

God of the Pilgrim Way



- 1 God of the pilgrim way,
guide of each generation,
through ever-changing years
our sure and firm foundation:
we turn to you, the source
of all that's good and true,
the never-failing store
of treasures old and new.

- 2 We praise you for the lives
of those who went before us,
saints honoured, saints unsung,
the witness which they bore us;
for those who took to heart
the prayer of Christ the Son,
that all who bear his name
should be in Christ as one:

- 3 One Church, a house of peace,
where people long surrounded
by walls built to divide
meet, held in Love unbounded.
The suffering of our world,
the sorrows of our earth
cry for your healing touch,
long for a second birth.

- 4 And when the way grows hard,
and will and purpose fail us,
when dreams and visions die,
and doubts and fears assail us,
let wisdom from on high
our troubled spirits raise,
walk with us on the road
and set our hearts ablaze.



5 United for your sake,
by grace a new creation,
grant us the strength to serve
the work of your salvation:
hope for a world unsoiled
by terror, lies and greed,
faith in a future blest
where Love's commandments lead.

Colin Thompson

Tune 'Darmstadt', Ahasuerus Fritsch (1629-1701)

Category: Traditional hymn; tune in the public domain.

Author's note

This hymn is not so specific that it can only be used for anniversaries in the life of the URC, nor so general that it bears only a tangential relationship to the Jubilee.

It sets our own history during these fifty years in the broader context of the nature and mission of the whole Church, because the URC was never intended to be an end, only the beginning of a wider process of reuniting the separated parts of the one Church.

Nor is such greater reunion an end in itself, but the recalling of the Church to its mission as a living sign of healing and reconciliation in a fragmented world.

Within that context, our particular history is recalled in the second verse, with its thanksgiving for those who prepared the way for the 1972 Union, while our own identity and purpose is present at the beginning of the final verse: 'United', and 'a new creation', which is another, biblical way of saying Reformed.

Biblical references:

- v1 Psalm 90, James 1.17-18, Matthew 13.52
- v2 Hebrews 12.1, John 17.20-21
- v3 Ephesians 2.14, Romans 8.22, Matthew 9.20-21
(and other miracles of touching), John 3.5
- v4 I Samuel 3.1, James 3.17, Luke 24.13-32
- v5 2 Corinthians 5.17, Philippians 2.12, 1 Corinthians 13, Matthew 22.37-40, John 13.34

These words were written for the tune 'Darmstadt', by Ahasuerus Fritsch (1629-1701). To my mind it is one of the noblest chorales of the Lutheran Reformation, especially as set by Bach (copy below). I have chosen it because it is both old and (to us) new. The hymn could also be sung to 'Nun danket' (*Rejoice and Sing*, 72), but for the reason just given, that would rather defeat the purpose.

DARMSTADT. 6 7, 6 7, 6 6, 6 6. AHAUERUS FRITSCH, 1629-1701
Adapted and harm. by J. S. BACH, 1685-1750

Moderately

1. Our God, to whom we turn When wea-ry with il-lu-sion,
2. Thou art thy-self the truth; Though we, who fain would find thee,
3. All beau-ty speaks of thee: The moun-tains and the riv-ers,

Whose stars se-rene-ly burn A-bove this earth's con-fu-sion,
Have tried, with thoughts un-couth, In fee-ble words to bind thee,
The line of lift-ed sea, Where spread-ing moon-light quiv-ers,

Thine is the might-y plan, The stead-fast or-der sure,
It is be-cause thou art We're driv-en to the quest;
The deep-toned or-gan blast That rolls through arch-es dim,

In which the world be-gan, En-dures, and shall en-dure.
Till truth from false-hood part Our souls can find no rest.
Hints of the mu-sic vast Of thy e-ter-nal hymn. A-men.

4 Wherever goodness lurks
We catch thy tones appealing;
Where man for justice works
Thou art thyself revealing;
The blood of man, for man
On friendship's altar spill,
Betrays the mystic plan
On which thy house is built.

5 Thou hidden fount of love,
Of peace, and truth, and beau-ty
Inspire us from above
With joy and strength for duty
May thy fresh light arise
Within each clouded heart,
And give us open eyes
To see thee as thou art. Amen.

Edward Grubb, 1871

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ST. DENIO. 11 11, 11 11. Welsh Hymn Me

Majestically

1. Im-mor-tal, in-vis-i-ble, God on-ly we
In light in-ac-ces-si-ble hid from our eyes

Most bless-ed, most glo-ri-ous, the An-cient of Days

Al-might-y, vic-to-ri-ous, thy great Name we praise. Amen.

2 Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
Nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might;
Thy justice like mountains high soaring above,
Thy clouds which are fountains of goodness and love.

3 To all life thou givest, to both great and small;
In all life thou livest, the true life of all;
We blossom and flourish like leaves on the tree,
And wither and perish; but naught changeth thee.

4 Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,
Thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;
All laud we would render; O help us to see
'Tis only the splendor of light hideth thee. Amen.

Walter Chalmers Smith, 1871

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