



**W**HAT profit is therein my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth? <sup>10</sup>Hear, O LORD, and have mercy upon me: LORD, be thou my helper. <sup>11</sup>Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness; <sup>12</sup>To the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever. (Psalm 30:9-12)

I love commentaries and hymns that predate the modern infatuation with entertainment, but rather emphasize the love of God and His Son, Jesus. It is for that reason that ancient hymns appeal to me more than the pabulum-filled gospel songs of today. The closer to the ancient religion preached by Christ, the sounder the doctrine. There was a day when men and women would lay down their lives rather than deny a single line or word of Scripture. Today, most singers and preachers will not perform unless the price is right. How far we have fallen from the Fire of the Ancient Faith of Christ! This hymn was originally intended to be sung at Morning Prayer on St. Thomas' Day. Moreover, today's hymn selection is ancient having been composed by John of Damascus in the eighth century. The hymn reflects upon the text of the "Song of Moses" of Exodus 15. There are two tunes provided in the 1940 Hymnal for this hymn – the first is my choice for the hymn, *GUADEAMUS PARITER*, by Johan Horn (1544); and the second, *ST. KEVIN*, is the composition of Arthur S. Sullivan (1872).

### **Come, ye faithful, raise the strain**

Come, ye faithful, raise the strain  
of triumphant gladness!  
God hath brought his Israel  
into joy from sadness:  
loosed from Pharoah's bitter yoke  
Jacob's sons and daughters,  
led them with unmoistened foot  
through the Red Sea waters.

'Tis the spring of souls today:  
Christ hath burst his prison,  
and from three days' sleep in death  
as a sun hath risen;  
all the winter of our sins,

long and dark, is flying  
from his light, to whom we give  
laud and praise undying.

Now the queen of seasons, bright  
with the day of splendor,  
with the royal feast of feasts,  
comes its joy to render;  
comes to glad Jerusalem,  
who with true affection  
welcomes in unwearied strains  
Jesus' resurrection.

Neither might the gates of death,  
nor the tomb's dark portal,  
nor the watchers, nor the seal  
hold thee as a mortal:  
but today amidst the twelve  
thou didst stand, bestowing  
that thy peace which evermore  
passeth human knowing.

Alleluia now we cry  
to our King Immortal,  
who triumphant burst the bars  
of the tomb's dark portal;  
alleluia, with the Son  
God the Father praising;  
alleluia yet again  
to the Spirit raising.

*Come, ye faithful, raise the strain of triumphant gladness; God hath brought his Israel into joy from sadness; loosed from Pharaoh's bitter yoke Jacob's sons and daughters; led them with unmoistened foot through the Red Sea waters.* Imagine the fear and chaos of finding themselves penned between the banks of the Red Sea and the approach of a huge and gleaming army bent upon their destruction! And then consider the joy born by the great salvation of God as the Children crossed on die ground when the great banks of water stood erect on either side. The miracle was a singular event never seen before, or since. What a mighty salvation was this! The Children of Israel entered the seabed and crossed to the other shore. In His arrogance, Pharaoh's army followed hard on. As the last of Israel climbed the far bank, the entire host of Pharaoh's formidable army with lances and chariots had entered the seabed and was fully deployed in that dry path. How they could have doubted the power of God to save His own remains a mystery to me; but no so much so as I witness the faithless ministers and laity of our own day who doubt the power of God and flaunt His Law – even in churches. When I read the account of this mighty miracle, I am made to fully trust in the Providence of God in all matters. The reader will recall that Pillar of Cloud by Day and Fire by Night that both led and followed Israel. God always goes before, but He is also mindful always of our rear defense. As the Children were crossing, and Pharaoh's army was fully committed to the depths, God looked out from the Cloud and troubled the chariots of the enemy so that their wheels came off, and had Moses command the sea to cover them there. God is mighty and certainly no wimp. In fact, God is a "Man of War." *"The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name."* (Exodus 15:3)

*'Tis the spring of souls today; Christ hath burst his prison, and from three days' sleep in death as a sun hath risen; all the winter of our sins, long and dark, is flying from his light, to whom we give laud and praise undying.* The readers of this devotion will be of varying ages. Some may be quite advanced in years – I know the feeling! But consider that those

who have been born anew in Christ are in the earliest days of spring compared to the eternity of life that lies ahead. If we “*take up our crosses daily*” and follow Christ, we will die to self, as He did. We will be buried in a borrowed tomb, as He was. But we will not descend to Hell, for He defeated death and Hell so that we can arise from the sleep of death, as He did! The darkness of our sins will flee as the morning vapors from the Light of Christ. But light will not penetrate a heart encased in the stone walls of hate, greed, and faithlessness. We must “*study to make our calling and election sure.*” (see 2 Tim 2:15)

*Now the queen of seasons, bright with the day of splendor, with the royal feast of feasts, comes its joy to render; comes to glad Jerusalem, who with true affection welcomes in unwearied strains Jesus' resurrection.* There is a great Wedding Feast planned by God the Father for His only Begotten Son. But the Marriage has yet to be consummated. It shall be on the last day when all of the elect of God have been sealed and brought into His fold. Glad Jerusalem is far from that dusty little town on Mt. Moriah. Jerusalem will suffer a new glorified Body just as we shall have. That Jerusalem shall descend from Heaven as a Bride adorned for her Husband. “*And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.*” (Revelation 21:1-4)

*Neither might the gates of death, nor the tomb's dark portal, nor the watchers, nor the seal hold thee as a mortal: but today amidst thine own thou didst stand, bestowing thine own peace, which evermore passeth human knowing.* There is no death for the believer but rather a Door – the door of our Lord Jesus Christ – that admits us from this mortal existence into the Gates of Splendor.. “*Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*” (John 10:7-10)

While seedtime and harvest continue upon this earthen sphere, there will be no peace. It is futile to hope so. The peace that politicians promise is one of hard bondage, so that all of life is a war for liberty and faith. Those who fall out on the march will not gain the fruits of victory. We must persevere until the Captain of our Souls proclaims victory. The modern church has forgotten what it means to persevere in the faith; so it makes compromises of truth and faith as the crescendo of the battle builds. These cannot know the joy of that victory to come in Christ. But even in the heat of battle, the believer has a glorious peace in the covert of his heart.