

*Hymns for the National Fast (1782)*¹

[Baker list, #424]

Editorial Introduction:

On October 19, 1781, the American and French forces successfully forced the surrender of General Cornwallis at Yorktown, in the Battle of the Chesapeake. While formal peace was still over a year away, this decisive victory marked the end of a major British land force in North America. As news of the defeat reached England, George III progressively lost control of Parliament. In an attempt to rally support, on January 20, 1782, George called for a public fast to be observed on February 8, to beseech God to bless the British land and sea forces in the ongoing battle with the colonies. Charles Wesley quickly pulled together this collection of fifteen hymns for the occasion.

After appearing in its own right, this collection was appended to *Hymns for the Nation* (1781). This larger collection was then issued in an abridged form, omitting seven hymns.

Editions:

[Charles Wesley.] *Hymns for the National Fast, Feb. 8, 1782*. London: Paramore, [1782].

Hymns for the Nation in 1782, in Two Parts. London: Paramore [1782?] .

(incorporated as hymns 18–32)

Hymns for the Nation in 1782. London: Paramore [1782?].

(combined edition omitting hymns 2, 3, 8, 12, 16, 21 & 22)

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**HYMNS
FOR THE
NATIONAL FAST,
FEB[RUARY] 8, 1782.**

Hymn 1.

- 1 Let every prophet cry aloud,
Lift up the voice, the trumpet blow,
Show their transgression to the crowd,
The nation's sin to Britons show,
That sin which marks the worst of times,
Which heaven with most displeasure sees,
Which fills the measure of our crimes,
Profane, extreme UNGODLINESS!

- 2 Through every rank and order spread:
The poor and rich, the low and high,
Alike disdain their God to dread,
And him throughout their lives deny:
His laws, through ignorance of him,
His providence they dare disown,
Neglect, despise, insult, blaspheme,
And all defy the God unknown.

- 3 Their oaths have caused the land to mourn,
The land to its foundations shook,
And still the profligates foresworn
Are blind to the impending stroke:
His outstretched arm they will not see,
His thunder's voice they will not hear,
But mock at their calamity,
And triumph in destruction near.
- 4 God is not in their thoughts, or ways;
As atheists in the world they live,
A cursing, curst, abandoned race,
To Satan's will themselves they give,
Daily devote themselves to hell;
And when they in their sins expire,
Convinced, alas, too late, they feel
The real, true, eternal fire.
- 5 The pit of bottomless despair
Hath oped its mouth to take them in:
Yet still our nation doth not bear
The utmost penalty of sin:
Some unknown friend before the throne
To God the just for mercy prays,
And will not let his wrath alone,
To swallow up our impious race.
- 6 A few at this tremendous hour,
Whose faithful prayer doth heaven assail,
One with their head, exert their power,
And wrestling on with God prevail:
Their prayer a longer space supplies,
Their prayer hath power with God, we know,
Who are not lifting up our eyes
With fiends and infidels below.
- 7 God of all grace and patience, hear
The prayer presented through thy Son,
Who doth our Advocate appear,
Who made our every sin his own:

Justice and us he stands between;
His blood hath quenched the wrath of heaven,
His blood—which cleanses from all sin,
And speaks a guilty world forgiven.

Hymn 2.

- 1 God of tremendous power,
Our evils we confess,
And prostrate in the dust, adore
Thy sov'reign righteousness,
Which cuts our Israel short,
Which lays our nation low,
And gives us up the scorn and sport
Of every taunting foe.
- 2 Stricken so oft, we mourn,
But fear to ask thy aid,
By vile, intestine vipers torn,
By faithless friends betrayed,
By factions fierce and bold,
Rebellion's sworn allies,
Traitors, who have their country sold,
And on its ruins rise.
- 3 'Gainst our anointed Lord
The parricides conspire,
With lies and calumnies abhorred
Th' unthinking people fire,
From all restraint set free,
Fit instruments of ill,
And mad with rage of liberty
To do whate'er they will.
- 4 Of sense thou dost bereave
The slaves of every vice,
And to our own confusions leave,
And sin by sin chastise;

While from one wickedness
We to another fall,
Till the dark, bottomless abyss
Yawns, and receives us all.

