

Thanksgiving Hymns (1746)¹

[Baker list, #125]

Editorial Introduction:

The Jacobite uprising in 1745, led by Charles Edward Stuart, had been greeted by Charles Wesley with a series of hymns beseeching God's protection for the English king and nation—see “Hymns for 1745.” When the English troops led by William, Duke of Cumberland and the 25 year-old son of George II, defeated the Jacobite forces in April 1746 at the battle of Culloden, it is small surprise that Charles would again respond with appropriate verse.

Specifically, in preparation for the official public commemoration of this victory, Charles published (anonymously) in early October 1746 in London and Bristol his *Hymns for the Public Thanksgiving Day, Oct. 9, 1746*, a booklet containing seven new hymns specific to the occasion. The hymns exude the English sense of being defenders of the cause of Protestantism against the treachery of Catholic Spain and France (see esp. Hymn 3, st. 2).

This collection was reprinted only once, in 1769. It is unlikely that this was simply because the original copies had been exhausted. It appears timed to bolster English confidence in the face of the growing rebellion of the American colonists (and their French supporters).

Editions:

[Charles Wesley.] *Hymns for the Public Thanksgiving Day, Oct. 9, 1746*. London: [Strahan], 1746.
[Bristol: Farley], 1746.
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**HYMNS
FOR THE
PUBLIC THANKSGIVING-DAY,
October 9, 1746.**

Hymn 1.

- 1 Britons, rejoice, the Lord is King,
The Lord of hosts and nations sing,
Whose arm hath now your foes o'erthrown,
Ascribe the praise to God alone,
The giver of success proclaim,
And shout your thanks in Jesus' name.

- 2 'Twas not a feeble arm of ours
Which chased the fierce contending powers,
Jehovah turned the scale of fight,
Jehovah quelled their boasted might,
And knapped their spears, and broke their swords,
And showed—*the battle is the Lord's*.

- 3 He beckoned to the savage-band,
And bade them sweep through *half* the land:
The savage-band their terror spread,
With Rome and Satan at their head,
But stopped by his almighty breath,
Rushed back—into the arms of death.

- 4 Thou Lord, alone, hast laid them low,
 In pieces dashed th' invading foe,
 Thy breath which did their fury raise
 Hath quenched, at once, the sudden blaze,
 Destroyed the weapons of thine ire,
 And cast the rods into the fire.
- 5 O that we all might see the hand
 Which still protects a guilty land;
 Glory and strength ascribe to thee
 Who giv'st to kings the victory;
 And yield, while yet thy Spirit strives,
 And thank thee with our hearts and lives.
- 6 O that we might to God rejoice,
 And tremble at thy mercy's voice:
 Nor fondly dream the danger past,
 While yet *our own* rebellions last!
 O that our wars with heav'n might cease,
 And all receive the Prince of Peace!
- 7 Or if, before the scourge return,
 The thankless crowd disdains to mourn,
 Yet, Lord, with reverential joy,
 We vow for thee *our* all t' employ,
 And bless thee for the kind reprieve,
 And to our Saviour's glory live!
- 8 Long as thou length'nest out our days,
 We live to testify thy grace,
 Secure beneath thy mercy's wings,
 We triumph in the King of kings,
 The giver of success proclaim,
 And shout our thanks in Jesus' name.

Hymn 2.

- 1 Thanks be to God, the God of power,
 Who sheltered us in danger's hour,
 The God of truth, who heard the prayer,
 Let all his faithfulness declare,
 Who sent us succours from above,
 Let all adore the God of love.

- 2 God sitting on his holy seat
Compels the heathen to submit,
The grasshoppers of earth he sees,
And mocks their prosp'rous wickedness,
Frustrates their counsels with a frown,
And turns their Babels upside down.
- 3 His eye observed the dark design,
To blast our rightful monarch's line,
The scheme in Satan's *conclave* laid,
Improved by Rome's unerring head,
To gall us with their yoke abhorred,
And plant *their* faith with fire and sword.
- 4 He saw the serpent's egg break forth,
The cloud arising in the north,
He let the *slighted* mischief spread,
And hang in thunder o'er our head;
And while we scorned our abject foes,
The drop into a torrent rose.
- 5 Lured by the grateful scent of blood,
The vultures hastened to their food,
The aliens urged their rapid way,
Resolved to die, or win the day;
Madly resolved their doom to brave,
And gain *a kingdom or a grave*.
- 6 Swelled to an host, the daring few
Through ours as waving lightning flew,
Rushed on with *unresisted* power,
And scaled the wall, and stormed the tower,
While God *seemed* pleased their cause to bless,
And cursed them with a short success.
- 7 Drunk with the bold aspiring hope,
Behold them march triumphant up,
Of conquest fatally secure,
They vow to make our ruin sure,
And shout around our threatened towers,
"*The day, the crown, and all is ours!*"
- 8 Who was it then dispersed the snare,
And choked those ravening dogs of war?

