

MS Death of Dr. John Middleton¹

(Drafts 1 & 2)

On August 6, 1740, Charles Wesley fell dangerously ill of a fever while preaching to the colliers in Kingswood. He was treated by Dr. John Middleton, who became Charles's regular physician, as well as a close friend. Middleton was the son of Patrick Middleton (1661–1736), a Scottish Episcopal clergyman, well known in defending the nonjuring party. John Middleton's sister Margaret (d. 1752) was married to George Cheyne (1671–1743), a well-known physician and author of treatises on health, who lived nearby in Bath. Middleton was born about 1680, and matriculated at Edinburgh in 1699, where he studied medicine with Archibald Pitcairne. He moved to Bristol after completing his studies. When John Middleton died on December 16, 1760, Charles Wesley marked the occasion with a hymn.

Two preliminary drafts of Wesley's hymn for Middleton have survived (in addition to the polished form in *MS Funeral Hymns*) as part of the collection in the Methodist Archive and Research Centre, filed together in accession number MA 1977/583/22 (Charles Wesley Notebooks Box 4). They are looseleaf and the roughest draft is incomplete, giving only a portion of the second part of the hymn. Both drafts are transcribed below, with permission of the Librarian and Director, The John Rylands Library, The University of Manchester.

(The drafts are presented in consecutive order—draft 2 beginning on overall page 5).

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, and Dr. Timothy Underhill consulting on the shorthand. Last updated: August 20, 2010.

[On the Death of
Dr. Middleton, Dec. 16, 1760.
draft 1]²

Second Part.

- [1.] He's come, He's come, in peace and power,
The Agony, He cries, is past!
Call'd as at life's eleventh³ hour
But call'd I surely am at last:
I now in Christ Redemption have,
I feel it thro' his sprinkled blood,
And testify his Will to save,
And claim him for my Lord, my GOD.
2. My GOD to me his grace hath given,
Hath with the sense of Pardon blest,
I taste anticipated⁴ heaven,
And happy in his favor⁵ rest:
No evil now, but Pride, I fear
For GOD in Christ is reconcil'd;
My heart is fixt: I find Him here,
The Witness, that I am a Child.
3. What is Redemption unpossesst?
Poor, reasoning Soul, to Jesus bow,
Thy pardon seek, like me distrest,
And feel it, a meer sinner, Now!
Ah! who the Blessing will embrace,
The Messengers' Report believe,
Or urg'd accept the proffer'd Grace
As freely as my Lord would give?

²Appears also draft 2 (below) and in MS Funeral Hymns, 12–20. Published in *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 445–48, 502–504, 557–58.

³Ori., “~~at my~~ life’s ~~extremest~~” changed to “as at life’s eleventh.”

⁴Ori., “~~here anticipate my~~” changed to “taste anticipated.”

⁵Ori., “Love I.”

4. To day, while it is call'd to day,
Ye all my happiness may prove:
Discharg'd, when I had nought to pay,⁶
I go, to thank my Lord above;
Thro' the dark Vale of Death I go,
Whom Christ unto Himself doth bring
And trample on my final⁷ Foe
A feeble⁸ Foe without a Sting.

5. T'was thus the new born Christian spoke,
Redeem'd from hell, the world, and sin,
And every accent, every look
Confessed the heavenly Calm within:
How patient now, and meek, and mild
That Spirit which man could never tame
As loving as a little child
As gentle as an harmless Lamb.

6. That all might Jesus Witness hear,
Might own his Lord in Him reveal'd
His Reason, as his conscience clear,
Its office to the last fulfil'd:
But what are Nature's gifts he cried,
If Jesus were not pleas'd t' impart
To a poor sinner justifi'd
The Comfort of a praying heart!⁹

⁶Ori., "prov[er]."

⁷"Latest" is written in the margin, most likely as an alternative to "final."

⁸"Vanquish'd" and "baffled" are written in the margin, most likely as alternatives to "feeble."

⁹There is a draft of stanza 6 in two lines of shorthand at the bottom on the page. This draft appears to contain some slight variants, but the shorthand has been struck out—rendering reliable expansion impossible. There is a third line of shorthand that appears to be a draft of part of a stanza that Wesley did not decide to include, but it too has been struck out and is illegible.

7. Yet ready to depart in peace,
He must a farther¹⁰ Test sustain,
The last¹¹ good fight of great Distress
And suffer more with Christ to reign:
Rous'd by his Spirits newborn cry
Satan and all his Hosts assail,
In vain to shake his faith they try,
The Rock tis built on cannot fail.
8. Mercy prolong'd his dying hours,
That wrestling with the hellish Foe,
With Principalities and Powers,
He might his utmost Saviour know,
Might act his faith in Jesus Blood,
Hold fast his adamantine Shield,
And see th' Accusing Fiend subdued
With all his fiery Darts repel'd.
- [9.] I will, I will in Jesus trust
I cannot doubt his faithful love
The Foe hath made his parting thrust,
And could not from my Rock remove:
My Saviour woud not quit his own
And lo¹² in death I hold him fast
Having my latest Foe o'rethrown
I stand—and All is well at last!¹³
- [10.] One only Task was¹⁴ yet behind
To bless us with his parting¹⁵ breath
With Love unutterably kind,
With Love surviving time and death
Ready to quit the house of clay
He lean'd on a Beloved Breast,¹⁶
And sunk, in Friendships Arms away,
And found¹⁷ his everlasting Rest.

