



O CLAP your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph. ² For the Lord most high is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth. ³ He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet. ⁴ He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom he loved. Selah. ⁵ God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet. ⁶ Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises. ⁷ For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding. ⁸ God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness. ⁹ The princes of the people are gathered together, even the people of the God of Abraham: for the shields of the earth belong unto God: he is greatly exalted. (Psalms 47:1-9)

This is the only hymn of which I am aware GK Chesterton ever authored (1906). Chesterton was a man who came late to Christianity, and not until 1922 did he become a Roman Catholic. Though he became a staunch defender of Christian ideals, some ideals he presumed were Christian were not so – Socialism being one of them. Though the lyrics cannot be exclusively attributed to socialistic principles, they were appropriated by the socialist movement and stood in England as a rallying hymn for the movement. But it must be added that the lyrics are very compatible with Scriptural truth if not twisted in their interpretation.

The most popular tune is LLANGLOFFAN – a Welsh tune; however, the tune presented in the 1940 Hymnal is KING'S LYNN by R. Vaughan Williams (1906).

O God of Earth and Altar

O God of earth and altar, bow down and hear our cry,
Our earthly rulers falter, our people drift and die;
The walls of gold entomb us, the swords of scorn divide;
Take not Thy thunder from us, but take away our pride.

From all that terror teaches, from lies of tongue and pen,
From all the easy speeches that comfort cruel men;
From sale and profanation of honor and the sword;
From sleep and from damnation, deliver us, good Lord!

Tie in a living tether, the prince and priest and thrall;
Bind all our lives together, smite us and save us all;
In ire and exultation aflame with faith and free,
Lift up a living nation, a single sword to Thee.

O God of earth and altar, bow down and hear our cry, Our earthly rulers falter, our people drift and die; The walls of gold entomb us, the swords of scorn divide; Take not Thy thunder from us, but take away our pride. God is both Lord of Heaven and Earth and all creation in between. The Lord does bend His ear to hear our cry, else our voices would be too feeble to reach the Throne. It is the old, old story of oppression spawned by the avarice and pride of earthly rulers. It is not inconsistent of the faith to raise our voices to God in seeking redress for such injustice brought upon us by earthly rulers. *When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn.* (Prov 29:2) The wealthy of the world do, indeed, control the king by controlling his purse-strings. These sentiments were eloquently illustrated in the famous speech of William Jennings Bryan, in 1896, opposing a gold-only standard: . . . *we shall answer their demands for a gold standard by saying to them, you shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns. You shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold.* Insofar as every reader of this devotion has been made aware through national media, you will know that the words of scorn do divide a peaceful people. If we are able to dispense with our personal pride, our thunder shall be fueled by Heaven instead of by petty political correctness.

From all that terror teaches, from lies of tongue and pen, From all the easy speeches that comfort cruel men; From sale and profanation of honor and the sword; From sleep and from damnation, deliver us, good Lord! Terror teaches nothing of value except terror itself. Terror is a tool of the cruel and power hungry to subjugate the populations. We witness its most outrageous manifestations in the so-called Islamic Jihad. Murder, rape, and profanation of history are being practiced in the name of Allah. The opposite side of terror is the home-grown variety being practiced in the United States of speech and thought-control by means of 'political correctness' and destruction of historical documentations. There is a plethora of smooth-sounding talk coming from the demented halls of the swamp whose meaning is pointless. Any political favor may be purchased from Congress and their minions for a price. Wars are created, fought, and lost over the mal-appropriated largess of tax dollars. If we sleep the while these absurdities of justice take place, we shall fall just as hard and completely as Rome, ancient Greece, and Babylon. Chesterton borrows a phrase and principle from the Litany or General Supplication of the Book of Common Prayer (¶ *To be used after the Third Collect at Morning or Evening Prayer; or before the Holy Communion; or separately*) – *FROM all evil and mischief; from sin; from the crafts and assaults of the devil; from thy wrath, and from everlasting damnation, GOOD LORD, DELIVER US.*

Tie in a living tether, the prince and priest and thrall; Bind all our lives together, smite us and save us all; In ire and exultation aflame with faith and free, Lift up a living nation, a single sword to Thee. The strongest rope is that about which many smaller cords are twined. Unity is an absolute prerequisite to a mighty and powerful nation, but that unity must derive from Godly principles. We have witnessed the kind of unity that exists in evil and corrupt nations that slaughter the innocent and starve the youth. But if we fear the Living God, and His justice, we will be bound together with singleness of national purpose to be a Godly nation and a Light to those afar off. A single sword, well-manned and artfully employed, can accomplish more than ten in the hands of the slothful. If we are restored as a nation of Godly faith and Liberty (of which only God is Author), we can once more arise to become that bright and shining City on a Hill.