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WILLIAM LAURENCE LEDWITH :

1850-1904.

BY EDWARD M. DEEMS, D. D.

About thirty miles south of Pittsburg, where the Monongahela River makes a graceful curve, Brownsville rests on the sloping side of one of Fayette County's picturesque hills. It is one of Pennsylvania's most attractive towns, and is not without historic associations, as it is on one of the old highways, and its inn was a favorite stopping place of Henry Clay and his friends during their political campaigns.

Here, on March 14th, 1850, William Laurence Ledwith was born to William Medkirk and Jane Bryce Ledwith, and was baptized by the Rev. Thomas Martin in the summer of 1850. His father was born and raised in Washington, Washington County, Pa., and his mother was born in Paisley, Scotland, coming to this country while quite young.

In a letter to the writer of this sketch, the Rev. Hughes O. Gibbons, D. D., of Philadelphia, contributes the following interesting reminiscences of Dr. Ledwith's boyhood :

"My first recollection of William L. Ledwith goes back to 1858. I first saw him one Sabbath as he entered the Presbyterian Church of Brownsville, Pa., with his father and mother. Among the boys of the congregation he attracted my attention especially, because of his remarkably erect and especially neat appearance. He had a pale, intellectual face, and, as I found afterwards, was wonderfully alert.

## THE HYMNS OF PRESIDENT DAVIES.

EDITED BY LOUIS F. BENSON, D. D.

In the September number of the JOURNAL a study was made of President Davies as a hymn writer. That article is now followed by a printing of the whole body of his hymns, together with notes indicating the measure of use they have attained, and containing such elucidations as seem called for. The hymns themselves are the only adequate memorial of Davies as a hymn writer. Such a printing of them seems justified, because, although one or another hymn may have become more or less familiar, the whole body of the hymns has not been reproduced since its original appearance in the now somewhat scarce book of 1769.

The hymns are here numbered consecutively. The first sixteen are carefully reproduced from Dr. Gibbons's *Hymns Adapted to Divine Worship* (London, 1769), with the numbering in that book indicated in brackets. The titles there given are retained in full, except that from each the words "*By the Reverend SAMUEL DAVIES, A. M.*" have been omitted. The text of the hymns is given here as there in all respects. To these sixteen original hymns two variations of hymns of Dr. Doddridge made by Davies are added for the sake of completeness.

It will be observed that of the eighteen hymns we are able to date eight, and that all of these eight fall within the limits of the short period marked by Davies's return from England on the one hand and his leaving Virginia for Princeton on the other. We can define the period of their composition even more closely as lying between July, 1755 (the earliest date for hymn No. 4), and January, 1758 (the date of No. 10).

As regards the first appearance of the hymns in print I have found actual proof that those numbered 4, 5, and 18, were published by Davies himself. Of Nos. 6, 11, 12, 14, and 15, we can infer nothing. In the case of Nos. 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 16, and 17 the probability of Davies having printed the sermons to which they were appended is discussed in the notes. If he did

not, the hymns were first printed in Dr. Gibbons's hymn book. The question must await such a collection of Davies's own publications as would make a bibliography possible.

1. [BOOK I. XXX.]

*The Blessing of Hope in Death ; or  
Comfort in a dying Hour earnestly implored.*

PROVERBS xiv. 32. Long Metre.

I

YES ; I must bow my Head and die !  
What then can bear my Spirit up ?  
In Nature's last Extremity  
Who can afford one Ray of Hope ?

II

Then all created Comforts fail,  
And Earth speaks nothing but Despair ;  
And you, my Friends, must bid Farewel,  
And leave your Fellow-Traveller.

III

Yet, SAVIOUR, thine Almighty Pow'r  
Ev'n then can sure Support afford,  
Ev'n then that Hope shall smile secure,  
That's now supported by thy Word.

IV

Searcher of Hearts ! O try me now,  
Nor let me build upon the Sand ;  
O teach me now myself to know,  
That I may then the Trial stand !

NOTE.—Most, if not all, of Davies's hymns were composed in connection with his sermons ; the hymn taking its subject and more or less of its materials from the sermon, and being designed to deepen and fix the impressions which the sermon made. In this practice Davies followed Watts and Doddridge. It was in the form of appendages to his sermons that his hymns came into the hands of Dr. Gibbons.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>See the JOURNAL, Vol. II, p. 285.

This hymn was appended to a sermon on "The Objects, Grounds, and Evidences of the Hope of the Righteous" (Proverbs, xiv, 32), dated "Henrico, March 6, 1757." This sermon was probably not one of those which Davies printed; and, if not, the hymn first appeared in Dr. Gibbons's hymn book. It appeared again, in connection with the above sermon, in the additional volume of Davies's *Sermons*, published in London, 1806, as "LINES BY THE AUTHOR OF THE FOREGOING SERMON," which was therein included as "SERMON LXXVI." The hymn merely versifies a few of the points of the sermon:—"The gloomy hour of death is nature's last extremity: it stands in need of some effectual Support." "Death—that separates friend from friend;—that separates us from all our Earthly Comforts." But Christ affords "a blessed support in a dying hour:" we should therefore examine the grounds and evidences of our personal hope of His support.

The hymn seems to have found no favor with the compilers; I have not observed it in any collection but that of Dr. Gibbons. As printed in the 1806 volume the third verse reads:—

*Line 1.* Yet, Saviour! thy almighty hand,—

*Line 3.* Ev'n then, that hope shall firmly stand,—

2.

[BOOK I. XXXVII.]

*The different States of Sinners  
and Saints in the Wreck of Nature.*

ISAIAH xxiv. 18–20. Long Metre.

I

How great, how terrible that God,  
Who shakes Creation with his Nod!  
He frowns, and Earth's Foundations shake,  
And all the Wheels of Nature break.

