

Tumult Hymns (1780)¹

[Baker list, #410]

Editorial Introduction:

While Roman Catholics were officially tolerated, or allowed to hold their own worship, after the Elizabethan settlement, they suffered under a number of economic and political restrictions. These restrictions were based on the fear that Catholics were bound to follow the direction of the Pope in civil matters, as well as the connection of Catholicism to the deposed Stuart line and to France and Spain, long-time enemies of England.

The Catholic Relief Act of 1778 was one of the first moves to set aside these restrictions. It allowed Roman Catholics to purchase and inherit land. It also allowed them to join the army, if they swore an oath against the Stuart claim to the throne and the papal claim to civil jurisdiction. This move came as Britain was enmeshed in battle with their colonists in North America, who were supported by the French. There were also growing strains with Spain. The British army was stretched thin and one purpose of the act was to provide a new source for recruits.

Many Protestants had misgivings about the Catholic Relief Act, which were heightened when Spain declared war on Britain in June 1779 and began to plan a naval invasion. Lord George Gordon (1751–93) took the lead in organizing this concern, forming the “Protestant Association” in late 1779, with the explicit purpose of repealing the Relief Act. On June 2, 1780, he led nearly 60,000 persons to petition Parliament against the Act. As Gordon was presenting their petition, the crowd outside became riotous. Over the course of a week they burned many Roman Catholic chapels and homes in London. They attacked several prisons and freed the inmates. They stormed the Bank of England and burned the house of Lord Chief Justice Mansfield (an old school friend of Charles Wesley), destroying his vast library. Order was restored by the army only after arresting 450 persons and hanging at least another 25. Lord Gordon was tried for high treason, but gained an acquittal through the efforts of his lawyer, Thomas Erskine.

While Charles Wesley was an ardent Protestant and shared concern about the loyalty of Roman Catholics in Britain to the Hanoverian throne, he was even more committed to the rule of law and respect for public property. His outrage against the mob and its leaders, as well as his gratitude when peace was restored, were captured in a set of thirteen *Hymns Written in the Time of the Tumults* that were published within months of the riots. See also *Protestant Association* (1781).

Edition:

[Charles Wesley.] *Hymns Written in the Time of the Tumults, June 1780*. Bristol, 1780.

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HYMNS.

Hymn 1.

- 1 The floods, O Lord, lift up their voice,
And ocean's waves with angry noise,
 With din tremendous roar;
Convulsive pangs our nation seize,
And discord's horrible abyss
 Wide opens to devour.

- 2 Blaspheming multitudes we hear,
By wild astonishment and fear
 Beset on every side:
How shall we the destruction shun,
Or to what place of safety run,
 Our trembling souls to hide?

- 3 Jesus, our sanctuary thou art:
And if thou take thy people's part,
 Elisha's flaming bands,
Their high commission to fulfil,
Secure from every threatened ill,
 Shall bear us in their hands.

- 4 We now with thy protection blest,
Beneath thy wings of mercy rest,
Till all this tyranny
Is, like a sudden flood, o'erpassed,
And peace, which evermore shall last,
And love returns with thee.

Hymn 2.²

- 1 Thou most compassionate high priest,
In answer to our joint request
United to thy own,
With pity's softest eye behold
The sheep which are not of this fold,
The church in Babylon.
- 2 The ignorant who miss their way,
Not wilfully, but weakly stray;
O let thy bowels move
To these by furious hate pursued,
And from the frantic multitude
Conceal their lives above.
- 3 As sheep appointed to be slain,
By cruel, persecuting men,
By fierce fanatic zeal;
By Christian wolves, *reformed* in name,
Whose dire atrocious deeds proclaim
The synagogue of hell.
- 4 Thy help to the distressed afford,
The men that tremble at thy word,
The quiet of the land;
Thy worshippers, if blind, sincere,
Who honour thy vicegerent* here,
And bless his mild command.

* King George [III].

²Republished in *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 674–75, under the title “A Prayer written at the time of the Insurrection, June 1780.”

- 5 And O! Beneath thy mercy's wings,
 Hide and preserve the best of kings,
 Our king by right divine:
 His consort in thy bosom bear,
 His children make thy darling care,
 And seal them ever thine.
- 6 The father of his people bless
 With outward and internal peace;
 And when his work is done,
 Our hoary patriot king receive,
 Redeemed from earth, with thee to live,
 And wear an heavenly crown.