¹⁰Ori., “~~the fiery~~” changed to “a farther.”

¹¹Ori., “~~Fight the~~” changed to “The last.”

¹²Ori., “~~hence~~.”

¹³Perhaps in connection to this stanza, Wesley wrote in shorthand at the bottom of the page: “Ask Mrs {Sh-r-s-n [?]}, I Feel I am in the arms of Jesus”; likely referring to Middleton’s dying words.

¹⁴Ori., “~~Only~~ only Task ~~did~~.”

¹⁵Ori., “~~by his dying~~” changed to “with his parting.”

¹⁶In a second shorthand note at the bottom of the page Wesley wrote: “Ask the {??} {??} Dr.” In MS Funeral Hymns he added a note identifying Dr. John Robertson as this beloved breast.

¹⁷Ori., “~~sought~~.”

**On The Death of
Dr. Middleton, Dec. 16, 1760.¹**

[draft 2]

[Part I.]

- [1.] Glory to the Redeemer give
The glory of a Soul brought home!
Our Friend, for whom we joy and grieve,
Is to th' Eternal Garner come:
Like a ripe Shock of corn laid up
In season due for GOD mature,
He kept the faith, held fast his hope,
And made his Crown thro' sufferings sure.

2. Let Infidels and Heathens mourn,
Hopeless to see their Dead restor'd,
We *feel* him from our bosom torn
But calmly say It is the Lord!
In pity of his Creature's pain
Whom GOD had to th' Afflicted given,
He justly asks his own again,
And takes to his Reward in Heaven.

3. Let us the Shining Path pursue
And following Him to GOD ascend,
His bright Example keep in view,
His useful Life and blessed End:
He liv'd a life of faith unfeign'd,
His rigid Virtue unsubdued,
His strict Integrity maintain'd,
And boldly own'd, He fear'd a GOD.

¹Appears also in MS Funeral Hymns, 12–20. Published in *Arminian Magazine* 6 (1783): 445–48, 502–504, 557–58.

4. O where shall we his Equal find
To all so just, to all so dear!²
The pious Son, the Husband kind,
The Father good, the Friend sincere!
Not David lov'd his Friend so well,
Loth from his Jonathan to part,
Or serv'd him with so warm a zeal,
Or held him in so fond an heart.

5. Yet in no narrow bounds confin'd
His undisguis'd³ affection flow'd,
His heart enlarg'd to all mankind,
Render'd to all the Love it owed:
But chiefly those who lov'd his Lord,
Who most of Jesus mind exprest,
Won by their lives without the word,
He cherish'd in his generous⁴ breast.

6. Cover'd with honourable shame
He mark'd the poor afflicted Few,
The faithful Followers of The Lamb
In life and death to Jesus true:
Rejected, and despis'd of men
He heard the Saints Departing sing,
He saw them smile in mortal pain,
And trample on⁵ the Grizly King.

7. Not biass'd by a party-zeal,
Their unsought Advocate he stood,

²Ori., "~~For every social Duty here.~~"

³Ori., "~~generous free.~~"

⁴Ori., "~~honest.~~"

⁵Ori., "~~triumph in.~~"

“The men who live and die so well,
Howe’er decry’d, they must be good!”
Happy his tenderest help t’ afford,
A servant of Salvation’s heirs,
He look’d on earth for no reward,
He ask’d no⁶ payment—“*but their prayers.*”

8. In part, before he reach’d the sky
He found his loving labours *paid*,
He found their prayers return’d from high
In blessings on his hoary head:
Warn’d of his dissolution near,
He *miss’d* that Witness from above,
Or felt Him in distressing Fear,
And not in sweet forgiving Love.

9. The GOD Unknown his Servant knew
Long in the school of Moses tried;
The sin-convincing Spirit blew,
And wither’d all his Virtuous Pride:
With Publicans and Harlots now
He comes the Sinners Friend to meet,
By grace subdued, and taught to bow
A Leper poor at Jesus feet.

10. While weeping there⁷ the Sinner lay,
Asunder sawn by hopes and fears,
He cast, as⁸ filthy rags, away
The righteousness of Seventy years!

⁶Ori., “~~No gain or~~” changed to “He ask’d no.” Wesley also shows two changes for “~~gain~~” that are struck out: “~~Fee~~” and “~~meed.~~”

⁷Ori., “~~their.~~”

⁸Ori., “~~his.~~”

Loathsom, and foul, and self-abhor'd,
Full of all sin, void of all good,
His soul at the last gasp implor'd
One drop of that Atoning Blood.

