Editorial Introduction:

This is the first major published example of Charles Wesley’s propensity for versifying scripture. Charles issued it in his own name as a pamphlet on May 24, 1740, and the ledger of his printer (William Strahan) suggests that it was reprinted on June 2 on that year. John Wesley then incorporated the hymn into *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1740), which appeared in July.

The issues of the “quietism” controversy between the Wesley brothers and the English Moravians can also be discerned in this work; cf. the introduction to *Means of Grace* (1740).

Editions:

THE
LIFE OF
FAITH.

Exemplified in the Eleventh Chapter
of St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews.

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Verse I.

1 Author of faith, eternal word,
   Whose Spirit breathes the active flame,
   Faith, like its Finisher and Lord,
   To day, as yesterday the same;

2 To thee our humble hearts aspire,
   And ask the gift unspeakable:
   Increase in us the kindled fire,
   In us the work of faith fulfil.

3 By faith we know thee strong to save,
   (Save us, a present Saviour thou!)
   Whate’er we hope, by faith we have,
   Future and past subsisting now.

4 To him that in thy name believes,
   Eternal life with thee is given,
   Into himself he all receives,
   Pardon, and happiness, and heaven.
The things unknown to feeble sense,
Unseen by reason’s glimm’ring ray,
With strong, commanding evidence
Their heavenly origine display.

Faith lends its realizing light,
The clouds disperse, the shadows fly,
Th’ invisible appears in sight,
And God is seen by mortal eye.

**Verses II, III.**

1 By faith the holy men of old
   Obtain’d a never-dying name,
The sacred leaves their praise unfold,
   And God himself records their fame.

2 Thro’ faith we know the worlds were made,
   By his great word to being brought:
He spake: the earth and heaven obey’d;
   The universe sprang forth from nought.

3 The heavens thy glorious power proclaim,
   If thou in us thy power declare;
We know from whom the fabrick came,
   Our heart believes, when God is there.

4 Thee thro’ thy self we understand,
   When thou in us thyself hast shown,
We see thy all creating hand,
   We feel a God thro’ faith alone.

**Verse IV.**

1 Believing in the woman’s seed,
   And justified by faith alone,
Abel a nobler offering made,
   And God vouchsaf’d his gifts to own.
2 Witness divine he thus obtain’d,
The gift of righteousness receiv’d;
And now he wears the crown he gain’d,
And sees the Christ he once believ’d.

3 Still by his faith he speaks tho’ dead,
He calls us to the living way:
We hear; and in his footsteps tread:
We first believe, and then obey.

**Verses V, VI.**

1 Exempted from the general doom,
The death which all are born to know,
Enoch obtain’d his heavenly home
By faith, and disappear’d below.

2 From earth unpainfully releas’d,
Translated to the realms of light,
He found the God by faith he pleas’d,
His faith was sweetly lost in sight.

3 God without faith we cannot please:
For all, who unto God would come,
Must *feelingly* believe he is,
And gives to all their righteous doom.

4 We *feelingly* believe thou art:
Behold we ever seek thee, Lord,
With all our mind, with all our heart,
And find thee now our great reward.

**Verse VII.**

1 Divinely warn’d of judgments near,
Noah believ’d a threatening God,
With humble faith, and holy fear
He built the ark, and ’scap’d the flood.

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2Ori., “threatening”, a misprint; corrected in 2nd edn. (1743) of *HSP* (1740).
2 He (while the world that disbeliev’d,  
    The careless world of sinners died,)
The righteousness of faith receiv’d:  
    Noah by faith was justified.

3 We too by faith the world condemn,  
    Of righteousness divine possest,  
Escape the wrath that covers them,  
    Safe in the ark of Jesu’s breast.

**Verses VIII, IX, X.**

1 Obedient to his God’s command,  
    And influenc’d by faith alone,  
Abraham left his native land,  
    Went out, and sought a place unknown.

2 A place he should possess at last,  
    When twice two’ hundred years were o’er,  
Upon the word himself he cast,  
    He follow’d God, and ask’d no more.

3 As in a strange, tho’ promis’d, land,  
    (A land his distant heirs receiv’d,)  
He, and his sons in tents remain’d;  
    He knew on whom he had believ’d.

4 A better heritage he sought,  
    A city built by God on high,  
Thither he rais’d his tow’ring thought,  
    He fix’d on heaven his stedfast eye.

5 Whose firm foundations never move,  
    Jerusalem was all his care,  
The New Jerusalem above;  
    His treasure, and his heart was there.

6 And shall not we the call obey,  
    And haste where God commands, to go?  
Despise these tenements of clay,  
    These dreams of happiness below?

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"Twice two" changed to “full four” in *HSP* (1740).
7 Yes Lord; we hearken to thy call,  
As sojourners o’er earth we rove,  
We have for thee forsaken all,  
And seek the heaven of perfect love.

