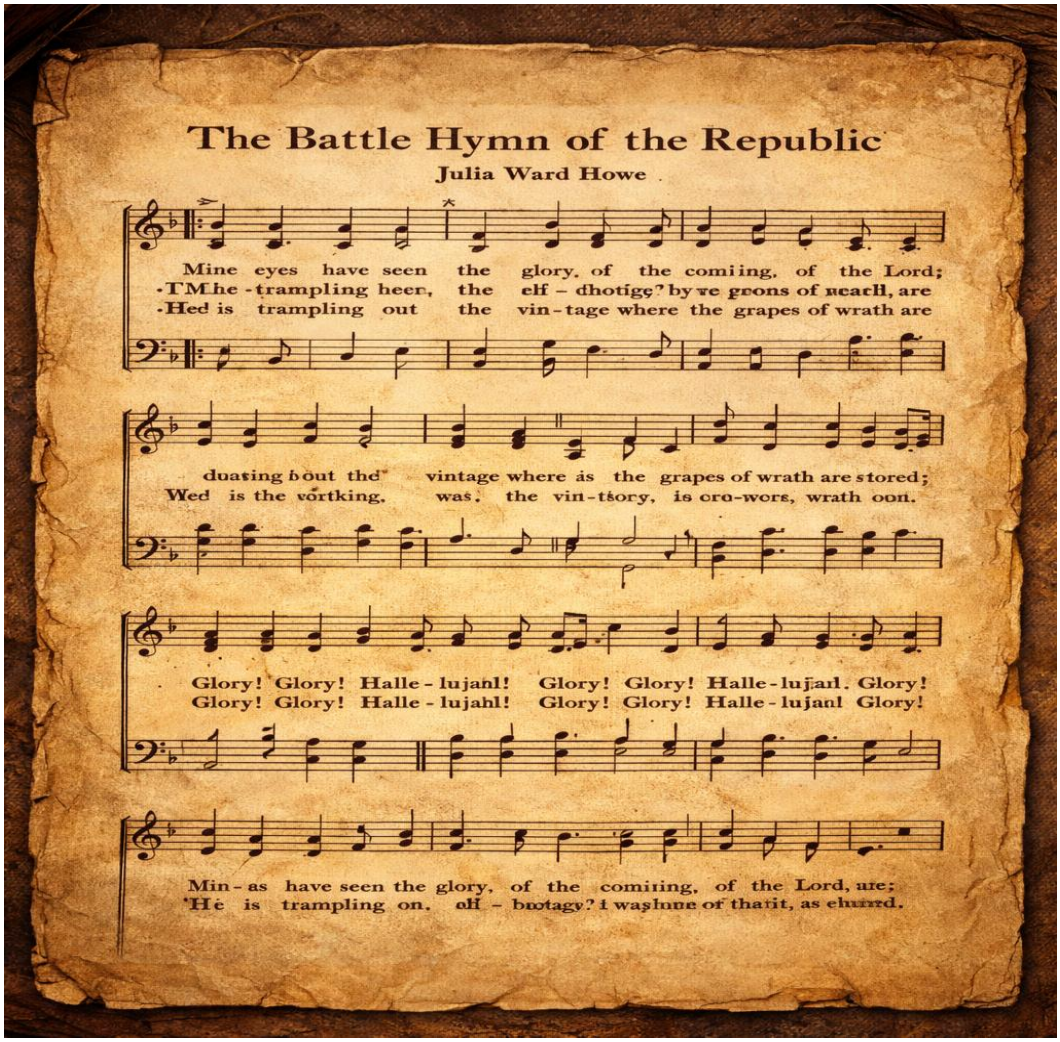

Verse of the day for Monday November 9, 2026 - Proverbs 20: 3

It is to a man's honor to avoid strife, but every fool is quick to quarrel.

Read Proverbs 20 for meditation and inspiration.



A TRIBUTE TO ALL VETERANS

Dear Lakesiders and Friends,

On February 1, 1862, in the early days of the Civil War, the Atlantic Monthly published Julia Ward Howe's "Battle Hymn of the Republic," summing up the cause of freedom for which the United States troops would soon be fighting. "Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord," it began.

"He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword:
His truth is marching on."

Howe had written the poem on a visit to Washington, D.C., with her husband. Approaching the city, she had reflected sadly that there was little she could do for the United States. She couldn't send her menfolk to war: her husband was too old to fight, her sons too young. And with a toddler, she didn't even have enough time to

volunteer to pack stores for the field hospitals. “I thought of the women of my acquaintance whose sons or husbands were fighting our great battle; the women themselves serving in the hospitals or busying themselves with the work of the Sanitary Commission,” she recalled, and she worried there was nothing she could give to the cause.

One day she, her husband, and friends, toured the troop encampments surrounding the city. To amuse themselves on the way back to the hotel, they sang a song that was popular with the troops as they marched. It ended: “John Brown’s body lies a-mouldering in the grave; his soul is marching on.” A friend challenged Howe to write more uplifting words for the soldiers’ song.

That night, Howe slept soundly. She awoke before dawn and, lying in bed, began thinking about the tune she had heard the day before. She recalled: *“[A]s I lay waiting for the dawn; the long lines of the desired poem began to twine themselves in my mind.... With a sudden effort, I sprang out of bed, and found in the dimness an old stump of a pen…. I scrawled the verses almost without looking at the paper*.”

Howe’s hymn captured the tension of Washington, D.C., during the war, and the soldiers’ camps strung in circles around the city to keep invaders from the U.S. capital.

“I have seen Him in the watch-fires of a hundred circling camps,

They have builded Him an altar in the evening dews and damps;

I can read His righteous sentence by the dim and flaring lamps:

His day is marching on.”

Howe’s Battle Hymn of the Republic went on to define the Civil War as a holy war for human freedom:

“In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,

With a glory in His bosom that transfigures you and me.

As He died to make men holy, let us die to make men free,

While God is marching on.”

In God’s march,



Roger