


Bunker Hill

Nathaniel Niles, 1775
An American Hero 11 11.11 5.

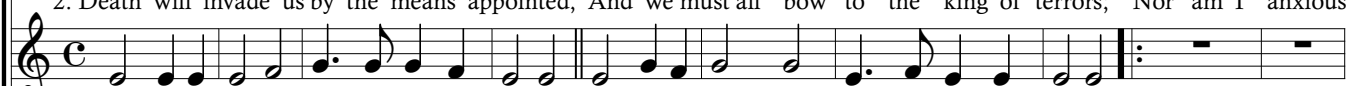
Transcribed from Andrew Law's
Select Number of Plain Tunes, 1781.

A minor
Ascribed to Sylvanus Ripley, 1749-1787
Published in Select Number of Plain Tunes, 1781

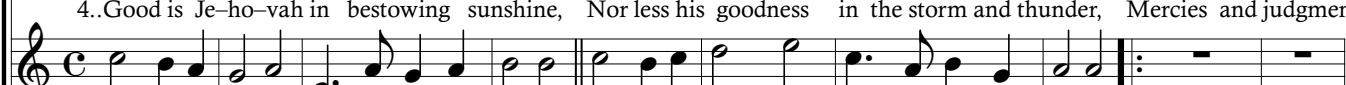
5 10

Tr. 

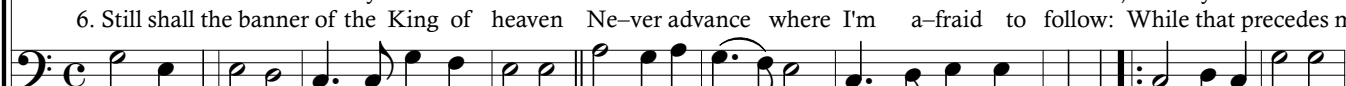
1. Why should vain mortals tremble at the sight of Death and destruction in the field of battle, Where blood and carnage
2. Death will invade us by the means appointed, And we must all bow to the king of terrors; Nor am I anxious,

C. 


3. In-fi-nite goodness teaches us sub-mis-sion, Bids us be qui-et un-der all his dealings; Ne-ver re-pi-ning,
4. Good is Je-ho-vah in bestowing sunshine, Nor less his goodness in the storm and thunder, Mercies and judgment

T. 

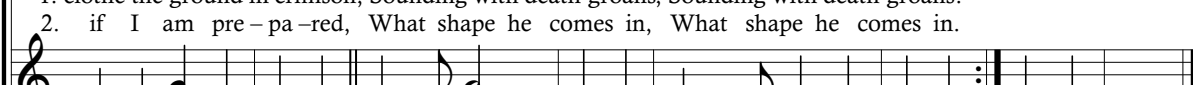
5. Then to the wisdom of my Lord and Master I will commit all that I have or wish for, Sweetly as babes' sleep
6. Still shall the banner of the King of heaven Ne-ver advance where I'm a-fraid to follow: While that precedes me,

B. 

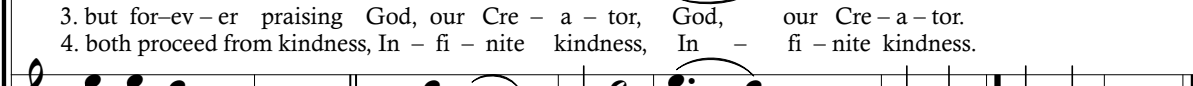
15 1. 2.

Tr. 

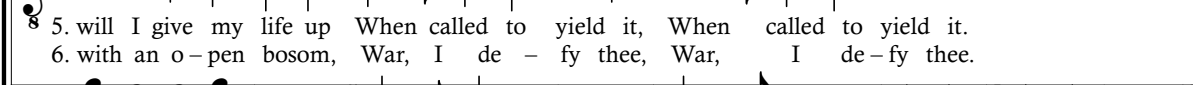
1. clothe the ground in crimson, Sounding with death-groans, Sounding with death-groans?
2. if I am pre-pa-red, What shape he comes in, What shape he comes in.

C. 

3. but for-ev-er praising God, our Cre-a-tor, God, our Cre-a-tor.
4. both proceed from kindness, In-fi-nite kindness, In-fi-nite kindness.

T. 

5. will I give my life up When called to yield it, When called to yield it.
6. with an o-pen bosom, War, I de-fy thee, War, I de-fy thee.

B. 

7. Well may we praise him: all his ways are perfect:
Though a resplendence, infinitely glowing,
Dazzles in glory on the sight of mortals,
Struck blind by luster.

8. O, then, exult that God forever reigneth;
Clouds which, around him, hinder our perception,
Bind us the stronger to exalt his name, and
Shout louder praises.

9. Up the bleak heavens let the spreading flames rise.
Breaking, like Ætna, through the smoky columns,
Lowering, like Egypt, o'er the falling city,
Wantonly burned down.

10. While all their hearts quick palpitate for havoc,
Let slip your blood-hounds, named the British lions;
Dauntless as death stares, nimble as the whirl-wind,
Dreadful as demons!

11. Let oceans waft on all your floating castles,
Fraught with destruction, horrible to nature;
Then, with your sails filled by a storm of vengeance.
Bear down to battle.

12. From the dire caverns, made by ghostly miners,
Let the explosion, dreadful as volcanoes,
Heave the broad town, with all its wealth and people,
Quick to destruction.

13. Fame and dear freedom lure me on to battle,
While a fell despot, grimmer than a death's-head,
Stings me with serpents, fiercer than Medusa's,
To the encounter.

14. Life, for my country and the cause of freedom,
Is but a trifle for a worm to part with;
And, if preserved in so great a contest,
Life is redoubled.

The poem, of fifteen stanzas, was written by Nathaniel Niles in 1775, and published in a broadside in 1781. The stanzas given above have been rearranged from the original.

The tune was published by Andrew Law in 1781, without words or attribution of composer; tune is sometimes ascribed to Sylvanus Ripley. The tune was slightly rearranged, and new words added, by Joshua Leavitt in his *Christian Lyre* in 1831.

Edited by B. C. Johnston, 2019. Measure 11, all parts: the second quarter note added to make rhyme work.