5 Alas, what shall we do,
 T' escape our instant doom?
If thou art just, if thou art true,
 The threatened curse *must* come;
 On such a land as this
 Thy soul must vengeance take,
Nor can thy plagues and judgments cease,
 Till we our sins forsake.

6 O were the work begun,
 O were our hearts inclined
The dire destroyer's paths to shun,
 The way of peace to find!
 Casting our sins away,
 Might all our nation grieve,
Today, while it is called today,
 Return, repent, and live!

7 Father, if still we have
 An Advocate with thee,
Who can ev'n to the utmost save
 From sin and misery,
 Let justice strike, or spare,
 We leave it to thy Son,
And only offer up *his* prayer,
 Father, thy will be done!

Hymn 3.

1 Thou awful God of righteousness,
 Whose heavy chastisements we bear,
We mournfully our sins confess,
 Which would not suffer thee to spare,
But urged the ling'ring ruin on,
And forced thy heaviest judgments down.

- 2 Year after year, thy patient grace
Hath waited our return to thee,
With mercies bless'd a thankless race,
With wide-extended victory,
And forced the nations to submit,
And bruised our foes beneath our feet.
- 3 But drunk with insolence of power,
And surfeited with every good,
We thought not in our prosperous hour,
How soon thou could'st abase the proud,
The victors crush, the vanquished raise,
And crown our en'mies with success.
- 4 Therefore a sad reverse we find,
So suddenly of late brought low,
Scourged by the basest of mankind,
Who aimed by one destructive blow
Our plundered cities to consume,
And seal a sinful nation's doom.
- 5 Therefore the sword abroad bereaves,
And thousands and ten thousands fall;
America the yoke receives
Of rebels, and perfidious Gaul;
We weep our friends in pieces torn,
And the dismembered empire mourn.
- 6 Thou hast an evil spirit sent,
Brethren from brethren to divide,
Our land is into parties rent,
And discord storms on every side,
And Britain's sons, her curse and shame,
Throw oil on the outrageous flame.
- 7 Britain thou hast to traitors sold,
To faction's and rebellion's friends,
Who having quenched their thirst of gold,
And served their own flagitious ends,
For shelter to a party fly,
And laws, and king, and God defy.

- 8 Wild, independent anarchy,
Sad presage of a nation's fall,
And every order and degree
Corrupt, profane, for vengeance call,
The noble and ignoble crowd,
Whose lives declare There is no God.
- 9 Yet hast thou, Lord, a remnant still,
Who for their guilty brethren plead,
And wait the counsels of thy will,
Th' event by sov'reign love decreed,
Whether thou wilt no longer spare,
Or give us to thy people's prayer.
- 10 Father of everlasting love,
In Jesu's name and Spirit we cry,
Thy judgments with their cause remove,
Who wouldst not have one sinner die,
Millions in Christ accepted see,
And bid us live, restored, to thee.

Hymn 4.
Habbakuk 1.

- 1 How long, to thee, O God, shall I
Of violence and oppression cry,
And thou refuse to hear?
Fresh scenes of wickedness I see,
Of bloody strife and cruelty,
But no deliverance near.
- 2 Why dost thou to thy servants show
Spoiling, and waste, and grievous woe,
Which force me to complain:
Tyrants and demagogues arise,
Where'er I turn my blasted eyes,
And fill my heart with pain.

- 3 The silent laws have lost their force,
Where rebels armed obstruct their course,
And grasp at sov' reign power,
Their law their own despotic will,
Their whole delight to slay and kill,
To murder and devour.
- 4 Suffered by thee, their swift allies,
Whom treach'rous Babylon supplies,
To their assistance haste,
March through a land that is not theirs,
Impatient to demand their shares,
And seize the whole at last.
- 5 As hungry wolves, they come from far,
With violent rage to rend, and tear
America oppressed,
As eagles to the carcass fly,
And enemies and friends must die,
To furnish out the feast.
- 6 O Lord, my God, my holy one,
High on thine everlasting throne,
Whom Britain's crimes offend,
Thou wilt not give our nation up
To the destroyer's will, but hope
And peace is in our end.
- 7 More righteous than ourselves are they
Who scourge us in our evil day?
Or dost thou choose the worst,
Thy wrath vindictive to reveal,
Thy lighter chastisements to deal,
And punish us the first?
- 8 Thy purer eyes abhor to see,
Or look upon iniquity,
Nor wilt thou always bear
With treach'rous and blood thirsty men,
Who have their juster brethren slain,
And all thy judgments dare.

