

## *Nativity Hymns (1745)*<sup>1</sup>

[Baker list, #112]

### 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.

Of all these festivals, regular celebration of Christmas held Charles's deepest interest. He apparently arranged for reprinting the Christmas hymn in *HSP* (1739) as a broadsheet for use on Christmas 1743—see *Hymn for Christmas Day* (1743). The following year he issued a collection of 3–4 hymns for this purpose—see *Hymns for Christmas Day* (1744). Then, in preparation for Christmas 1745, he issued a collection of 18 new *Hymns for the Nativity of our Lord*.

This collection contains some of Wesley's most creative work. There are 14 different metrical patterns represented, nearly a unique pattern for each hymn. Likewise, they contain some of his most compelling images about the paradoxical affirmation of the Divine becoming human.

While it is little known among Methodists today, this collection was also a favorite of early Methodists. As the list of editions on the next page shows, it went through at least 25 printings in Britain before Charles's death.

The textual history of this collection is more complex than most of Charles's pamphlets. The first edition was printed in London on December 17, 1745. An edition followed briefly after in Bristol which made a few small corrections and one large omission: the final hymn was not included. It is unclear if this was intentional, as Charles was in London at the time and would not have been supervising the process in Bristol. This defective Bristol copy served as the source for the reprint editions in Dublin in 1747, 1751 & 1760, as well as the 5<sup>th</sup> edn. (1756) and 6<sup>th</sup> edn. (1761) in Bristol. By contrast, the 4<sup>th</sup> edn. (1750) in Bristol restored the last hymn, perhaps at Charles's direction.

John Wesley's input provoked some of the other textual changes in later editions of *Nativity Hymns*. In his personal copy of the 4<sup>th</sup> edn. (1750)<sup>2</sup> John noted in manuscript some suggested corrections and Charles adopted a few (the most significant, which Charles did not adopt, are noted below in footnotes). Likewise, when John came across the 6<sup>th</sup> edn. (1761) still lacking the final hymn, he wrote to Charles protesting and saying that this hymn was his favorite in the collection. The hymn was restored in the next edition and appears in all from that point.

For more details on the textual history and the contents of this collection see the excellent article by Frank Baker, "The Metamorphoses of Charles Wesley's Christmas Hymns, 1739–88," *Proceedings of the Charles Wesley Society* 7 (2001): 43–59.

Charles followed this collection on Christ's birth with three further pamphlets for key festivals: *Resurrection Hymns* (1746), *Ascension Hymns* (1746), and *Whitsunday Hymns* (1746).

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<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. Last updated: December 5, 2009.

<sup>2</sup>This survives in the remnants of his personal library at Wesley's House, London.

## **Editions:**

- [Charles Wesley.] *Hymns for the Nativity of our Lord*. London: [Strahan,] 1745.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Bristol: Farley, 1745. [lacking hymn #18]  
Newcastle: Gooding, 1746. [no copy extant]
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Dublin: Powell, 1747. [lacking hymn #18]  
[Cork: Harrison, 1748?]
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Bristol: Farley, 1749. [no copy extant]
  - 4<sup>th</sup> Bristol: Farley, 1750.
  - 10<sup>th</sup> London: Cock, 1750. [it is unclear why Cock thought this was the 10<sup>th</sup> edn.]
  - 4<sup>th</sup> Dublin: Powell, 1751. [lacking hymn #18]
  - 11<sup>th</sup> London: Foundery, 1755.
  - 5<sup>th</sup> Bristol: Farley, 1756. [lacking hymn #18]
  - 6<sup>th</sup> Dublin: Powell, 1760. [lacking hymn #18]
  - 6<sup>th</sup> Bristol: Pine, 1761. [lacking hymn #18]  
Bristol: Pine, 1762.  
Bristol: Pine, 1764.  
Bristol: Pine, 1766.  
Bristol: Pine, 1768.  
Bristol: Pine, 1770.  
Bristol: Pine, 1772.  
London: Hawes, [c. 1774].  
London: Hawes, 1777.  
London: Hawes, 1778.  
London: Paramore, 1782.  
London: Paramore, 1784.  
London: Paramore, 1787.  
London: New Chapel, 1788.  
London: Paramore, 1791.

