

## *Ascension Hymns (1746)*<sup>1</sup>

[Baker list, #121]

### Editorial Introduction:

Charles Wesley deeply appreciated the value of celebrating the major Christian festivals connected to the life of Christ. This is evident from the first volume containing his poetry, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1739), which included (on pp. 206–15) a series of hymns on Christmas Day, Epiphany, Easter Day, Ascension Day and Whitsunday (Pentecost)—all clearly traced to Charles.

Desiring to provide a richer set of worship resources, in 1745–46 Wesley published a series of pamphlet hymn collections for these festivals. The first collection was *Nativity Hymns* (1745), released in time for Christmas 1745. The second was *Resurrection Hymns* (1746), released just prior to Easter. Then, in early May 1746 he published *Hymns for Ascension Day*, shortly prior to the celebration on this festival (May 9 that year).

This third collection contained seven hymns, all new. While *Ascension Hymns* was not as popular as *Nativity Hymns* (1745), it stayed in print through Wesley's life. No significant variant readings emerged through its reprints.

### Editions:

[Charles Wesley.] *Hymns for Ascension Day*. Bristol: Farley 1746.

2<sup>nd</sup> Bristol: Farley, 1747.

3<sup>rd</sup> Dublin: Powell, 1747.

London: Cock, 1753.

Bristol: Pine, 1761.

London: Hawes, 1775.

London: Paramore, 1784.

London: New Chapel, 1789.

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**HYMNS  
FOR  
ASCENSION-DAY.**

**Hymn 1.**

- 1       Lift up your heads, ye gates,  
          T' admit your King again!  
          Returned from earth he waits  
          With half his angel train:  
Wide open throw the heavenly scene,  
Receive the King of Glory in.
  
- 2       Instinct with living powers  
          The huge portcullis raise,  
          Ye everlasting doors  
          Disclose the holiest place,  
Wide open throw the heavenly scene,  
Receive the King of Glory in.

3           He comes, he comes from far,  
              The strong and mighty Lord,  
              Mighty and strong in war,  
              To claim his just reward:  
Wide open throw the heavenly scene,  
Receive the King of Glory in.

4           The Lord of hosts is he,  
              The omnipotent I AM,  
              Glorious in majesty,  
              Jehovah is his name:  
Wide open throw the heavenly scene,  
Receive the King of Glory in.

5           Jehovah, Jesus, Lord  
              Of earth and heaven receive,  
              Who comes, that man restored  
              With God again may live;  
Wide open throw the heavenly scene,  
Receive the King of Glory in.

6           Forerunner of mankind  
              For us he reigns on high,  
              Till all his members joined  
              Repeat the joyful cry  
Wide open throw the heavenly scene,  
Receive the sons of glory in!

**Hymn 2.**

- 1        God is gone up on high  
          With a triumphant noise,  
          The clarions of the sky  
          Proclaim the angelic joys!  
Join all on earth, rejoice, and sing,  
Glory ascribe to glory's King.
  
- 2        God in the flesh below,  
          For us he reigns above:  
          Let all the nations know  
          Our Jesu's conquering love!  
Join all on earth, rejoice, and sing,  
Glory ascribe to glory's King.
  
- 3        All power to our great Lord  
          Is by his Father given,  
          By angel-hosts adored  
          He reigns supreme in heaven:  
Join all on earth, rejoice, and sing,  
Glory ascribe to glory's King.
  
- 4        High on his holy seat  
          He bears the righteous sway,  
          His foes beneath his feet  
          Shall sink, and die away:  
Join all on earth, rejoice, and sing,  
Glory ascribe to glory's King.

5 His foes and ours are one,  
Satan, the world, and sin;  
But he shall tread them down,  
And bring his kingdom in:  
Join all on earth, rejoice, and sing,  
Glory ascribe to glory's King.

6 Till all the earth renewed  
In righteousness divine  
With all the hosts of God  
In one great chorus join,  
Join all on earth, rejoice, and sing,  
Glory ascribe to glory's King.

### Hymn 3.

1 And is he removed  
Our Master below'd,  
Our heavenly Lord,  
Is Jesus again to his heaven restored?  
He is gone, he is gone  
To his dearly-bought throne;  
Vanished out of our sight  
To his mansion of pure inaccessible light.

2 Yet still we all share  
His happiness there,  
The valley pass through,  
And our Lord to his heaven of heavens pursue,

In assurance of hope  
The members mount up,  
Where Jesus hath led  
We follow, and reign with our glorified head.

3        Our heart is above,  
          Our treasure and love  
          Laid up in the sky,  
And thither in all our affections we fly:  
          No longer inclined  
          To the flesh-pots behind,  
          The world we forego,  
Not a wish, or a passion shall wander below.

4        Our spirit is flown  
          To Jesus's throne,  
          Our bodies are here,  
But wait when our Lord in the clouds shall appear.  
          In the clouds he shall come  
          And take his bride home,  
          To his banquet above,  
To his heavenly fulness of glory and love.

#### **Hymn 4.**

1        Hail, Jesus, hail, our great high priest,  
Entered into thy glorious rest,  
          That holy happy place above!  
Thou hast the conquest more than gained,  
The everlasting bliss obtained  
          For all who trust thy dying love.

