

Onward, Christian Soldiers

Sabine Baring-Gould · 1865 · Tune: St. Gertrude (Arthur Sullivan)

Meter: 6.5.6.5.D with refrain

Verse 1

Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus going on before!
Christ, the royal Master, leads against the foe;
Forward into battle, see His banners go!

Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus going on before.

Verse 2

At the sign of triumph Satan's host doth flee;
On then, Christian soldiers, on to victory!
Hell's foundations quiver at the shout of praise;
Brothers, lift your voices, loud your anthems raise.

Verse 3

Like a mighty army moves the Church of God;
Brothers, we are treading where the saints have trod;
We are not divided, all one body we,
One in hope and doctrine, one in charity.

Verse 4

Crowns and thrones may perish, kingdoms rise and wane,
But the Church of Jesus constant will remain;
Gates of hell can never 'gainst that Church prevail;
We have Christ's own promise, and that cannot fail.

Verse 5

Onward, then, ye people, join our happy throng,
Blend with ours your voices in the triumph song;
Glory, laud, and honor unto Christ the King;
This through countless ages men and angels sing.

History

Sabine Baring-Gould wrote the verses in fifteen minutes one evening in 1865 for children in Horbury Bridge, Yorkshire to sing while marching to a neighboring village for a Whit Monday festival. Arthur Sullivan (of Gilbert and Sullivan) composed the tune 'St. Gertrude' in 1871, naming it for the wife of his friend Ernest Clay-Ker-Seymer.

Scripture References (KJV)

Matthew 16:18

And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

2 Timothy 2:3

Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

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