- 9 Fishers of men, by Satan sent,
They hunt them through the continent,
And catch them in their toils,
As reptiles vile they tread them down,
And then proclaim their own renown,
And glory in their wiles.
- 10 But soon their evil day shall come,
And thou, the righteous God, consume
The weapons of thine ire:
Yet merciful when once severe,
O let them have their chast'ning here,
And 'scape th' eternal fire!

Hymn 5.

- 1 Happy, forever happy they,
Taken from the evil day,
Who will not live to see
Their country wasted and o'erthrown,
Or swell the sympathizing groan
At Britain's misery.
- 2 The great vindictive day's begun,
God's destructive work we own,
Which general horror spreads;
His thunders roar, his lightnings shine,
And vials big with wrath divine
Are bursting on our heads.
- 3 But while the showers of vengeance come,
May not prayer prevent our doom,
And save us from the fire?
Have we no part in Abraham's God?
Or is it not in Jesu's blood
To quench thy flaming ire?
- 4 With the flagitious multitude
Wilt thou slay the just and good,

In whom thou dost delight,
The men who tremble at thy word?
Or shall not the great judge and Lord
Of all the earth do right?

5 Wouldst thou for fifty righteous men,
Wouldst thou for the sake of ten
Have spared the wicked place?
And wilt thou not ten thousand hear,
Who ceaseless advocates appear
For our abandoned race?

6 Ten thousand now unite their cries
Mingled with that sacrifice
Which did for all atone;
Thy church, in one request agreed,
For mercy ask, and only plead
The death of Abraham's Son.

7 The Son of Abraham, and thine,
Just with righteousness divine,
Doth in his members pray:
Our powerful Advocate and head,
He ever lives to intercede,
And turn thy wrath away.

8 Thou always hear'st thy favourite Son:
Make in him thy mercy known,
That all again may see
Britannia plucked out of the flame,
And glorify our Saviour's name,
Forever one with thee.

Hymn 6.
Mal[achi] 4:1.

1 O Lord of hosts, to whom are known
Thy works of judgment and of grace,
If thy great day is now begun,
And doth as a fierce furnace blaze,
The sons of pride shall be cast in,
And all the hardened slaves of sin.

- 2 Exposed to thy vindictive ire
The workers of iniquity,
As fuel for the quenchless fire,
As stubble, all burnt up shall be,
(So doth thy righteous will ordain)
And neither root nor branch remain.
- 3 But we who truly fear thy name,
And languish to attain thy love,
May we not now thy promise claim,
The light to bless us from above,
The Sun of righteousness to rise,
The glory both of earth and skies.
- 4 O Sun of righteousness, appear,
Appear with healing in thy wings,
With grace which doth the mourners cheer,
Which pardon and salvation brings;
Which strong immortal health imparts,
And fills with love the fearful hearts.
- 5 Then shall we all go forth in peace,
And up to full perfection grow,
And strong in finished holiness
Trample on our infernal foe,
Till called the Saviour's throne to share,
We mount, and reign forever there!

Hymn 7.

- 1 Righteous, O Lord, thy judgments are,
Yet let us plead with thee,
Thy mercies manifold declare,
To stop thy stern decree;
Before the word bring forth the woe,
And thy uplifted hand
By sword and pestilence o'erthrow
Our execrated land.
- 2 If fully purposed to destroy
Thou art in vengeance come,
Why dost thou instruments employ
To bring thy wand'ers home?

Why doth thy grace its work revive,
Converting us from sin?
And still we find thy Spirit strive
Our worthless hearts to win.

- 3 Thy messengers run to and fro,
Believers are increased,
And thousands their Redeemer know,
With life eternal bless'd;
Lost sheep for half a century
Have flocked into thy fold;
And more are daily called by thee,
And in thy book enrolled.
- 4 But didst thou, Lord, thy kingdom send,
Thy kingdom to remove,
To make of sinners a full end
Excluded from thy love?
Corrected, and chastised, we trust,
Thou wilt not give us o'er,
But spare the wicked for the just,
And curse our land no more.
- 5 Out of the deep thy call we wait
To bid our nation rise,
Aspiring to our first estate,
And by affliction wise;
That following after righteousness,
We may thy grace retrieve,
Repent, believe, and go in peace,
And for thy glory live.
- 6 For this ten thousand faithful souls
Are weeping round thy throne,
And while thy angry thunder rolls,
They in thy Spirit groan:
We join the heaven-invading cry,
And mercy, mercy claim,
O let thy bowels, Lord, reply:
We ask in Jesu's name!