- 2     The blood of goats and bullocks slain  
      Could never purge our guilty stain,  
          Could never for our sins atone;  
      But thou thine own most precious blood  
      Hast spilt to quench the wrath of God,  
          Hast saved us by thy blood alone.
- 3     Shed on the altar of thy cross,  
      Thy blood to God presented was  
          Through the eternal Spirit's power:  
      Thou didst a spotless victim, bleed,  
      That we from sin and suffering freed  
          Might live to God, and sin no more.
- 4     That we the promise might receive,  
      Might soon with thee in glory live,  
          Thou stand'st before thy Father now!  
      For us thou dost in heaven appear,  
      Our surety, head, and harbinger,  
          Our Saviour to the utmost thou.
- 5     Not without blood—thou pray'st above:  
      The marks of thy expiring love  
          God on thy hands engraven sees!  
      He hears thy blood for mercy cry,  
      And sends his Spirit from the sky,  
          And seals our everlasting peace.
- 6     Thankful we now the earnest take,  
      The pledge thou wilt at last come back

And openly thy servants own;  
To us, who long to see thee here,  
Thou shalt a second time appear,  
And bear us to thy glorious throne.

**Hymn 5.**  
**John 14:1–3.**

- 1 Jesus, we long to know thy name,  
Today, as yesterday the same  
Our Lord and Saviour be,  
That comfort of the troubled heart  
That gift unspeakable impart,  
That faith which is in thee.
- 2 Surely we do in God believe;  
Yet O! We still must fear and grieve  
Till thou the secret tell,  
The end of thy departure show,  
The heaven-ensuring faith bestow,  
And all thy love reveal.
- 3 Us by thy Spirit certify,  
That we, e'en we shall in the sky  
Our happy mansions find,  
There is thy Father's house above,  
Celestial thrones of glorious love  
For us, and all mankind.
- 4 Art thou not our forerunner gone  
To claim the kingdom for thine own,

Through thee to all men given,  
To challenge and prepare a place  
For us, and every child of grace  
And write our names in heaven?

- 5 Yes, thou art surely gone before;  
We see thee, Lord, on earth no more,  
And for thy absence mourn;  
But lo! We on thy word depend;  
Our griefs and miseries to end  
Thou wilt at last return.
- 6 Soon as thou hast our place prepared,  
And made us meet for our reward,  
Thou wilt come back again,  
Wilt to thyself our souls receive  
With thee eternally to live,  
Eternally to reign.

### Hymn 6.

- 1 Sinners, rejoice; your peace is made,  
Your Saviour on the cross hath bled,  
Your God, in Jesus reconciled,  
On all his works again hath smiled,  
Hath grace through him and blessing given  
To all in earth and all in heaven.
- 2 Angels, rejoice in Jesus' grace,  
And vie with man's more favoured race,  
The blood that did for us atone  
Conferred on you some gift unknown,

Your joys through Jesus' pains abound,  
Ye triumph by his glorious wound.

- 3 Or 'stablished and confirmed by him  
Who did our lower world redeem,  
Secure ye keep your blest estate  
Firm on an everlasting seat,  
Or raised above yourselves, aspire,  
In bliss improved, in glory higher.
- 4 Him ye beheld, our conquering God,  
Return with garments rolled in blood!  
Ye saw, and kindled at the sight,  
And filled with shouts the realms of light,  
With loudest hallelujahs met,  
And fell and kissed his bleeding feet.
- 5 Ye saw him in the courts above  
With all his recent prints of love:  
The wounds, the blood! Ye heard its voice  
That heightened all your highest joys,  
Ye felt it sprinkled through the skies,  
And shared that better sacrifice.\*
- 6 But who of all your hosts can tell  
The mystic bliss unspeakable,  
The joy that issued from his side,  
And how the pure it purified,  
The grace supreme by Jesus given,  
When heaven itself was double heaven!
- 7 Nor angel-tongues can e'er express  
Th' unutterable happiness,  
Nor human hearts can e'er conceive  
The bliss wherein through Christ ye live,  
But all your heaven, ye glorious powers,  
And all your God is doubly ours!

\* Heb. 9:23.

**Hymn 7.**

- 1            Jesus, to thee we fly,  
              On thee for help rely:  
Thou our only refuge art,  
              Thou dost all our fears control,  
Rest of every troubled heart,  
              Life of every dying soul.
- 2            We lift our joyful eyes,  
              And see the dazzling prize,  
See the purchase of thy blood,  
              Freely now to sinners given;  
Thou the living way hast showed,  
              Thou to us hast opened heaven.
- 3            We now divinely bold  
              Of thy reward lay hold:  
All thy glorious joy is ours,  
              All the treasures of thy love:  
Now we taste the heavenly powers,  
              Now we reign with thee above.
- 4            Our anchor sure and fast  
              Within the veil is cast,  
Stands our never-failing hope  
              Grounded in the holy place,  
We shall after thee mount up,  
              See the Godhead face to face.
- 5            By faith already there  
              In thee our head we are,  
With our great forerunner we  
              Now in heavenly places sit,  
Banquet with the deity,  
              See the world beneath our feet.
- 6            Thou art our flesh and bone,  
              Thou art to heaven gone!  
Gone that we might all pursue,  
              Closely in thy footsteps tread,  
Gone that we might follow too,  
              Reign triumphant with our head.