

# Hark! I Hear the Harps Eternal

Traditional or it could have been written by F.R. Warren and / or Alice Parker

Sing along with Custer Larue & the Baltimore Consort @ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XceKxqIv19c>

*D* *G*  
Hark! I hear the Harps eternal,  
*D* *G*  
Ringing on the farther shore.  
*D* *G*  
As I near those swollen waters,  
*D* *G*  
With their deep and solemn roar.



## CHORUS

*D* *G* *D* *G*  
Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, praise the Lamb!  
*D* *G* *D* *G*  
Hallelujah, hallelujah, Glory to the great I AM!



And my soul, tho' stain'd with sorrow,  
Fading as the light of day,  
Passes swiftly o'er those waters,  
To the city far away.

## CHORUS

Souls have cross'd before me, saintly,  
To that land of perfect rest;  
And I hear them singing faintly,  
In the mansions of the blest.

## CHORUS

# Scripture and History

**Psalms 89:52** Blessed be the LORD forever! Amen and amen!

**Revelation 5:11-14** Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!” And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!” And the four living creatures said, “Amen!” and the elders fell down and worshiped.

The harp had a special connotation in 19th century Appalachia, where “**Hark! I Hear the Harps Eternal**” originated. “Harp singing” was first recorded in the 1844 publication of *The Southern Harp*, a collection of songs noted in “shape notes” thought to be easier for amateur singers to learn. These songs were meant to be sung a cappella.

The harmonization made possible through shape notes, created the same chordal harmony one can produce by strumming a harp. Several Appalachian instruments were referred to as harps, including the bow harp, jaw harp, door harp, and dulcimer.

F. R. WARREN'S "Dream Music." **INVITATION. (New.) 8s, 7s & 4s.** Arr'd by WM. HAYDEN, M. D. **247**

1. Hark! I hear the harps a - ter - nal Ring - ing on the fir - ther shore, Hal - lo - lu - jah!  
As I near these swell - en - ing wa - ters, With their deep and sol - emn roar. Hal - lo - lu - jah!

2. Hal - lo - lu - jah! Hal - lo - lu - jah! Glo - ry to the GREAT I AM! Hal - lo - lu - jah!

The image shows a musical score for a hymn titled "INVITATION. (New.) 8s, 7s & 4s." by F. R. Warren's "Dream Music." The score is arranged by Wm. Hayden, M.D. and is numbered 247. It features three staves: a vocal line with lyrics, a piano accompaniment line, and a bass line. The lyrics are: "1. Hark! I hear the harps a - ter - nal Ring - ing on the fir - ther shore, Hal - lo - lu - jah! As I near these swell - en - ing wa - ters, With their deep and sol - emn roar. Hal - lo - lu - jah! 2. Hal - lo - lu - jah! Hal - lo - lu - jah! Glo - ry to the GREAT I AM! Hal - lo - lu - jah!"

**“Hark! I hear the Harps Eternal” earliest shape-note form with lyrics (1878)**

The tune of “Hark! I Hear the Harps Eternal” was first published in the 1854 edition of *Southern Harmony*, a harp singing collection, where it went by the title, “Invitation”. It is sometimes attributed to F. R. Warren and /or Alice Parker.

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