**Verses XI, XII.**

1 By faith, the handmaid of the Lord,  
   Sarah, receiv’d a power unknown,  
She judg’d him faithful to his word;  
   Barren and old she bore a son.

2 Nature had lost its genial power,  
   And Abraham was old in vain:  
Impossibilities are o’er,  
   If faith assent, and God ordain.

3 He glorified Jehovah’s name;  
   (God spake the word, it must be done)  
Father of nations he became,  
   And multitudes sprang forth from one.

4 From one old man the race did rise,  
   A barren womb the myriads bore,  
Countless, as stars that deck the skies,  
   As sands that crown the ocean shore.

**Verses XIII, XIV, XV, XVI.**

1 The worthies these of ancient days,  
   By faith they lived, in faith they died:  
Not yet receiv’d the promis’d grace,  
   But darkly from afar descri’d.

2 Assur’d the Saviour should appear,  
   And confident in Christ to come,  
Him they embrac’d, tho’ distant near,  
   And languish’d for their heavenly home.
3 Pilgrims they here themselves confess'd,
   Who no abiding-place must know,
Strangers on earth they could not rest,
   Or find their happiness below.

4 Regardless of the things behind,
   The earthly home from whence they came,
A better land they long'd to find,
   A promis'd heaven was all their aim.

5 Their faith the gracious Father sees,
   And kindly for his children cares,
He condescends to call them his,
   And suffers them to call him theirs,

6 For them his heaven he hath prepar'd,
   His New Jerusalem above,
And love is there their great reward,
   A whole eternity of love.

**Verses XVII, XVIII, XIX.**

1 Abraham, when severely tried,
   His faith by his obedience shew'd;
He with the harsh command complied,
   And gave his Isaac back to God.

2 His son the father offer'd up,
   Son of his age, his only son,
Object of all his joy and hope,
   And less belov'd than God alone.

3 His seed elect, his heir foretold,
   Of whom the promis'd Christ should rise,
He could not from his God with-hold
   That best, that costliest sacrifice.

4 The father curb'd his swelling grief,
   'Twas God requir'd, it must be done;
He stagger'd not thro' unbelief,
   He bar'd his arm to slay his son.
5 He rested in Jehovah’s power,  
The word must stand which God hath said,  
He knew th’ Almighty could restore,  
Could raise his Isaac from the dead.

6 He knew in whom he had believ’d,  
And, trusting in omnipotence,  
His son as from the dead receiv’d,  
His stedfast faith receiv’d him thence.

7 O for a faith like his, that we  
The bright example may pursue,  
May gladly give up all to thee,  
To whom our more than all is due!

8 Now, Lord, for thee our all we leave,  
Our willing soul thy call obeys,  
Pleasure, and wealth, and fame we give,  
Freedom, and life, to win thy grace.

9 Is there a thing than life more dear,  
A thing from which we cannot part?—  
We can—we now rejoice to tear  
The idol from our bleeding heart.

10 Jesu accept our sacrifice,  
All things for thee we count but loss,  
Lo! At thy word our Isaac dies,  
Dies on the altar of thy cross.

11 Now to thyself the victim take,  
Nature’s last agony is o’er,  
Freely thine own we render back,  
We grieve to part with all no more.

12 For what to thee, O Lord, we give,  
An hundred fold we here obtain,  
And soon with thee shall all receive,  
And loss shall be eternal gain.
Verses XX, XXI, XXII.

1 Isaac by faith declar’d his race
   In Jacob and in Esau blest,
The younger by peculiar grace
   A nobler heritage possess’d.

2 By faith expiring Jacob knew
   Distinguish’d mercies to pronounce,
   His hands found out the happy two,
   And bless’d his fav’rite Joseph’s sons.

3 He rais’d himself upon the bed,
   Prop’d on a staff he own’d his Lord,
The patriarch bow’d his hoary head,
   His body with his soul ador’d.

4 Joseph by faith the flight foretold
   Of Israel’s afflicted race;
   God their hard bondage should behold,
   And lead them to the promis’d place.

5 Thither he will’d his bones to go,
   And take possession in their stead;
   His bones the promis’d land shall shew,
   He claims his Canaan, tho’ dead.

Verses XXIII, XXIV, XXV, XXVI, XXVII, XXVIII.

1 Moses by faith from death was sav’d,
   While heedless of the tyrant’s will,
   His parents in their God believ’d,
   And dar’d the lovely babe conceal.

2 By faith, when now to manhood grown,
   A just contempt of earth he shew’d,
   Refus’d a prince’s name to own,
   And sought but to be great in God.
3 In vain its pomps ambition spreads,  
    Glory in vain displays her charms,  
    A brighter crown its lustre sheds,  
    A purer flame his bosom warms.

