

Charles Wesley's poem to Whitefield

Come on, my Whitefield (since the strife is past, and friends at first are friends again at last.)
Our hands, and hearts, and counsels let us join, in mutual league, t'advance the work Divine.
Our one contention now, our single aim, to pluck poor souls as brands out of the flame;
To spread the victory of that bloody cross, and gasp our latest breath in the Redeemer's cause.

Too long, alas! We gave to Satan place when party-zeal put on an angel's face,
Too long we listened to the coz'ning fiend, whose trumpet sounded, "For the faith contend!"
With hasty blind-fold rage, in error's night, how did we with our fellow-soldiers fight!
We could not then our Father's children know, but each mistook his brother for his foe.

Foes to the truth, can you in conscience spare? "Tear them, (the tempter cried) in pieces tear!"
So thick the darkness, so confused the noise, we took the stranger's for the Shepherd's voice;
Rash nature waved the controversial sword, on fire to fight the battles of the Lord,
Fraternal love from every breast was driven, and bleeding Charity returned to heaven.

The Saviour saw our strife with pitying eye, and cast a look that made the shadows fly;
Soon as the day-spring in His presence shone, we found the two fierce armies were but one;
Common our hope and family and name, our arms, our Captain and our crown the same;
Enlisted all beneath Immanuel's sign and purchased every soul with precious blood divine.

Then let us cordially again embrace, nor e'er infringe the league of gospel-grace;
Let us in Jesus' name to battle go, and turn our arms against the common foe;
Fight side by side beneath our Captain's eye, chase the Philistines, on their shoulder fly,
And, more than conquerors, in the harness die.

For whether I am born to "blush above", on earth suspicious of electing love,
Or you, o'erwhelmed with honourable shame, to shout the universal Saviour's Name,
It matters not; if all our conflicts past, before the great white throne we meet at last.
Our only care, while sojourning below, our real Faith by real Love to show:
To blast the alien's hope, and let them see how friends of jarring sentiments agree:
Not in a party's narrow banks confined, not by the sameness of opinions joined,
But cemented with the Redeemer's blood, and bound together in the heart of God.

Can we forget from whence our union came, when first we simply met in Jesus' name?
The name mysterious of the God Unknown, whose secret love allured and drew us on
Thro' a long, lonely, legal wilderness to find the promised land of gospel peace.
True yoke-fellows, we then agreed to draw the intolerable burden of the Law.
And jointly labouring on with zealous strife strengthened each other's hands to work for life
To turn against the world our steady face, and, valiant for the truth, enjoy disgrace.

Then, when we served our God through fear alone our views, our studies and our hearts were one:
No smallest difference damped the social flame in Moses' school we thought and spake the same:
And must we, now in Christ, with shame confess, our love was greater when our light was less?
When darkly through a glass with servile awe we first the spiritual commandment saw,
Could we not then, our mutual love to show, through fire and water for each other go?
We could – we did – In a strange land I stood, and beckoned thee to cross the Atlantic flood:
With true affection winged, thy ready mind, left country, fame and ease and friends behind,
And, eager all heaven's counsels to explore, flew through the watery world and grasped the shore.

Nor did I linger, at my friend's desire, to tempt the furnace, and abide the fire:
When suddenly sent forth, from the highways I called poor outcasts to the feast of grace.
Urged to pursue the work by thee begun through ill and good report I still rushed on,
Nor felt the fire of popular applause, nor feared the torturing flame in such a glorious cause.

Ah, wherefore did we ever seem to part, or clash in sentiment, while one in heart?
What dire device did the old Serpent find, To put asunder those whom God had joined?
From folly and self-love Opinion rose, to sever friends who never yet were foes;
To baffle and divert our noblest aim, confound our pride, and cover us with shame:
To make us blush beneath her short-lived power, and glad the world with one triumphant hour.

But lo! The snare is broke, the captive's freed by Faith on all the hostile powers we tread,
And crush through Jesus' strength the Serpent's head.
Jesus hath cast the cursed Accuser down, hath rooted up the tares by Satan sown:
Kindled anew the never-dying flame, and re-baptised our souls into His Name.

Soon as the virtue of His Name we feel, the storm of life subsides, the sea is still,
All nature bows to His benign command, and two are one in his Almighty hand.
One in His hand, O may we still remain, fast bound with love's indissoluble chain;
(That adamant which time and death defies, that golden chain which draws us to the skies!)

His love the tie that binds us to His throne,
His love (let all the ground of friendship see)
His only love constrains our hearts to agree
And gives the rivet of eternity!

Written by Charles Wesley to George Whitefield
In 1755.