

Once to every man and nation

KITNOCK'S HILL

Music: Peter Tranchell
Words: James Russell Lowell (1819-1891)

con moto (♩ = 63)
Very smoothly

S
A
T
B

CHOIR
AND
ORGAN

[The organ should not repeat notes repeated by the voices within a phrase]

5

9

13

First Verses

17

Last Verse

21

molto allarg. **rit. al fine**

Once to every man and nation

from James Russell Lowell's poem, "The Present Crisis" ("When a deed is done for freedom")

1

Once to every man and nation
comes the moment to decide,
In the strife of Truth with Falsehood,
for the good or evil side;
Some great cause, God's new Messiah,
offering each the bloom or blight,
Parts the goats upon the left hand,
and the sheep upon the right,
And the choice goes on for ever
'twixt the darkness and the light.

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.

Music arranged for SATB, 1987, from original setting for men's voices & organ, 1963.

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

Composer's note: this tune is not intended to fit the 8-line mutilated versions to be found in S.O.P.309, King's School Canterbury Hymn Book 325, E.H.563, or Methodist Hymn Book 898.