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Song "Hold The Fare"

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HOLD THE FORT
As sung by Ira D. Sankey

During the late American War, a fort at Allatoona, Ga. defended by a detachment, from Howard's Army of the Tennessee, under Gen. Corse was attacked (Oct. 6th, 1864) by French's Division of Hood's Confederate Army.

After a sanguinary struggle of several hours the enemy was repulsed but with great loss to the fort - and Corse was apprehensive of a renewed attack. But reinforcements were at hand and Gen. Sherman's signal flag, just then descried on the top of Kenesaw Mountain over the heads of the enemy, waved in substance the cheering message, "Hold on - I am coming!" All apprehension was relieved and soon the detachment and the approaching army mingled in shouts of "Victory!" From this historic picture the following stirring hymn was sprung.

Ho! my comrades, see the signal
Waving in the sky!
Reinforcements now appearing
Victory is nigh!

Chorus: "Hold the fort, for I am coming,"
Jesus signals still
Wave the answer back to heaven
"By Thy grace we will."

See the mighty host advancing,
Satan leading on
Mighty men around us falling,
Courage almost gone.
Chorus: "Hold the fort," etc.

See the gloriou banner waving,
Hear the trumpets blow:
In our Leader's name we'll triumph
Over every foe.
Chours: "Hold the fort," etc.

Fierce and long the battle rages,
But our help is near;
Onward comes our great Commander,
Cheer my comrades cheer!
Chorus: "Hold the fort," etc.

The writer of this song was Major D.W. Whittle of Gen. O.O. Howard's Staff.

Note: This is an extract from a letter in the handwriting of General O.O. Howard, to his son, Col. John Howard, in 1895. A full description of the Allatoona battle in 1864, is in Vol. II pages 58 to 63 of The Autobiography of General Howard, published by Baker Taylor Co., New York, 1907.