

Henry Kieffer

Short Stories of the Hymns



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Short Stories of the Hymns

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Short Stories of the Hymns

Being A Brief Account Of The Circumstances In Which Some Of Our
Best Hymns And Songs Were Written

By Henry Martyn Kieffer

AUTHOR OF "THE RECOLLECTIONS OF A DRUMMER BOY," "COLLEGE CHAPEL
SERMONS," "THE FIRST SETTLERS OF THE FORKS OF THE DELAWARE." "IT IS TO
LAUGH." "THE FUNNY BONE," ETC.

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Dedication

To My Wife

To whose most efficient and faithful aid the preparation of this volume is due, it is most affectionately inscribed.

Contents

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About The Lutheran Library

Dedication

Contents

Preface by Lutheran Librarian

A Note about Typos [Typographical Errors]

Preface

1. Introduction

2. “Jesus, Lover of my Soul” by Charles Wesley

A War Incident

◇ Charles Wesley

3. “Nearer, My God To Thee” by Sarah Flower Adams

4. Isaac Watts

◇ Isaac Watts

5. William Cowper and Augustus Toplady

6. William Williams; The Titanic

7. Henry Harbaugh

8. Heber. From Greenland’s Icy Mountains

9. “Just As I Am, Without One Plea.”

The Hymn, “Stand up, Stand up for Jesus.”

10. O Little Town of Bethlehem

11. Home Sweet Home

The First Singing of “Home, Sweet Home.”

Something About “The Star Spangled Banner.”

12. “Closing Hymns”

13. “Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow.”

14. “O Mother Dear, Jerusalem”

The New Jerusalem

16. “The Celestial Country”

The Celestial Country

17. Conclusion

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Preface by Lutheran Librarian

In republishing this book, we seek to introduce this author to a new generation of those seeking authentic spirituality.

HENRY MARTYN KIEFFER (1845-1930), wrote many books including “The Recollections of a Drummer Boy,” “College Chapel Sermons,” “The First Settlers of the Forks of the Delaware,” “It is to Laugh” “The Funny Bone,” etc. Especially valuable is his “Short Stories of the Hymns: A Brief Account Of The Circumstances In Which Some Of Our Best Hymns And Songs Were Written.” Dr. Kieffer served as pastor of the First Reform Church of Easton, Pa., where he translated early German record books of the church into the publication “Some of the First Settlers of The Forks of the Delaware and their descendants from 1760-1852”.

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Preface

THE PURPOSE of this little book is to present to its readers some brief account of the origin and authorship of some of our more familiar hymns. It is not the purpose to attempt to cover the whole ground of Christian hymnology, in its simply historical aspect, as that would demand the preparation of a book of very considerable dimensions. It is proposed, simply, to select from a very large amount of material which the author has for years past been gathering, a few of the more striking and interesting incidents connected with the composition of some of our best known Songs of Zion. In doing this free use will be made of such works on the subject as either a private or a public library will afford, while some assistance, and that not inconsiderable, will be found in certain carefully kept scrapbooks of apoplectic dimension and appearance, the joint product of scissors, paste, and patience for many years past.

It is quite possible, truly, that this little book may traverse some ground already familiar to some of its readers, but it is believed that to the great majority of them the story of the hymns is new, and will prove interesting and profitable. At all events, it will be an advantage to all who have not access to special works on the subject, to have in hand, gathered up in brief compass and available shape, such facts connected with the origin of the hymns, as the author, after some years of patient search, has found most interesting and instructive to himself.

ATLANTIC CITY, N. J.

1. Introduction

Our Hymns — where did they come from? As you take your seat in your pew on the Sunday morning, and open your hymn book to find the hymn which the minister has just announced, does it ever occur to you to inquire, as you look at the hymn, “Who wrote this hymn? Why? And under what circumstances?” Your hymn book may perhaps of itself tell you the name of the author and the date of its composition — but that is very little information. Let us say, for example, that the hymn which the minister has announced is,

Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love!
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.

Your hymn book may indeed tell you that this was written by one John Fawcett, in the year 1772. But these bare facts have very little interest for you. Who was John Fawcett, and why, and under what circumstances did he write this good old hymn? If we could only get at that, perhaps we should find a new interest and see a new meaning in this grand old song of Christian fellowship. If a person has not yet started such inquiries as these in his own mind in reference to at least some of the hymns we are accustomed to use in the service of the sanctuary, he has not a little yet to learn in connection with the general subject of singing in church. No one can understand a hymn, or at least appreciate it aright, or feel the full power of its meaning, unless he knows somewhat of the spirit which actuated its composer and the outward circumstances which called it forth.

Such historical knowledge of the hymns adds a new interest to them. It is true here as it is true generally — that our knowledge of the history of a thing is the measure of our interest in it. Whether it concern the earth which we inhabit, the language we use, the laws by which we are governed, or

anything whatsoever with which we have to do, history is in all respects one of the noblest, most refining and instructive branches of study. And everything has had a history. The mountains which rise towering toward the sky, and which seem to have been from everlasting, were not always where they are now. The rivers did not always flow in their present channels toward the sea. The continents were at one time at the bottom of the ocean. Earthquakes, volcanic action, changes of climate, and a thousand other influences have conspired to make the earth what it is. It has had a history. And it derives a new interest for us the moment we begin to read and study and examine into the manifold changes through which it has passed. Indeed, anything develops a new significance the moment you learn something of its past. The piece of coal which you unthinkingly toss into your stove becomes a something more when you learn that it is older than the family of man: that it once was a piece of wood and grew in a forest, the like of which is now nowhere to be found, and of which, if it only had a tongue, it could tell a most wonderful story. Now hold it in your hand, and turn it over, and look at it in wonder. So, too, the words which we daily use, have had, each and all of them, a history — often a very beautiful and instructive history; and when one once begins to go to his dictionary, and studies the origin of words and the changes through which they have passed, language ceases to be the dead thing it formerly was esteemed, and becomes living, interesting, instructive.

