

Every Soul and Every Nation

by

James Russell Lowell

General

SATB

The music for this anthem is the shape-note hymn JEFFERSON, which I have taken from the 1849 edition of *Southern Harmony* by William Walker. The words are drawn from the 1844 poem "The Present Crisis" by James Russell Lowell (1819–1891).

Though the music and lyric are thus contemporaneous, matching the words of a Harvard man of letters—an urban, New England Lowell—with the rural tradition of shape-note singing might seem incongruous. In fact, Lowell was a pioneering linguist with a deep and democratic love for rural dialect. In *The Biglow Papers* of 1846–48 Lowell expresses his abhorrence over slavery and the Mexican-American War through characters speaking what he calls "homely dialect":

...I imagined to myself such an upcountry man as I had often seen at anti-slavery gatherings, capable of district-school English, but always instinctively falling back into the natural stronghold of his homely dialect when heated to the point of self-forgetfulness.

Lowell's central character, Hosea Biglow, is an irrepressible moralist:

Wut's the use of meetin'-goin,
Every Sabbath, wet or dry,
Ef it's right to go a-mowin
Feller-men—like oats and rye?

I think it plausible that Lowell would also value "homely dialect" of a musical kind, as heard in upcountry gatherings of shape-note singers.

"The Present Crisis" is a lengthy poem, comprising 18 stanzas of 5 lines each. Much of its imagery relates specifically to slavery and the Mexican War. All who have undertaken to adapt the poem to a hymn of wider moral application have found it necessary to select lines, dispersed throughout the poem, that are less closely bound to the 1840s. The aggregates that result might displease the poet. Yet the process of selecting and adapting, as I have done here, is unavoidable if church hymnody is to be enriched by what one biographer has called the poem's "sonorous and inspiring expression of moral passion."

Albert Blackwell

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James Russell Lowell, 1844, alt.

JEFFERSON, *The Sacred Harp*, 1849
arr. Albert Blackwell

The musical score is arranged for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass, and Accordion. It consists of four systems of staves. The first three systems are vocal parts, and the fourth is for the Accordion. Each vocal part has three verses of lyrics. The lyrics are: 1. Ev - 'ry soul and ev - 'ry na - tion fa - ces mo - ments to de - cide, 2. We see dim - ly in the pre - sent what is small and what is great, 3. Though the cause of e - vil pros - per, yet 'tis truth a - lone is strong. The Alto and Tenor parts are marked 'Melody' and include a soprano clef with an 8 below it. The Accordion part is marked 'Acc.' and consists of two staves.

Performance suggestion: Let verse 1 consist of the A & T melody only; verse 2 of ATB; and verse 3 of SATB.

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5

S
 in the strife of truth with false-hood, for the good or e - vil side,
 slow to grasp how weak an arm may turn the i - ron helm of fate.
 Truth for - ev - er on the scaf - fold; on the throne for - ev - er, Wrong:

A
 in the strife of truth with false - hood, for the good or e - vil side,
 slow to grasp how weak an arm may turn the i - ron helm of fate.
 Truth for - ev - er on the scaf - fold; on the throne for - ev - er, Wrong:

5
 T
 8
 in the strife of truth with false - hood, for the good or e - vil side.
 slow to grasp how weak an arm may turn the i - ron helm of fate.
 Truth for - ev - er on the scaf - fold; on the throne for - ev - er, Wrong:

B
 in the strife of truth with false - hood, for the good or e - vil side.
 slow to grasp how weak an arm may turn the i - ron helm of fate.
 Truth for - ev - er on the scaf - fold; on the throne for - ev - er, Wrong:

5

9

S
Some great cause, God's
New oc - cas - ions
yet that scaf - fold

A
Some great cause, God's
New oc - ca - sions
yet that scaf - fold

T
8
Some great cause, God's
New oc - ca - sions
yet that scaf - fold

B
Some great cause, God's
New oc - ca - sions
yet that scaf - fold

new dis - clo - sure,
teach new du - ties;
sways the fu - ture,

of - fers each the
time makes an - cient
and, be - hind the

bloom or blight,
good un - couth;
dim un - known,

9

13

S
and the choice goes by for - ev - er 'twixt the dark - ness and the light.
they must up - ward still, and on - ward, who would keep a - breast of truth.
God is stand - ing in the sha - dow, till glad truth's full light be shown.

A
and the choice goes by for - ev - er 'twixt the dark - ness and the light.
they must up - ward still, and on - ward, who would keep a - breast of truth.
God is stand - ing in the sha - dow, till glad truth's full light be shown.

13
T
8 and the choice goes by for - ev - er 'twixt the dark - ness and the light.
they must up - ward still, and on - ward, who would keep a - breast of truth.
God is stand - ing in the sha - dow, till glad truth's full light be shown.

B
and the choice goes by for - ev - er 'twixt the dark - ness and the light.
they must up - ward still, and on - ward, who would keep a - breast of truth.
God is stand - ing in the sha - dow, till glad truth's full light be shown.

13