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**HYMNS  
FOR THE  
NATIVITY [OF OUR LORD].**

**Hymn 1.**

- 1 Ye simple men of heart sincere,  
Shepherds who watch your flocks by night,  
Start not to see an angel near,  
Nor tremble at this<sup>3</sup> glorious light.
  
- 2 An herald from the heavenly King  
I come, your every fear to chase;  
Good tidings of great joy I bring,  
Great joy to all the fallen race!

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<sup>3</sup>“This” changed to “his” in 1782 edn. and following.

- 3 To you is born on this glad day,  
A Saviour by our host adored,  
Our God in Bethlehem survey,  
Make haste to worship Christ the Lord.
- 4 By this the<sup>4</sup> Saviour of mankind,  
Th' incarnate God shall be displayed,  
The babe ye wrapped in swathes shall find,  
And humbly in a manger laid.

**Hymn 2.**

- 1 Ye heavenly choir,  
Assist me to sing,  
And strike the soft lyre,  
And honour our King:  
His mighty salvation  
Demands all our praise,  
Our best adoration,  
And loftiest lays.
- 2 All glory to God,  
Who ruleth on high,  
And now hath bestowed,  
And sent from the sky  
Christ Jesus, the Saviour,  
Poor mortals to bless;  
The pledge of his favour,  
The seal of their<sup>5</sup> peace.

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<sup>4</sup>“The” omitted in London 1750 and 1755 edns. only.

<sup>5</sup>“Their” changed to “his” in 1762 edn. and following.

**Hymn 3.**

- 1 Angels speak, let man<sup>6</sup> give ear,  
Sent from high,  
They are nigh,  
And forbid our fear.
- 2 News they bring us of salvation,  
Sounds of joy  
To employ  
Every tongue and nation.
- 3 Welcome tidings! To retrieve us  
From our fall,  
Born for all,  
Christ is born to save us.
- 4 Born his creatures to restore,  
Abject earth  
Sees his birth,  
Whom the heavens adore.<sup>7</sup>
- 5 Wrapped in swathes th' immortal stranger  
Man with men  
We have seen,  
Lying in a manger.

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<sup>6</sup>“Man” changed to “men” in 1768 edn. and following; adopting change in *Festival Hymns* (1746).

<sup>7</sup>Reads “heavens do adore” in 1755 edn. only.

- 6 All to God's free grace is owing;  
We are his  
Witnesses,  
Poor, and nothing knowing.
- 7 Simple shepherds us he raises,  
Bids us sing  
Christ the King,  
And show forth his praises.
- 8 We have seen the King of Glory,  
We proclaim  
Christ his name,  
And record his story.
- 9 Sing we with the host of heaven,  
Reconciled  
By a child  
Who to us is given.
- 10 Glory be to God the giver,  
Peace and love  
From above  
Reign on earth forever.

**Hymn 4.**

- 1 Glory be to God on high,  
And peace on earth descend;  
God comes<sup>8</sup> down: he bows the sky:  
And shows himself our friend!

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<sup>8</sup>“Comes” changed to “came” in London 1750 and 1755 edns. only.

God th' invisible *appears*,  
God the blest, the great I AM  
Sojourns in this vale of tears,  
And Jesus is his name.