Jehovah curbed their furious speed,
Jehovah sent the panic dread,
And damped and filled them with dismay,
And scared the vultures from their prey.

- 9 His hidden power controlled the foe,
And said, "No farther shalt thou go."
His bridle in their mouths they found,
And fled subdued without a wound,
(As stubble by the whirlwind driven)
They fled before the frown of heaven.
- 10 Thanks be to God, the God of power,
Who sheltered us in danger's hour,
The God of truth, who heard the prayer,
Let all his faithfulness declare,
Who sent deliverance from above,
Let all adore the God of love!

Hymn 3.

- 1 Still let us in our rising song,
Pursue the wild rebellious throng,
With tenfold rage and fury fired,
With all the zeal of hell inspired,
The sons of Rome and Satan see,
And trace them to their destiny.
- 2 Bold they return to sure success,
Whom all *the saints* conspire to bless,
Supported by their friends *beneath*,
In covenant with hell and death;
And Spanish gold, and Gallic pride,
And *Holy Church* is on their side.
- 3 See how they fly to set us free
From all our *northern heresy*,
Our feuds and grievances to heal,
And purge the land with northern steel,
Bring back to *their* infernal god,
And re-baptize us in our blood.

- 4 Bent to devour the total prey,
They leave our troops an open way,
An uncontested passage yield,
And draw their conquerors to the field,
And sworn our ruin to secure,
They make their own destruction sure.
- 5 Lo! The audacious hopes of Rome,
Rush headlong to their instant doom,
Slaughter and threats the aliens breathe,
Nor see the Lord of life and death,
Till struck with lightning from his eye,
They fear, they turn, they fall, they die!
- 6 How are the mighty fallen! Dead!
Who filled our conscious land with dread,
Perished the keenest tools of war,
The crafty caught in their own snare,
And Antichrist robbed of his plea,
His blind infallibility!
- 7 'Twas not the *number* of our hosts,
That baffled all their furious boasts,
Our wisdom did not cast them down,
Our courage, Lord, was not *our own*;
From thee the sacred ardor came,
And William² breathed an heavenly flame!
- 8 O let him thankfully submit
To lay his laurels at thy feet,
By FAITH a Christian hero stand,
And hang on thine all-ruling hand,
Supporter of his father's throne,
Upheld himself by thee alone!
- 9 Give him, and us, and all to see,
Our strength and life secured in thee,
By whom thy dread vicegerents reign,
And righteous kings their sway maintain,
Assured, who on thy love depend,
Their God and Maker is their friend.
- 10 O that we all may seek and find,
The Saviour, friend of humankind,

²William, Duke of Cumberland, leader of the English troops.

People and prince be still employed
T' insure the lasting peace of God,
And strive, till all obtain above
Eternal rest in Jesus' love!

Hymn 4.

- 1 Join all who know the name
 That sure deliverance brings,
 The conquering God proclaim,
 The guardian King of kings;
Saved from the peril of the sword,
Rejoice, and glory in the Lord.

- 2 He on our Israel's side,
 In glorious power hath stood,
 And quelled their cruel pride,
 Who thirsted for our blood:
Saved from the peril of the sword,
Rejoice, and glory in the Lord.

- 3 Forth with our armies went
 The God of victory,
 And bless'd the instrument
 That set our nation free:
Saved from the peril of the sword,
Rejoice, and glory in the Lord.

- 4 The means his wisdom chose
 We honour, and *look through*
 To him, who all our foes,
 When flushed with conquest slew:
Saved from the peril of the sword,
Rejoice, and glory in the Lord.

- 5 Wisdom and strength belongs
 To Jesu's only name,
 He claims our thankful songs,
 From whom our safety came:
Saved from the peril of the sword,
Rejoice, and glory in the Lord.

