

## CFBC Hymns Class 49

### *Hymns Old and New on God's Sovereignty*

**I am God, and there is no other;  
I am God, and there is no one like Me,  
Declaring the end from the beginning,  
And from ancient times things which have not been done,  
Saying, 'My purpose will be established,  
And I will accomplish all My good pleasure'**

Isaiah 45:9,10

- ***Because God is the Omnipotent Creator...He Reigns Invincibly Supreme over His Creation***
- ***Because God's Ways are higher than our ways...His Rule is often Mysterious***
- ***Because God is Faithful and Good...His Rule is Reason to Rest***
- ***Because God is God...He is Worthy of Our Praise***

### ***Because God is the Omnipotent Creator...He Reigns Invincibly Supreme over His Creation***

*Absolute sovereignty is what I love to ascribe to God... God's sovereignty has ever appeared to me, [a] great part of His glory. It has often been my delight to approach God, and adore him as a sovereign God.*

*The doctrine has very often appeared exceeding pleasant, bright, and sweet.*

Jonathan Edwards

*The sovereignty of God may be defined as the exercise of His supremacy. Being infinitely elevated above the highest creature, He is the Most High, Lord of heaven and earth. Subject to none, influenced by none, absolutely independent; God does as He pleases, only as He pleases always as He pleases. None can thwart Him, none can hinder Him.*

A W Pink

*This is the essence of God's sovereignty; His absolute independence to do as He pleases and His absolute control over the actions of all His creatures. No creature, person, or empire can either thwart His will or act outside the bounds of His will.*

Jerry Bridges

*God writes with a pen that never blots, speaks with a tongue that never slips, acts with a hand that never fails.*

Charles Spurgeon

*No plan of God's can be thwarted; when He acts, no one can reverse it; no one can hold back His hand or bring Him to account for His actions. God does as He pleases, only as He pleases, and works out every event to bring about the accomplishment of His will. Such a bare unqualified statement of the sovereignty of God would terrify us if that were all we knew about God. But God is not only sovereign, He is perfect in love and infinite in wisdom.*

Jerry Bridges

*Nothing is a surprise to God; nothing is a setback to His plans; nothing can thwart His purposes; and nothing is beyond His control. His sovereignty is absolute. Everything that happens is uniquely ordained by God. Sovereignty is a weighty thing to ascribe to the nature and character of God. Yet if He were not sovereign, He would not be God. The Bible is clear that God is in control of everything that happens.*

Joni Ericson Tada

### ***Behold Our God***

Music and words by Jonathan Baird, Meghan Baird, Ryan Baird, and Stephen Altrogge

Who has held the oceans in His hands?  
Who has numbered every grain of sand?  
Kings and nations tremble at His voice  
All creation rises to rejoice

#### CHORUS

Behold our God seated on His throne  
Come, let us adore Him  
Behold our King! Nothing can compare  
Come, let us adore Him!

Who has given counsel to the Lord?  
Who can question any of His words?  
Who can teach the One Who knows all things?  
Who can fathom all His wondrous deeds?

### ***Because God's Ways are higher than our ways...His Rule is often Mysterious***

**Romans 11:33** Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! **34** For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? **35** Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again? **36** For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him *be* the glory forever. Amen.

***Who has given counsel to the Lord?  
Who can question any of His words?  
Who can teach the One Who knows all things?  
Who can fathom all His wondrous deeds?***

*Confidence in the sovereignty of God in all that affects us is crucial to our trusting Him. If there is a single event in all of the universe that can occur outside of God's sovereign control then we cannot trust Him. His love may be infinite, but if His power is limited and His purpose can be thwarted, we cannot trust Him.*  
*Jerry Bridges*

*The sovereignty of God is the one impregnable rock to which the suffering human heart must cling. The circumstances surrounding our lives are no accident; they may be the work of evil, but that evil is held firmly within the mighty hand of our sovereign God... All evil is subject to Him, and evil cannot touch His children unless He permits it. God is the Lord of human history and of the personal history of every member of His redeemed family.*  
*Margaret Clarkson*

## **William Cowper...Embattled Soul**

John Calvin referred to fallen humanity and the world in which we live as broken actors performing on a broken down stage. Cowper's brokenness was as profound as it was palpable. In his excellent biographical essay on the life of William Cowper, John Piper wrote of him, "The battles in this man's soul were of epic proportions." Indeed.