II

Crush'd under Guilt's oppressive Weight  
The Globe now totters to its Fate,  
Trembles beneath its guilty Sons,  
And for Deliv'rance loudly groans:

III

And see the glorious dreadful Day  
That takes th' enormous Load away!  
See Ocean, Earth, all Nature's Frame  
Sink in one universal Flame.

## IV

Where now, O where shall Sinners seek  
 For Shelter in the gen'ral Wreck ?  
 Shall falling Rocks be o'er them thrown ?  
 See Rocks, like Snow, dissolving down.

## V

In vain for Mercy now they cry;  
 In Lakes of liquid Fire they lie;  
 There on the flaming Billows tost,  
 For ever, O for ever lost!

## VI

But, Saints, undaunted and serene  
 Your Eyes shall view the dreadful Scene;  
 Your Saviour lives, tho' Worlds expire,  
 And Earth and Skies dissolve in Fire.

## VII

JESUS, the helpless Creature's Friend,  
 To Thee my All I dare commend :  
 Thou can'st preserve my feeble Soul,  
 When Lightnings blaze from Pole to Pole.

NOTE.—This Judgment-hymn was originally appended to a sermon on “The Religious Improvement of the late Earthquakes” (Isaiah xxiv, 18-20), “Preached in Hanover county, Virginia, June 19, 1756”; and appears in connection with it (No. LXVII) in the 1806 volume of *Sermons*. There is some reason to think that sermon and hymn may have been printed in Davies's lifetime. The earthquakes referred to were the series of disturbances which wrought so great damage in the city of Lisbon and other localities in 1755. The preacher classes earthquakes with famine, sword, and pestilence, as “four extraordinary ministers of God's vengeance.” After giving a “short history” of the recent calamities, he follows it with some reflections upon God's majesty and “the dreadfulness of his displeasure” at human sin; and then proceeds to treat the earthquake as a confirmation and representation of the final judgment.

It is plain that the hymn suffered severely as appearing in Dr. Gibbons's collection, divorced from its thrilling occasion and its context. It was, nevertheless, one of the seven of Davies's hymns included in

Rippon's influential *Selection* of 1787.<sup>1</sup> From this it passed into numerous American books, e. g., Nathan Strong's *Hartford Selection*, 1799; Dodge's (Baptist) *Selection*, 1808; Parkinson's *Collection*, 1809; Nettleton's *Village Hymns*; the Presbyterian *Psalms and Hymns*, 1830; the German Reformed *Psalms and Hymns*, 1834; the Reformed Dutch *Psalms and Hymns*, 1847; the Lutheran *Hymns*, 1850.

The text in the 1806 volume agrees with Gibbons's in the sixth and seventh verses. In the earlier verses there are numerous variances.

3. [BOOK I. XXXVIII.]

*Pious Breathings amidst general  
Wickedness and Desolation.*

ISAIAH xxxii, 13-19. Common Metre.

I

WHILE in a thousand open'd Veins  
Contending Nations bleed,  
While Bri'rs and Thorns on blooming Plains  
And fruitful Fields succeed;

II

While Desolation rages round,  
Like an o'erwhelming Flood,  
Where can a Remedy be found  
To stop these Streams of Blood?

III

Eternal Spirit! Source of Good!  
The Author of our Peace,  
Pour down thine Influence, like a Flood,  
On this wide Wilderness.

IV

O grant us one reviving Show'r,  
And let it spread afar:  
Thine Influence alone can cure  
The bleeding Wounds of War.

<sup>1</sup>See the JOURNAL, Vol. II, p. 286.

## V

Come, Thou—and then the Wilderness  
 Shall bloom a Paradise,  
 And heav'nly Plants t' adorn and bless  
 O'er this wild Waste shall rise :

## VI

Then Peace shall in large Rivers flow,  
 Where Streams of Blood have run ;  
 Then universal Love shall glow,  
 And all the World be one ;

## VII

Then num'rous Colonies shall rise,  
 A People all Divine,  
 To fill the Mansions of the Skies,  
 And bright as Angels shine.

NOTE.—This hymn was originally appended to a sermon on “The Happy Effects of the Pouring Out of the Spirit” (Isaiah xxxii, 13–19), dated “Hanover, October 16, 1757” ; and appears in connection with that sermon (No. LXV) in the 1806 volume. If the notes there given are by Davies, they suggest that he may have published the sermon (and hymn) during his lifetime. It may be questioned if from the point of view of availability this hymn should have had a place in Dr. Gibbons's book, and I have not found it copied into any other. But in connection with the two hymns here following it forms a group of great historical and personal interest. To appreciate or even to understand these hymns it is necessary to see the situation at the time as Davies saw it and as he set it forth in the introduction of the above sermon :—

“It is our lot to be born in an age of blood and slaughter ; an age, in which mankind remarkably exemplify the character given of them long ago by an inspired pen, ‘Hateful, and hating one another ;’ an age, which has seen a strange revolution, in that Britain, that about three hundred years ago had crushed the power of France, and had the crown of that kingdom made over to her by treaty—now every where defeated by that very power ; an age, in which the cause of liberty and the protestant religion is in the most alarming danger, from the formidable confederacy of Popish tyrants and their vassals ; an age, in which our liberty, our property, our lives, and our religion, which should be dearer to us than all, are no longer ensured to us with the usual firmness of the British constitution, but disputed with a powerful invader ; and the issue

of the contest is dreadfully uncertain. And in such an age can there be so stupid a soul among us, as to be thoughtless and unconcerned? Sure, if we have any thing of the *man*, the *patriot*, or the *Christian* within us, we must be deeply solicitous about these important interests, and anxious for a remedy to our bleeding country and nation.