- 2 Him the angels all adored  
Their Maker and their King:  
Tidings of their humbled Lord  
They now to mortals bring:  
Emptied of his majesty,  
Of his dazzling glories shorn,  
Being's source *begins* to be,<sup>9</sup>  
And God himself is BORN!
- 3 See th' eternal Son of God  
A mortal Son of man,  
Dwelling in an earthy<sup>10</sup> clod  
Whom heaven cannot contain!  
Stand amazed ye heavens at this!  
See the Lord of earth and skies!  
Humbled to the dust he is,  
And in a manger lies!
- 4 We the sons of men rejoice,  
The Prince of Peace proclaim,  
With heaven's host<sup>11</sup> lift up our<sup>12</sup> voice,  
And shout Immanuel's name;  
Knees and hearts to him we bow;  
Of our flesh, and of our bone  
Jesus is our brother now,  
And God is all our own!

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<sup>9</sup>“To be” also italicized in 1756 edn. and following.

<sup>10</sup>“Earthy” changed to “earthly” in most edns. after 1755.

<sup>11</sup>“Host” changed to “hosts” in 1761 edn. only.

<sup>12</sup>“Our” changed to “your” in 1755 and 1768 edns. only.



**Hymn 5.**

- 1 Let earth and heaven combine,  
Angels and men agree  
To praise in songs divine  
Th' incarnate deity,  
Our God contracted to a span,  
Incomprehensibly made man.
- 2 He laid his glory by,  
He wrapped him in our clay,  
Unmarked by human eye  
The latent Godhead lay;  
Infant of days he here became,  
And bore the loved<sup>13</sup> Immanuel's name.
- 3 See in that infant's face  
The depths of deity,  
And labour while ye gaze  
To sound the mystery:  
In vain; ye angels gaze no more,  
But fall, and silently adore.
- 4 Unsearchable the love  
That hath the Saviour brought,  
The grace is far above  
Or men<sup>14</sup> or angel's thought;  
Suffice for us, that God, we know,  
Our God is manifest below.

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<sup>13</sup>“Loved” changed to “mild” in 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (1745) and following.

<sup>14</sup>“Men” changed to “man” in 1778 edn. and following.

- 5 He deigns in flesh t' appear,  
Widest extremes to join,  
To bring our vileness near,  
And make us all divine;  
And we the life of God shall know,  
For God is manifest below.
- 6 Made perfect first in love,  
And sanctified by grace,  
We shall from earth remove,  
And see his glorious face;  
His love shall then be fully showed,  
And man shall all be lost in God.

**Hymn 6.**<sup>15</sup>

- 1 Join all ye joyful nations  
Th' acclaiming hosts<sup>16</sup> of heaven!  
This happy morn  
A child is<sup>17</sup> born,  
To us a Son is given:
- The messenger and token  
Of God's eternal favour,  
God hath sent down  
To us his Son,  
An universal Saviour!
- 2 The wonderful Messias,  
The joy of every nation,  
Jesus his name,  
With God the same,  
The Lord of all creation:

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<sup>15</sup>In John's letter to Charles (26 Dec. 1761) he says of the *Nativity Hymns*: "Omit one or two of them, and I will thank you. They are namby-pambical." In his personal copy of the 1750 edn., John marks for such omission stanzas 3, 4 and 5 of this hymn.

<sup>16</sup>"Hosts" changed to "host" in 1766 edn. and following.

<sup>17</sup>"Is" changed to "was" in 1774–78 edns. only.

The Counsellor of sinners,  
Almighty to deliver,  
The Prince of Peace,  
Whose love's increase  
Shall reign in man forever.

- 3 Go see the King of Glory,  
Discern the heavenly stranger,  
So poor and mean,  
His court an inn,  
His cradle is a manger:

Who from his Father's bosom  
But now for us descended,  
Who built the skies,  
On earth he lies,  
With only beasts attended.

- 4 Whom all the angels worship,  
Lies hid in human nature;  
Incarnate see  
The deity,  
The infinite Creator!

See the stupendous blessing  
Which God to us hath<sup>18</sup> given!  
A child of man,  
In length a span,  
Who fills both earth and heaven.

