



<sup>5</sup> And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O LORD: thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints. <sup>6</sup>For who in the heaven can be compared unto the LORD? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the LORD? (Psalms 89:5-6)

<sup>1</sup> Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the LORD from the heavens: praise him in the heights. <sup>2</sup> Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts. <sup>3</sup> Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light. <sup>4</sup> Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. <sup>5</sup> Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created. <sup>6</sup> He hath also stablished them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass. (Psalms 148:1-6)

Many of the world's greatest hymns come from that grand, old island off the western shores of Europe called England. This one is no exception. It is purely a song of praise and adoration – not asking for blessings, but simply praising Him from whom all blessings truly do flow. Though the lyrics are primarily provided by England's son - Edward Osler – as with many great hymns, the beauty of this hymn was accomplished across international and church boundaries. While the words came from England, the great composer, Joseph Haydn, provides the tune, *Austria*, for the hymn. This was also the Austrian National Anthem and later, Germany's as well. The hymn was first printed on a pamphlet of the London Foundling Hospital for orphans. The organ at the orphanage was a gift of George Frederick Handel. Joseph Haydn himself visited the hospital in 1792 and heard his music adorned, for the first time, with the fine lyrics of this hymn (mostly taken from Psalms 148). Haydn commented on the totality of music he was blessed to hear: "I was more touched by their innocent and reverent music than by anything I had ever heard." I would rate that as a profoundly rare expression of appreciation coming from such an esteemed musician as Haydn.

## Praise the Lord, Ye Heavens

1 Praise the Lord! ye heav'ns, adore Him;  
Praise Him, angels, in the height.  
Sun and moon, rejoice before Him;  
Praise Him, all ye stars of light.

Praise the Lord! for He hath spoken;  
Worlds His mighty voice obeyed.  
Law which never shall be broken  
For their guidance hath He made.

2 Praise the Lord for He is glorious;  
Never shall His promise fail.  
God hath made His saints victorious;  
Sin and death shall not prevail.

Praise the God of our salvation!  
Hosts on high, His power proclaim,  
Heav'n and earth and all creation  
Laud and magnify His name.

3 Worship, honor, glory, blessing,  
Lord, we offer unto Thee.  
Young and old, Thy praise expressing,  
In glad homage bend the knee.

All the saints in heav'n adore Thee;  
We would bow before Thy throne.  
As Thine angels serve before Thee,  
So on earth Thy will be done.

*"Praise the Lord! ye heav'ns, adore Him; Praise Him, angels, in the height. Sun and moon, rejoice before Him; Praise Him, all ye stars of light."* If angels praise and adore the Sovereign of Heaven, how much more should we earth-bound souls! Every heavenly orb of light and beauty – the Sun, Moon, and Stars - rejoice before their Maker, God. Do we feel reticent to follow in their example? It should be noted, too, that the earth itself is one of those orbs of Heaven that rejoice before the Lord: *"Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King."* (Psalms 48:2)

*"Praise the Lord! for He hath spoken; Worlds His mighty voice obeyed. Law which never shall be broken For their guidance hath He made."* The ultimate power that propels the earth and all galaxies through the ether of space is God's Word – His VOICE! All Creation, though man may be the exceptional rebel, will obey His Voice and conform to His Word. Every man, woman, and child shall, as well, be brought to bow the knee to Christ – the Lord of Creation. *"For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."* (Romans 14:11-12) God has given His Law – both Moral and Natural - as guidance for our souls and well-being. We may attempt to break God's natural law of gravity, but the results are not all that desirable. We may seek to abuse His Moral Law, yet, the ruins of soul and ravages of body that follow, will bring deep remorse.

*"Praise the Lord for He is glorious; Never shall His promise fail. God hath*

*made His saints victorious; Sin and death shall not prevail.*" No promise of God has ever failed in the past Aeons of time, and it shall never fail in the future eternities. Many are seeking a Gospel of instant gratification much like the instant results of a fast-foods order; but God is not encumbered by the space-time scale. He works outside the Natural Order, and His will is as sure and certain as the next sunrise – in fact, more so!

When we look upon our temporary setbacks in church and life, we consider that perhaps God has not come through for us; but He will bring every single line, every jot and tittle, to pass that He has spoken. I especially like the way that great old Master, Matthew Henry describes the issue: Commenting on Judges 20:18-25 in which Israel has suffered reverses in battle, though battle was approved of God, Matthew Henry demonstrates that size and apparent material success are not the true measure of God's approbation on our conduct as individuals, or as the Church. When things appear most sparse and dismal may be the very place God takes us to show His mighty Arm of Strength. I received this quote from Henry's Commentary from a friend this morning and found it most encouraging:

*God's judgments are a great deep, and his way is in the sea. Clouds and darkness are often round about him, but judgment and justice are always the habitation of his throne. We may be sure of the righteousness, when we cannot see the reasons, of God's proceedings. 2. God would hereby show them, and us in them, that the race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong, that we are not to confide in numbers, which perhaps the Israelites did with too much assurance. We must never lay the weight on an arm of flesh, which only the Rock of ages will bear.....*

*God would hereby teach us not to think it strange if a good cause should suffer defeat fore a while, nor to judge of the merits of it by the success of it. The interest of grace in the heart, and of religion in the world, may be foiled, and suffer great loss, and seem to be quite run down, but judgment will be brought forth to victory at last. Vincimur in praelio, sed non in bello—We are foiled in a battle, but not in the whole campaign. Right may fall, but it shall arise."*

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*"Worship, honor, glory, blessing, Lord, we offer unto Thee. Young and old, Thy praise expressing, In glad homage bend the knee."* Do we truly offer these to the Lord

today? Does our reverence for His sanctuary begin at the portals of the church and continue throughout the service to its conclusion? Do our young and old worship together, or do we separate our youth from the main body at the most critical juncture of their lives? It is so very important that we *“bend the knee”* in the days of our lives rather than only at that fearful moment of the ‘resurrection of the dead.’ All shall surely do so at that Day, but some to eternal bliss, and others to eternal damnation.

*“All the saints in heav’n adore Thee; We would bow before Thy throne. As Thine angels serve before Thee, So on earth Thy will be done.”* The Throne of God is just at the Foyer of the Heart. Do we bow before that Throne always? The Church Glorious has completed her course in the heavenlies, and now rejoices forever in the presence of her King. The Church Militant remains in the here-and-now to press the battle forward for souls and terrain so wickedly misappropriated by the Prince of the Air. The angels in Heaven forever observe the very face of God and are compelled by the Heart of Love behind the face. But we now see a feature of our daily and weekly lives expressed in this last line. Can you identify it? It is a line from the prayer that is prayed weekly in 80% of churches around the world – The Lord’s Prayer! *“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”* (Matt 6:10) We are reminded, once more, in this final line of the Lord’s Prayer how much our faith, and God’s Word, is sustained and supported by the great hymns of the Church.

I hope you sing them daily. Do you?