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REJOICE, YE PURE IN HEART

Edward H. Plumptre, 1821–1891

Sing joyfully to the Lord, you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise Him. (Psalm 33:1)

The hallmark of the Christian life is a joyous spirit. The Bible teaches that “a cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones” (Proverbs 17:22). And singing has an important part in the life of joy. It can be the mind’s greatest solace and can express its noblest inspiration. For the person who learns to enjoy it, singing has therapeutic value.

A joyous, singing spirit should not be limited to a Sunday worship experience. Every day is the time to rejoice. Let us never forget that “to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever” should be the ultimate goal of all human existence.

Edward H. Plumptre, the author of this hymn, was a graduate of Oxford University and a minister in the Anglican state church. He was recognized as a brilliant scholar and was appointed to be a member of the Old Testament Committee for the revision of the Authorized Version of the Bible. He authored a number of scholarly works, translated numerous Latin hymns, and had several volumes of his own poetry published.

This hymn was written for the annual choir festival at Peterborough Cathedral, England, May, 1865. It was used as a processional when the choirs from a number of different communities entered and sang in the great cathedral. The hymn first appeared in the 1868 appendix to Hymns Ancient and Modern, the well-known Anglican hymnal of the past century. These words still inspire believers to “rejoice, give thanks, and sing!”

Rejoice, ye pure in heart; rejoice, give thanks, and sing; your festal banner wave on high, the cross of Christ your King.

With all the angel choirs, with all the saints on earth, pour out the strains of joy and bliss, true rapture, noblest mirth!

Still lift your standard high, still march in firm array; as warriors through the darkness toil till dawns the golden day.

Yes, on through life’s long path, still chanting as you go; from youth to age, by night and day, in gladness and in woe.

Then on, ye pure in heart, rejoice, give thanks, and sing; your festal banner wave on high, the cross of Christ your King

Refrain: Rejoice, rejoice, rejoice give thanks, and sing!

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” Matthew 28:18 – 20