“I need not detain you with a particular account of the present mortifying and alarming situation of our public affairs. I need not tell you of slaughtered families, mangled corpses, men, women, and children held in barbarous captivity in the dens of savages; routed garrisons, demolished fortifications, deserted, desolated settlements upon our frontiers. I need not remind you of defeated armies, blasted expeditions, and abortive schemes—of divided, dilatory councils on both sides the ocean—a jangling, unsettled ministry, and an uneasy, murmuring, clamorous people. I need not tell you that our enemies have pushed their conquests with surprising rapidity, and executed all their schemes; while all our attempts to stop their progress have issued in disappointment and mortification; and that they are now become formidable, even in America, where a few years ago they were so contemptible. I need not tell you that our hopes are lowered as to our brave ally, the king of Prussia, who has lately been routed, and obliged to break up the siege of Prague; and who has almost the half of the powers of Europe for his enemies. He stands the single champion of the protestant cause upon the Continent; and should he be crushed, that important cause would probably fall with him, especially in Germany. I need not tell you, how gloomy and discouraging the prospect is before us, from the growing power of the French—from their great influence with the Indian savages—from the naked and defenceless state of our country—from the dastardly, secure spirit that prevails among the generality, and from many causes that I need not name. These things are too public and notorious for me to enlarge upon them.”

This hymn is characteristic of Davies in its dark views of the situation and prospects, but especially characteristic in the remedy he sought. To Davies's mind the people's sins are the cause of their calamities, and the “thousand wounds from which this country bleeds” are tokens of the Divine displeasure and judgment. There is no remedy except in a general moral reformation, and to produce this there must be an outpouring of the Spirit. For this the hymn prays, and pictures its “happy effects” in the phraseology of the passage from Isaiah which is the text of the sermon.

The principal variances in the two printings of the hymn are in the last verse. As printed in the 1806 volume, that verse reads:—

“Then num'rous colonies shall rise  
From this vile world of sin  
To people regions in the skies,  
And with bright angels shine.”



4.

[BOOK I. LVI.]

*National Judgments deprecated, and  
National Mercies pleaded.*

AMOS iii. 1-6. Long Metre.\*

## I

WHILE o'er our guilty Land, O LORD,  
We view the Terrors of thy Sword ;  
While Heav'n its fruitful Show'rs denies,  
And Nature round us fades and dies ;

## II

While Clouds collecting o'er our Head  
Seem charg'd with Wrath to smite us dead,  
Oh ! whither shall the Helpless fly ?  
To whom but Thee direct their Cry ?

## III

The helpless Sinner's Cries and Tears  
Are grown familiar to thine Ears ;  
Oft has thy Mercy sent Relief,  
When all was Fear and hopeless Grief :

## IV

On Thee, our Guardian God we call,  
Before thy Throne of Grace we fall ;  
And is there no Deliv'rance there ?  
And must we perish in Despair ?

## V

See, we repent, we weep, we mourn,  
To our forsaken GOD we turn ;  
O spare our guilty Country, spare  
The Church which Thou hast planted here !

\*This and the following Hymn were printed by the Author with two Discourses on *Amos* iii. 1-6. intitled, "VIRGINIA'S *Danger and Remedy*, and occasioned by the severe Drought in sundry Parts of that Country, and the Defeat of General *Braddock*, 1756.

## VI

Revive our with'ring Fields with Rain,  
 Let Peace compose our Land again,  
 Silence the horrid Noise of War!  
 O spare a guilty People, spare!

## VII

We plead thy Grace, indulgent God;  
 We plead thy Son's atoning Blood,  
 We plead thy gracious Promises,  
 And are they unavailing Pleas?

## VIII

These Pleas, by faith urg'd at thy Throne,  
 Have brought ten thousand Blessings down  
 On guilty Lands in helpless Woe;  
 Let them prevail to save us too!

NOTE.—The above note by Dr. Gibbons sufficiently explains the origin of this and the following hymn, and the note already made to the last hymn sufficiently elucidates the historical occasion of all three. The sermon to which the two hymns were appended was printed by W. Hunter, Williamsburg, 1756. It was not included in any of the volumes of Davies's collected sermons.

This hymn is one of the seven of Davies's included in Rippon's *Selection*. It appeared in several early American books, such as Jones & Allison's, 1790; *The Hymns Approved by the Presbytery of Charleston, S. C.*, 1796; the *Hymns* appended to Dr. Dwight's edition of Watts, 1801; Williston's, 1806; and Dodge's, 1808. Gradually it assumed the character of a fast-day hymn of somewhat standard character, appearing in prominent collections of the Lutheran, Congregational, Presbyterian, Dutch and German Reformed Churches. In some books the hymn was abridged, beginning "On Thee our Guardian God, we call," or, as in the *Andover Sabbath Hymn Book*, "On thee, O Lord our God, we call." In a little book made by Dr. James P. Wilson for the First Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia (*Hymns for Social Worship, 1817*), there is a curious medley of three verses entitled "*Prayer for rain just before harvest*," ascribed to Davies, and using some lines from the present hymn. It begins, "Great God, we view thy chast'ning hand" (No. 137).

5.

[BOOK I. LVII.]

*On the same.*

Long Metre.

I

WHILE various Rumours spread abroad,  
 And hold our Souls in dread Suspence,  
 We look, we fly to Thee our God;  
 Our Refuge is thy Providence.

II

This Wilderness, so long untill'd,  
 An hideous Waste of barren Ground,  
 Thy Care has made a fruitful Field,  
 With Peace and Plenty richly crown'd.

III

Thy Gospel spreads an heav'nly Day  
 Throughout this once benighted Land,  
 A Land once wild with Beasts of Prey,  
 By impious Heathen Rites profan'd ;

IV

Thy Gospel, like a gen'rous Vine,  
 Its Branches wide began to spread,  
 Refresh'd our Souls with heav'nly Wine,  
 And bless'd us with its cooling Shade ;

V

And shall these Mercies now remove ?  
 Shall Peace and Plenty fly away ?  
 The Land, that Heav'n did thus improve,  
 Will Heav'n give up an helpless Prey ?

VI

O must we bid our God adieu !  
 And must the Gospel take its Flight !  
 O shall our Children never view  
 The Beamings of that heav'nly Light !