Hymn 3.³

- 1 Saviour, thou dost their threat'nings see
 Who rage against our king and thee,
 Nor know, thy bridle in their jaws
 Restrains the friends of Satan's cause.
- 2 As in religion's cause they join,
 And blasphemously call it thine,
 The cause of persecuting zeal,
 Of treason, anarchy, and hell.
- 3 See, where th' impetuous waster comes,
 Like legion rushing from the tombs;
 Like stormy seas, that toss and roar,
 And foam, and lash the trembling shore!
- 4 Havoc, th' infernal leader cries!
 Havoc, th' associate host replies!
 The rabble shouts—the torrent pours—
 The city sinks—the flame devours!

³This hymn is included in a letter of Charles to his daughter Sally, June 12, 1780, and is identified as written on June 8.

- 5 A general consternation spreads,
While furious crowds ride o'er our heads;
Tremble the powers thou didst ordain,
And rulers bear the sword in vain!
- 6 Our arm of flesh entirely fails,
The many-headed beast prevails;
Conspiracy the state o'erturns,
Gallia exults—and London burns!
- 7 Arm of the Lord, awake, put on
Thy strength, and cast Apollyon down,
Jesus, against the murderers rise,
And blast them with thy flaming eyes:
- 8 Forbid the flood our land t' o'erflow,
Tell it—thou shalt no farther go;
My will be done, my word obeyed,
And here let thy proud waves be stayed!

Hymn 4.⁴

- 1 God omnipotent, arise,
To scatter all thy foes,
Blast the rebels with thine eyes,
Who thee and thine oppose;
Let the tools of anarchy
The daring sons of wickedness,
Driven as by a whirlwind flee,
Before thine angry face.
- 2 Lord of hosts, and King of kings,
Thine outstretched arm make bare,
Thine alone salvation brings,
And stops the waste of war:

⁴Republished in *Arminian Magazine* 4 (1781): 455, under the title “A Prayer, written at the time of the Insurrection.”

Earth and hell, to thee submit;
Avenge us quickly of the fiend,
Chase him back to his own pit,
The hour of darkness end.

3 Arm the man of thy right hand,
And make him strong for thee,
Confident th' angelic band
His constant guard shall be;
Him with wisdom from above,
With calm intrepid zeal inspire,
All our evils to remove,
And snatch us from the fire.

4 Britain then thy hand shall own,
And bless thine instrument;
Thou through him the work hast done,
The great deliverance sent:
All the praise to thee we give
The God supreme, the Lord most high,
Thankful to thy glory live,
And to thy glory die.

Hymn 5.

1 Omniscient God, to whom alone,
The thoughts of every heart are known,
Whose piercing eye the counsels sees
Of Britain's subtlest enemies;
The dark conspirators display,
And force them into open day.

2 Their hell without a covering lies,
Thou know'st them through their close disguise,

Who laid the well-concerted plan,
Who sprung the mine, and fired the train,
As sure to lay our cities low,
And end a nation at a blow.

3 But vain, without a nod of thine,
The most infallible design:
They bring us down to ruin's brink,
They reach their chain's extremest link;
And when their fiery darts they shoot,
Thy wrath destroys them branch and root.

4 Thou hast, O God, thy work begun;
But make their utmost evil known,
Drag out the whole assassin band,
Distinguished by the villain's brand,
And let impartial justice find
Those pests and outcasts of mankind.

5 But chiefly them, who dared employ,
And taught the wasters to destroy;
Make all the principals appear,
With all their black associates here,
Nor longer let the fiend conceal,
Those choicest instruments of hell.

6 Strengthen the powers thou didst ordain,
Nor let them bear the sword in vain,
But turn its sharpest edge on them,
Who patient majesty blaspheme,
And for their country's fall conspire,
And doom Britannia to the fire.

7 Then as the rivers of the sea,
Turn back the people, Lord, to thee,
To thee, and to their king convert,
And plant thy fear in every heart,

That every heart may faithful prove,
His God, his king, and country love.

- 8 Thy heavenly kingdom then restore,
Command that war be learnt no more,
Pronounce the sacred number sealed,
The mystery of God fulfilled;
And Jesus shall his sway maintain,
And GLORY shall forever reign.

Hymn 6.

- [1] 'Tis of thy mercy Lord,
That we are not consumed,
By hostile fire and sword,
To sure destruction doomed;
But snatched as brands out of the flame,
To magnify our Saviour's name.
- 2 Jesus, thy name alone
To us salvation brought,
Thy outstretched arm, we own,
The great deliverance wrought,
Whoe'er accomplished thy decree,
The praise entire belongs to thee.
- 3 Thy power was on our side,
When fiends against us rose,
And stemmed the furious tide,
And baffled all our foes;
Crushed the design which could not fail,
And quenched the fiery darts of hell.
- 4 Our cities in a blaze
Extinguished by thy word,
The providence confess
Of an Almighty Lord;

'Scaped as a bird from Satan's snare,
We live thy glory to declare.