- 5 Gaze on that<sup>19</sup> helpless object  
Of endless adoration!  
Those infant-hands  
Shall burst our bands,  
And work out our salvation;

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<sup>18</sup>“Hath” changed to “has” in 1784 edn. and following.

<sup>19</sup>“That” changed to “the” in 1766–68 edns. only.

Strangle the crooked serpent,  
Destroy his works forever,  
    And open set  
    The heavenly gate  
To every true believer.

- 6 Till then, thou holy Jesus,  
We humbly bow before thee,  
    Our treasures bring  
    To serve our King,  
And joyfully adore thee:

To thee we gladly render  
Whate'er thy grace hath given,  
    Till thou appear  
    In glory here,  
And take us up to heaven.

#### **Hymn 7.**

- 1 All glory to God, and peace upon earth  
Be published abroad at Jesus's birth;  
The forfeited favour of heaven we find  
Restored in the Saviour and friend of mankind.
- 2 Then let us behold Messiah the Lord,  
By prophets foretold, by angels adored,  
Our God's incarnation with angels proclaim,  
And publish salvation in Jesus's name.
- 3 Our newly-born King by faith we have seen,  
And joyfully sing his goodness to men,  
That all men may wonder at what we impart,  
And thankfully ponder his love in their heart.

- 4     What moved the Most High so greatly to stoop,  
       He comes from the sky our souls to lift up;  
       That sinners forgiven, might sinless return  
       To God and to heaven; their Maker is born.
- 5     Immanuel's love let sinners confess,  
       Who comes from above, to bring us his peace;  
       Let every believer his mercy adore,  
       And praise him forever, when time is no more.

**Hymn 8.**

- 1         Away with our fears!  
           The Godhead appears  
           In Christ reconciled,  
       The Father of mercies in Jesus the child.
- 2         He comes from above,  
           In manifest love,  
           The desire of our<sup>20</sup> eyes,  
       The meek Lamb of God, in a manger he lies.
- 3         At Immanuel's birth  
           What a triumph on earth!  
           Yet could it afford  
       No better a place for its heavenly Lord.
- 4         The Ancient of Days  
           To redeem a lost race,  
           From his glory comes down,  
       Self-humbled to carry us up to a crown.

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<sup>20</sup>“Our” changed to “your” in 1761 edn. only.

- 5        Made flesh for our sake,  
          That we might partake  
          The nature divine,  
And again in his image, his holiness shine;
- 6        An heavenly birth  
          Experience on earth,  
          And rise on<sup>21</sup> his throne,  
And live with our Jesus eternally one.
- 7        Then let us believe,  
          And gladly receive  
          The tidings they bring,  
Who publish to sinners their Saviour and King.
- 8        And while we are here,  
          Our King shall appear,  
          His Spirit impart,  
And form his full image of love in our heart.

**Hymn 9.**

- 1        Father, our hearts we lift  
          Up to thy gracious throne,  
And bless thee for the precious gift  
          Of thine incarnate Son;  
          The gift unspeakable  
          We thankfully receive,  
And to the world thy goodness tell,  
          And to thy glory live.

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<sup>21</sup>“On” changed to “to” in 1774–78 edns. only; adopting change in *Festival Hymns* (1746).

- 2        Jesus, the holy child,  
          Doth by his birth declare,  
That God and man are reconciled,  
          And one in him we are.  
          Salvation through his name  
          To all mankind is given,  
And loud his infant-cries proclaim  
          A peace 'twixt earth and heaven.
- 3        A peace on earth he brings,  
          Which never more shall end:  
The Lord of hosts, the King of kings,  
          Declares himself our friend,  
          Assumes our flesh and blood,  
          That we his Sp'rit may gain,  
The everlasting Son of God,  
          The mortal Son of man.
- 4        His kingdom from above  
          He doth to us impart,  
And pure benevolence and love  
          O'erflow the faithful heart:  
          Changed in a moment we  
          The sweet attraction find,  
With open arms of charity  
          Embracing all mankind.
- 5        O might they all receive  
          The newborn Prince of Peace,  
And meekly in his Spirit live,  
          And in his love increase!  
          Till he convey us home,  
          Cry every soul aloud,  
Come, thou desire of nations come,  
          And take us all<sup>22</sup> to God!