## VII

Forbid it, LORD! with Arms of Faith  
 We'll hold Thee fast, and Thou shalt stay;  
 We'll cry, while we have Life or Breath,  
 Our God, do not depart away!

## VIII

If broken Hearts and weeping Eyes  
 Can find Acceptance at thy Throne,  
 Lo, here they are: this Sacrifice  
 Thou wilt accept thro' CHRIST thy Son.

NOTE.—See under No. 4. I have not found this hymn in any collection but that of Dr. Gibbons.

## 6. [BOOK I. LIX.]

*The Glories of GOD in pardoning  
 Sinners.*

As the Old 112<sup>th</sup> Psalm.

MICAH vii, 18.

## I

GREAT GOD of Wonders! all thy Ways  
 Are matchless, godlike, and divine,  
 But the fair Glories of thy Grace  
 More godlike and unrivall'd shine:  
 Who is a pard'ning God like Thee?  
 Or who has Grace so rich and free?

## II

Crimes of such Horror to forgive,  
 Such guilty daring Worms to spare,  
 This is thy grand Prerogative,  
 And none shall in the Honour share.  
 Who is a pard'ning God like Thee?  
 Or who has Grace so rich and free?

## III

Angels and Men, resign your Claim  
 To Pity, Mercy, Love, and Grace,  
 These Glories crown JEHOVAH's Name  
 With an incomparable Blaze.  
 Who is a pard'ning God like Thee?  
 Or who has Grace so rich and free?

## IV

In Wonder lost, with trembling Joy,  
 We take the Pardon of our God,  
 Pardon for Crimes of deepest Die,  
 A Pardon bought with Jesus' Blood.  
 Who is a pard'ning God like Thee?  
 Or who has Grace so rich and free?

## V

O may this strange, this matchless Grace,  
 This godlike Miracle of Love,  
 Fill the wide Earth with grateful Praise,  
 And all th' Angelic Hosts above!  
 Who is a pard'ning God like Thee?  
 Or who has Grace so rich and free?

NOTE.—Among Davies's published sermons there is none from the text here prefixed to this hymn, and none especially suggesting that the hymn was originally annexed to it. No date, therefore, can be given to the hymn earlier than that of its appearance in Dr. Gibbons's hymn book. It was to prove one of the most acceptable of Davies's hymns, is one of the seven included in Rippon's *Selection*, and one of the four in Ash and Evans's *Collection*. It is the hymn referred to as having been found by Mr. Bird in more than one hundred English hymn books.<sup>1</sup> In the course of time its text has become so modified as to leave but little of the original. It may be worth while to quote the form in which the hymn appears in the recent *Scottish Church Hymnary*:

“ GREAT God of wonders! all Thy ways  
 Are worthy of Thyself—Divine;

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<sup>1</sup> See the JOURNAL, Vol. II, p. 282.

But the bright glories of Thy grace  
 Beyond Thine other wonders shine.  
 Who is a pardoning God like Thee,  
 Or who has grace so rich and free?

“ Pardon—from an offended God !  
 Pardon—for sins of deepest dye !  
 Pardon—bestowed through Jesus’ blood !  
 Pardon—that brings the rebel nigh !  
 Who is a pardoning God like Thee,  
 Or who has grace so rich and free ?

“ O may this glorious, matchless love,  
 This God-like miracle of grace,  
 Teach mortal tongues, like those above,  
 To raise this song of lofty praise :  
 ‘ Who is a pardoning God like Thee,  
 Or who has grace so rich and free ? ’ ”

The use of the hymn in this country has been more limited, but it is found as early as 1790 in the Jones & Allison Baptist *Selection* and as late as 1871 in the Baptist *Service of Song*.

7.

## [BOOK I. LXII.]

CHRIST'S *Tenderness to the bruised  
 Reed and smoking Flax.*

MATTHEW xii. 20. Long Metre.

## I

WEAK in myself, and burden'd too,  
 Lo here I am, a bruised Reed ;  
 And see th' Almighty Conqu'ror comes,  
 And I might feel his angry Tread.

## II

But, O the condescending Grace,  
 The humble Pity of his Soul,  
 He sees the Straw, he sees its State,  
 Stoops down, supports, and makes it whole.

## III

The weak low Music of this Reed,  
 To his kind Ear is Melody ;  
 Nor will he break the useless Thing,  
 But tune it for the Choirs on high.

## IV

If e'er his Love inflam'd my Breast,  
 Alas! 'tis just expiring now:  
 A dying Snuff is all remains,  
 And furious Storms against it blow.

## V

Deep in the Socket of my Heart  
 The Flame breaks, catches, quivers, dies,  
 But Jesus breathes upon the Spark,  
 And the fresh Oil of Joy supplies.

## VI

Angels, thro' all your shining Ranks  
 Such Tenderness was never known ;  
 The brightest Wonders of his Grace  
 To our rebellious Race are shown.

## VII

But, Angels, ye with Rapture view  
 That Pity which we Mortals share ;  
 Come then, assist a bruised Reed  
 EMANUEL'S Praises to declare :

## VIII

Low are its Notes, but you can raise  
 Strains of sublimest Praise above,  
 Yet your sublimest Strains must fall  
 Far, far below his matchless Love.

NOTE.—There can hardly be a doubt that this hymn, as it reached Dr. Gibbons's hands, was appended to the sermon on "The Compassion of Christ to Weak Believers" (Matt. xii, 20), No. VIII in the published

series. The earlier part of the hymn follows the sermon with a curious closeness :—"The bruised reed seems naturally to represent a soul at once feeble in itself, and crushed with a burden." "The Lord Jesus is an almighty conqueror, marches in state throughout our world; and here and there a bruised reed lies in his way. But instead of disregarding it, or trampling it under foot, he takes care not to break it: he raises up the drooping straw, and supports it with his gentle hand." The change in the imagery to the shepherd amusing himself with the music of a pipe of reed, and again to that of the smoking flax, is much more successfully managed in the sermon than in the hymn, but the phrasing is closely parallel throughout. With the sixth verse the hymn leaves the sermon, to its own manifest gain. It is no disparagement of the hymn to say that it is inferior in quality to the sermon, for the sermon is still effective and helpful, and the hymn does not appear ever to have got beyond the confines of Dr. Gibbons's book. The sermon contains no indications of its date, and was probably not printed by Davies himself.

