



THE ONE YEAR [®]

BOOK *of* HYMNS



365 DEVOTIONS BASED ON POPULAR HYMNS





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The One Year Book of Hymns: 365 Devotions Based on Popular Hymns

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PREFACE

*Shout with joy to the LORD, all the earth! Worship the LORD
with gladness. Come before him, singing with joy.*

PSALM 100:1-2

From the earliest days of the church, the singing of hymns has been an integral part of Christian worship. In the book of Acts we find Paul and Silas “praying and singing hymns to God” (Acts 16:25) while chained in the Philippian jail. It was also the apostle Paul who admonished believers with these words: “Be filled with the Holy Spirit, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts. And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 5:18-20).

But the tradition of singing in worship is far older than even Paul and the early Christians. Many centuries earlier, Moses and his sister, Miriam, led the nation of Israel in song after their miraculous escape through the Red Sea. And who can forget King David, Israel’s beloved singer, who composed numerous psalms expressing both personal and corporate praise. Centuries later, translations of the psalms would provide the nurturing cradle for English hymnody.

In centuries past, singing hymns was an important means for teaching Christian truth in a church that was largely illiterate. Even so, hymn singing was and is far more than just a way of disseminating knowledge. It is a means for all believers, educated or uneducated, great or lowly, to express praise to their Creator and Savior. It is a way for all of us to communicate with God using more than just words. It allows us to pour out the grateful feelings of the heart—feelings awakened by the experience of forgiveness and the gracious work of the Holy Spirit.

As you come each day to this devotional, lift your heart and voice in praise to the Lord of all peoples and centuries—Jesus Christ. Join the chorus of believers throughout history and throughout the earth as you express praise and commitment to God through their words. Meet the hymnwriters and discover how God’s work in their lives has left this legacy of hymns for us to share. And as you worship through this treasury of hymns, look forward to the day when all believers—past, present, and future—will join in one great chorus around God’s throne. For as the great hymnwriter Isaac Watts once recognized, “The singing of God’s praise is the part of worship most closely related to heaven.”

JANUARY 1

Another Year Is Dawning

Frances Ridley Havergal enjoyed New Year's Day. It was a day of promise, looking forward in faith to God's blessing in the coming twelve months. She had such a positive spirit that when she entered a room, it was said she brought a "burst of sunshine." New Year's Day was the source for today's hymn, "Another Year Is Dawning," which she wrote on a card she was sending to a friend.

Frances Havergal died when she was only forty-three. Even at the end of her life she remained steadfast in reminding Christians that "fresh glory" is just as important as fresh air and fresh water. We need to celebrate God's glorious mercies each new day as well as each new year.



*May the Lord bless you and protect you.
May the Lord smile on you and be gracious
to you. May the Lord show you his favor
and give you his peace.*

NUMBERS 6:24-26

Another year is dawning:

Dear Father, let it be,
In working or in waiting,
Another year with Thee;
Another year of progress,
Another year of praise,
Another year of proving
Thy presence all the days.

Another year of mercies,
Of faithfulness and grace;
Another year of gladness
In the shining of Thy face;
Another year of leaning
Upon Thy loving breast;
Another year of trusting,
Of quiet, happy rest.

Another year of service,
Of witness for Thy love;
Another year of training
For holier work above.
Another year is dawning:
Dear Father, let it be,
On earth or else in heaven,
Another year for Thee.

Frances Ridley Havergal (1836-1879)



May the Mind of Christ, My Savior



May the mind of Christ, my Savior,
Live in me from day to day,
By His love and pow'r controlling
All I do and say.

May the word of God dwell richly
In my heart from hour to hour,
So that all may see I triumph
Only through His pow'r.

May the peace of God my Father
Rule my life in ev'rything,
That I may be calm to comfort
Sick and sorrowing.

May the love of Jesus fill me
As the waters fill the sea;
Him exalting, self abasing—
This is victory.

May I run the race before me,
Strong and brave to face the foe,
Looking only unto Jesus
As I onward go.

May His beauty rest upon me
As I seek the lost to win,
And may they forget the channel,
Seeing only Him.