4 Wisely he chose the better part,  
    Suff'ring with God's elect to share,  
    To pleasures vain he steel'd his heart,  
    No room for them when God is there.

5 Fleeting he deem'd them all, and vain,  
    His heart on heavenly joys bestow'd,  
    Partaker of his people's pain,  
    Th' afflicted people of his God.

6 Egypt unfolds her golden blaze,  
    Yet all for Christ he counts but loss;  
    A richer treasure he surveys,  
    His Lord's anticipated cross.

7 He triumph'd in his glorious shame,  
    On pleasure, fame, and wealth look'd down,  
    'Twas heaven at which his wishes aim'd,  
    Aspiring to a starry crown.

8 By faith he left th' oppressive land,  
    And scorn'd the petty rage of kings,  
    Supported by Jehovah's hand,  
    And shadow'd by Jehovah's wings.

9 His steady way he still pursu'd,  
    Nor hopes nor fears retard his pace,  
    Th' Invisible before him stood,  
    And faith unveil'd the Saviour's face.

10 By faith he slew the typick lamb,  
    And kept the Passover of God:  
    He knew from whom its virtue came,  
    The saving power of sprinkled blood.
11 With all the servants of his Lord,
   He (while the first-born victims died)
Dar’d the destroying angel’s sword,
   And, arm’d with blood, its point defied!

**Verse XXIX.**

1 While thro’ the sea by faith they past,
   The sea retir’d at God’s command,
The waves shrink back with trembling haste,
   The waves a chrysal barrier stand.

2 Th’ Egyptians daring to pursue,
   With horror found a wat’ry grave,
Too late their want of faith they knew,
   And sunk beneath th’ o’erwhelming wave.

**Verses XXX, XXXI, XXXII, XXXIII, XXXIV, XXXV.**

1 By faith, while Israel’s host surrounds
   Proud Jericho’s devoted walls,
The ark stands still, the trumpet sounds,
   The people shouts, the city falls.

2 Rahab by faith deliv’rance found,
   Nor perish’d with th’ accursed race,
The harlot for her faith renown’d,
   Amongst the worthies takes her place.

3 Worthies, who all recorded stand,
   And shine in everlasting lays;
And justly now they each demand
   The tribute of distincter praise.

4 Gideon, and Barak claim the song,
   And David good, and Samuel wise,
And Jephtha bold, and Samson strong,
   And all the ancient prophets rise!
5 The battles of the Lord they fought  
   Thro’ faith, and mighty states subdu’d,  
   And works of righteousness they wrought,  
   And prov’d the faithfulness of God.

6 They stop’d the lions’ mouths, the rage  
   Of fire they quench’d, escap’d the sword,  
   The weak grew strong, and bold t’ engage,  
   And chase the hosts that dar’d their Lord.

7 Women their quicken’d dead receiv’d,  
   Women the power of faith display’d,  
   With stedfast confidence believ’d,  
   Believ’d their children from the dead.

Verses XXXV, XXXVI, XXXVII.

1 Others, as in a furnace try’d,  
   With strength of passive grace endu’d,  
   Tortures, and deaths thro’ faith defy’d,  
   Thro’ faith resisted unto blood.

2 Earth they beheld with gen’rous scorn,  
   On all its proffer’d goods look’d down,  
   High on a fiery chariot borne,  
   They lost their life to keep their crown.

3 Secure a better life to find,  
   The path of varied death they trod,  
   Their souls triumphantly resign’d,  
   And died into the arms of God.

4 The prelude of contempt they found,  
   A spectacle to fiends and men;  
   Cruelly mock’d, and scourg’d, and bound,  
   ’Till death shut up the bloody scene.

5 Or stoned, they glorified their Lord,  
   Or joy’d, asunder sawn, t’ expire,  
   Or rush’d to meet the slaught’ring sword,  
   Or triumph’d in the tort’ring fire.
Verses XXXVII, XXXVIII.

1 Naked, or in rough goatskins clad,
   In every place they long confess’d
The God, for whom o’er earth they stray’d
   Tormented, destitute, distress’d.

2 Of whom the world unworthy was,
   Whom only God their Maker knew,
The world they punish’d with their loss,
   The holy anchorites withdrew.

3 Lone unfrequented wilds they trod,
   O’er mountain-tops the wanderers ran,
With milder beasts in dens abode,
   And shun’d the haunts of savage man.

Verses XXXIX, XL.

1 Famed for their faith all these believ’d,
   By justifying faith made whole:
Nor yet the promis’d grace receiv’d,
   The Christ, the fulness in their soul.

2 A better gift he us provides,
   On whom the gospel-times are come;
And lo! The Holy Ghost \textit{abides}
   In us, and makes our hearts his home.

3 We now our elder brethren meet,
   Their faith, and happiness improve,
And soon with them shall shine compleat
   In Christ, and perfected in love.