## 8. [BOOK I. LXX.]

*The one Thing needful generally  
neglected.*

LUKE x. 42. Long Metre.

## I

O, WAS my Heart but form'd for Woe,  
What Streams of pitying Tears should flow,  
To see the thoughtless Sons of Men  
Labour, and toil, and live in vain!

## II

One Thing is needful, one alone;  
If this be ours, all is our own:  
'Tis needful now, 'twill needful be  
In Death, and thro' Eternity.

## III

Without it we are all undone,  
Tho' we could call the World our own:  
Not all the Joys of Time and Sense  
Can countervail the Loss immense.



## IV

Yet, (O the Horrors of the Thought!)  
 The one Thing needful is forgot;  
 Forgot, while Trifles of an Hour  
 Our Love, and Hope, and Zeal devour.

## V

Hurry, and Toil, and anxious Care,  
 The busy Life of Mortals share,  
 Till Death compels them to bemoan  
 Their Folly, when their Sands are run.

## VI

The Bliss of Heav'n they disregard,  
 Hell's flaming Terrors rage unfear'd;  
 Eternity a Trifle seems;  
 Immense Realities are Dreams.

## VII

O Sinners! will you now return?  
 Or must I still your Madness mourn?  
 O will you now at length be wise,  
 And strive to gain the only Prize?

## VIII

Great God! that powerful Grace of thine,  
 Which rous'd a Soul so dead as mine,  
 Can rouse these thoughtless Sinners too  
 The one Thing needful to pursue.

**NOTE.**—The first line of this hymn may have been a reminiscence of the opening of that of Dr. Watts, (Book II, No. CVI), "Oh, if my Soul was form'd for Woe." The hymn itself closely follows the sermon on "The One Thing Needful," numbered XXI as published by Dr. Gibbons, and was doubtless appended to it in Davies's manuscripts. I have not found the hymn in any collection but that of Dr. Gibbons. The

sermon contains no indications of its date, and probably was not printed in Davies's lifetime.

9. [BOOK I. LXXXI.]

*The universal Call of GOD to  
Repentance.*

ACTS xvii. 30. Common Metre.

I

HARK ! from the Skies the great Command  
Sounds thro' the Earth abroad ;  
"Repent, ye Sons of Men, repent ;  
"Return unto your GOD."

II

The Times of Ignorance are past,  
The Gospel-Day now shines :  
The sov'reign Judge no more o'erlooks,  
But marks down all your Crimes.

III

Sinners on Thrones, in Cottages,  
All on this guilty Ball,  
Whate'er you are, whate'er you be,  
This Charge includes you all.

IV

Come Thousands then, come all Mankind  
Fall at your Sov'reign's Feet :  
With broken Hearts, and weeping Eyes,  
Approach the Mercy-Seat.

V

There sits the Sin-forgiving GOD,  
And spreads his Arms to All ;  
There his free Pardons deals abroad  
To each who hears his Call.

NOTE.—Originally appended, it may be presumed, to the sermon (No. XLIV) on “The Nature and Necessity of true Repentance” (Acts xvii, 30), and dated in a note, “New Kent, May 22, 1757.” That this hymn does not appear to have been taken from Gibbons's into other books is only another evidence of how slightly at the time the lyrical quality was regarded in estimating the availability of a hymn; for among Davies's hymns this one stands pre-eminent in respect to that quality. Its force and directness were attained partly by not attempting to summarize the sermon, and partly by forsaking his customary long metre in favor of the ballad measure.

There is nothing but the fact of a date given to suggest that this sermon may have been printed in Davies's lifetime, and the date, of course, may have been endorsed on the MS.

10. [BOOK I. CV.]

*Self-Examination.*

GAL. iv. 19, 20. Long Metre.

I

WHAT strange Perplexities arise?  
 What anxious Fears, and Jealousies?  
 What Crowds in doubtful Light appear?  
 How few, alas! approv'd and clear!

II

And what am I?—My Soul, awake,  
 And an impartial Prospect take:  
 Does no dark Sign, no Ground of Fear  
 In Practice, or in Heart appear?

III

What Image does my Spirit bear?  
 Is JESUS form'd, and living there?  
 Say, do his Lineaments Divine  
 In Thought, and Word, and Action shine?

## IV

Searcher of hearts, O search me still ;  
 The Secrets of my Soul reveal,  
 My Fears remove : let me appear  
 To God, and my own Conscience clear :

## V

Scatter the Clouds, that o'er my Head  
 Thick Glooms of dubious Terrors spread ;  
 Lead me into celestial Day,  
 And to my Self my Self display :

## VI

May I at that blest World arrive,  
 Where CHRIST thro' all my Soul shall live,  
 And give full proof that he is there,  
 Without one gloomy Doubt or Fear.

NOTE.—This hymn appears to have been appended to Sermon XLV; “The Tender Anxieties of Ministers for their People” (Gal. iv, 19, 20). A note gives “Hanover, Jan. 8, 1758” as the date of the sermon, and hence of the hymn. The sermon is a frank statement of the preacher’s reasons for doubting that many of his hearers are Christians, and an explanation of what is meant by that formation of the image of Christ in their hearts which “alone can put it beyond all doubt that they are Christians indeed.” The call of the sermon is to self-examination, and it ends with an invocation to the Holy Spirit. In the hymn the first verse repeats the preacher’s doubt, while the remainder responds to his call for self-examination.