Kate B. Wilkinson (1859-1928)

Many Christians have made the New Year's resolution to be more like Jesus—but where do you start? The apostle Paul told the Philippian believers, "You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had" (Philippians 2:5). But how do we develop the attitude of Christ? Kate Wilkinson directs us to Colossians 3:16 for the answer: "Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives." In the third stanza Wilkinson returns to Philippians for this promise: "God's peace . . . will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7). And so the song builds.

Christian growth is not instantaneous but gradual. It flows naturally from obeying God's Word. Thomas à Kempis, who wrote the Christian classic *The Imitation of Christ*, said, "One thing that draws back many from spiritual progress is the fear of the difficulty of the labor of the combat." Don't give up what you have started.



Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus.

COLOSSIANS 3:16-17

Great God, We Sing That Mighty Hand

In Scripture the “hand of God” often refers to judgment. But for the Christian it is also an image of providential care. We can see this throughout the book of Ezra, where Ezra attributed his success to the fact that the gracious hand of God was upon him.

Philip Doddridge felt the same way. The youngest of twenty children, Doddridge was considered too sickly to live, but the gracious hand of God was upon him. His parents died when he was only a teenager, but he was taken in by a minister who nurtured him in spiritual matters. Doddridge became a pastor, an educator, a hymnwriter, and an author. One theme remained uppermost in his mind—the providence of God. He wrote his hymns to illustrate his sermons and taught them to his congregation after he finished preaching. “Great God, We Sing That Mighty Hand” apparently illustrated a New Year’s sermon.



*The Lord is a shelter for the oppressed,
a refuge in times of trouble. Those who
know your name trust in you, for you,
O Lord, do not abandon those who
search for you.*

PSALM 9:9-10

Great God, we sing that mighty hand
By which supported still we stand;
The opening year Thy mercy shows;
That mercy crowns it till it close.

By day, by night, at home, abroad,
Still are we guarded by our God;
By His incessant bounty fed,
By His unerring counsel led.

With grateful hearts the past we own;
The future, all to us unknown,
We to Thy guardian care commit,
And peaceful leave before Thy feet.

In scenes exalted or depressed,
Thou art our Joy, and Thou our Rest;
Thy goodness all our hopes shall raise,
Adored through all our changing days.

Philip Doddridge (1702-1751)



JANUARY 4

Lead, Kindly Light!

Lead, kindly Light! amid th'encircling gloom,
Lead Thou me on;
The night is dark, and I am far from home,
Lead Thou me on;
Keep Thou my feet: I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor prayed that Thou
Shouldst lead me on;
I loved to choose and see my path; but now
Lead Thou me on;
I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will. Remember not past years.

So long Thy pow'r has blessed me, sure it still
Will lead me on
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
The night is gone;
And with the morn those angel faces smile
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile!

John Henry Newman (1801-1890)



In 1833 John Henry Newman, a leader in the Church of England, went to visit Catholic leaders in Italy. There he contracted Sicilian fever and boarded a ship back to England. But a lack of wind kept the ship motionless in the Mediterranean, and a dense fog left them unable to navigate. Restless and sick, Newman penned the words of this hymn. Along with his desire for physical health, he wanted to see spiritual recovery in the Church of England. And he wanted the ship to get moving!

Finally, the ship's captain pointed heavenward and said, "The star is shining tonight. If a wind rises, we can chart our course. At night one little star is sufficient." Newman took that as a divine assurance. He later wrote that he had been looking for dazzling sunlight to guide him through his life, "but He sent me the kindly light of a star to show me the way one step at a time."



Your own ears will hear him. Right behind you a voice will say, "This is the way you should go," whether to the right or to the left.

ISAIAH 30:21

The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want

Scottish Bibles in the seventeenth century often had psalms in meter printed after the book of Revelation. The metrical psalms were sung twice a day in most of the humble cottages of Scotland and so became more familiar to the people than the Bible text itself.

This text of the familiar Twenty-third Psalm comes from a metrical version by Francis Rous, a member of the British Parliament. He was dissatisfied with the accuracy of other psalm translations being used by the Puritans, some of which took liberties with the meaning to make the words rhyme. As you can see, this version is a faithful paraphrase of David's original. Rous's Psalter was widely used and was authorized by the Westminster Assembly, which also created the Westminster Confession of Faith.