Cowper lived from 1731 to 1800, a contemporary to John Wesley and George Whitefield in England and Jonathan Edwards in America. Heartache was his handmaiden virtually from birth. William and his brother John were the only two among seven siblings to survive past infancy. At age 6, his mother died giving birth to John, leaving William deeply distraught. Cowper moved from school to school before landing at Westminster school in 1742 where he was bullied mercilessly by older students. While studying for a career in law as a young adult, he fell in love with his cousin Theodora and sought her hand in marriage. Her father refused to consent to the union and nuptials were never exchanged. Lost love left him crestfallen.

As he progressed into adulthood, things grew appreciably worse. In 1763, he was offered a position as a clerk of journals in the House of Lords, but the specter of the job examination sent him off the rails. He experienced grinding depression that bordered on insanity.

Three times he attempted suicide and was sent to an asylum for recovery. The asylum turned out to be a place of grace for Cowper. Dr. Nathaniel Cotton, an evangelical believer, cared for Cowper and showed him the love of Christ.

One day at the hospital, Cowper found a Bible and opened it. The pages fell upon Romans 3:25. God opened Cowper's blind spiritual eyes that day, and he was converted to a saving hope in Jesus Christ. Salvation changed his heart, but not his propensity for melancholy.

In 1767, two years after leaving the asylum, Cowper met the slave-trader-turned-preacher John Newton, author of "Amazing Grace" and curate of the church at Olney. Newton mentored Cowper. He encouraged Cowper and ministered to him. There were numerous additional suicide attempts as the viper of melancholy gripped the poet every ten years, usually every tenth January. Cowper wrote "God Moves" in 1773 at the behest of Newton, who later published it in the Olney Hymnal. Soon after Cowper wrote "God Moves," the darkness returned, and he attempted suicide by drowning. He died on April 25, 1800, in the throes of depression. The final poem he composed in 1799 was titled "The Castaway," but by God's grace that did not describe his eternal state.

### **Hymn for Rough Weather**

Cowper's story makes this hymn all the more remarkable. Life between the times is full of hurt and pain; we live in what John Bunyan aptly called a veil of tears. Relationships sour. Malignant tumors grow inside our frail bodies. A phone call shatters our dreams. The spring flowers die, and our lush summer lawns turn brown in winter. The only thing consistent in this embittered cosmos is that nothing stays the same. Cowper lived in and wrote out of this reality as much as any figure in church history. "God Moves" was originally titled "Conflict: Light Shining out of Darkness." Cowper knew first-hand that life is warfare.

This hymn is my favorite for the same reason Romans 8:28-39 is my favorite Bible passage. The final four of the six stanzas are pure gold for suffering saints—that's all of us on various levels—on pilgrimage through the valley of the shadow of death: "You fearful saints, fresh courage take, the clouds that you now dread, are big with mercy and will break in blessings on your head." The world is groaning, we are groaning, but God is protecting us, forging our faith on the anvil of affliction because of his love for us and because of a passion for his own glory. Charles Spurgeon once said that God's sovereignty is a doctrine for rough weather; "God Moves" is a hymn for stormy days, and there are many such days in a fallen world.

### **Behind a Frowning Providence**

The fourth stanza is the best-known: "Judge not the Lord by feeble sense, but trust him for his grace; behind a frowning providence, he hides a smiling face."

***It is easy to hear echoes of Isaiah 55 here: "My ways are higher than your ways, my thoughts than your thoughts."***

***We are not omniscient. We have a limited ability to exegete our experiences...***

Life may seem bad, sometimes, very bad. But we do not find peace in our ability to interpret events but in the God who is righteous in all his ways and kind in all his works (Ps. 145:17). The fifth verse is a healing balm: “His purposes will ripen fast, unfolding every hour; the bud may have a bitter taste, but sweet will be the flower.”

Cowper concludes the hymn with a reminder for forgetful Christians like me, a reminder I need to hear hourly: “Blind unbelief is sure to err, and scan his work in vain. God is his own interpreter, and he will make it plain.” We don’t know the future. We don’t often understand his ways. But we can trust him...

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/god-moves-in-a-mysterious-way/>

## **God moves in a mysterious way**

***God moves in a mysterious way,  
his wonders to perform;***

he plants his footsteps in the sea,  
and rides upon the storm.

