



12 Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. 13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them. (Rev 14:12-13)

It seems most appropriate we should examine this great hymn of the Saints on All Saints Day. This day follows Reformation Day - an event which resulted many martyrs dying for our Lord. This hymn is of such magnificence that I feel I should cover the entire hymn despite its length – eleven verses. So, my devotion will be a bit longer than usual, almost a tome – a small price to pay in honoring our saints in glory.

Lyrics for the hymn were written by William Walsham How in 1864; and the favored tune, *Sine Nomine*, is the composition of R. Vaughan Williams. The alternate tune in the Hymnal is *Sarum, For All the Saints*, by Joseph Barnby.

For all the Saints

For all the saints, who from their labors rest,
Who Thee by faith before the world confessed,
Thy Name, O Jesus, be forever blessed.
Alleluia, Alleluia!

Thou wast their Rock, their Fortress and their Might;
Thou, Lord, their Captain in the well fought fight;
Thou, in the darkness drear, their one true Light.
Alleluia, Alleluia!

For the Apostles' glorious company,
Who bearing forth the Cross o'er land and sea,
Shook all the mighty world, we sing to Thee:
Alleluia, Alleluia!

For the Evangelists, by whose blest word,
Like fourfold streams, the garden of the Lord,
Is fair and fruitful, be Thy Name adored.
Alleluia, Alleluia!

For Martyrs, who with rapture kindled eye,
Saw the bright crown descending from the sky,
And seeing, grasped it, Thee we glorify.
Alleluia, Alleluia!

O blest communion, fellowship divine!
We feebly struggle, they in glory shine;
All are one in Thee, for all are Thine.
Alleluia, Alleluia!

O may Thy soldiers, faithful, true and bold,
Fight as the saints who nobly fought of old,
And win with them the victor's crown of gold.
Alleluia, Alleluia!

And when the strife is fierce, the warfare long,
Steals on the ear the distant triumph song,
And hearts are brave, again, and arms are strong.
Alleluia, Alleluia!

The golden evening brightens in the west;
Soon, soon to faithful warriors comes their rest;
Sweet is the calm of paradise the blessed.
Alleluia, Alleluia!

But lo! there breaks a yet more glorious day;
The saints triumphant rise in bright array;
The King of glory passes on His way.
Alleluia, Alleluia!

From earth's wide bounds, from ocean's farthest coast,
Through gates of pearl streams in the countless host,
And singing to Father, Son and Holy Ghost:
Alleluia, Alleluia!

For all the saints, who from their labors rest, Who Thee by faith before the world confessed, Thy Name, O Jesus, be forever blessed. Alleluia, Alleluia! In death, the saints of God receive that glorious Sabbath of Rest which is their Lord Jesus Christ. They have made the supreme testament of their faith by sealing that testimony with their death. ¹⁶For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. ¹⁷For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. (Heb 9:16-17) What a wonderful testimony that they have blessed the Name of the Lord with their last breath!

Thou wast their Rock, their Fortress and their Might; Thou, Lord, their Captain in the well fought fight; Thou, in the darkness drear, their one true Light. Alleluia, Alleluia! If you are familiar with my writing, you will know that I find this stanza most uplifting for majestic and spiritual truth. Yes, God is our Rock and Fortress. *The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.* (Psalm 18:2) And Jesus Christ our Lord is, has been, and will forever be our Solid and Immoveable Rock of His people: ¹Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; ²And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; ³And did all eat the same spiritual meat; ⁴And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. (1 Cor 10:1-4) And, oh

yes, He is the Light of the World! (see John 8:12) Who is the Captain and Bishop of our souls? The Lord Jesus Christ. (see Hebrews 2:10)

For the Apostles' glorious company, Who bearing forth the Cross o'er land and sea, Shook all the mighty world, we sing to Thee: Alleluia, Alleluia! We bear record of the work of the Apostles in propagating the Gospel to the four quarters of the world as commanded by our Lord: ¹⁹ *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: ²⁰ Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.* (Matt 28:19-20) Though we, too, may grow weary of travel and labors; yet it is our duty and obligation to go forth and do the same to every remunerative people.

For the Evangelists, by whose blest word, Like fourfold streams, the garden of the Lord, Is fair and fruitful, be Thy Name adored. Alleluia, Alleluia! Yes, there was a River of Life which branched into four heads that flowed through Eden bearing life-giving waters to the Garden. Christ was the River of Life as well as the Tree of Life: ¹⁰ *And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. ¹¹ The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold.* (Gen 2:10-11) Whatever water of life we share, its Source is Christ!

