

# *Faith With The Lid Off*



## *Contemporary Hymns*

*by David Stevenson*

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Cover image: January sunset over Poole Harbour, Dorset

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Tune: *Blaenwern*, W P Rowlands (1860-1937)

8.7.8.7.D

1. At the heart of our Connexion  
Ever speaking truth in love,  
Widely held in deep affection,  
Firm in hope all fears above;  
Thus the *Methodist Recorder*  
Links its readers everywhere,  
Hears their voice on faith and order,  
Prompts to action and to prayer.
2. Fifteen decades span its labours:  
Leaders, columns by the score,  
Distant people met as neighbours,  
World concerns brought to the fore;  
Editorials, news and features,  
Books and media in review,  
Scholarly and gracious teachers,  
Graphic skills bear insights new.
3. Lord, we trust you for the morrow  
As we praise you for the past,  
Present still in joy and sorrow,  
Our support from first to last.  
Cherishing sublime, eternal,  
Led by faith beyond our sight,  
May the course of this great journal  
Point us surely to the light!

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Tune: *Abbot's Leigh*, Cyril V Taylor (1907-91)

8.7.8.7.D

1. Boundless love in all creation,  
Source and pulse of human life,  
Unseen hope of every nation,  
Healer of disease and strife;  
You are rich beyond our dreaming,  
Bursting forth in sacred mirth,  
Light and colour gaily streaming  
Through the dull affairs of earth.
2. Doctrines, creeds and forms of worship  
Dimly focus our belief,  
Falter lamely after Lordship,  
Bringing groping minds relief.  
For no concept can contain you,  
You are greater than them all;  
And the rules we make to bind you  
Hold ourselves, not God, in thrall.
3. Love and mercy, grace and healing  
In a thousand forms we find;  
You have countless ways of dealing  
With the quest of humankind.  
World religions trace the story:  
Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, Jew,  
Each has caught a glimpse of glory;  
All have heard a word from you.
4. Ever growing in our learning  
From the folk of other creeds,  
May we humbly with discerning  
Follow where the Spirit leads.  
Banish fears and indecision,  
Fruitful dialogue afford;  
Bid us share the priceless vision  
We have seen in Christ our Lord!

Tune: *Manna*, J G Schicht (1753-1823)

88.6.D

1. Eternal Love, your grace we praise  
Which shapes and comforts all our days,  
Evolves the world we know.  
Let worship, symbols come of age  
To help us read beneath the page  
And test the status quo!
2. Renewing Love, in Jesus met  
Defying limitation yet  
Particular in all;  
Confronting still the edifice  
Of ignorance and prejudice,  
Responding to our call.
3. But still your truth we faintly see  
Though Church and Scripture guarantee  
To point us on our way.  
A darkened mirror blurs our sight  
While false ideas obscure the light  
And spurn the shining ray.
4. Thanks be for scholars, prophets too  
Who lead the quest for insights new  
As old convictions fade.  
May we in faith by Spirit led  
In Jesus' footsteps bravely tread  
And never be afraid!

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Tune: *Laus Deo (Redhead 46)*, Richard Redhead (1820-1901)

8.7.8.7. (*Trochaic*)

1. Gladly we address our burdens  
Through the mystery of prayer,  
Lovingly support each other  
In the privilege of care.
2. Prayer expands to fill our being  
As we touch infinity,  
Serve as channels to our neighbour,  
Bearers of divinity.
3. In the calm of meditation,  
Inspiration and resource,  
Still we long for peace and justice.  
Let the kingdom run its course!
4. Spirit, draw us ever onward  
By refinement's purity,  
From our childish wish fulfilment  
To a new maturity.
5. As we view a world in torment  
May we find the nerve to dare,  
Not content to be spectators,  
Live the answer to our prayer.