***Deep in unfathomable mines,  
of never-failing skill;  
he fashions up his bright designs,  
and works his sovereign will.***

Ye fearful saints fresh courage take,  
the clouds that you much dread,  
are big with mercy and will break  
in blessings on your head.

***Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,  
but trust him for his grace;  
behind a frowning providence,  
he hides a smiling face.***

His purposes will ripen fast,  
unfolding every hour;  
the bud may have a bitter taste,  
but sweet will be the flower.

***Blind unbelief is sure to err,  
and scan his work in vain;  
God is his own interpreter,  
and he will make it plain.***

## **Be Still My Soul**

Kathrina von Schlegel

***Be still, my soul! for God is on your side;  
bear patiently the cross of grief or pain:  
leave to your God to order and provide,  
who through all changes faithful will remain.***

Be still, my soul! your best, your heav'nly Friend  
through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.

***Be still, my soul! for God will undertake  
to guide the future surely as the past.  
Your hope, your confidence, let nothing shake;  
all now mysterious shall be clear at last.***

Be still, my soul! the waves and winds still know  
the voice that calmed their fury long ago.

***Be still, my soul! the hour is hastening on  
when we shall be forever in God's peace;  
when disappointment, grief, and fear are gone,  
love's joys restored, our strivings all shall cease.***

Be still my soul! when change and tears are past,  
all safe and blessed we shall meet at last.

## ***Because God is Faithful and Good...His Rule is Reason to Rest***

**Romans 8:28** And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose. **29** For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren

***Divine sovereignty is...the exercised pleasure of One who is infinitely wise and good! Because God is infinitely wise He cannot err, and because He is infinitely righteous He will not do wrong. Here then is the preciousness of this truth. The mere fact itself that God's will is irresistible and irreversible fills me with fear, but once I realize that God wills only that which is good, my heart is made to rejoice.***

*A W Pink*

***There are seasons in the lives of all when it is not easy, no not even for Christians, to believe that God is faithful. Our faith is sorely tried, our eyes bedimmed with tears, and we can no longer trace the outworkings of His love. Our ears are distracted with the noises of the world, harassed by the atheistic whisperings of Satan, and we can no longer hear the sweet accents of His still small voice.***

*Cherished plans have been thwarted, friends on whom we relied have failed us, a trusted brother or sister in Christ has betrayed us. We are staggered. We sought to be faithful to God, and now a dark cloud hides Him from us. We find it difficult, yea, impossible, for carnal reason to harmonize His frowning providence with His gracious promises.*

Yet...

*God is true. His Word of Promise is sure. In all His relations with His people God is faithful. He may be safely relied upon. No one ever yet really trusted Him in vain. We find this precious truth expressed almost everywhere in the Scriptures, for His people need to know that faithfulness is an essential part of the Divine character. This is the basis of our confidence in Him.*

A W Pink

*There is no attribute of God more comforting to His children than the doctrine of Divine Sovereignty. Under the most adverse circumstances, in the most severe troubles, they believe that Sovereignty hath ordained their afflictions, that Sovereignty overrules them, and that Sovereignty will sanctify them all.*

*When you go through a trial, the sovereignty of God is the pillow upon which you lay your head.*

Charles Spurgeon

### **“Whate’er My God Ordains Is Right”**

This beautiful hymn was written by Samuel Rodigast in 1676 to comfort a sick friend. In it he lays out what it means to deal with the problem of pain and suffering through the perspective of faith. Our God is sovereign and full of love, and every circumstance he brings us through is good and right and true. His promise is that he will never leave us in the midst of any adversity through which he takes us.

This song reminds us that all things are from the hand of God. And like Job, who attributed all his recent tragedies to the hand of God (“the Lord, gave, and the Lord has taken away”), when we affirm this truth we are not charging God with wrong. For, as this song so beautifully affirms again and again, God’s sovereign hand brings about what is right. Our response is to trust God and to be content through the pain. In the midst of difficult things brought by his hand, God himself is helping us (“he holds me that I should not fall”), and we look forward to the day when all suffering will be over (Patiently I wait his day”).

<https://trinitybiblechurch.org/hymn-story-whateer-my-god-ordains-is-right/>

Whate'er my God ordains is right,  
His holy will abideth;  
I will be still whate'er He does,  
And follow where He guideth.  
He is my God, though dark my road;  
He holds me that I shall not fall;  
And so to Him I leave it all,  
And so to Him I leave it all.