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<sup>22</sup>“All” changed to “up” in 1762 edn. and following.

**Hymn 10.**

- 1    Come thou long-expected Jesus,  
      Born to set thy people free,  
      From our fears and sins relieve<sup>23</sup> us,  
      Let us find our rest in thee:  
      Israel's strength and consolation,  
      Hope of all the earth thou art,  
      Dear desire of every nation,  
      Joy of every longing heart.
  
- 2    Born thy people to deliver,  
      Born a child and yet a king,  
      Born to reign in us forever,  
      Now thy gracious kingdom bring;  
      By thine<sup>24</sup> own eternal Spirit  
      Rule in all our hearts alone,  
      By thine<sup>25</sup> all-sufficient merit  
      Raise us to thy glorious throne.

**Hymn 11.**

- 1    Light of those whose dreary dwelling  
      Borders on the shades of death,  
      Come, and by thy love's revealing  
      Dissipate the clouds beneath:  
      The new heaven and earth's Creator,  
      In our deepest darkness rise,  
      Scattering all the night of nature,  
      Pouring eyesight on our eyes.

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<sup>23</sup>“Relieve” changed to “release” in 1777 edn. and following.

<sup>24</sup>“Thine” changed to “thy” in 1762 edn. and following.

<sup>25</sup>“Thine” changed to “thy” in 1762 edn. and following.



- 2 Still we wait for thy appearing,  
Life and joy thy beams impart,  
Chasing all our fears, and cheering  
Every poor benighted heart.  
Come, and manifest the favour  
God hath for our ransomed race;  
Come, thou universal Saviour,  
Come, and bring the gospel-grace.
- 3 Save us in thy great compassion,  
O thou mild pacific Prince,  
Give the knowledge of salvation,  
Give the pardon of our sins;  
By thine<sup>26</sup> all-redeeming<sup>27</sup> merit  
Every burdened soul release,  
Every weary wand'ring spirit  
Guide into thy perfect peace.

### Hymn 12.

- 1 Sing, ye ransomed nations, sing  
Praises to our newborn King,  
Son of man our Maker is,  
Lord of hosts and Prince of Peace.
- 2 Lo! He lays his glory by,  
Emptied of his majesty!  
See the God who all things made,  
Humbly in a manger laid.
- 3 Cast we off our needless fear,  
Boldly to his cratch<sup>28</sup> draw near,  
Jesus is our flesh and bone,  
God-with-us<sup>29</sup> is all our own.

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<sup>26</sup>“Thine” changed to “thy” in 1777 edn. and following.

<sup>27</sup>“All-redeeming” changed to “all-restoring” in 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (1745) and following.

<sup>28</sup>“Cratch” (archaic for manger) changed to “church” in 1761 edn. and following.

<sup>29</sup>Changed to “*God with us*” in 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (1745) and following.

- 4 Let us then with angels gaze  
On our newborn monarch's face,  
With the choir celestial joined,  
Shout the Saviour of mankind.
- 5 Son of man, will he despise  
Man's well-meaning sacrifice?  
No; with condescending grace  
He accepts his creature's praise.
- 6 Will his majesty disdain  
The poor shepherd's simple strain?  
No; for Israel's shepherd he  
Loves their artless melody.
- 7 He will not refuse the song  
Of the stammering infant's tongue,  
Babes he hears humanely mild,  
Once himself a little child.
- 8 Let us then our Prince proclaim,  
Humbly chant Immanuel's name,  
Publish at his wondrous birth  
Praise in heaven and peace on earth:
- 9 Triumph in our Saviour's love,  
Till he takes us up above,  
All his majesty displays,  
Shows us all his glorious face.

