

O God, our help in ages past

'Man frail, and God eternal'

Words: Isaac Watts (1719), based on Psalm 90

Tune: *St Anne* (William Croft, 1678—1727)

The musical score is written in 4/4 time. The vocal line is in the treble clef, and the piano accompaniment is in the bass clef. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with a steady rhythm. The lyrics are printed below the notes, with dynamic markings (f, ff, p) indicating volume changes. The score consists of two systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line.

f 1. O God, our help in a - ges past, Our hope for years to come,
ff 2. Thy word com - mands our flesh to dust: 'Re - turn, ye sons of men';
p 3. A thou - sand a - ges in thy sight Are like an even - ing gone,
p 4. Time, like an ev - er - roll - ing stream, Bears all its sons a - way;
f 5. O God, our help in a - ges past, Our hope for years to come:

Our shel - ter from the storm - y blast, And our e - ter - nal home,
All na - tions rose at first from earth, And turn to earth a - gain.
Short as the watch that ends the night Be - fore the ris - ing sun.
They fly for - got - ten, as a dream Dies at the op'n - ing day.
Be thou our guard while life shall last, And our e - ter - nal home.

Verse 2 is present in the *Primitive Methodist Hymnal* (1889), but omitted in most modern hymn books. Four other verses are omitted.

The harmonies are from *A Supplement to the New Version* (1708), but the rhythm has been simplified as per *Psalms and Hymns* (1841).

"[This hymn] is a work of which it would be difficult to write too highly. It is undoubtedly one of Watts's finest compositions, and his best paraphrase." — *Dictionary of Hymnology* (1892).