Thomas Waller (1751–81), was the son of James and Elizabeth Waller. James Waller (1735–1802) was a lace merchant who became active among the Methodists in the mid-1740s. Through the second half of this decade he frequently traveled with Charles Wesley on his preaching tours. In the process Waller became acquainted with Elizabeth Gwynne (b. 1730), the younger sister of Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley. They were married on 4 December 1750, with Charles Wesley performing the ceremony (recounted in his Manuscript Journal). Thomas was their first child, and Charles Wesley’s nephew.

There are two looseleaf drafts of the hymn that Charles Wesley wrote on the death of Thomas Waller, as well as the copy in MS Funeral Hymns. The transcription below of both drafts is provided 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 4).
[1.] Th’ eternal mind at last is known,
    The will omnipotent obey’d,
    The Father hath call’d home His son,
    And number’d with th’ Immortal Dead!
    Redeem’d from earth, th’ unspotted youth
    Hath join’d the Virgin-Quire above,
    And SEES unveil’d the God of truth,
    And triumphs in his Saviour’s Love.

[2.] Not of the world, while here he liv’d,
    A stranger to its hopes and fears,
    With reverence he rejoiced or grieved,
    Compos’d throughout his thirty years:
    From vice and every great offence
    By grace miraculous secur’d,
    He kept his childish innocence,
    And faithful unto death endur’d.

[3.] A daily death thro’ life he died,
    In weakness, weariness, and pain,
    By many a sharp affliction tried,
    His faith did every cross sustain:

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1MARC: MA 1977/594/12. Appears also in draft 2 (below) and MS Funeral Hymns, 94–97. Published posthumously in Poetical Works, 6:345–46.
What but the’ Invisible display’d
   Could bear him thro’ the fiery Test,
While still he look’d to God for aid,
   And God in all his ways confest?

4. So modest, diffident, and meek,
   So small and mean in his own eyes,
Did not his life and actions speak
   An humble soul, without disguise?
Let others of their virtue tell,
   Their knowledge, or superior grace,
His good he studied to conceal,
   And only sought his Maker’s praise.

5. Religion undefiled and true
   In works of charity is shown:
Twas thus his feeling heart we knew,
   Who made the sufferer’s griefs his own;
So swift to succour the distrest,
   So wise and tender to reprove!
He clasp’d a sister to his breast
   With more than a fraternal Love.

6. His soul in pure affection flow’d
   To all by nature’s ties endear’d;
Freely he paid the debt he owed,
   The Friend in every act appear’d;
The warmth of Piety unfeign’d,
   The flame of Love unquenchable,
That in his duteous bosom reign’d,
   Let an indulgent mother tell.

7. For her a suffering life he lived,
   For her a daily death he died,
With all her pains and sorrows grieved,
   On all her crosses crucified;
Willing for her on earth to stay,
   To want his place above prepared —
But call’d at last — he drops his clay,
   And mounts, and gains a full Reward.

²Ori., “known.”
³Ori., “glad.”
⁴“Afflicted” is suggested in the margin as an alternative to “indulgent.”
⁵Ori. “With.”
On the Death of Mr Tho[mas] Waller, in his thirtieth Year—May 11, 1781.1

[1.] Th’ Eternal mind at last is known,
    The will Omnipotent obey’d,
    The Father hath call’d home his Son
    And numbred with th’ Immortal Dead!
    Redeem’d from earth, th’ unspotted Youth
    Hath join’d the Virgin-quire above,
    And SEES unveil’d the God of truth,
    And triumphs in his Saviour’s love.

2. Not of the world, while here he liv’d,
    A stranger to its hopes and fears,
    With reverence he rejoic’d, and griev’d,
    Resign’d throughout his thirty years.

1MARC: MA 1977/583/23b. Appears also in draft 1 (above) and MS Funeral Hymns, 94–97. Published posthumously in Poetical Works, 6:345–46.
From vice, and every great offence
By grace miraculous secur’d,
He kept his childish innocence,
And faithful unto death endur’d.

3. A daily death thro’ life he died
   In weakness, weariness, and pain,
   By many a sharp affliction tried
   His faith did every cross sustain:
   What but th’ Invisible display’d
   Could bear him thro’ the fiery test,²
   While still he look’d to God for aid,
   And God in all his ways confest?

4. So modest, diffident, and meek,
   So small and mean in his own eyes,
   Did not his life and actions speak
   An humble soul without disguise?
   Let Others of their virtue tell,
   Their knowledge, or superior grace,
   His good he studied to conceal,
   And only sought his Maker’s praise.

5. Religion undefil’d and true
   In works of charity is shown:
   ’Twas thus his feeling heart we knew,
   Who made the sufferer’s griefs his own,

²Ori., “hour.”