**Hymn 13.**

- 1 Let angels and archangels sing  
The wonderful Immanuel's name,  
Adore with us our newborn King,  
And still the joyful news proclaim,  
All earth and heaven be ever joined  
To praise the Saviour of mankind.
- 2 The everlasting God comes down  
To sojourn with the sons of men;  
Without his majesty or crown,  
The great INVISIBLE<sup>30</sup> is seen:<sup>31</sup>  
Of all his dazzling glories shorn  
The everlasting God is born!
- 3 Angels, behold that infant's face,  
With rapt'rous awe the Godhead own:  
'Tis all your heaven on him to gaze,  
And cast your crowns before his throne;  
Though now he on his footstool lies,  
Ye know he built both earth and skies.
- 4 By him into existence brought,  
Ye sang the all-creating word;  
Ye heard him call our world from nought:  
Again, in honour of your Lord,  
Ye morning-stars your hymns employ,  
And shout, ye sons of God, for joy.

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<sup>30</sup>“Invisible” taken out of small caps in 1768 edn. and following.

<sup>31</sup>“Seen” in italics in most edns. between 2<sup>nd</sup> (1745) and 1774.

**Hymn 14.**

- 1 O astonishing grace,  
That the reprobate race  
Should be so<sup>32</sup> reconciled!  
What a wonder of wonders that God is a child!
- 2 The Creator of all,  
To repair our sad fall,  
From his<sup>33</sup> heav'n stoops down,  
Lays hold of our nature, and joins to his own.
- 3 Our Immanuel came,<sup>34</sup>  
The whole world to redeem,  
And incarnated showed  
That man may again be united to God!
- 4 And shall we not hope,  
After God to wake up,  
His nature to know?  
His nature is sinless perfection below.
- 5 To this heavenly prize,  
By faith let us rise  
To his image ascend,  
Apprehended of God let us God apprehend.

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<sup>32</sup>“So” is omitted in 1784 edn. and following; likely a misprint.

<sup>33</sup>“His” omitted from 1768 edn. and following.

<sup>34</sup>“Came” changed to “come” in 1774–84 edns.; likely a misprint.

**Hymn 15.**<sup>35</sup>

- 1 All-wise, all-good, Almighty Lord,  
Jesus, by highest heaven<sup>36</sup> adored,  
Ere time its course began,  
How did thy glorious mercy stoop  
To take the fallen nature up,  
When thou thyself wert man?
- 2 Th' eternal God from heav'n came down,  
The King of Glory dropped his crown,  
And veiled his majesty,  
Emptied of all but love he came;  
Jesus, I call thee by the<sup>37</sup> name  
Thy<sup>38</sup> pity bore for me.
- 3 O holy child, still let thy birth  
Bring peace to us poor worms on<sup>39</sup> earth,  
And praise to God on high!  
Come, thou who didst my<sup>40</sup> flesh assume,  
Now to the abject sinner come,  
And in a manger lie.
- 4 Didst thou not in thy person join  
The natures human and divine,  
That God and man might be  
Henceforth inseparably one?  
Haste then, and make thy nature known  
Incarnated in me.
- 5 In my weak sinful flesh appear,  
O God, be manifested here,  
Peace, righteousness, and joy,  
Thy kingdom, Lord, set up within  
My faithful heart, and all my sin,  
The devil's works<sup>41</sup> destroy.

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<sup>35</sup>Manuscript precursors of this hymn appear in MS Shent, 107a–107b; and MS Thirty, 42–43.

<sup>36</sup>“Heaven” changed to “heavens” in 1768–74 edns. only.

<sup>37</sup>“The” changed to “thy” in 1762–68 edns.; likely a misprint.

<sup>38</sup>“Thy” changed to “The” in 1782 edn. and following; likely a misprint.

