

HYMNS AND HYMNALS UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

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PERSONAL NOTE

Hymns have been a part of my life from the very beginning. My father used to casually play his favorites on the piano; this is the way that I was first introduced to them. When I was seven, I had been playing piano by ear for about four years. I asked my mother to teach me to play one of the hymns from the Sunday service, “Soldiers of Christ Arise”.

Realizing that I needed a more structured approach of instruction, she found a professor at High Point College (now University), and that was the beginning of my piano studies.

Everything has a history, a creative process, and evolution.

One’s curiosity is only as deep as their desire to dig, research, and cross-check to find the accurate answers.

Check out www.hymnary.org. [Calvin University, Grand Rapids, MI]

ANALYSIS

MUSICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- *Composer:
- *Dates (birth-death):
- *Date of composition of tune and placement composer’s output
- *Backstory or inspiration for the composition of the tune (Check out *Glory to God’s* explanatory notes for initial inspiration)
- *Origin of tune if not originally composed; adaptation from previous musical sources
[“Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee” is an adaptation of the choral last movement of Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9.]
- *Tune name - composer or publisher determined
- *(How) Has the tune been altered to fit the text?
- *How is the text set to the music? i.e. downbeats, strong vs. weak beats; two or more notes to one words; one note to two words or syllables; contractions
- *Alternate Tunes
- *Vocal Range/Unexpected Melodic/Rhythmic Passages
- *Text painting (the melody/harmony reflecting the words)

TEXTUAL CONSIDERATIONS

- *Author/Writer/Poet:
- *Dates (birth-death):
- *Date of composition of lyrics/text/poem and placement writer’s output
- *Backstory or inspiration for the writing of the text [Check out *Glory to God’s* explanatory notes for initial inspiration.]
- *Other sources of the text if not original
- *Original language and translation
- *Word choices
- *Punctuation and how that affects interpretation and musical phrasing
- *Definitions of all (unfamiliar) the words and references - archaic/modern meanings
[i.e. In “Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing, “Ebenezer” is not referring to Scrooge.]
- *Is the full text of poems/lyrics used or only part?
- *Theme of the hymn in the top corner
- *Meter (see below) based on number syllables
- *Poetic Analysis (rhyme scheme)
- *Text Inclusion

REASONS TO OWN YOUR OWN HYMNAL

- *personal meditation on the lyrics
- *singing along online

“Blest Be the Tie That Binds”
John Fawcett
UM [United Methodist] Hymnal, No. 557

John Fawcett (1739-1817), a dissenting Baptist clergyman in England, gave us one of the most beloved farewell hymns of all time. Fawcett’s parish in Wainsgate, described by hymnologist Albert Bailey as “a straggling group of houses on the top of a barren hill,” may have been typical for many rural pastors in the 18th century.

Fawcett, orphaned at 12, was “bound out” to a tailor in Bradford where he worked long hours. He learned to read and eventually mastered *Pilgrim’s Progress*, the devotional classic by John Bunyan.

Fawcett was converted under the powerful preaching of George Whitefield while the evangelist delivered a message to 20,000 people in an open field. It is said that upon telling Whitefield he wanted to preach, the evangelist gave Fawcett his blessing.

Mr. Bailey describes Fawcett’s congregation at Wainsgate: “The people were all farmers and shepherds, poor as Job’s turkey; an uncouth lot whose speech one could hardly understand, unable to read or write; most of them pagans cursed with vice and ignorance and wild tempers. The Established Church had never touched them; only the humble Baptists had sent an itinerant preacher there and he had made a good beginning.”

John and Mary Fawcett went to live there in 1765 following his ordination. By engaging families house-to-house, he built a congregation that grew to the point that a gallery had to be added to the modest meetinghouse. With the addition of four children to the family, a modest salary that was supplemented by parishioners’ donations of wool and potatoes was barely adequate, especially during the long winters.

The story is told that a prestigious parish with more financial resources in London, Carter’s Lane Baptist Church, extended a call. It is at this point that it becomes difficult to separate fact from apocryphal imagination.

Mr. Bailey, a vivid storyteller, sets the scene: “[John] and Mary decided to accept. The announcement was made to the church, and the farewell sermon was preached, the bulky items of his furniture and some of his older books were sold and the day of departure arrived. The two-wheeled cart came for the rest of his belongings, and likewise came the parishioners to say good-by.”

The crowd was despondent and in tears. According to Mr. Bailey, Mary is quoted as saying, “I can’t stand it, John! I know not how to go.” John responded, “Lord help me Mary, nor can I stand it! We will unload the wagon. . . . [To the crowd], We’ve changed our minds! We are going to stay!” Mr. Bailey describes a scene of pandemonium as the crowd broke out in joyful acclamations.

It was the practice of many ministers to write hymns on the theme of the day to be sung at the conclusion of the sermon. This hymn was included under the title of “Brotherly Love” in Fawcett’s *Hymns Adapted to the Circumstances of Public Worship and Private Devotion* (1782). *UM Hymnal* editor Carlton Young notes that the “collection contained 166 hymns, most of them to be sung as a congregational response to the sermon.”

We do know that John Fawcett remained in Wainsgate for 54 years and nearby Hebden Bridge. We do not know if this hymn was written in conjunction with his decision to remain in Wainsgate, but its language connects well with congregations, identifying with the struggles of life and our unity in Christ.

No doubt this hymn has been tearfully sung by more Christians upon parting than any other hymn.

Fawcett developed a school for the area children by adding on to his home. He was known as an educator and scholar, as well as a fine preacher.