Whate'er my God ordains is right,  
He never will deceive me;  
He leads me by the proper path,  
I know He will not leave me.  
I take, content, what He has sent;  
His hand can turn my griefs away;  
And patiently I wait His day,  
And patiently I wait His day.

Whate'er my God ordains is right,  
Though now this cup in drinking  
May bitter seem to my faint heart,  
I take it all, unshrinking.  
My God is true, each morn anew  
Sweet comfort yet shall fill my heart;  
And pain and sorrow shall depart,  
And pain and sorrow shall depart.

Whate'er my God ordains is right,  
Here shall my stand be taken;  
Though sorrow, need, or death be mine,  
Yet I am not forsaken.  
My Father's care is round me there;  
He holds me that I shall not fall;  
***And so to Him I leave it all,***  
***And so to Him I leave it all.***

Words: Samuel Rodigast (1675), tr. Catherine Winkworth (1829-1878)



## **Our Sovereign God**

Tom Pennington

Our Sovereign God by His own word  
Sustains this world and reigns as Lord.  
No angel, demon, sinful man can change  
His course, restrain His hand.

***O sovereign God, we praise Your pow'r;  
Your wisdom, goodness we adore!  
We bow our hearts before Your throne;  
Help us, O Lord, to trust You more,  
Help us, O Lord, to trust You more.***

When the fullness of the time had come,  
God sent His own Beloved Son.  
To keep God's law, live in our place,  
to bear our sin, guilt and disgrace.  
Dead in our sin, estranged from God,  
We fled as rebels from His love.  
In sovereign grace He made us sons,  
And saved us from the wrath to come,  
And saved us from the wrath to come.

Before our birth He planned our days,  
Laid out our course, ordained our ways.  
The moments of our lives He weaves  
So all the glory He receives.  
To those He loved before all time,  
To all He called, and grace renewed,  
He cannot lie; His word is true,  
He makes all things to work for good,  
He makes all things to work for good.

He has written history's final page  
His Son's return will end this age.  
The Lamb will come in glorious might,  
Take back His world and end it's night.  
***How deep the wisdom of our God,  
Unknown, unfathomed are His ways.  
None counsels Him or knows His mind.  
We bow before Him all our days,  
We bow before Him all our days***

O sovereign God, we praise Your pow'r;  
Your wisdom, goodness we adore!  
We bow our hearts before Your throne;  
***Help us, O Lord, to trust You more,  
Help us, O Lord, to trust You more.***

## ***Because God is God...He is Worthy of Our Praise***

**Revelation 5:13** And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever."

14 And the four living creatures kept saying, "Amen." And the elders fell down and worshiped.

***The foundation of worship in the heart is not emotional ("I feel full of worship" or "The atmosphere is so worshipful"). Actually, it is theological. Worship is not something we "work up," it is something that "comes down" to us, from the character of God.***

Sinclair Ferguson

***Transcendent worship is directly related to the depth of comprehending divine truth. Those who understand the gospel most deeply worship God with the greatest exaltation and exhilaration.***

The Master's Mantle, The Power of Expository Preaching, Fall/Winter 2006, v. 13:2

***Praise is the honey of life which a devout heart extracts from every bloom of providence and grace.***

Charles Spurgeon

***Praising God is one of the highest and purest acts of religion. In prayer we act like men; in praise we act like angels.***

Thomas Watson

***Behold our God seated on His throne  
Come, let us adore Him  
Behold our King! Nothing can compare  
Come, let us adore Him!***

## **Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!**

Joachim Neander

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!  
O my soul, praise him, for he is your health and salvation!  
Come, all who hear; now to his temple draw near,  
join me in glad adoration.

Praise to the Lord, above all things so wondrously reigning;  
sheltering you under his wings, and so gently sustaining!  
Have you not seen all that is needful has been  
sent by his gracious ordaining?

Praise to the Lord, who will prosper your work and defend you;  
surely his goodness and mercy shall daily attend you.  
Ponder anew what the Almighty can do,  
if with his love he befriends you.

Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me adore him!  
All that has life and breath, come now with praises before him.  
Let the Amen sound from his people again;  
gladly forever adore him.