<sup>39</sup>“Of” changed to “on” in 1762 edn. and following.

<sup>40</sup>“My” changed to “thy” in 1777–78 edns; a misprint.

<sup>41</sup>“Works” changed to “work” in 1774 edn. and following.

- 6 I long thy coming to confess  
The mystic power of godliness,  
The life divine to prove,  
The fulness of thy life to know,  
Redeemed from all my sins<sup>42</sup> below,  
And perfected in love.
- 7 O Christ, my hope, make known in<sup>43</sup> me  
The great, the glorious mystery,  
The hidden life impart:  
Come, thou desire of nations, come,  
Formed in a spotless virgin's womb,  
A pure believing heart.
- 8 Come quickly, dearest Lord, that I  
May own, though antichrist deny,  
Thy incarnation's power,  
May cry, a witness to my Lord,  
"Come in my flesh is Christ, the Word,  
And I can sin no more!"

**Hymn 16.**<sup>44</sup>

- 1 O mercy divine  
How couldst thou incline  
My God to become such an infant as *mine*!
- 2 What a wonder of grace!  
The Ancient of Days  
Is found in the likeness of Adam's frail race.

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<sup>42</sup>"Sins" changed to "sin" in 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (1745) through 6<sup>th</sup> edn. (1761); then back to "sins."

<sup>43</sup>"In" changed to "to" in 1774 edn. and following.

<sup>44</sup>In John's letter to Charles (26 Dec. 1761) he says of the *Nativity Hymns*: "Omit one or two of them, and I will thank you. They are namby-pambical." In his personal copy of the 1750 edn. John marks for such omission stanzas 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 13 and 14 of this hymn.

- 3        He comes from on high,  
          Who fashioned the sky,  
          And meekly vouchsafes in a manger to lie.
- 4        Our God ever blest  
          With oxen doth rest,  
          Is nursed by his creature and hangs at the breast.
- 5        So heavenly-mild  
          His innocence smiled,  
          No wonder the mother should worship the child.
- 6        The angels she knew  
          Had worshipped him too,  
          And still they confess adoration his<sup>45</sup> due.
- 7        On Jesus's face,  
          With eager amaze,  
          And pleasure<sup>46</sup> ecstatic the cherubim<sup>47</sup> gaze.
- [8]<sup>48</sup>    Their newly-born King,  
          Transported they sing,  
          And heav'n and earth with the triumph doth ring.
- [9]       The shepherds behold  
          Him promised of old,  
          By angels attended, by prophets foretold.
- [10]      The wise men adore,  
          And bring him their store,  
          The rich are permitted to follow the poor.
- [11]      To the inn they repair,  
          To see the young heir:  
          The inn is a palace; for Jesus is there!
- [12]      Who now would be great,  
          And not rather wait  
          On Jesus their Lord in his humble estate?

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<sup>45</sup>“His” changed to “is” in most editions after London 1750.

<sup>46</sup>“Pleasure” changed to “pleasures” in 1764 edn. and following.

<sup>47</sup>“Cheribim” changed to “cheribims” in 1762 edn. and following.

<sup>48</sup>Original jumps in numbering from stanza 7 to stanza 9; renumbered above as in later edns.

- [13] Like him would I be,  
My Master I see  
In a stable; a stable shall satisfy me.
- 14 With him I reside:  
The manger shall hide  
Mine honour; the manger shall bury my pride.
- 15 And here will I lie,  
Till raised up on high  
With him on the cross I recover the sky.

