

Hymns in *Word in Season* (1745)¹

[cf. Baker list, #109]

Modernized text

Editorial Introduction:

In July 1745 Charles Edward Stuart (grandson of James II) landed in Scotland with a few of his supporters, proclaimed his father as king of both Scotland and England, and was able to draw on strong Jacobite sympathies there to defeat the small military contingent led by General John Cope at the battle of Prestonpans on September 21. John Wesley was at Newcastle upon Tyne at the time and his *Journal* entries capture well the sense of danger that was in the air. Stuart intended to invade England, and would indeed turn his troops southward in December (though he was defeated soundly in April 1746).

In the midst of these tensions John Wesley records in his *Journal* on October 14 writing a short tract titled *A Word in Season; or, Advice to an Englishman*. The central concern of the tract was to call English citizens to repentance and righteous living, contending that God was allowing the potential of Protestant England being conquered by the invading Roman Catholic troops because of the sinfulness of the general population. It is unclear whether John sent the manuscript to London by mail, or waited to have it printed when he returned to London in mid-November. In any case, *Word in Season* was in print in time to distribute it in the streets of London on December 18, a day set aside by King George II for national repentance. The tract had also been printed and distributed in Bristol about that time, because the *Bristol Journal* records that one of the hymns appended to the tract was sung at the Wesley's preaching room in the Horsefair in late December.

Two hymns were appended to *Word in Season*. There is no indication of authorship for either. John often included hymns by Charles in his tracts without indicating source. In most cases we can establish Charles's role, because he republished in *HSP* (1749) several hymns that appeared first appended to one of John's tracts. This may make it significant that Charles did NOT include these two hymns in *HSP* (1749). It is also striking how closely the hymns echo the themes of the tract. The possibility must be considered that these two hymns were written by John rather than Charles.

Editions:

[Charles Wesley??]. "A Hymn" and "For His Majesty King George." In John Wesley's *A Word in Season; or, Advice to an Englishman*. [London: Strahan, 1745.] [no copies extant]

2nd [London: Strahan, 1745.] [no copies extant]

3rd [Bristol: Farley, 1745.] [text below from this edition]

4th [Bristol: Farley, 1745.]

5th [Bristol: Farley, 1745.]

6th [no known copies or details]

7th [London: Strahan, 1745.]

8th London: Strahan, 1745.

[Newcastle: Gooding, nd.]

London, 1755.

London, 1756.

Included in *Works* (Bristol: Pine, 1772), vol. 9 [hymns on pp. 16–18].

¹This document was produced by the Duke Center for Studies in the Wesleyan Tradition under editorial direction of Randy L. Maddox, with the diligent assistance of Aileen F. Maddox. Last updated: Feb. 20, 2008.

An Hymn.

- [1] Regard, thou righteous God, and true,
 Regard thy weeping people's prayer,
Before the sword our land go through,
 Before thy latest plague we bear,
Let all to thee their smiter turn,
Let all beneath thine anger mourn.
- [2] The sword, which first bereaved abroad,
 We now within *our* borders see:
We see, but slight thy nearer rod,
 So oft so kindly warned by thee:
We still thy warning love despise,
And dare thine utmost wrath to rise.
- [3] Yet for the faithful remnant's sake
 Thine utmost wrath a while defer,
If haply we at last may wake,
 And trembling at destruction near
The *cause* of all our evils *own*,
And leave the sins for which we groan.
- [4] Or if the wicked will not mourn,
 And 'scape the long-suspended blow,
Yet shall it to thy glory turn,
 Yet shall they all thy patience know,
Thy slighted love and mercy clear,
And vindicate thy justice here.

For His Majesty King George.²

[1] Immortal King of kings,
Whose favour or whose frown
Monarchs and states to honour brings,
Or turns them upside down;

To thee in danger's hour
We for our sovereign cry,
Protect him by thy gracious power,
And set him up on high.

[2] Not by a mighty host
Can he delivered be;
Let others in their numbers trust,
We look, O Lord, to thee:

Help to thy servant send,
And strengthen from above,
And still thy minister defend
By thine almighty love.

[3] The Spirit of thy grace,
Thy heavenly unction shed,
And hosts of guardian angels place
Around his sacred head:

Confound whoe'er oppose,
Or force them to retire;
Be thou a tower against his foes,
Be thou a wall of fire.

²This hymn was printed in the *Bristol Journal* (December 28, 1745), described "As Sung at Mr. Wesley's Room in the Horsefair, Bristol."

[4] O bring him out of all
His *sanctified* distress,
And by his name thy servant call,
And fill him with thy peace:

Show him, Almighty Lord,
That thou *his* Saviour art,
And speak the soul-converting word
“My son, give me thy heart!”