Devotion on Hymns of the Church (Hymn 564 – How Firm a Foundation) – 22 July 2014, Anno Domini (In the Year of our Lord)



Rise Up, O Men of God (#535, 1940 Hymnal) – 9 August 2016 Anno Domini

*17 And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! 18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, 19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. 20 And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him*. Luke 15:17-20 (KJV)

            The paranoia of the politically correct, all-inclusive, language propagandists would change the words of the author of this hymn to say, Rise up O Church (or saints, or even ‘ones’), but God created man and woman with different characteristics and, as the French say, ”*Viva la différence*!” The all-inclusive lunacy that attempts to banish all distinctives renders our language sterile and inadequate to communicate precise meaning. Perhaps we should no longer refer to a ‘cup’ of coffee, or ‘bowl’ of soup; but instead, in order to avoid offending either, call for a ‘VESSEL’ of coffee, or a ‘UTENSIL’ of soup!

            It is literally a compliment to the distaff that a hymn is needful to rouse the men of God from their desolation and malaise since the ladies of the church are already alert and active.

            This hymn was literally written aboard a steamer sailing across Lake Michigan to Chicago by the Rev. William P. Merrill in 1911. The favored tune listed in the 1940 Hymnal is, *Festal Song* (1872), by William H. Walter. The tune perfectly fits the mood conveyed by the inspiring lyrics, but an excellent alternate tune is, *St. Thomas* (1770), by Aaron Williams – either tune inspires the soul to arise and take a stand of righteousness.

**RISE UP, O MEN OF GOD**

*Rise up, O men of God!*

*Have done with lesser things.*

*Give heart and mind and soul and strength*

*To serve the King of kings.*

*Rise up, O men of God!*

*The kingdom tarries long.*

*Bring in the day of brotherhood*

*And end the night of wrong.*

*Rise up, O men of God!*

*The church for you doth wait,*

*Her strength unequal to her task;*

*Rise up and make her great!*

*Lift high the cross of Christ!*

*Tread where His feet have trod.*

*As brothers of the Son of Man,*

*Rise up, O men of God!*

“**Rise up, O men of God! Have done with lesser things. Give heart and mind and soul and strength To serve the King of kings**.” No man is in his ‘right mind’ without acknowledging and following the Lord his God. In fact, he is dead altogether in trespasses and sin (Eph 2). The Prodigal Son was in a state of deranged mind when he prematurely took his inheritance from his father and lit out to a “*far country*.” “*And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger*!” A far country is the world of sin where we forget our obligations to our Father. Once we regain our senses, or come to ourselves, we must resolve to return to the Father who is waiting and watching. “*I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants*.” Once we have made our resolution of repentance and return, we must follow through with it: “*And he arose, and came to his father*.” By the way, as this stanza points out, EVERYTHING that is not of God is of LESSER things. Our hearts and minds are prone to greater and greater wickedness apart from God; so in coming to Him, we must surrender that old self-will and take upon us the mind that was in Christ Jesus. “*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus*:” Phil 2:5 (KJV)

The men who are the leading ‘lights’ in most modern churches are oftentimes effeminate – too much so to be called “men of God!” There are inordinate numbers of women in most churches compared to the sparse male populations. This has resulted in churches, themselves, becoming effeminate in worship and fellowship. Men of deep conviction no longer feel comfortable in an environment in which there is informality to the extent that worship seems haphazard and even silly, and the meat of the Gospel has long been neglected.

            “***Rise up, O men of God! The kingdom tarries long. Bring in the day of brotherhood And end the night of wrong****.*” The dark night of the soul grows more and more desolate as time endures. The churches are silent in the face of rampant sin and wickedness as these gain social and political distinction. It is no time for the strong and manly pillars of the church to slink into the shadows in resignation and surrender. The women of the church have too long been forced to bear the brunt of the assault upon the family and upon God’s plan for His Church. It is almost as if war were declared and only our women bore the burden of battle. Rise up, O men of God! It is not enough to waste away in distant enclaves and to stand alone in worship and knowledge of God. We must band together as brothers in our fellowship – strengthening, encouraging, and admonishing one another. Only when good and righteous men unite against the evils pervading our land and people will there be a glimmer on the eastern horizon of light, and that light grow into a brilliant sunrise of glorious power and faith.

            The strength of the Church is the righteousness and holiness of families; and the strength of a nation resides in the fidelity to truth of her churches. “***Rise up, O men of God! The church for you doth wait, Her strength unequal to her task; Rise up and make her great****!*” The task of the church today would be a daunting one for a healthy church, but the Laodicean Church that prevails today is most certainly unequal to the task of defending the families and the nation. In fact, they are openly complicit with the decadence of faith. Of course, the strength of the Church resides not in the human strength of her members, but upon faith in the One to whom the Church is betrothed. We have so-called “Holy-Spirit” Churches that hear not the Voice of the Holy Ghost in always pointing to Christ and not Himself. We have churches that glorify unintelligible babblings (not tongues of any stripe or nation), who boast of miraculous healing at a given hour of the televised coverage (as if the Holy Ghost is biting His nails) awaiting the command of the minster to come down. We have churches that have been set adrift from their anchorage in Biblical doctrine and theology. We have churches that are calling abject wickedness good (homosexual marriage), and that which God has commanded as bad, “Thou shalt not kill.” (abortion). God can put an end to our ungodly behavior at the twinkling of an eye; but He prefers to, in mercy, give us an opportunity to learn of Him and to grow in knowledge and truth. He waited 100 years while Noah was building the Ark and the ungodly ridiculed Noah during the building.

            **“*Lift high the cross of Christ! Tread where His feet have trod. As brothers of the Son of Man, Rise up, O men of God!***” Have our men forgotten the heavy cross to be borne? Have they not only carried that cross, but waved it before the multitudes as a cure for the sting of death and sin? Have we forgotten that we must walk the way of suffering that our Lord walked in our following of Him? The brazen serpent was nailed to a wooden pole and lifted on high in the midst of the camp of Israel in the Wilderness as a means of saving the lives of those bitten by the fiery serpent. Well, we all have been bitten by the fiery serpent of sin and are as good as dead without a like remedy for our affliction. That remedy is the Cross of Christ who bore our sins in Himself on the cross as redemption of those who believe. **“*13****And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.* ***14****And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:* ***15****That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life*.” John 3:13-15 (KJV)

            If you believe this to the extent that your mind has been healed of the madness of sin, you will resolve to arise, and return to your Father, and repent in the garments of the pig sty. You will then ACT on that resolution by following through. In that way, you will gain a covering Robe for your sins (the very BEST Robe), you will receive the ring of AUTHORITY for your finger in sharing the Word of God (His authority – not yours), and you will receive the LIBERTY of your person by being awarded shoes for your feet. The Prodigal Son was the beneficiary of these for doing so. Do thou likewise, Men of God!