

Hymns Celebrating the Mysteries

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Anglican · Post-Reformation · Exegesis

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INTRODUCTION

Composed during Taylor's enforced retirement in Wales after the Royalist defeat, when the Book of Common Prayer was outlawed and Anglican worship driven underground, these hymns were meant to keep the liturgical year alive in private hands, particularly among the young. Taylor follows the calendar from Advent through the Passion and Ascension, recasting the festivals in metaphysical verse that owes much to Herbert and Crashaw while pointing forward to the eighteenth-century hymnody of Watts and the Wesleys. The voice is unmistakably that of the author of *Holy Living* and *Holy Dying*: ornate, emblematic, and unembarrassed by sweetness. Read these as devotional exercises rather than poems for the page, they were built to be memorized, sung, and folded into daily prayer.

Hymns Celebrating the Mysteries and Chief Festivals of the Year

According to the manner of the Ancient Church: fitted to the fancy and devotion of the younger and pious persons. Apt for memory, and to be joyned to their other Prayers.

Hymns for Advent

Or the weeks immediately before the Birth of our blessed Saviour.

I.

When Lord, O when shall we Our dear Salvation see? Arise, arise, Our fainting eyes Have long'd all night, and 'twas a long one too. Man never yet could say He saw more then one day, One day of Edens seven: The guilty hours there blasted with the breath Of sin and death, Have ever since worn a nocturnal hue. But thou hast given us hopes that we At length another day shall see, Wherein each vile neglected place, Gilt with the aspect of thy face, Shall be like that, the porch and gate of Heaven. How long, dear God, how long! See how the Nations throng: All humane kinde Knit and combin'd Into one body, look for thee their Head. Pity our multitude, Lord, we are vile and rude, Headless and senseless without thee, Of all things but the want of thy blest face, O haste apace; And thy bright self to this our body wed,

That through the influx of thy power, Each part that er'st confusion wore May put on order, and appear
Spruce as the childhood of the year, When thou to it shalt so united be. Amen.

II. Christs coming to Jerusalem in triumph

Lord come away, Why dost thou stay? Thy rode is ready; and thy paths made strait With longing expectation wait
The Consecration of thy beauteous feet. Ride on triumphantly, behold we lay Our lusts and proud wills in thy way. Hosanna! welcome to our hearts. Lord here Thou hast a Temple too, and full as dear
As that of Sion; and as full of sin, Nothing but Thieves and Robbers dwell therein; Enter, and chase them forth & cleanse the floore; Crucifie them, that they may never more Profane that holy place
Where thou hast chose to set thy face. And then if our stiff tongues shall be Mute in the praises of thy Deity, The stones out of the Temple wall Shall cry aloud and call Hosanna! and thy glorious footsteps greet. Amen.

Hymns for Christmas-day

I.

Mysterious truth! that the self same should be A Lamb, a Shepherd, and a Lion too! Yet such was he Whom first the shepherds knew,
When they themselves became Sheep to the Shepherd Lambe. Shepherd of Men and Angels, Lamb of God, Lion of Judah, by these Titles keep The Wolf from thy indangered Sheep. Bring all the world unto thy Fold, Let Jews and Gentiles hither come In numbers great that can't be told, And call thy Lambs that wander, home. Glory be to God on high, All glories be to th'glorious Deity.

II. A Dialogue between three Shepherds

1. Where is this blessed Babe That hath made All the world so full of joy And expectation; That glorious boy That crowns each Nation With a triumphant wreath of blessedness?
2. Where should he be but in the throng, And among His Angel Ministers, that sing And take wing Just as may Echo to his Voyce, And rejoyce, When wing and tongue and all May so procure their happiness?
3. But he hath other Waiters now, A poor Cow, An Ox and Mule stand and behold, And wonder, That a stable should enfold Him that can thunder.

Chorus. O what a gracious God have we? How good, how great! even as our misery.

III. Of Christs birth in an Inne

The blessed Virgin travail'd without pain, And lodged in an Inne, A glorious Star the signe But of a greater guest then ever came that way, For there he lay That is the God of Night and Day, And over all the pow'rs of heaven doth reign. It was the time of great Augustus Tax, And then he comes That payes

all sums, Even the whole price of lost humanity, And sets us free From the ungodly Emperie Of Sin, and Satan, and of Death. O make our hearts, blest God, thy lodging place, And in our brest Be pleas'd to rest, For thou lov'st Temples better then an Inne, And cause that sin May not profane the Deity within, And sully o're the ornaments of Grace. Amen.