Hymn 8.

- 1 How happy, Lord, are we
 Who have a part in thee!
Following after righteousness,
 Hidden in thine anger's day,
We enjoy an heart-felt peace,
 Peace which none can take away.
- 2 When plagues the land o'erflow,
 We share the common woe:
But our patriotic love
 Is not selfish, or confined,
But our yearning bowels move
 Tow'rd the whole afflicted kind.
- 3 With every sufferer
 We drop the generous tear,
(Whom thy tendering Spirit leads)
 Pity no distinction knows,
Love for all the wounded bleeds,
 Love embraces friends and foes.
- 4 Yet though for all we feel,
 Our souls are happy still:
Soft, compassionate distress
 On a wretched world bestowed,
Cannot violate our peace,
 Cannot shake our trust in God.
- 5 With deepest sympathy,
 Saviour, we cry to thee:
Listening to thy chosen race,
 Come, thou universal friend,
Shorten these vindictive days,
 Bring the joy which ne'er shall end.
- 6 Ev'n now with eagle's eye
 We see thee in the sky;

Soon with eagle's wings we soar,
Our descending Lord to meet:
Then the cup of bliss runs o'er,
Then the rapture is complete!

Hymn 9.

- 1 Who on the Lord most high
 With humbly fervent zeal,
 With loving faith rely,
 And in his presence dwell,
In dangers safe and undismayed,
We rest beneath th' almighty shade.

- 2 The ill we cannot fear,
 Which worldly souls alarms,
 Or shrink appalled to hear
 Of nations up in arms,
Assured, if empires are o'erthrown,
The Lord is King, and reigns alone.

- 3 His wise, permissive will
 In all events we see,
 Who orders good and ill
 T' accomplish his decree;
Who kindly for his people cares,
And counts, and keeps their precious hairs.

- 4 O that the world might feel
 What none can comprehend,
 The joy unspeakable,
 The peace which ne'er shall end,
The happiness his people prove,
Who trust in their Redeemer's love!

- 5 Then would their vain concern
 For earthly toys be o'er,
 The nations then would learn
 Pernicious war no more,

But bless the mild Immanuel's sway,
And count it heav'n on earth t' obey.

6 Come, O thou common Lord,
 Thou universal King,
 In every soul restored
 Thy peaceful kingdom bring,
The forces of the sea receive,
And bid the heathen world believe.

7 Hasten the promised hour
 Of monarchy divine,
 And exercise thy power
 Through endless ages thine,
Again thine ancient Israel call,
And change their hearts, and save them all.

8 Not one of Adam's race
 Shall then unsaved be found,
 But peace and righteousness
 Throughout the earth abound,
The thrones shall to thy saints be given,
And the new earth be turned to heaven.

Hymn 10.

1 Can the disciples of our Lord
 With unconcern their country see
Destroyed by parricides abhorred,
 And not complain, O God, to thee?
The little flock, the pious few,
 Whose number *we* aspire t' increase,
When sinners reign, what can we do,
 But pray against their wickedness?

2 Snatched from the flames by grace divine,
 We see the dire assassin-band
Pursuing still their curst design,
 To spread confusion through the land,

In league with our inveterate foe,
Indignant Britons to enthrall,
And gainers by the public woe
To triumph in their country's fall.

3 The factious enemies to peace,
The friends of Gaul, and tools of hell,
They know, if wars and tumults cease,
They must their due demerits feel;
Their darkest works shall then appear,
If laws revive and order reign
And rulers, freed from servile fear,
No longer bear the sword in vain.

4 O might they, Lord, this moment rise,
With courage firm inspired by thee,
Nor suffer rebels to despise
Their mild, irresolute lenity!
Too mild, alas, for times like these,
Which sterner discipline require,
To stem the tide of wickedness,
And pluck us from th' infernal fire.