This is one of the seven hymns of Davies’s that were copied into Rippon’s *Selection*, and one of the four in Ash & Evans. In this country it appeared in the *Hymns approved by the Presbytery of Charleston, S. C.* 1796 ; in the *Hymns* appended to Dr. Dwight’s edition of Watts, 1801 ; in Williston’s book of 1806, and in many more after that date. In both countries it attained a wide circulation and use. It still appears in the *Church Book*, in current use in the American Lutheran (General Council) Church, and in Dr. Hatfield’s (Presbyterian) *Church Hymn Book*, 1872, also in current use.

The giving of the original date and of one note to the sermon is all that suggests that it may have been printed by Davies.

## 11. [BOOK I. CXXIX.]

*Spiritual Want and Misery confessed,  
and the Communication of spiritual  
Blessings implored.*

REV. iii. 17, 18. Long Metre.

## I

No, I'll indulge vain Hopes no more :  
I see I'm wretched, blind, and poor ;  
By mad Delusions led astray,  
Till now Conviction shot its Ray.

## II

Blest JESUS ! 'tis thine heav'nly Light  
That opens this surprizing Sight,  
Shows me myself so long unknown,  
And by my Ignorance undone.

## III

Welcome this Heart-affecting View,  
Tho' dreadful, just ; tho' painful, true !  
Ye visionary Hopes, farewell,  
Ye dreams of Bliss that end in Hell !

## IV

LORD, since my Danger now I see,  
O let me view my Remedy !  
And let the Day, that shows my Wound,  
Show me where Healing may be found !

## V

The wretched, helpless, poor, and blind  
Relief in Thee alone can find.  
See one more Sinner from the Dust  
Look up, and make thy Name his Trust.

## VI

O may that Sun which saw me poor,  
 Tho' proud of my imagin'd Store,  
 Dart down his setting Beams on me,  
 Enrich'd, and safe, and blest in Thee!

NOTE.—I have not identified this and the following hymn, to which the same Scripture text is prefixed, as presumably associated with any one of Davies's published sermons, nor found this one in any hymn book but that of Dr. Gibbons.

12. [BOOK I. CXXX.]

*Applying for Relief to the  
 All-Sufficiency of CHRIST.*

REV. iii. 17, 18. Long Metre.

## I

I HEAR the Counsel of a Friend ;  
 To the kind Voice, my Soul, attend.  
 "Come, Sinners, wretched, blind, and poor,  
 "Come, draw from my unbounded Store.

## II

"I only ask you to receive,  
 "For freely I my Blessings give."  
 JESUS, and are thy Treasures free,  
 Then I may dare to come to Thee?

## III

I come for Grace, that Gold refin'd,  
 T' enrich and beautify my Mind,  
 Grace that will Trials well endure,  
 By Trials more divinely pure ;

## IV

Naked I come for that bright Dress,  
 Thy perfect spotless Righteousness,  
 That glorious Robe, so richly dy'd  
 In thine own Blood, my Shame to hide.

## V

Like *Bartimeus*,\* LORD, to Thee  
 I come : O give the Blind to see !  
 Ev'n Clay is Eye-salve in thine Hand,  
 If Thou the Blessing but command.

## VI

Poor, naked, blind I hither came,  
 O let me not depart the same !  
 Let me return, All-gracious LORD,  
 Enrich'd, adorn'd, to Sight restor'd.

NOTE.—See under No. 11. This hymn was not one of those originally selected by Dr. Rippon for his *Selection*, but was added to the 10th Edition, 1800, (as a third part of Hymn 121) with some alterations in the text. I have not found it elsewhere.

13.

## [BOOK II. XXVIII.]

*Self-Dedication at the Table  
 of the LORD.*

Long Metre.

A SACRAMENTAL HYMN.

## I

LORD, I am thine, entirely thine,  
 Purchas'd and sav'd by Blood Divine,  
 With full Consent thine I would be,  
 And own thy sov'reign Right in me.

## II

Here, LORD, my Flesh, my Soul, my All  
 I yield to Thee beyond Recal ;  
 Accept thine own so long withheld,  
 Accept what I so freely yield !

\* *Mark* x. 46.

## III

Grant one poor Sinner more a Place  
 Among the Children of thy Grace ;  
 A wretched Sinner lost to GOD,  
 But ransom'd by EMANUEL's Blood.

## IV

Thine would I live, thine would I die,  
 Be thine thro' all Eternity :  
 The Vow is past beyond Repeal,  
 Now will I set the solemn Seal.

## V

Be Thou the Witness of my Vow,  
 Angels and Men attest it too,  
 That to thy Board I now repair,  
 And seal the sacred Contract there.

## VI

Here at that Cross, where flows the Blood  
 That bought my guilty Soul for God,  
 Thee my new Master now I call,  
 And consecrate to Thee my All ;

## VII

Do Thou assist a feeble Worm  
 The great Engagement to perform :  
 Thy Grace can full Assistance lend,  
 And on that Grace I dare depend.

NOTE.—Of this hymn, two verses, with the first line altered to “ Lord, am I thine, entirely thine ? ” were included by Dr. Rippon in his *Selection*, and it may be owing to this inadequate presentation that the hymn remains little known in England. In this country, on the other hand, it is by much the best known of Davies's hymns: it is indeed the only one now associated with his name in the popular mind. Omitting early reprints of Rippon's *Selection*, Collier's *Baptist Selection* of 1812, and the Dutch Reformed book of 1814, are the earliest in which I have found the hymn. By the middle of the century its use had become quite common.