A Hymn upon S. Johns day

This day We sing The friend of our eternal King, Who in his bosome lay, And kept the Keys Of his profound and glorious Mysteries: Which to the world dispensed by his hand, Made it stand Fix'd in amazement to behold that light Which came From the Throne of the Lamb, To invite Our wretched eyes (which nothing else could see But fire, and sword, hunger and miserie) To anticipate by their ravish'd sight The beauty of Celestial delight. Mysterious God, regard me when I pray: And when this load of clay Shall fall away, O let thy gracious hand conduct me up, Where on the Lambs rich viands I may sup: And in this last Supper I May with thy friend in thy sweet bosome lie For ever in Eternity. Allelujah.

Upon the day of the holy Innocents

Mournful Judah shrieks and cries At the obsequies Of their Babes, that cry More that they lose the paps, then that they die. He that came with life to all, Brings the Babes a funeral, To redeem from slaughter him Who did redeem us all from sin. They like himself went spotless hence, A sacrifice to Innocence; Which now does ride Trampling upon Herods pride: Passing from their fontinels of clay To heaven a milky and a bloody way. All their tears and groans are dead, And they to rest and glory fled; Lord, who wert pleas'd so many babes should fall, Whil'st each sword hop'd that every of the All Was the desir'd King: make us to be In Innocence like them, in Glory, thee. Amen.

Upon the Epiphany

And the three wise men of the East coming to worship Jesus.

A Comet dangling in the aire Presag'd the ruine both of Death and Sin; And told the wise-men of a King, The King of Glory, and the Sun Of Righteousness, who then begun To draw towards that blessed Hemisphere. They from the furthest East this new And unknown light pursue, Till they appeare In this blest Infants King's propitious eye, And pay their homage to his Royalty. Persia might then the rising Sun adore, It was Idolatry no more: Great God, they gave to thee Myrrhe, Frankincense, and Gold: But Lord, with what shall we Present our selves before thy Majesty, Whom thou redeem'dst when we were sold? W'have nothing but our selves, & scarce that neither, Vile dirt and clay: Yet it is soft, and may

Impression take: Accept it, Lord, and say, this thou had'st rather; Stamp it, and on this sordid metal make Thy holy Image, and it shall out-shine The beauty of the golden Myne. Amen.

A Meditation of the Four Last Things

Death, Judgment, Heaven, Hell. For the time of Lent especially.

Of Death

Death, the old Serpents Son, Thou had'st a sting once like thy Sire, That carried Hell, and ever-burning fire: But those black dayes are done; Thy foolish spite buried thy sting In the profound and wide Wound of our Saviours side. And now thou art become a tame and harmless thing, A thing we dare not fear Since we hear That our triumphant God to punish thee For the affront thou didst him on the Tree, Hath snatcht the keyes of Hell out of thy hand, And made thee stand A Porter to the gate of Life, thy mortal enemy. O thou who art that Gate, command that he May when we die And thither flie, Let us into the Courts of Heaven through thee. Allelujah.

The Prayer.

My Soul doth pant tow'rds thee My God, Source of eternal life: Flesh fights with me, Oh end the strife And part us, that in peace I may Unclay My wearied spirit, and take My flight to thy eternal Spring; Where for his sake Who is my King, I may wash all my tears away That day. Thou Conqueror of Death, Glorious triumph' o're the Grave, Whose holy breath Was spent to save Lost Mankind; make me to be stil'd Thy Child, And take me when I dye, And go unto my dust, my Soul Above the sky With Saints enroll, That in thy arms for ever I May lye. Amen.

Of the Day of Judgement

Great Judge of all, how we vile wretches quake! Our guilty bones do ake, Our marrow freezes, when we think Of the consuming fire Of thine ire; And horrid phials thou shalt make The wicked drink, When thou the winepress of thy wrath shalt tread With feet of lead. Sinful rebellious clay! what unknown place Shall hide it from thy face! When earth shall vanish from thy sight, The heavens that never err'd, But observ'd Thy laws, shal from thy presence take their flight, And kil'd with glory, their bright eyes, stark dead Start from their head: Lord, how shall we, Thy enemies, endure to see So bright, so killing Majesty? Mercy dear Saviour: Thy Judgement seat We dare not Lord intreat; We are condemn'd already, there. Mercy: vouchsafe one look On thy book Of life; Lord we can read the saving Jesus, here, And in his Name our own Salvation see: Lord set us free, The book of sin Is cross'd within, Our debts are paid by thee. Mercy.

