

Once to every man and nation

TUNE: KITNOCK'S HILL

Words: James Russell Lowell (1819-1891)

Music: Peter Tranchell

con moto

5 Once to ev - 'ry man and na - tion comes the mom - ent to dec - ide,
9 In the strife of Truth with False - hood, for the good or ev - il side;
13 Some great cause, God's new Mess - i - ah, off - ring each the bloom or blight,
17 Parts the goats up - on the left hand, and the sheep up - on the right,
And the choice goes on for ev - er 'twixt the dark - ness and the light.

Con moto

7
13
19

Source of text: "The Present Crisis" December 1844.
Elmwood, Boston, USA.

This is the original 1963 setting for men's voices & organ.
Tranchell arranged the hymn for SATB & organ in 1987
(MS.Tranchell.1.99).

2

Careless seems the great Avenger;
 history's pages but record
One death-grapple in the darkness
 'twixt old systems and the Word;
Truth for ever on the scaffold,
 Wrong for ever on the throne,—
Yet that scaffold sways the future,
 and, behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow,
 keeping watch above His own.

3

We see dimly in the Present
 what is small and what is great—
Slow of faith, how weak an arm may
 turn the iron helm of fate;
But the soul is still oracular;
 for amid the market's din,
List the ominous stern whisper
 from the Delphic cave within,—
"They enslave their children's children
 who make compromise with sin."

4

Then to side with Truth is noble
 when we share her wretched crust,
Ere her cause bring fame and profit,
 and 'tis prosperous to be just;
Then it is the brave man chooses,
 while the coward stands aside,
Doubting in his abject spirit,
 till his Lord is crucified,
And the multitude make virtue
 of the faith they had denied.

5

New occasions teach new duties;
 Time makes ancient good uncouth;
They must upward still, and onward,
 who would keep abreast of Truth;
Lo, before us gleam her camp-fires!
 we ourselves must Pilgrims be,
Launch our *Mayflower*, and steer boldly
 through the desperate winter sea,
Nor attempt the Future's portal
 with the Past's blood-rusted key.