In 1811 Fawcett published his *Devotional Commentary on the Holy Scriptures* and was also honored with a Doctor of Divinity degree from Brown University, Providence, R.I.

Dr. C. Michael Hawn is professor of sacred music at Perkins School of Theology, SMU.

(Source: <https://www.umdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-hymns-blest-be-the-tie-that-binds>)

1. Blest be the tie that binds Our hearts in
 2. Be - fore our Fa - ther's throne We pour our
 3. We share our mu - tual woes, Our mu - tual
 4. When we a - sun - der part, It gives us

5

Chris - tian love; The fel - low - ship of
 ar - dent pray'rs; Our fears, our hopes, our
 bur - dens bear; And of - ten for each
 in - ward pain; But we shall still be

9

kin - dred minds Is like to that a - bove.
 aims are one, Our com - forts and our cares.
 oth - er flows The sym - pa - thiz - ing tear.
 joined in heart, And hope to meet a - gain.

This tune in a lower key, No. 375.

Baptist Hymnal 1891 387

WORDS: John Fawcett, 1740-1817

MUSIC (DENNIS 6.6.8.6.(S.M.)): Johann G. Nageli, 1773-1836; arr. Lowell Mason, 1792-1872

5 This glorious hope revives
 our courage by the way;
 while each in expectation lives
 and waits to see the day.

6 From sorrow, toil, and pain,
 and sin, we shall be free;
 and perfect love and friendship reign
 through all eternity.

Johann G. Nageli (b. Wetzikon, near Zurich, Switzerland, 1773; d. Wetzikon, 1836) was an influential music educator who lectured throughout Germany and France. Influenced by Johann Pestalozzi, he published his theories of music education in *Gangbildungslehre* (1810), a book that made a strong impact on Lowell Mason. Nageli composed mainly choral works, including settings of Goethe's poetry. He received his early instruction from his father, then in Zurich, where he concentrated on the music of J. S. Bach. In Zurich, he also established a lending library and a publishing house, which published first editions of Beethoven's piano sonatas and music by Bach, Handel, and Frescobaldi.

METERS OF HYMNS
(based on number of syllables per line)

METER	EXAMPLE
SM 6.6.8.6 (short meter)	6 Blest be the tie that binds 6 our hearts in Christian love, 8 The fellowship of kindred minds 6 is like to that above.
SM 6.6.8.6 (short meter) with refrain	6 God reigns! Let earth rejoice! 6 Let oceans shout God's might! 8 Born up by truth and righteousness 6 God's throne is our delight. <i>Refrain</i> Rejoice! Rejoice! God reigns! Let earth rejoice.
SMD 6.6.8.6. 6.6.8.6 (short meter doubled)	6 Crown Him with many crowns 6 the Lamb upon His throne; 8 hark, how the heavenly anthem drowns 6 all music but its own! 6 Awake, my soul, and sing 6 of him who died for thee, 8 and hail him as thy matchless King 6 through all eternity.
CM 8.6.8.6 (common meter)	8 Amazing grace, how sweet the sound 6 that saved a wretch like me. 8 I once was lost but now I'm found, 6 was blind but not I see.
CM 8.6.8.6 (common meter) extended	8 You thirsty ones, come to the spring 6 Have you no money? Come, 8 buy wine and milk; come buy and eat 6 without a price or sum, 6 without a price or sum.
CM 8.6.8.6 (common meter) with refrain	8 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! 6 Let earth receive her king. 8 Let every heart prepare him room <i>Refrain</i> and heaven and nature sing and heaven and nature sing and heaven and heaven and nature sing.
CMD 8.6.8.6. 8.6.8.6 (common meter doubled)	8 As those of old their firstfruits brought 6 of vineyard, flock, and field. 8 to God, the giver of all good, 6 the source of bounteous yield 8 so we today our first fruits bring, 6 the wealth of this good land: 8 of farm and market, shop and home, 6 of mind and heart and hand.

LM 8.8.8.8 (long meter)	8 Jesus shall reign where'er the sun 8 does its successive journeys run; 8 his kingdom stretch from shore to shore 8 till moons shall wax and wane no more.
LM 8.8.8.8 (long meter) with alleluias	8 All creatures of our God and King, 8 Lift up your voice and with us sing, Alleluia! Alleluia! 8 O brother sun with golden beam, 8 O sister moon with silver gleam. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
LM 8.8.8.8 (long meter) with refrain	8 O come, O come, Emmanuel, 8 and ransom captive Israel, 8 that mourns in lonely exile here 8 until the Son of God appear <i>Refrain</i> Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.
LMD 8.8.8.8 8.8.8.8 (long meter doubled)	8 Soul, adorn yourself with gladness; 8 leave the gloomy haunts of sadness. 8 Come into the daylight's splendor; 8 there with joy your praises render. 8 Bless the one whose grace unbounded 8 this amazing banquet founded; 8 Christ, though heavenly, high, and holy, 8 deigns to dwell with you most lowly.
Irregular	6 O come, all ye faithful, 6 joyful and triumphant 10 O come ye; O come ye to Bethlehem! 11 Come, and behold him, born the King of angels 6 O come let us adore him; 6 O come let us adore him; 6 O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord! (v. 1 has a pickup beat; the others do not.)
Other various combinations	7 Prepare the way, O Zion, 6 your Christ is drawing near! 7 Let every hill and valley 6 a level way appear. 7 Greet One who comes in glory, 7 foretold in sacred story. <i>Refrain</i> 6 O blest is Christ who came 6 in God's most holy name.