Of Heaven

O Beauteous God, uncircumscribed treasure Of an eternal pleasure, Thy Throne is seated far Above the highest Star, Where thou prepar'st a glorious place Within the brightness of thy face For every spirit

To inherit That builds his hopes on thy merit, And loves thee with a holy charity. What ravish'd heart, Seraphick tongue or eyes, Clear as the mornings rise, Can speak, or think, or see That bright eternity? Where the great Kings transparent Throne, Is of an intire Jasper stone: There the eye O'th'Chrysolite, And a sky Of Diamonds, Rubies, Chrysoprase, And above all, thy holy face Makes an eternal Clarity, When thou thy Jewels up dost binde: that day Remember us, we pray, That where the Beryl lyes And the Crystal, 'bove the skyes, There thou may'st appoint us place Within the brightness of thy face; And our Soul In the Scrowl Of life and blissfulness enrowl, That we may praise thee to eternity. Allelujah.

Of Hell

Horrid darkness, sad and fore, And an eternal Night, Groans and shrieks, and thousands more In the want of glorious light: Every corner hath a Snake In the accursed lake: Seas of fire, beds of snow Are the best delights below, A Viper from the fire Is his hire That knows not moments from Eternity. Glorious God of Day and Night, Spring of eternal Light, Allelujahs, Hymns and Psalms, And Coronets of Palms Fill thy Temple evermore. O mighty God, Let not thy bruising rod Crush our loins with an eternal pressure; O let thy mercy be the measure, For if thou keepest wrath in store We all shall die, And none be left to glorifie Thy Name, and tell How thou hast sav'd our souls from Hell. Mercy.

On the Conversion of S. Paul

Full of wrath, his threatning breath Belching nought, but chains and death: Saul was arrested in his way By a voice and a light, That if a thousand dayes Should joyn rayes To beautifie one day, It would not shew so glorious and so bright. On his amazed eyes it night did fling, That day might break within; And by those beams of Faith Make him of a childe of wrath Become a vessel full of glory. Lord curb us in our dark and sinful way, We humbly pray, When we down horrid precipices run With feet that thirst to be undone, That this may be our story. Allelujah.

On the Purification of the blessed Virgin

Pure and spotless was the Maid That to the Temple came, A pair of Turtle-doves she paid, Although she brought the Lamb. Pure and spotless though she were, Her body chaste, and her soul faire, She to the Temple went To be purifi'd And try'd, That she was spotless and obedient. O make us to follow so blest Precedent, And purifie our souls, for we Are cloth'd with sin and misery. From our conception One imperfection, And a continued state of sin, Hath sullied all our faculties within. We present our souls to thee Full of need and misery: And for Redemption a Lamb The purest, whitest that e're came A Sacrifice to thee, Even he that bled upon the Tree.

On Good-Friday

The Lamb is eaten, and is yet again Preparing to be slain; The Cup is full and mixt, And must be drunk: Wormwood and gall To this, are draughts to beguile care withall, Yet the Decree is fixt. Doubled knees, and groans, and cries, Prayers and sighs, and flowing eyes Could not intreat. His sad Soul sunk Under the heavy pressure of our sin: The pains of Death and Hell About him dwell. His Fathers burning wrath did make His very heart, like melting wax, to sweat Rivers of blood, Through the pure strainer of his skin: His boiling body stood Bubbling all o're, As if the wretched whole were but one dore To let in pain and grief, And turn out all relief. O thou, who for our sake Didst drink up This bitter Cup: Remember us, we pray, In thy day, When down The strugling throats of wicked men The dregs of thy just fury shall be thrown. Oh then Let thy unbounded mercy think On us, for whom Thou underwent'st this heavy doom, And give us of the well of life to drink. Amen.

