

My Country 'Tis of Thee

1. My country! 'tis of thee,
sweet land of liberty,
of thee I sing;
land where my fathers died,
land of the pilgrims' pride,
from ev'ry mountainside
let freedom ring!
2. My native country! thee,
land of the noble free,
thy name I love;
I love thy rocks and rills,
thy woods and templed hills;
my heart with rapture thrills,
like that above.
3. Let music swell the breeze,
and ring from all the trees
sweet freedom's song;
let mortal tongues awake;
let all that breathe partake;
let rocks their silence break,
the sound prolong.
4. Our fathers' God! to thee,
Author of liberty,
to thee we sing.
Long may our land be bright,
with freedom's holy light.
Protect us by Thy might,
Great God our King.

Words: 1831 | Samuel Francis Smith (1808-1895)

Music: *America*, first published 1744 | *Thesaurus Musicus*; composer unknown 664. 6664

Premiered at Park Street Church on Monday July 4, 1831, *My Country 'Tis of Thee* is a hymn praising and thanking God for the blessings of this country. It was self-evident to many Americans of Smith's era that the chief benefit of liberty is the opportunity to worship and serve God freely. The tune used here, in addition to being the longtime unofficial British anthem, has also been used by Russia (later inspiring the composition of the *Czar's Hymn* to which we sing No. 711 God the All-Terrible) and Germany (later inspiring Haydn to write his anthem for Germany, to which we sing No. 345 Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken). The last line of the final stanza, "Great God our King," is a direct jab at the British version *God Save the King* and their "king like the nations" (in Smith's view). The original service leaflet from the 1831 Park Street premiere can be viewed at:

<https://repository.library.brown.edu/studio/item/bdr:267170>