For Martyrs, who with rapture kindled eye, Saw the bright crown descending from the sky, And seeing, grasped it, Thee we glorify. Alleluia, Alleluia! No martyr could have sealed his testimony in blood and suffering unless his fading vision caught the divine image of the Gates of Splendor opening for his reception. Giants of the faith such as Hus, the Rev. John Rogers, Rowland Taylor (Rector of Hadleigh), Hugh Latimer (Chaplain to King Edward VI), Nicholas Ridley (Bishop of London). Thomas Cranmer (Archbishop of Canterbury), and thousands on the night of St. Bartholomews Massacre of courageous Huguenot Protestants. Paid that last full measure of devotion required by the deaths. My apologies to the millions of martyrs of the past and present (unmentioned or unknown) for whom no earthly candle burns, but a torch is lit in Heaven.

O blest communion, fellowship divine! We feebly struggle, they in glory shine; All are one in Thee, for all are Thine. Alleluia, Alleluia! Families eat together at the family table of home, and of the Lord. What fellowship we enjoyed as children during the evening meal at home. But this cannot compare with the heavenly fellowship to be enjoyed with the heavenly family at the Lord's Table. We are never alone at the Lord's Table. He is ever with us! ¹ *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, ² Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* (Heb 12:1-2) On the night of His betrayal in the Garden, our Lord prayed that we would all be One with Him as He was One with the Father. He sealed that privilege the next day on the brow of Calvary's Mount.

O may Thy soldiers, faithful, true and bold, Fight as the saints who nobly fought of old, And win with them the victor's crown of gold. Alleluia, Alleluia! We are both enlisted and commissioned in the Army of the Lord to bear the arms of faith and truth to all nations. We do not hunker down behind the barricades, we sally forth behind the Banner and Ensign of our Faith – the Lord Jesus Christ! Do we lack courage? Then rely upon the great reservoir of courage possessed by our Leader. We are more privileged than any earthly army because we already have victory assured. We need only advance to the Leading Ensign and never retreat. The victory comes at the dawning of the glorious morning.

And when the strife is fierce, the warfare long, Steals on the ear the distant triumph song, And hearts are brave, again, and arms are strong. Alleluia, Alleluia! The army that has the steel to persevere at the most arduous point of battle wins the field; however, the Army of God has the added blessing of hearing the ring of the Divine Trumpet at the moment of decision. A Federal Union ammunitions depot at Kennesaw, Georgia, during the War Between the States, came under attack by an overwhelming Confederate force. They were about to capitulate when the Union commander saw their predicament and signaled, *Hold the Fort, I am coming!* They were inspired to hold on longer and were relieved. So are we encouraged at EVERY point of the battle.

The golden evening brightens in the west; Soon, soon to faithful warriors comes their rest; Sweet is the calm of paradise the blessed. Alleluia, Alleluia! The biblical day of Genesis begins at eventide – amazing but true. *And the evening and the morning were the first day.* God began Creation while the earth was veiled in darkness, and ended it in startling light! God foresaw the need for rest even before that of labor. To the saint, who bears his arms in the heat of battle throughout the hot and weary day, may expect his night of rest ere the brilliance of the Reveille Sunrise. At the end of great and historic battles (such as that of Gettysburg) there is an unusual hush that pervades the battle scene. The guns are silenced and the cries are hushed. So at the end of the Great Day of Battle of this life in Christ.

But lo! there breaks a yet more glorious day; The saints triumphant rise in bright array; The King of glory passes on His way. Alleluia, Alleluia! There is another hymn whose sentiments bring joy to my heart. *When the Trumpet of the Lord shall sound and time will be no more, and the morning breaks eternal bright and clear...* The darkness of death brings the battle to a close, but the morning is coming, and that morning will be resplendent with light and glory. Our battle lines shall assemble erect and peerless in their glistening arms of faith and hope. The enemy guns are silenced and the savor of final peace shall be heralded throughout the ranks of the saints. The Lord our God rides in majesty to troop the line.

From earth's wide bounds, from ocean's farthest coast, Through gates of pearl streams in the countless host, And singing to Father, Son and Holy Ghost: Alleluia, Alleluia! I am afraid that vocabulary escapes the imagination to describe this moment, though the author of the hymn captures it very well. The forces and armies of anti-Christ are gathered from the four corners of the world and surround the Camp of the Saints – only to be destroyed by the Divine Artillery of Heaven. (see Revelations 20:9) The parading columns are as endless as those of the sand of the seas: *I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies.* (Gen 22:17) Those enemies called greed, pride, lies, immorality, murder, death, and Hell are finally and completely vanquished never to arise again.....and then shall there be peace profound and eternal.