To-day it is in familiar use in all the Presbyterian Churches that sing hymns, in both the Reformed, and in the Baptist, Congregational, Lutheran, Methodist, and other Churches. In several of these bodies it has attained the rank of a standard hymn, and is inevitably associated with their religious experiences in the minds of very many. In annotating *The Hymnal of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, the Rev. Charles S. Nutter has described this hymn as "a rich legacy to the Christian Church."<sup>1</sup>

Of such a hymn an account of its origin is particularly desirable. It was apparently first printed in Dr. Gibbons's book. While there associated with no scripture text, there can hardly be a doubt that it came into his hands among Davies's papers appended to the sermon afterwards printed as No. XXXI: "Dedication to God argued from Redeeming Mercy," from the text (I Cor. vi, 19, 20), "What! know ye not that ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price;" etc. A note states (in doubtful English), "The discourse is said by the author to be Sermons preparatory to the Lord's Supper," but there is little to fix the date of composition of the sermon or to suggest that he had printed it. It was preached in Virginia, as he refers to his hearers as freemen and slaves, black and white; and a reference to a coming possible persecution, even to death, may, perhaps, refer to Davies's dread of Roman Catholic supremacy in view of the French aggressions. The reference may, on the other hand, be only to the possible position of dissenters under English rule; in which case the sermon probably antedates the French War, during which the disabilities of the dissenters were lightened.

In addressing his hearers Davies "enters a claim" in God's name "to the whole of them, soul and body, and whatever they possess," as God's and not their own. He urges that their solemn business at the Lord's table is "to yield themselves to God, and seal their indenture to be His." This claim the preacher rests upon God's creation of them, His providential support of them, and especially His purchase and redemption of them by Christ's blood. He proceeds to expound the nature of the duty of their dedication of themselves involved in these premises. In the exhortation he asks his hearers to follow him while he proposes the terms of the transaction, and, if they consent to it, they are "to rise and crowd round the table of their Lord, and there annex their solemn seals, and acknowledge it as their act and deed." The "contract" thus read is as follows: "Lord, here is a poor sinner, thy creature redeemed by the blood of thy Son, that has long been a slave to other masters, and withheld from thee thy just and dear-bought property; here, Lord, I would now, freely and without reserve, devote and surrender myself, my soul and body, and my all to thee, to be universally and for ever

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<sup>1</sup> *Hymn Studies*: rev. ed. New York, 1891, p. 183.

thine. And let the omnipotent God, let angels and men, be witness to the engagement." It will readily be seen that the hymn relates itself to the sermon at this point, and that in it the individual believer at the Lord's table gives voice to the terms of his self-surrender.

The hymn beginning, "While to Thy table I repair," No. 652, in Dr. Robinson's *Songs of the Church*, (1862), ascribed to Davies, is merely a *réchauffé* of the above hymn, which also appears in that book in its proper text.

14. [BOOK II. XXIX.]

*The holy Spirit invoked, and his  
purifying and quickening Influences implored.*

As the Old 112th PSALM.

I

ETERNAL Spirit, Source of Light,  
Enliv'ning, consecrating Fire,  
Descend, and with celestial Heat  
Our dull, our frozen Hearts inspire,  
Our Souls refine, our Dross consume!  
Come, condescending Spirit, come!

II

In our cold Breasts O strike a Spark  
Of the pure Flame which Seraphs feel,  
Nor let us wander in the Dark,  
Or lie benumb'd and stupid still.  
Come, vivifying Spirit, come,  
And make our Hearts thy constant Home!

III

Whatever Guilt and Madness dare,  
We would not quench the heav'nly Fire:  
Our Hearts as Fuel we prepare,  
Tho' in the Flame we should expire:  
Our Breasts expand to make Thee Room:  
Come, purifying Spirit, come!

## IV

Let pure Devotion's Fervors rise!  
 Let ev'ry pious Passion glow!  
 O let the Raptures of the Skies  
 Kindle in our cold Hearts below!  
 Come, condescending Spirit, come,  
 And make our Souls thy constant Home!

NOTE.—There is nothing to suggest that this hymn was originally appended to any of the published sermons. It was one of the seven hymns taken into Rippon's *Selection*, and one of the four in Ash & Evans's *Collection*. It appears also in Williams & Boden's *Collection*, 1801, and other English books. In this country it attained very wide circulation, appearing, among others, in Jones & Allison's *Selection*, 1790; the *Charleston Hymns*, 1796; the *Hartford Selection*, 1799; Spalding's *The Lord's Song*, 1805; Williston's, 1806; Collier's, 1812; the *Lutheran* of 1814 and 1850; Nettleton's *Village Hymns*; the *Presbyterian Psalms and Hymns* of 1830 and 1843; Dr. Hatfield's *Church Hymn Book*, 1872; and Dr. Schaff's *Hymns and Songs of Praise*, 1874. The hymn has largely passed out of use, and possibly never much appealed to the popular heart, but it still occupies a creditable place in the anthology of Hymns of The Spirit.

15.

[BOOK II. XXX.]

CHRIST *most worthy of Esteem, but  
 ungratefully neglected in our World.*

Long Metre.

## I

WELCOME to Earth, Great Son of GOD!  
 His best-belov'd, his only Son!  
 Hail, Thou blest Messenger of Peace  
 To Sinners helpless and undone!

## II

Hail, great Deliv'rer!——Bow the Knee,  
 Ye Rebel-Nations, and adore!  
 JESUS, who would not love thy Name?  
 What Rebel dare offend Thee more?

## III

See ev'n this stubborn Heart of mine  
 Conquer'd by sov'reign Love, submit,  
 And shall not all the Nations fall  
 In humble Homage at thy Feet?

## IV

[Shall not thy Praise from Tongue to Tongue  
 Be spread? Thy Love from Breast to Breast?  
 Thy Name the universal Song  
 From North to South, from East to West?]

## V

But, O my Heart, with Sorrow break,  
 Mine Eyes pour out incessant Tears!  
 The Son of GOD, the Sinner's Friend,  
 Neglected in our World appears.

## VI

The Wonders of his dying Love  
 The Riches of his Grace forgot!—  
 Strange! *Justice* should behold the Sight,  
 And yet its Vengeance kindle not.

## VII

[O Thou, whose Mercy deign'd to pray  
 For those who nail'd Thee to the Tree,  
 The Wonders of thy Pow'r display,  
 And turn the Hearts of Men to Thee!]