The Lord is my shepherd; I have all that I need. He lets me rest in green meadows; he leads me beside peaceful streams. He renews my strength. He guides me along right paths, bringing honor to his name.

PSALM 23:1-3

The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want;
He makes me down to lie
In pastures green; He leadeth me
The quiet waters by.

My soul He doth restore again;
And me to walk doth make
Within the paths of righteousness,
E'en for His own name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through death's dark vale,
Yet will I fear no ill;
For Thou art with me, and Thy rod
And staff me comfort still.

My table Thou hast furnished
In presence of my foes;
My head Thou dost with oil anoint,
And my cup overflows.

Goodness and mercy all my life
Shall surely follow me;
And in God's house forevermore
My dwelling place shall be.

Scottish Psalter, 1650



We Three Kings of Orient Are

We three kings of Orient are;
Bearing gifts we traverse afar,
Field and fountain, moor and mountain,
Following yonder star.

**O star of wonder, star of night,
Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to thy perfect light.**

Born a King on Bethlehem's plain,
Gold I bring to crown Him again,
King forever, ceasing never
Over us all to reign.

Frankincense to offer have I;
Incense owns a Deity nigh;
Prayer and praising all men raising,
Worship Him, God on high.

Myrrh is mine: its bitter perfume
Breathes a life of gathering gloom:
Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying,
Sealed in the stone-cold tomb.

Glorious now behold Him arise,
King and God and sacrifice;
Alleluia, Alleluia!
Sounds through the earth and skies.

John Henry Hopkins, Jr. (1820-1891)



Unfortunately, we tend to sing only the first stanza of most Christmas carols, even though the depth of meaning is often found in later stanzas. Everyone knows that the wise men brought gifts, but what was their significance? John Henry Hopkins, an Episcopalian minister (as well as a news reporter and stained-glass artist), pondered this question in hymn form in 1857.

Gold was a gift for a king. Frankincense was brought by priests in their worship of God. Myrrh was a spice used in burial. Thus Jesus was honored by these sages as King, God, and Sacrifice.

How then shall we approach the King of kings? What gold shall we bring? What incense can we offer as priests of our God? How can we honor our crucified Lord? It makes sense to consider these questions today, the traditional date of Epiphany, celebrating the magi's worship of our Lord.



Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him."

MATTHEW 2:1-2, NKJV

As with Gladness, Men of Old



The church has traditionally celebrated the coming of the wise men two weeks after Christmas. But on Epiphany Sunday in 1860, William Dix was too sick to attend church. At home in bed, he read the story of the wise men and tried to apply the lesson to his own heart. The result was a new Christmas hymn that celebrated while it instructed, one that applied not only to the author, but to future generations of Christians as well. The pattern is obvious: As the wise men did—following, adoring, giving—so should we.

Dix was a brilliant linguist and poet, but he made his living as the manager of a maritime insurance company in Glasgow, Scotland. He knew the rigors of travel and the joy of bringing gifts from afar. Yet rather than focusing on the costliness of the magi's gifts, Dix emphasized the magi's finding of what they sought and their worship of the Christ child.



When they saw the star, they were filled with joy! They entered the house and saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

MATTHEW 2:10-11

As with gladness men of old
Did the guiding star behold;
As with joy they hailed its light,
Leading onward, beaming bright;
So, most gracious Lord, may we
Evermore be led to Thee.

As with joyous steps they sped
To that lowly manger bed,
There to bend the knee before
Him whom heaven and earth adore;
So may we with willing feet
Ever seek Thy mercy seat.

As they offered gifts most rare
At the manger rude and bare,
So may we with holy joy,
Pure and free from sin's alloy,
All our costliest treasures bring,
Christ, to Thee, our heavenly King.

Holy Jesus, every day
Keep us in the narrow way;
And, when earthly things are past,
Bring our ransomed souls at last
Where they need no star to guide,
Where no clouds Thy glory hide.

In the heavenly country bright
Need they no created light;
Thou its light, its joy, its crown,
Thou its sun which goes not down,
There forever may we sing
Hallelujah to our King.

William Chatterton Dix (1837-1898)