

My Loved Ones:

God says in Ephesians 6:10-12 - Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Our hymn today was written by a person graduating from seminary in 1877. Ernest W. Shurtleff was born in Boston, MA in 1862. All of his classmates in seminary knew that he had gifts for poetry, and asked him to write a hymn that they all might sing together for their commencement. This is what he came up with. The song has many Biblical allusions to it to the regular Christian life, as well as metaphors for graduating from seminary.

Lead on, O King eternal, / the day of march has come;
henceforth in fields of conquest / Your tents will be our home.
Through days of preparation / Your grace has made us strong;
and now, O King eternal, / we lift our battle song.

Verse One. "Days of preparation" speaks of the preparation for graduation. But every day of our lives, we're preparing for our "graduation day" to be in Heaven. "Fields of conquest" means that we all have specific responsibilities in the Kingdom. "Thy tents" means that we don't have a permanent dwelling place here - "This world is not my home."

Lead on, O King eternal, / 'till sin's fierce war shall cease,
and holiness shall whisper / the sweet amen of peace.
For not with swords' loud clashing / or roll of stirring drums
with deeds of love and mercy / the heavenly kingdom comes.

Verse Two. Here is a summary purpose of all of our Christian lives: it is warfare against sin, but it is accomplished with deeds of love and mercy.

Lead on, O King eternal; / we follow, not with fears,
for gladness breaks like morning / where'er your face appears.
Your cross is lifted o'er us, / we journey in its light;
the crown awaits the conquest; / lead on, O God of might.

Verse Three. This is our motivation for Christian service: the sense of God's abiding presence throughout this life and the reward of a faithful servant when done.

Loved Ones, the Christian life is not a ball field in the comfort zone, it's a battle field in the combat zone. Suit up with the Whole Armor of God. Through Jesus, you can have victory today! We love you and are praying for you today.