5 Strengthen their hands, Almighty Lord,
Incline their hearts to seek thy face,
That truth and righteousness restored
May flourish as in ancient days,
That all the pardoning God may know,
Thy kingdom in their hearts receive,
And serve thy blessed will below,
And saved by grace forever live!

Hymn 11.

Part the First.

1 Lord of hosts, and God most high,
Canst thou a nation bless,
Who thy providence deny,
And rob thee of thy praise,

- Of their fleets and armies boast,
For sure success and victory
In themselves entirely trust,
And never look to thee?
- 2 Thee the Christian-infidels
From thy own world exclude,
“Skill and stratagem prevails
And strength, and multitude:”
They on these alone depend;
And if thou make thy mercy known,
If thine arm deliverance send,
They cry, “’Tis all their own!”
- 3 Fifty thousand Britons brave
To the New World pass o’er,
Never yet th’ Atlantic wave
So huge a burden bore:
Who the prowess can withstand
Of fleets and hosts invincible?
Lo! They fly, they reach the land,
They see, and conquer all!
- 4 But if thou in anger frown,
No longer on their side,
O how suddenly cast down,
They suffer for their pride!
Let but one* his trust betray,
A sad reverse their legions know,
Yield—and waste—and sink away
Before a conquered foe!
- 5 Yet th’ infatuated crowd
Will not thy hand confess,
When thou dost abase the proud,
And when the abject raise;
When they pass beneath the yoke,
Thy scourge the *chance of war* they call;
In the instruments o’erlook
The sovereign cause of all.

* Sir W[illiam] H[owe]

- 6 But the men who fear thy name,
Thy power and wisdom own;
Now as yesterday the same,
Thou sittest on the throne:
Good, the creature of thy will,
Thou only dost to mortals send,
Only thou permitest ill,
Which all in good shall end.
- 7 In this last tremendous blow †
Thy righteousness we see,
Thousands taken by the foe,
Though flushed with victory:
Scandal of the British name,
Their brethren they no more oppress:
Let their glory end in shame,
And let their rapines cease.
- 8 Such their country's cause to fight,
Thou wilt not, Lord, employ,
Without human power or might
Who canst our foes destroy;
When the conquerors come, prepared
To execute their furious boasts,
Then thy mighty arm is bared,
And scatters all their hosts.
- 9 Vapours, fire, and hail, and snow
Are servants of our Lord,
Winds by thy direction blow,
And storms fulfil thy word;
Storms go forth at thy command,
And with resistless fury sweep,
Dash our foes against the strand,
Or plunge them in the deep.
- 10 This the Lord himself hath done,
Which, wondrous in our eyes,
Fills us, who thy love have known,
With rapturous surprise:
Jesus, at whose throne we bow,
In thee we full affiance have:
Surely thou hast saved us now,
And shalt forever save!

† Lord C[ornwallis]

Hymn 12.

Part the Second.

- 1 Foolish world, thy vain reply
Is to the faithful known,
“If we must on God rely,
And God doth all alone,
Rust our arms, our useless bands
And navies be dispersed abroad,
Let us idly fold our hands,
And leave it all to God.”

- 2 God who doth appoint the end
The proper means bestows,
Wills us bravely to defend
Our country from her foes:
“Fight with Amalek,” he cries,
While Moses on the mountain prays,
Brings assistance from the skies,
And ascertains success.

- 3 Still the battle is the Lord’s,
Who doth the vict’ry send:
Bring forth all your spears and swords,
Yet still on God depend:
Courage, strength, and skill exert,
Every nerve and sinew strain,
Yet unless he takes your part
Your utmost effort’s vain.

- 4 Did we in our evil day
Low at thy footstool mourn,
Cast our daring sins away,
And to our smiter turn,
Then thou wouldst for us appear,
As a wall of brass surround,
Put our vaunting foes in fear,
And all their force confound.

- 5 Did we, Lord, in every step
Look up to thee for aid,
Us thou wouldst in safety keep
Beneath th’ almighty shade;

While our weapons we employ,
And in thine only name confide,
None could hurt us, or annoy,
With Jesus on our side.

