



**O** COME, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. <sup>2</sup> Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. <sup>3</sup> For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. <sup>4</sup> In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also. <sup>5</sup> The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land. <sup>6</sup> O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker. <sup>7</sup> For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. . . . (Psalm 95:1-7)

This processional hymn was authored by the Anglican Bishop, William Boyd Carpenter (26 March 1841, Liverpool – 26 October 1918, Westminster), and was first published after his death in 1925. Carpenter was a Church of England clergyman who became Bishop of Ripon and court chaplain to Queen Victoria. The tune is from a collection of Peter Tchaikovski containing the tune, *Petersburg, Russian Hymn* by Dmitri Bortnianski. The hymn attains to the purpose of any classical hymn in revealing the beauty of doctrinal truth and mystery.

### **Before Thy Throne, O God, we kneel**

*1 Before thy throne, O God, we kneel:  
give us a conscience quick to feel,  
a ready mind to understand  
the meaning of thy chastening hand;  
whate'er the pain and shame may be,  
bring us, O Father, nearer thee.*

*2 Search out our hearts and make us true;  
help us to give to all their due.  
From love of pleasure, lust of gold,  
from sins which make the heart grow cold,  
wean us and train us with thy rod;  
teach us to know our faults, O God.*

3 For sins of heedless word and deed,  
for pride ambitions to succeed,  
for crafty trade and subtle snare  
to catch the simple unaware,  
for lives bereft of purpose high,  
forgive, forgive, O Lord, we cry.

4 Let the fierce fires which burn and try,  
our inmost spirits purify:  
consume the ill; purge out the shame;  
O God, be with us in the flame;  
a newborn people may we rise,  
more pure, more true, more nobly wise.

**1 Before thy throne, O God, we kneel: give us a conscience quick to feel, a ready mind to understand the meaning of thy chastening hand; whate'er the pain and shame may be, bring us, O Father, nearer thee.** After the Anglican tradition, and that of the ancient Church, we kneel in prayer at every worship service; but should we not also kneel at the home altar even more often? The possession of a good conscience is not our own meritorious possession, but rather a gift of the Lord's grace toward us. If we disregard the Word of God in our daily conduct, our consciences will be well-worn and unfeeling. *Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; 3 Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.* (1 Tim 4:2-3) If we disregard the Voice of God, we will certainly heed the word of the devil. *If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.* (John 8:42-44)

**2 Search out our hearts and make us true; help us to give to all their due. From love of pleasure, lust of gold, from sins which make the heart grow cold, wean us and train us with thy rod; teach us to know our faults, O God.** If we are believers, we know God's Word and Law. The greater problem is conforming to God's Word in our lives. There are no hidden corridors in the inner chambers of a man's heart. Its secrets are constantly accessible to God. It is the Holy Ghost that enables us to learn wisdom and follow that wisdom. If God never chastens us, we must not have received Him into our hearts. *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.* (Rev 3:19)

**3 For sins of heedless word and deed, for pride ambitions to succeed, for crafty trade and subtle snare to catch the simple unaware, for lives bereft of purpose high, forgive, forgive, O Lord, we cry.** We call upon the ears of the Lord in the Prayer Book Litany to hear us. That it may please thee to give us true repentance; to forgive us all our sins, negligences, and ignorances; and to endue us with the grace of thy Holy Spirit to amend our lives according to thy holy Word; *We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.* We all have cause for repentance for both sins committed and acts of righteousness omitted (sins of omission).

**4 Let the fierce fires which burn and try, our inmost spirits purify: consume the ill; purge out the shame; O God, be with us in the flame; a newborn people may we rise, more pure, more true, more nobly wise.** Time after time we undergo the fires of refinement. We are refined as much as seven times very like silver by the Great Refiner of Souls. Impurities rise as dross to the surface and are gathered each time and cast aside. Once the Refiner is able to discern His likeness in our visage, He will know that

we are sanctified to be His servant. The Holy Spirit fans those flames of the Refiner. *28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: 29 For our God is a consuming fire.* (Heb 12:28-29) The fire that burns also cleanses. It burns because it is healing a sinful blood disease that is inherited from Adam – SIN! But the graces with which we are imbued by God do not perish or burn away. In this mortal coil, we will not reach that perfect sanctification and sinlessness which we shall embrace at the very Gates of Splendor. But we do grow in wisdom, knowledge, and sanctification through the refining Word of God as we study to show ourselves approved of God. *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 16 But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.* (2 Tim 2:15-16)

I have had occasion recently to hear men and women, who should know better, debate whether God's Word came into our hands complete and without error. They plead the reason and logic of man and not God. It seems that the maker of their souls, and of the heavenly Universe, did not get it just right; so He needs the improving proof-reading of ignorant and clueless man. Really? God promised to preserve His Word. He has done so. Those who would discover a new Bible, or add and detract meaning from His original Masterpiece should beware the fires promised in the closing verses of the New Testament (just before the last benediction): *For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.* (Rev 22:18-19)