## VIII

Make Thyself Room in ev'ry Heart;  
 Great Saviour! welcome into mine;  
 Welcome, great Conqu'ror, to our World,  
 To make all Tribes and Nations thine!

NOTE.—None of the published sermons of Davies suggests that this hymn may originally have been appended to it. I have found it in no hymn book except that in which Dr. Gibbons first printed it. It has, nevertheless, a felicity in rhythm and phrase greater than some other

hymns of Davies ; and certainly these qualities are most clearly marked in the two verses enclosed in brackets by Dr. Gibbons as being convenient to omit.

16.

[BOOK II. XXXI.]

*The Transcendent Excellency of CHRIST  
in his Person and Offices, and the  
Soul desirous to love Him.*

As the Old 112<sup>th</sup> PSALM.

## I

JESUS, how precious is thy Name!  
The great JEHOVAH's Darling, Thou!  
O let me catch th' immortal Flame,  
With which Angelic Bosoms glow!  
Since Angels love Thee, I would love,  
And imitate the Blest above.

## II

*My Prophet* Thou, my heav'nly Guide,  
Thy sweet Instructions I will hear,  
The Words, that from thy Lips proceed,  
O how divinely sweet they are!  
Thee, my great *Prophet*, I would love,  
And imitate the Blest above.

## III

*My great High-Priest*, whose precious Blood  
Did once atone upon the Cross,  
Who now dost intercede with God,  
And plead the friendless Sinner's Cause;  
In Thee I trust; Thee I would love,  
And imitate the Blest above.

## IV

*My King* supreme, to Thee I bow,  
A willing Subject at thy Feet;  
All other Lords I disavow,  
And to thy Government submit:  
*My Saviour-King* this Heart would love,  
And imitate the Blest above.

## V

Transcendant Prince! for ever dear,  
 Dearer than thousand Worlds to me,  
 Shall bold presumptuous Rivals dare  
 Pretend to share my Love with Thee?  
 Thee above all this heart would love,  
 And imitate the Blest above.

NOTE.—Internal evidence plainly suggests that this hymn came into Dr. Gibbons's hands appended to the sermon published as No. XIV in his volumes:—"Christ Precious to all true Believers"; from I Peter ii, 7, "Unto you therefore which believe, He is precious." The sermon bears no date, and was probably not printed by Davies.

The four main points of the exposition are: (1) Christ is precious in Himself; (2) precious in His offices as Prophet, Priest and King; (3) precious to all the angels; (4) infinitely precious to the Father. It is interesting to observe how each of these points enters into the structure of the hymn.

It is one of the seven of Davies's hymns in Rippon's *Selection* and one of the four in Ash & Evans's. It was in many other important English hymn books, such as Williams & Boden's *Collection*, 1801; Dobell's *New Selection*, 1806; Bickersteth's *Christian Psalmody*, 1833. In Dobell, the second line became, "The great Jehovah's equal thou!" and in Bickersteth, "Beloved of the Father, thou!" Dobell's, as well as Rippon's, book was reprinted in this country, and this hymn passed from them into a few American collections, such as Collier's *Selection*, 1812, and Henry Miller's *New Selection*, of which there were many editions. In both countries the hymn has largely gone out of use. Dr. Julian, in his *Dictionary of Hymnology*, remarks: "It is worthy of notice."

17.

## AN HYMN

BY THE AUTHOR OF THE SERMON FOREGOING,

(*Varied from Dr. Doddridge*)

*With grateful hearts* come let us sing,  
 The gifts of our ascended King;  
 Though long since gone from earth below,  
 Through every age his bounties flow.

*The Saviour when to heav'n he rose  
In splendid triumph o'er his foes,  
His gifts on rebel men bestow'd,  
And wide his royal bounties flow'd.*

*Hence sprung th' apostles' honour'd name,  
More glorious than the hero's fame ;  
Evangelists and prophets hence  
Derive the blessings they dispense.*

*In humbler forms, to bless our eyes,  
Pastors from hence and teachers rise ;  
Who, though with feebler rays they shine,  
Still gild a long-extended line.*

*From Christ their various gifts derive,  
And fed by Christ their graces live :  
While, guarded by his mighty hand,  
'Midst all the rage of hell they stand.*

Thus teachers, teachers shall succeed  
When we lie silent with the dead !  
And unborn churches, by their care,  
Shall rise and flourish large and fair.

*Pastors and people, join and sing,  
This constant, inexhausted spring,  
Whence through all ages richly flow  
The streams that cheer the church below.*

NOTE.—The above hymn was printed at the end of Sermon LXXVIII in the 1806 volume of Davies's *Sermons*. The sermon, on "The Office of a Bishop a Good Work," was preached at the ordination of the Rev. John Martin at Hanover, June 9, 1757, and looks as though it had been printed at the time. The hymn is a recast of Doddridge's "Father of Mercies, in Thy House," (No. CCLXXXIX in Orton's 1755 edition of *Doddridge's Hymns Founded on various Texts in the Holy Scriptures*). The words of the original retained by Davies are here indicated by italic type. Dr. Gibbons did not print this among Davies's hymns in his hymn book.

18.

## An HYMN

*From Dr. DODDRIDGE, varied.*

A hymn with the above title is printed at the end of a sermon preached by Davies at Hanover, May 8, 1757, and printed in London in 1758, with the title, "Little Children Invited to Jesus Christ." The sermon is in 24mo, of 36 pages, including "A Short Account of the late remarkable Religious Impressions among the Students in the College of New Jersey," and has apparently never been reprinted.

The hymn is that printed as No. 198 in Orton's edition of Doddridge's hymns, beginning, "See Israel's gentle Shepherd stand." The first four verses are unaltered, and in place of Doddridge's fifth verse the following original verse makes the fifth as here printed :—

"Ye feeble Lambs, fly to His Arms,  
That open wide for you ;  
He'll save you from the Lion's Rage,  
And all th' infernal Crew."