- 6 Britain thou again wouldst choose,
And call our nation thine,
Teach us means, as means to use,
And answer thy design,
Wouldst our sins, not us, destroy,
Us out of the dunghill raise,
Turn our sorrow into joy,
And nature into grace.
- 7 Rise, the Lord of armies, rise
In thy appointed hour,
Scattering evil with thine eyes,
And every adverse power:
Then let earth and hell engage,
Lodged in thine arms to pluck us thence,
Raging against us, they rage
Against omnipotence.
- 8 Crushed by thine almighty hand,
Do thou our foes suppress,
Then throughout the earth command
Infernal wars to cease,
Bid the ransomed world be still
And know that thou art God alone,
Seated on thy holy hill,
On thy millennial throne!

Hymn 13.

- 1 Jesus, thy flaming eyes
Full on the wicked dart,
Who in rebellion's cause arise,
And take the murderer's part,
Their bloody path pursue,
A congress from beneath,
A daring, dark, and desperate crew,
In league with hell and death.

- 2 Possessed of lawless power,
 Of absolute command,
The beasts with iron teeth devour
 A sad distracted land:
 Traitors with Gaul combined
 Their cruel sway maintain,
The scum and refuse of mankind
 As sovereign lords they reign.
- 3 Their heart, O Lord, thou know'st
 Elated with success,
Who triumph now, and make their boast
 Of prosperous wickedness,
 Who blasphemously claim
 Divine authority,
As acting treasons in thy name,
 And countenanced by thee.
- 4 How long, O God, how long
 Wilt thou their crimes pass by,
And suffer their oppressive wrong
 Who all thy plagues defy?
 Blast the aspiring fiend,
 Avenge us of the foe,
Confound his sworn allies, and end
 Their empire at a blow.
- 5 So shall thy people sing
 The power that sets us free,
The arm that doth deliverance bring
 From hellish tyranny;
 The same in heart and mind
 With loyal Britons prove,
In strictest bonds fraternal joined,
 In everlasting love.
- 6 Then, when the work is done
 Which fiends in vain withstand,
America and Britain, one
 In thy all-healing hand,
 The Lord's redeemed shall come,
 And crowned with joy arise
To Sion's heights, their long-sought home,
 Their country in the skies!

**Hymn 14.
For Peace.**

- 1 Come, thou choicest gift of heaven,
Far from earth by sinners driven,
While we for thy absence mourn,
Lovely, lasting peace return.
- 2 Forfeited by Britain's sin,
Lost to us thou long hast been,
Us for our iniquity,
Punished with the want of thee.
- 3 Never can we know thy way,
While we from our Maker stray:
But we now our sin deplore;
Come, and never leave us more.
- 4 Prince of Peace, and Israel's King,
With thyself the blessing bring:
Peace divine thy Spirit imparts;
Plant thy kingdom in our hearts.
- 5 Every stubborn spirit bow,
Turn us, Lord, and turn us now,
Thou who hear'st thy people's prayer,
End this dire intestine war.
- 6 Sprinkling us with thy own blood,
Reconcile us first to God,
Then let all the British race
Kindly, cordially embrace.
- 7 Concord, on a distant shore,
To our countrymen restore,
Every obstacle remove
Melt our hatred into love.
- 8 Gospel-grace to each extend,
Every foe, and every friend,
Then in thee we sweetly find
Peace with God, and all mankind.

Hymn 15.
Another [For Peace].

- 1 With tender affection inspired,
 With pity for mountains of slain,
My soul is of murderers tired,
 And bitterly forced to complain;
Heavy-laden, and weary of life,
 Whose sorrows and troubles increase,
I pine for an end of the strife,
 I sigh for the blessing of peace.

- 2 O peace, thou art banished and fled!
 The cause of our evils I see:
By sin such a havoc is made;
 By sin we have forfeited thee:
No peace for the wicked there is,
 Unless we our wickedness mourn,
No good for a nation like this,
 Unless to our God we return.

- 3 O God, who art always the same,
 Whose nature is still to forgive,
Permit us in Jesus's name
 To cry for a farther reprieve:
Our sins let us fully confess,
 Our sins let us deeply deplore;
And when from offending we cease,
 Thou wilt to thy favor restore.

- 4 When once reconciled to our God,
 We shall with each other agree,
Possessed of the blessing bestowed,
 And one with our Lord on the tree:
His blood the alliance hath sealed,
 The blessing his Spirit imparts,
And peace with its author revealed
 Eternally reigns in our hearts!