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Tune: *Manna*, J G Schicht (1753-1823)

88.6.D

1. Life in abundance, Jesus says  
I bring to set the world ablaze,  
Exalt the weak and poor.  
To save my life I give it up  
I drain afresh the bitter cup  
And live for evermore!
2. I heal your sickness, Jesus says  
The living dead I touch and raise  
In me their fears are shed.  
I set you free to rest awhile  
And then to walk the second mile  
Till hungry folk are fed.
3. I break convention, Jesus says  
No deep divisions bar my ways  
My love transcends them all.  
To enemies my heart extends  
While social outcasts are my friends  
I lift up those who fall.
4. I bid you follow, Jesus says  
To share my journey all your days  
Until Earth's time shall cease.  
With me discover love divine  
See water turning into wine  
And find a life at peace.

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Tune: *How great thou art!* (Swedish folk melody)

*11.10.11.10 & refrain*

1. Long years ago the promised Holy Spirit  
With wind and flame, in resurrection might  
Inspired true love, compassion rich within it,  
And now as then rekindles vision's light.

*So sing, my soul, of Pentecost's new birth,  
Emmanuel – God with us here!  
We live in you, revealed alive on earth;  
Abide in you, forever near!*

2. Not far away but in the depths of being,  
Essence of life, our living's very ground,  
Divine takes flesh, first fruits in Jesus seeing,  
Indwelling God in humankind profound.
3. Keeping the feast, the Spirit's proclamation,  
We find your grace within our neighbour too;  
Own you life's fount, sustaining all creation,  
Refreshing source forever making new.

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Tune: *Anima Christi*, William Maher (1823-77)

*10 10. 10 10.*

1. Love one another as I love you all;  
In others' needs hear my insistent call.  
I bid you wear with me love's seamless dress,  
Welcome the outcast from the wilderness.
2. I deem you worthy of my love for you,  
Love then yourself, no less your neighbour too;  
Yet, self denying, know yourself set free,  
Patient to bear the cross and follow me.
3. Love knows no bound, condition nor regret;  
In loving action I am ever met.  
Not least, wish well for those who do you wrong;  
Choose to forgive, discover love is strong
4. Faith, hope with love the greatest of the three:  
These are the marks of all who dwell in me.  
Accept my love, live in it and convey,  
Finding in me the life, the truth, the way.

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Tune: *St George's, Windsor*, George J Elvey (1816-93)

77.77.D

Wesley's Chapel 1778 –

1. Neat not fine our Chapel stands,  
Emblem of a Georgian age,  
Founder plucked from fiery brands,  
Graced to hallow history's page.  
Hapless victims see transformed,  
Saved by power to all who heard  
Through a heart once strangely warmed,  
Born to spread the Gospel word.
  
2. 'Neath one banner brave unfurled,  
Notwithstanding land of birth,  
Here in Wesley's parish world  
Join the peoples of the earth.  
Global pilgrims urge their way  
To this fond cathedral place;  
Still it serves the present day,  
Marks the city's changing face.
  
3. Lord, we owe you thanks indeed,  
For our heritage give praise,  
Shrine and refuge in our need,  
Love to set our hearts ablaze.  
As your living Church may we  
Reach out to a world in pain;  
Grant us courage yet to free  
Resurrected life again.

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(The opening line echoes John Wesley's description  
of the Chapel as 'perfectly neat but not fine'.)

Tune: *All for Jesus*, John Stainer (1840-1901)

8.7.8.7. (*Trochaic*)

1. Praise the universal Spirit,  
Present as we draw each breath,  
Live and move and have our being,  
Pass at length the gate of death.
2. Morning wings cannot escape you,  
Farthest seas your glory share.  
Climb to heaven, we know you with us,  
Sink to hell and you are there.
3. Far-flung galaxies proclaim you;  
Mortal thoughts constrain our mind.  
Burst the boundaries of language!  
Fill the heart of humankind!
4. Truth and mystery your emblems,  
Veiled in Jesus fleshly seen,  
Holiness beyond religion,  
Sanctifying poor and mean.
5. Urge us to our full potential,  
Touching your eternal life.  
Mark the kingdom deep within us  
In our pleasure, in our strife.
6. Thus we find unbounded loving,  
Not at distant mercy-seat,  
But with vision's high perspective  
Sought in everyone we meet.