On the Annunciation to the blessed Virgin

A Winged harbinger from bright heav'n flown, Bespeaks a lodging room For the mighty King of Love, The spotless structure of a Virgin womb, O'reshadow'd with the wings of the blest Dove: For he was travelling to earth, But did desire to lay By the way, That he might shift his clothes, and be A perfect Man as well as we. How good a God have we! who for our sake, To save us from the burning lake, Did change the order of Creation: At first he made Man like himself in his own Image; now In the more blessed reparation The Heavens bow: Eternity took the measure of a span, And said, Let us make our self like Man, And not from Man the Woman take, But from the Woman, Man. Allelujah: we adore His Name, whose goodness hath no store. Allelujah.

Easter Day

What glorious light! How bright a Sun after so sad a night Does now begin to dawn! Bless'd were those eyes That did behold This Sun when he did first unfold His glorious beams, and now begin to rise: It was the holy tender Sex That saw the first ray: Saint Peter and the other, had the reflex, The second glimpse o'th'day. Innocence had the first, and he That fled, and then did penance, next did see The glorious Sun of Righteousness In his new dress Of triumph, immortality, and bliss. O dearest God preserve our souls In holy innocence; Or if we do amiss, Make us to rise again to th'life of Grace, That we may live with thee, and see thy glorious face, The crown of holy Penitence. Allelujah.

On the day of Ascension

He is risen higher, not set: Indeed a cloud Did with his leave make bold to shroud The Sun of Glory from Mount Olivet. At Pentecost hee'll shew himself again, When every ray shall be a tongue To speak all comforts, and inspire Our Souls with their celestial fire; That we the Saints among May sing, and love, and reign. Amen.

On the Feast of Pentecost, or Whitsunday

Tongues of fire from heaven descend With a mighty rushing wind, To blow it up and make A living fire Of heavenly Charity, and pure desire, Where they their residence should take. On the Apostles sacred heads they sit, Who now like Beacons do proclaim and tell Th'invasion of the host of Hell; And give men warning to defend Themselves from the enraged brunt of it. Lord, let the flames of holy Charity, And all her gifts and graces slide Into our hearts, and there abide; That thus refined, we may soar above With it unto the element of Love, Even unto thee dear Spirit, And there eternal peace and rest inherit. Amen.

Penitentiall Hymns

I.

LOrd, I have sinn'd, & the black number swells To such a dismal sum, That should my stony heart and eyes, And this whole sinful trunk, a flood become, And run to tears, their drops could not suffice To count my score, Much less to pay: But thou, my God, hast blood in store, And art the Patron of the poore. Yet since the Balsam of thy Blood, Although it can, will do no good, Unless the wounds be cleans'd with tears before; Thou in whose sweet but pensive face Laughter could never steal a place, Teach but my heart and eyes To melt away, And then one drop of Balsam will suffice. Amen.

II.

Great God, and just! how canst thou fee, Dear God, our miserie, And not in mercy set us free? Poor miserable man! how wert thou born, Weak as the dewy jewels of the Morn, Rapt up in tender dust, Guarded with sins and lust, Who like Court flatterers waite To serve themselves in thy unhappy fate. Wealth is a snare, and poverty brings in Inlets for theft, paving the way for sin: Each perfum'd vanity doth gently breath Sin in thy Soul, and whispers it to Death. Our faults like ulcerated sores do go O're the sound flesh, and do corrupt that too. Lord, we are sick, spotted with sin, Thick as a crusty Lepers skin, Like Naaman, bid us wash, yet let it be In streams of blood that flow from thee: Then will we sing, Touch'd by the heavenly Doves bright wing, Hallelujahs, Psalms and Praise To God the Lord of night and dayes; Ever good, and ever just, Ever high, who ever must Thus be sung; is still the same; Eternal praises crown his Name. Amen.

Source: The Golden Grove, Jeremy Taylor. London: Printed by J.F. for R. Royston at the Angel in Ivie-lane, 1655. Text sourced from Project Canterbury (anglicanhistory.org).

Transcribed from the 1655 first edition by Project Canterbury (Anglican History Project, anglicanhistory.org). Taylor composed The Golden Grove during his years of enforced exile in Wales under the Interregnum, when Anglican worship had been suppressed and he was living under the protection of Richard Vaughan, Earl of Carbery, at the estate from which the book takes its name. The text is in the public domain; Taylor died in 1667. No translator is involved; this is Taylor's own English.

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