

MS Festivals¹

MS Festivals is a single foolscap sheet (8.5 in. by 13.5 in.) that contains ten manuscript poems and one poem in shorthand. The manuscript poems are devoted largely to public holidays and saints' days. They appear to be addressed to the Mayor and Corporation of Bristol on the occasion of some annual festival. The shorthand verse is a self-reflection of Charles Wesley on his lack of musical skills.

After drafting the poems, Charles Wesley renumbered them to suggest a revised order. We transcribe the poems below in this desired order, but without trying to crowd on two pages. The original order of the poems on the two sides of the foolscap page is as follows (from top to bottom):

front: 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 10

back: shorthand, 6, 4, 7, 9

Since the pagination below is not original, readers might want to cite by hymn number instead of page number.

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¹This document was produced by the Duke Center for Studies in the Wesleyan Tradition under the editorial direction of Randy L. Maddox, with the diligent assistance of Aileen F. Maddox. Last updated: August 1, 2010.

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1.²

Prologue.

Readers accept at this thrice solemn Time
The humble Tribute of an Annual Rhyme,
Accept with Smiles, from such a Bard as me,
Plain artless Truth transcending Poesy:
Let Others in³ superiour Strains aspire,
Charm the gay Crowd, and strike the tuneful Lyre,
Suffice it if to me kind Heaven impart
A good Intention, and an honest Heart.

2.⁴

**To the Worshipful the Mayor and
Aldermen of the City of Bristol.**

Ye worthy Ministers of Righteousness,
Who Piety promote, and Vice suppress,
Ye Guardians of our Liberties and Laws,
Patrons of Virtue's and Religion's Cause,
Go on, your high Commission to fulfil,
Commend The Good, and terrify The Ill,
Till HE who did the Powers on Earth ordain,
Receive You with Himself in Heavenly Bliss to reign.

3.⁵

On St. Michael.

See from his Throne by the Archangel driven,
The Dragon falls, as Lightning, out of Heaven!
To Hell He falls: but bursts th' infernal Den,
And fiercely wars against the Sons of Men:
Yet Michael shall again or'ecome the Foe,
Jesus shall Him, and all his Host or'ethrow,
And take us up their Places to supply,
First of Created Things, and Nearest the Most High!

²Published posthumously in *Unpublished Poetry*, 3:105.

³Ori., "to."

⁴Published posthumously in *Unpublished Poetry*, 3:105.

⁵Published posthumously in *Unpublished Poetry*, 3:105.

4.⁶

On the King's Birth-day.

With Joy we see th' auspicious Day return,
When Heaven on Brittain smil'd, and George was born!
Born for the General Good, by Fate⁷ design'd
A Parent, King, a Patron of Mankind!
Long may He bless the Nations with his Sway,
See the calm Sunset of his glorious Day
With golden Beams thro' all th' Horison shine,
And late return to Heaven in Majesty Divine!

5.⁸

On St. Andrew.⁹

"Saints in old Times there were (the World allow)
"But only Fools pretend to Saintship now."
What Fools like Those,¹⁰ who senselesly divide,
And blasphemously mock *The Sanctified*?
All¹¹ *must* be Saints, or *Lost*. Who will not be
Holy Themselves, our GOD shall never see;
Who scoff his Saints below, shall never prove
The Glorious Fellowship of Saints above.

6.¹²

On S[t]. Thomas' Day.

Happy the Man by Jesus Grace subdued,
Who saw, and cried at last, My Lord, my God!
They too are blest, whose Lives and Actions own
Their Lord and GOD, beheld by Faith alone,
Blest with the Consciousness of Sin forgiven
Blest with the Seal, and Antepast of Heaven,
Blest with their Full Inheritance above,
Blest with a glorious Crown of everlasting Love.

⁶Published posthumously in *Representative Verse*, 295; and *Unpublished Poetry*, 3:108. The king mentioned is George II who died in 1760.

⁷Ori., "Heaven."

⁸Published posthumously in *Unpublished Poetry*, 3:106.

⁹Ori., "Andrews."

¹⁰Ori., "You."

¹¹Ori., "Sain All"; presumably the first four letters of "Saints."

¹²Published posthumously in *Unpublished Poetry*, 3:107.

7.¹³

On the Prince of Wales.

Hail happy Prince, in whom combin'd we see
Imperial State, and mild Humanity!
In Thee¹⁴ let every Virtue still be join'd,
To constitute the Darling of Mankind:
And when your Royal Greatness shall supply
The Throne of George, translated to the Sky,
With Equal Mercy may You use your Power,
And leave a Race of Kings, till Time shall be no more.

8.¹⁵

On Christmas Day.

Favour and Peace on Earth and Praise in Heaven!
To us a Son is born, a Child is given!
To day¹⁶ Jehovah lays aside his Crown,
To day the Saviour of the World comes down,
GOD over all supream, who all things made,
Cloath'd with our Flesh, and in a Manger laid,
Is¹⁷ on this happy Morn to Mortals given:
Favour and Peace on Earth, and Praise in Heaven!

¹³Published posthumously in *Representative Verse*, 295; and *Unpublished Poetry*, 3:108. The Prince of Wales did not succeed his father, George II, as he died before him.

¹⁴Ori., "~~Let every Virtue~~ In Thee."

¹⁵Published posthumously in *Representative Verse*, 204; and *Unpublished Poetry*, 3:106.

¹⁶Ori., "~~Jehovah~~ To day."

¹⁷Ori., "As."

9.¹⁸

On St. Stephen's Day.

O for a Zeal like His,¹⁹ who scorn'd to fear
The hoary Murderers in Moses Chair!
O for a Faith like His, whose streaming Blood
First seal'd the Truth of the Atoning GOD!²⁰
A Meekness Evil still with Good t' oppose,
A Love that prays for its²¹ relentless Foes,
A Fiery Car, to mount like Dying Stephen,
And seize the glittering Crown, reach'd out by GOD in Heaven!

10.²²

On Innocents Day.

We blame the Savage King, whose Cruel Word
Gave up his Subjects Children to the Sword,
We praise our *doting* selves, who every Hour
Yield our own Babes to the Destroyer's Power:
Which to poor Innocents doth heavier prove,
The Tyrant's Hatred, or the Parents' Love?
His Fury on their slaughter'd Bodies fell,
Our Fondness sends their pamper'd Souls to Hell.

[11.]²³

Who would not wish to have the skill
Of tuning instruments at will?
Ye powers who guide my actions, tell
Why I, in whom the seeds of music dwell,
Who most its power and excellence admire,
Whose very breast itself a lyre
Was never taught the happy art
Of modulating sounds,
And can no more in concert bear a part
Than the wild roe that o're the mountain bounds.

¹⁸Published posthumously in *Unpublished Poetry*, 3:108.

¹⁹Ori., "Thine."

²⁰Ori., "Blood."

²¹Ori., "his."

²²Published posthumously in *Representative Verse*, 295; and *Unpublished Poetry*, 3:107.

²³This self-reflective poem was written in shorthand in the margin above poem 6 in MS Festivals. The shorthand expansion is by Frank Baker. Published posthumously in *Representative Verse*, 311; and *Unpublished Poetry*, 3:109.