its swift remove,
Then I'll praise thee,
In a nobler strain above.