11. Nor yet the peaceful answer came,
His Spirit to the utmost tried,
Must suffer all its guilty shame,
Condemn'd, and scourg'd,⁹ and crucified,
Must all his Saviour's sorrows¹⁰ share
And cry, as bleeding on the tree,
As in¹¹ the depths of self-despair
"My GOD hath quite forsaken Me!"
12. Not so, replied the Father's Love
And Jesus in his heart reveal'd,
He felt the Comfort from above,
The Gospel-grace, the Pardon seal'd
How strange that instantaneous Bliss
While to the Brink of Tophet driven,
Caught up as from the dark Abyss,
He mounted¹² to the highest Heaven!

⁹Ori., "bruised."

¹⁰Ori., "sufferings."

¹¹"Out of" is written in the margin, most likely as an alternative to "As in."

¹²Ori., "Transported."

Part II.¹³

- [1.] He's come, He's come, in peace and power!
The agony, He cries, is past:
Call'd at my life's Eleventh Hour,
But call'd I surely am at last!
I now in Christ redemption have,
I feel it thro' his sprinkled blood,
And testify his will to save,
And claim Him for my Lord, my GOD.
2. My GOD to me his grace hath given,
Hath with the sense of Pardon blest,
I taste anticipated Heaven,
And happy in his favour rest.
No evil now, but Pride, I fear,
For GOD in Christ is reconcil'd;
My heart is fixt: I find Him here,
The Witness that I am a Child.
3. What is Redemption unpossest?
Poor, reasoning Soul, to Jesus bow,
Thy pardon seek, like me distrest,
And find it, a meer Sinner, Now!
Ah! who the Blessing will embrace,
The tidings of great joy¹⁴ believe,
Or, urg'd, accept the proffer'd grace
As freely as my Lord woud give!

¹³For an earlier version of this part, see draft 1 (above).

¹⁴Ori., "~~Messengers Report~~" changed to "tidings of great joy."

- [4.] To day, while it is call'd to day
Ye all my happiness may prove:
Discharg'd, when I had nought to pay,
I go to thank my Lord above;
Thro' the dark Vale of Death I go,
Whom Jesus to Himself doth bring,
And triumph o're my vanquish'd Foe,
A feeble Foe without a sting.
5. T'was thus the dying Christian spoke
Conqueror of death, and hell, and sin,
While every accent, every look
Confess'd the heavenly Change within:
How patient now, and meek, and mild
That Spirit which man could never tame,
As loving as a little child,
As gentle as an harmless Lamb.
6. That all might Jesus' Witness hear,
Might own his Lord in Him reveal'd,
His Reason, as his Conscience clear
Its office to the last fulfill'd:
But what are Nature's gifts, he cried,
If Jesus were not pleas'd t' impart
To a poor Sinner justified
The Comfort of a Praying Heart!
7. Yet ready to depart in peace
He must a farther Test sustain,

The last¹⁵ good fight of great distress
And suffer more with Christ to reign:
Rous'd by his Spirits newborn cry
Satan and all his hosts assail,
In vain to shake his faith they try;
The Rock tis built on cannot fail.

8. Mercy prolong'd his dying hours,
That wrestling with the hellish Foe,
With Principalities and Powers
He might his Utmost Saviour know,
Might act his faith in Jesus blood,
Hold fast his adamantine Shield,
And see th' Accusing Fiend subdued
With all his fiery darts repel'd.
9. The Tempter ask'd, and urg'd in vain
Hath GOD indeed thy sins forgiven?
"He hath, he hath! in mortal pain
"I cleave to Christ, my Life, my Heaven!
"Jesus, Thou seest my sprinkled heart,¹⁶
"My faith in power almighty stands,
"Thou wilt not let th' Accuser part,
"Or pluck my soul out of thy hands.^[?]

¹⁵Ori., "Fight a."

¹⁶Wesley drew three vertical lines through the original lines 3–5 and wrote replacement lines below that. The original lines are as follows:

"I hold Him fast in mortal pain
"My Title and my way to heaven
"Jesus, He cries, Thou seest my heart,

10. The Purchase of thy Death I am,
On this, my only hope, depend,
Look on thy hands, and read my name,
And keep me faithful to the end:
I do, I do, believe on Thee,
Thou knowst the grace by Thee bestow'd;
I plunge me in the purple Sea,
I bathe me in my Saviour's blood.
11. I will, I will in Jesus trust:
I cannot doubt his changeless Love:
The Fiend¹⁷ hath made his parting Thrust,
But could not from my Rock remove:
My Saviour would not quit his own,
And lo! in death I hold him fast,
Having my latest Foe o'rethrown,
I stand: And all is well at last!
12. One¹⁸ only Task is yet behind
To bless us with his parting breath,
With Love unutterably kind
With Love surviving Time and Death:
Ready to quit¹⁹ the house of clay
He leans on a Beloved Breast²⁰
And sinks in Friendship's Arms away,
And finds his everlasting Rest.

¹⁷Ori., "Foe."

¹⁸Ori., "Only."

¹⁹Ori., "Just springing from."

²⁰Wesley identified this person as Dr. Robertson of Wells in a footnote in MS Funeral Hymns.