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Tune: *Croft's 136<sup>th</sup>*, William Croft (1678-1727)

6.6.6.6.44.44.

1. We praise with grateful hearts,  
Inspired on music's wing,  
Give thanks for organ, choirs,  
Hear youthful voices sing;  
In worship offering the best  
As most befits our highest quest.
2. For life's devoted years  
Four score as it may be,  
We honour duty's call,  
In service wholly free;  
With vision turning history's page,  
A church to serve the present age.
3. And we recall with joy  
Those times of pleasure true,  
Of festival and stage,  
Concerts and carols too;  
While oratorios nobly soared  
And fine cantatas praised the Lord.
4. In faith and hope we seek  
Strength for the coming days,  
A gracious providence,  
Guidance in all our ways.  
Safely we walk, future unknown,  
Casting our trust on love alone.

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Tune: *Ein' Feste Burg*, after Martin Luther (1483-1546)

8.7.8.7.66.66.7

1. We walk where reason may not tread  
By faith's audacious guiding,  
Beyond the light by knowledge shed  
We quest in grace confiding.  
The seed grows to a tree,  
Peaks plunge into the sea.  
From doubt's assisting phase  
For faith renewed give praise  
In thankful celebration.
2. Hope springs undying out of life  
In promise, expectation,  
Affirming trust in midst of strife  
With fond anticipation.  
For resurrection hope  
Of life's eternal scope  
And succour all our days,  
For patient hope give praise  
In thankful celebration.
3. And love the greatest of the three,  
Transcending law and limit,  
Once crucified upon a tree,  
Mark of divine within it.  
Despite condition's will  
Forgiving, serving still;  
For love's redemptive rays  
Rejoice with songs of praise  
In thankful celebration.
4. Thanks be for living's precious gift,  
Rich, free and fragile bearing;  
All flesh as grass by fortune rift,  
Yet cradled in love's caring.  
Potential joy and pain  
Are ours to share again;  
At peace in all our ways  
For life restored give praise  
In thankful celebration.

Tune: *Drake's Broughton*, Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

8.7.8.7. (*Trochaic*)

1. Welcome doubt! Refine our thinking,  
Urge us further into light;  
Lead us to a greater dawning  
From the shadows of our night.
2. Welcome knowledge! Food for wisdom,  
Leaving prejudice behind;  
Pledge of science, fruit of reason,  
Seeking love with all our mind.
3. Welcome truth! But little caring  
Whence it come, cost what it will;  
Though it challenge deep conviction,  
Truth shall be our focus still.
4. Welcome faith! Our thought transcending,  
Touching mystery divine;  
Joy of trusting, source of action,  
Fervent hope's courageous sign.
5. Welcome grace! Without deserving,  
Unexpected, pride at bay;  
Spirit's riches shower upon us  
As we give our lives away.

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Tune: *University College*, Henry Gauntlett (1805-76)

77.77.

1. Word of God from Bible page,  
Sacred wisdom for life's way,  
Framed within a distant age,  
Breaking forth in power to-day.
2. Word of God through science found,  
Treasures of Planet Earth,  
Boundless galaxies around,  
Heritage of priceless worth.
3. Word of God in prophet's cry,  
Seldom welcome, ever true.  
Brave credentials testify,  
In our time a crucial view.
4. Word of God in Jesus met,  
Teaching, serving unto death.  
Son of Man our comrade yet  
Through the Spirit's vital breath.
5. Word of God inviting still,  
Voice eternal always near,  
Urging from complacent will,  
Sensed by those with ears to hear.

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