

The water stood like walls of brass
The Creatures in the Lord's Hands
John Newton, 1779,
from Olney Hymns, vol. 2, hymn 97

The water stood like walls of brass,
To let the sons of Israel pass;
And from the rock in rivers burst
At Moses' prayer to quench their thirst.

2. The fire restrained by God's commands,
Could only burn his people's bands;
Too faint, when he was with them there,
To singe their garments or their hair.

3. At Daniel's feet the lions lay
Like harmless lambs, nor touched their prey;
And ravens, which on carrion fed,
Procured Elijah flesh and bread.

4. Thus creatures only can fulfill
Their great Creator's holy will;
And when his servants need their aid,
His purposes must be obeyed.

5. So if his blessing he refuse,
Their pow'r to help they quickly lose,
Sure as on creatures we depend,
Our hopes in disappointment end.

6. Then let us trust the Lord alone,
And creature-confidence disown;
Nor if they threaten need we fear,
They cannot hurt if he be near.

7. If instruments of pain they prove,
Still they are guided by his love;
As lancets by the surgeon's skill,
Which wound to cure, and not to kill.