5 O that our lives *may* tell
 The virtues of thy name,
 And every Briton feel
 From whence his safety came,
And find redemption in that blood
Which quenched the fiery wrath of God!

6 Saved from the burning pit,
 The death that never dies,
 We then our God shall meet
 Above the flaming skies,
In everlasting songs to praise
The wonders of redeeming grace.

Hymn 7.
Upon Notice Sent One that
His House was *Marked*.

1 In vain doth the assassin dark,
 This house for desolation mark,
 Protected by the scarlet sign,
 Already marked with blood divine;
 His idle threat'nings we defy,
 For the destroyer *must* pass by.

2 The Lord most high is our defence,
 Our trust is in omnipotence;
 His name our adamant tower;
 Jehovah's wisdom, truth and power,
 Jesus, beneath thy shade, we dwell,
 And laugh at all the leagues of hell.

Hymn 8.

- 1 Thou God who hear'st the prayer
 Presented through thy Son,
The man that bears thy character,
 And fills the British throne,
 Into thine arms receive,
 And fashioned to thy mind
Our nation's joy, long may he live
 A blessing to mankind.

- 2 Thou dost the malice know,
 And causeless enmity,
Which all the sons of Belial show
 To one set up by thee:
 Thou seest what they intend,
 Who traitorously presume
To style our blackened king the friend
 Of antichristian Rome.

- 3 Confound their devilish art,
 Who leagued together rise,
The poor unwary crowd pervert,
 And poison with their lies:
 Redeem them from the foe,
 The dire Ahithophel,
And all th' associate host o'erthrow,
 And chase them back to hell.

- 4 But turn their hearts again,
 Back to their king and thee,
Who ignorant of Satan's plan
 Swerved from their loyalty:
 Let them thy subjects live,
 Submit to Caesar's power,
And never place to Satan give,
 And trust his slaves no more.

Hymn 9.

- 1 Arm of the Lord, awake, awake,
Thy own resistless strength put on,
Us into thy protection take,
And cast our foes, in vengeance, down:
Our fathers unto us have told,
What thou in their defence hast wrought,
Thy wondrous works in times of old,
When Israel's God for Britain fought.
- 2 Our God the hostile powers destroyed,
Armies and fleets invincible,
Rendered their cruel counsels void,
And baffled all the plots of hell.
Again, great God, thou dost defeat
Their sure exterminating aim:
Again thy praises we repeat,
And London saved defies the flame.
- 3 By an almighty arm we own
The dire conspiracy suppressed,
Thou only, Lord, the work hast done,
And safe beneath thy wings we rest:
Thou hast *appeared* the Lord most high,
A token to thy servants given,
And lo! We see the aliens fly,
As chaff before the whirlwind driven!
- 4 Dispersed th' assassinating band,
(Soon as they missed their fatal blow)
Incendiaries throughout the land
They carry death where'er they go;
They carry their own hell within,
Rebels and traitors in disguise;
But all their hearts by thee are seen,
And hell is naked to thine eyes.

- 5 Thou know'st the depth of their design,
 To slander thine anointed here,
And in the holy league to join
 Full many a simple soul sincere;
The arts, and daring lies accurst,
 The parricides' successful pains
To blast, and make him odious first,
 And then—but God forever reigns!
- 6 Thy wrath on these shall soon be showed:
 But let thy grace extended be
To the misguided multitude,
 Who speak against their king and thee:
Let pity the distinction make,
 The merciful deliverance bring,
And touch their hearts, and turn them back
 To God, their country, and their king.
- 7 So will we sing and praise thy name,
 And sweetly in thy service joined,
The grace miraculous proclaim,
 Which makes us of one heart and mind;
Which hath to us salvation brought,
 A desperate, death-devoted crowd,
The brands out of the burning caught,
 And quenched a nation in thy blood!

Hymn 10.

- 1 Most righteous God of boundless power,
 Thy works of judgment and of grace
With awe and wonder we adore,
 Redeemed, but trembling while we praise:
Thy patience and long-suffering love
 Hath granted us a fresh reprieve:

Thy goodness, not thy wrath, we prove,
And unconsumed in Sodom live.

