



Stewardship Hymn: "Come, Ye Thankful People, Come"

"Come, Ye Thankful People, Come" is an English Christian harvest festival hymn written in 1844 by Henry Alford, rector of Aston Sandford church in Buckinghamshire, England.

Most often, the hymn is sung to the tune *St. George's Windsor* written by George J. Elvey in 1858. Originally seven verses in length, Alford revised the hymn to only four verses. The hymn text has been revised numerous times, some by Alford, and some, by others without the approval of Alford.

Nevertheless, the first verse is written as a celebration of the harvest, but this harvest time is about the final judgment when the good grain will be garnered based on the Parable of the Growing Seed, Mark 4:26-29. "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come.

The last two verses are based on the Parable of the Tares or Weeds, which appears in Matthew 13:24-43. The parable relates how servants eager to pull up weeds were warned that in so doing they would root out the wheat as well and were told to let both grow together until the harvest. Later in Matthew, the weeds are identified with "the children of the evil one," the wheat with "the children of the Kingdom," and the harvest with "the end of the age."

Traditionally sung in America at Thanksgiving Day celebrations, there is every reason to sing this hymn throughout the year as a Celebration of life where good and evil have always co-existed, yet ultimately with a prayer that we will be wholesome and pure grain on our final day.