

Yesterday, with Exultation
Adam of St. Victor, 12th Century.
Walter Macfarren, 1868.

Yesterday, with exultation,
Joined the world in celebration,
Of her promised Savior's birth;
Yesterday the angel nation
Poured the strains of jubilation
O'er the monarch born on earth.

But today o'er death victorious,
By his faith and actions glorious,
By his miracles renowned,
See the deacon triumph gaining,
'Midst the faithless faith sustaining,
First of holy martyrs found.

Onward, champion, falter never,
Sure of sure reward forever,
Holy Stephen, persevere;
Perjured witnesses confounding,
Satan's synagogues astounding
By thy doctrine true and clear.

Thine own witness is in Heaven,
True and faithful, to thee given,
Witness of thy blamelessness;
By thy name a crown implying,
Meet it is thou shouldst be dying
For the crown of righteousness.

For the crown that fadeth never
Bear the torturer's brief endeavor;
Victory waits to end the strife;
Death shall be thy life's beginning,
And life's losing be the winning
Of the true and better life.

Filled with God's most Holy Spirit,
See the Heav'n thou shalt inherit,
Stephen, gaze into the skies;
There God's glory steadfast viewing,
Thence thy victor strength renewing,
Pant for thy eternal prize.

See, as Jewish foes invade thee,
See how Jesus stands to aid thee,
Stands at God's right hand on high:
Tell how opened heaven is shown thee,
Tell how Jesus waits to own thee,
Tell it with thy latest cry.

As the dying martyr kneeleth,
For his murderers he appealeth,
For their madness grieving sore;
Then in Christ he sleepeth sweetly,
And with Christ he reigneth meetly,
Martyr firstfruits, evermore.