**Hymn 17.**

- 1 Where is the holy heav'n-born child,  
Heir of the everlasting throne,  
Who heav'n and earth hath reconciled,  
And God and man rejoined in one?
- 2 Shall we of earthly kings enquire,  
To courts or palaces repair?  
The nation's hope, the world's desire,  
Alas! We cannot find him there.
- 3 Shall learning show the sinner's friend,  
Or scribes a sight of Christ afford?  
Us to his natal place they send,  
But never go to see<sup>49</sup> their<sup>50</sup> Lord.
- 4 We search the outward church in vain,  
They cannot him we seek declare,  
They have not found the Son of man,  
Or known the sacred<sup>51</sup> name they bear.
- 5 Then let us turn no more aside,  
But use the light himself imparts,  
His Spirit is our surest guide,  
His Spirit glimmering in our hearts.

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<sup>49</sup>“See” changed to “seek” in 1777 edn. and following.

<sup>50</sup>“Their” changed to “the” in 5<sup>th</sup> edn. (1756) and following.

<sup>51</sup>“Sacred” changed to “secret” in 1770–72 edns.; a misprint.



- 6 Drawn by his grace we come from far,  
And fix on heaven our wishful eyes,  
That ray divine, that orient star  
Directs us where the infant lies.
- 7 See there! The new born Saviour see,  
By faith discern the great I AM;  
'Tis he! The eternal God! 'Tis he  
That bears the mild Immanuel's name.
- 8 The Prince of Peace on earth is found,  
The child is born, the Son is given;  
Tell it to all the nations round,  
Jehovah is come down from heaven!
- 9 Jehovah is come down to raise  
His dying creatures from their fall,  
And all may now receive the grace  
Which brings eternal life to all.
- 10 Lord, *we* receive the grace and thee,<sup>52</sup>  
With joy unspeakable receive,  
And rise thine open face to see,  
And one with God forever live.

**Hymn 18.**<sup>53</sup>

- 1 All glory to God in the sky,  
And peace upon earth be restored!  
O Jesus, exalted on high,  
Appear our omnipotent Lord:  
Who meanly in Bethlehem born,  
Didst stoop to redeem a lost race,  
Once more to thy creature<sup>54</sup> return,  
And reign in thy kingdom of grace.
- 2 When thou in our flesh didst appear,  
All nature acknowledged thy birth;  
Arose the acceptable year,  
And heaven was opened on earth:

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<sup>52</sup>Changed to “thy grace, and thee,” in 1772 edn. and following.

<sup>53</sup>This hymn was omitted, perhaps by accident, from 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (1745), 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. (1747), 4<sup>th</sup> edn (1751), 5<sup>th</sup> edn. (1756), and 6<sup>th</sup> edn. (1760–61). John protested in a letter to Charles (26 Dec. 1761), calling it “the very best hymn of the collection.” It was restored to the 1762 edn. and following.

<sup>54</sup>“Creature” changed to “creatures” in 1764 edn. and following.

Receiving its Lord from above,  
The world was *united* to bless  
The giver of concord and love,  
The Prince and the author of peace.

3 O wouldst thou again be made known,  
Again in thy Spirit descend,  
And set up in each of thine own,  
A kingdom that never shall end!  
Thou only art able to bless,  
And make the glad nations<sup>55</sup> obey,  
And bid the dire enmity cease,  
And bow the whole world to thy sway.

4 Come then to thy servants again,  
Who long thy appearing to know,  
Thy quiet and peaceable reign  
In mercy establish below:  
All sorrow before thee shall fly,  
And anger and hatred be o'er,  
And envy and malice shall die,  
And discord afflict us no more.

5 No horrid alarm<sup>56</sup> of war<sup>57</sup>  
Shall break our eternal repose;  
No sound of the trumpet is there,  
Where Jesus's Spirit o'erflows:  
Appeased by the charms of thy grace  
We all shall in amity join,  
And kindly each other embrace,  
And love with a passion like thine.

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<sup>55</sup>“Nations” changed to “nation” in 1784 edn. and following.

<sup>56</sup>“Alarm” changed to “alarum,” to provide correct metre, in 1762 edn. and following.

<sup>57</sup>Line changed to “No alarm of dread war” in 4<sup>th</sup> edn. (1750) only.