- 2 Hadst thou not left thyself a seed,
We all had now as Sodom been,
And felt the punishment decreed,
And justly perished in our sin;
Our cities had in heaps become
Sad mon'uments of thy righteous ire,
And every soul received its doom
The vengeance of eternal fire.
- 3 But rich in grace, thou hast not yet,
Abandoned us to Satan's power,
Or suffered the wide gaping pit
Our sinful nation to devour:
Our lives are giv'n us for a prey;
Yet O, with conscious hearts we feel
Thine anger is not turned away,
Thy dreadful arm is stretched out still!
- 4 The people still to evil sold
Fear not thy utmost wrath to meet,
While treason, and rebellion bold
Lift up their voice in every street:
Quelled for a season and repressed,
But not extirpated, they strive
To rouse the many-headed beast,
And all the work of hell revive.
- 5 America her felons pours,
Her savages, a chosen band,
Assassins, skilled at midnight hours,
To spread destruction through the land,
Deeds which humanity disowns,
To perpetrate,⁵ the villains come,

⁵Ori., "perpetuate"; almost certainly a misprint, as it does not fit the metre.

And Britain's most apostate sons
Conspire to seal their country's doom.

- 6 Wherefore should we be stricken more,
When all thy strokes our guilt increase?
O that the evil day were o'er!
O that our sins and plagues might cease!
Vanquished by thy own people's prayer,
Who day and night for mercy sue,
Spare the devoted nation, spare,
And give the many to the few.
- 7 The people of thy wrath abase,
The proud metropolis confound,
A murmuring, vile, rebellious race,
Where Satan's darkest works abound;
Where emulous of blackest times,
They glory in the martyr's blood,
Accumulate their foulest crimes,
And crown them with INGRATITUDE.
- 8 Jesus, our injured king incline
His foes to pity and forgive,
And turn their hearts by grace divine,
And bid them for thy glory live:
Obedient to their king and thee,
Let all the loyal nation bow:
And tell our hearts the thing shall be,
And seal it on our conscience now!

Hymn 11.

- 1 God of love, thy gracious token,
We with thankful hearts receive,
Thou the fowler's snare hast broken,
Saved from death by thee we live.

Hitherto thou hast defended
Us who on thy love are cast,
Keep, till all the storm is ended,
All the hour of darkness past.

2 Still beset with various evils,
Secret foes implacable,
Brethren false, and human devils,
We beneath thy shadow dwell;
Place on thee our whole reliance,
Every other help disclaim,
Bid our enemies defiance,
From the tower of Jesus' name.

3 In each hellish insurrection
Thou shalt still thy people hide,
Safe in the divine protection
All thy faithful ones abide:
Here we find thy presence cheering,
Happy in beholding thee;
Happier at thy last appearing,
Glorious as the God we SEE!

Hymn 12.
For the Magistrates.

1 Thou, Lord of lords, and King of kings,
Th' eternal potentate we own;
From thee its source dominion springs
A stream that issues from thy throne:
Thou hast ordained the powers that be,
Who govern by a grant from thee.

2 The man who o'er Britannia reigns
As thy vicegerent we receive;

Thy providence his right maintains,
And bids him for his people live,
And bless us by his gentle sway,
And teach our hearts with joy t' obey.

- 3 To George in majesty supreme
We bow, as sitting on thy seat,
To every ruler sent by him,
To every magistrate submit,
Whose delegated power is thine,
Whose whole authority, divine.
- 4 Strengthen their hands, Almighty Lord,
Their sacred office to fulfil,
And let them use thy vengeful sword
On those who daringly do ill,
Haters of government and peace,
Workers of all unrighteousness.
- 5 With terror arm, and virtuous zeal,
Against our king's and country's foes
Impartial punishments to deal,
Our desp'rate, sworn, intestine foes,
Assassins from the land to chase,
And root out all th' accursed race.
- 6 Thy ministers to us for good,
Long may they in thy service live,
By special grace on all bestowed,
Our nation's dignity retrieve,
Our past prosperity restore,
And peace, till time shall be no more.

Hymn 13.
Thanksgiving.

- 1 All glory to God!
Plucked out of the flame,
We publish abroad
His wonderful name,
With glad exultation
And heartiest praise,
Ascribing salvation
To Jesus's grace.

- 2 When devils and men
Against us arose,
And traitors unseen,
And legions of foes
Together conspired
The state to o'erturn,
And profligates hired
Our cities to burn;

- 3 Thou wouldst not restrain
The wicked from sin,
But slack'ning their chain,
Didst let them begin:
Beyond thy permission
Our land to o'erthrow,
The sons of perdition
No farther could go.

- 4 The remnant that prayed
Thou could'st not disown:
They brought to our aid
Omnipotence down:
Omnipotence hasted
Our foes to expel,

And suddenly blasted
The project of hell.

5 The tumult so loud
No farther proceeds,
No longer the crowd
Ride over our heads,
The ravaging fires
Are quenched by thy word,
Rebellion expires,
And peace is restored.

6 Through mercy set free,
The grace we receive,
And ransomed by thee
Thy servants we live,
Thy power to deliver,
Thy love we proclaim,
And triumph forever
In Jesus his name.