6 To him let us restore
The lives he doth redeem,
And praise him evermore,
And live and die to him.
Saved from the peril of the sword,
Rejoice, and glory in the Lord.

Hymn 5.

1 What recompense, or meet reward
Shall sinners render to the Lord
For all his saving grace?
We only can with thanks receive,
The utmost grace he deigns to give,
And sing the giver's praise.

2 Saved from the Romish fowler's snare,
Our Saviour's glory to declare
We joyfully agree:
Jesus, we now thy praise proclaim,
And rescued by thy conqu'ring name,
Give back our lives to thee.

3 Thou hast thy praying remnant heard,
Thou hast our sinful Sodom spared
For the ten righteous' sake:
Thou between God and us hast stood,
And pleaded thine atoning blood,
And turned the waster back.

4 Plucked as a brand out of the fire,
Let us to greater things aspire,
And mightier wonders see,
Deliverance from death, hell and sin,
From all these rebel foes *within*,
And more than victory.

5 Jesus, convert and stir us up
With transport to receive the cup
Of full salvation *here*:
And let us then by love restored,
Behold thee, our triumphant Lord,
With all thy saints *appear*!

Hymn 6.³

- 1 God of love, who hear'st the prayer
Offered for a guilty land,
Thou dost yet thy wrath forbear,
Hold a while thy lifted hand;
Thou with bowels of compassion
Giv'st us still a longer space:
Turn us then, the sinful nation,
Conquer by thy pard'ning grace.

- 2 Thee in dreadful indignation
Marching through the land we saw,
Stopped by Israel's supplication,
Lo! Thou dost the scourge withdraw:
O that all might hear and tremble
At the long-suspended rod,
All in Jesu's name assemble,
All confess the Son of God!

- 3 Grant us in this awful crisis,
Hearts thy warning to receive,
Hearts to cast away our vices,
Hearts to sorrow and believe:
Humbly at thy footstool mourning,
Let us groan thy face to see,
Let us all at last returning,
Find our help and rest in thee.

- 4 Come, the contrite heart's desire,
Friend of helpless sinners, come!
Hear and answer us by fire,
All our sins forgive—consume,
Humble us, and *then* deliver
Whom thou dost a while reprove,
Save us then, and save forever,
God of everlasting love!

³A manuscript version of this hymn appears in MS Richmond Tracts, 1.

Hymn 7.

- 1 While void of care, the cheerful crowd
In shouts and acclamations loud
 The festal time employ;
Let us, who still the rod revere,
With pitying grief and humble fear
 Correct the lighter joy.
- 2 Not but thou read'st our thankful heart,
Thankful that thou hast took our part,
 And saved the sinful land;
Thou hast preserved the best of kings,
And shadowed with thy mercy's wings
 The man of thy right hand.
- 3 Yet must we, Lord, with shame confess,
Nor for our nation's righteousness,
 Hast thou deliverance sent,
But grantest us a longer space,
To try, if those who scorned thy grace,
 Will now at last repent.
- 4 Thou hast not dropped thy quarrel, Lord,
Thou hast not from the threat'ning sword
 Revoked its charge to kill:
Thine anger is not turned away,
Thy justice still demands its prey,
 Thine hand is stretched out still.
- 5 Conqu'rors of our intestine foes,
We spurn the authors of our woes;
 But can our tears be dry
While just necessity commands,
And slaughtered by *fraternal* hands,
 Whole troops of Britons die!
- 6 Thousands to their account are fled
With all their sins upon their head,
 (Sins against man and God:)
Their lives are lost to ransom ours:
And still the sword *abroad* devours,
 And thirsts for nobler blood.

- 7 The man who sits on the *red* horse,
Holds on his bloody rapid course,
 And peace from earth destroys;
And O! What crowds of Britain's sons,
Have owned his power in dying groans,
 And answered to his voice!
- 8 O might we mercy seek and find,
Ere yet he calls the man behind,
 Who rides the *sable* steed;
Ere yet the meagre form appears,
With a long train of dearthy years,
 And famine lifts his head.
- 9 Before with fruitless horror we
The man on the *pale* courser see,
 And feel his blasting breath,
Jesus, regard the nation's cry,
Reverse our doom, nor let us die
 The *pestilential* death.
- 10 O might we all to thee submit
And fall, and kiss thy bleeding feet,
 And own thee for our King,
Bright in thy glorious image rise,
And rapt at last above the skies,
 Thine endless praises sing.