So it is with our hymns. We have been using many of them ever since we could sing; and we have sung them not knowing where they came from, by whom written, when or where or why; not knowing but they may have been dropped down from the skies; not knowing, even while we sang them, that each has had its lesson of instruction in the very circumstances which gave it birth. We were like our ancestors of an hundred years ago who roamed over the hills of central Pennsylvania never suspecting the vast mineral treasures which had been laid up in store beneath their feet.

There are probably very few, if any, of our readers who have not often joined in singing,

Come, Thou Fount of every blessing.
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise.

Yet — who wrote it? It was written by a certain Robert Robinson, of Cambridge, England. He was born in the year 1735, and was converted under the preaching of Whitefield. He is said to have been a man of unusual mental endowment, and shortly after his conversion he became a preacher. Unfortunately, he was also a man of a restless disposition, unstable in his thinking, always going from one thing to another, and eventually became an infidel. It would seem, from a careful perusal of this hymn, that when he wrote it in the first enthusiasm of his conversion, he was sensible of the unsettled character of his own mind and heart; for you will notice how, in the last verse, he pleads piteously for the grace of constancy —

Oh, to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be!
Let that grace now, like a fetter.
Bind my wand'ring heart to Thee!
Prone to wander. Lord, I feel it —
Prone to leave the God I love —
Here's my heart — Oh take and seal it.
Seal it from Thy courts above!

In connection with the history of this hymn, it is related that the author of it was one day traveling by coach and had for his fellow passenger a lady, an entire stranger to him. She had lately seen this hymn, and admired it so much that in the course of conversation she asked him whether he had ever seen it, and whether he could tell her who was the author of it? At first he avoided her questions, for he was at that very moment an avowed infidel. But as she pressed him for an answer and began to tell him what a blessing and comfort that one hymn had been to her soul, he at length burst into a passionate flood of tears, exclaiming, “Madam, I am the poor unhappy man who composed that hymn many years ago; and I would give a thousand worlds, if I had them, to enjoy the feeling I then had!” The poor man died hopeless. Alas, that one should preach the gospel and himself be a cast-away!

Let us take another familiar hymn which, like the above, we often sing at the opening of service, and which is frequently used when ministers and laymen meet in Conventions, Assemblies, Conferences and Synods —

I love Thy kingdom, Lord,
The house of Thine abode;
The Church our blest Redeemer saved
With His own precious blood.

For this most excellent hymn we are indebted to Timothy Dwight, D. D., one of the many celebrated Presidents of Yale College. He was born in Massachusetts in 1752. His father was a merchant, his mother the third daughter of Jonathan Edwards. He was a bright boy, learned the alphabet at a single lesson, could read the Bible at the age of four years; was ready for college at eight, entered at thirteen and graduated at seventeen. He at first devoted himself to the study of law, but found his way into the ministry, and was appointed a Chaplain in the Continental army in 1777. In 1795 he was elected President of Yale College. It is said of him that he was capable of doing an almost incredible amount of intellectual work, and that after working and studying all day he would sit up far into the night writing poetry. It was, no doubt, over the midnight oil, after a long day's work had been done for the Church of Christ, that he took his pen and wrote, as if anew consecrating himself to the service of the Master —

I love Thy kingdom. Lord,
The house of Thine abode;
The Church our blest Redeemer saved
With His own precious blood.

I love Thy Church, Oh God!
Her walls before Thee stand
Dear as the apple of Thine eye.
And graven on Thy hand.

For her my tears shall fall.
For her my prayers ascend.
To her my cares and toils be given,
Till toils and cares shall end.

As we read these burning words of self-consecration to the Redeemer's Church and Kingdom, one can imagine and almost in fancy see the weary Yale College President at the midnight hour, perhaps, when the day's work was done and all the house was still, bending over his study table which with him, as with many another minister of Christ, had become a veritable

altar of the Lord, with an aching head and a tired hand writing these words so familiar to us all. This hymn, which breathes a spirit of such consecration to the Church of Christ, could have been written only by one who had first of all really consecrated himself to God's service and praise, and it never can have its full power save only with those who, like the author of it, have indeed laid themselves on the altar of the Gospel.

It is worthy of observation that many of our most celebrated hymns were composed by ministers of the Gospel. And it is also worthy of remark how even they do not seem at all times to have been equally prepared for so difficult a work as hymn-writing, but appear to have been moved by the good spirit of God to an almost irresistible impulse on certain occasions of rare inspiration, when their hearts were aflame and their lips aglow with a fire kindled by a live coal from the altar. It has largely been in connection with pastoral care or pulpit labor that our noblest songs of Zion first saw the light of day. Hymns, that is to say good hymns, were never, or at least very seldom, written with much forethought or conscious premeditation. They were born, rather, out of a full heart and an overmastering inspiration, when the heart was all aglow with heavenly light and warmth, and when the intellect and the imagination were raised up, for the time being, to a higher plane than usual. Like the holy men of old, our hymnwriters "Spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

Here is another hymn which we often sing. It was composed by a minister and was drawn from or was suggested by ministerial experiences —

Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above...

When we asunder part
It gives us inward pain;
But we shall still be joined in heart.
And hope to meet again.

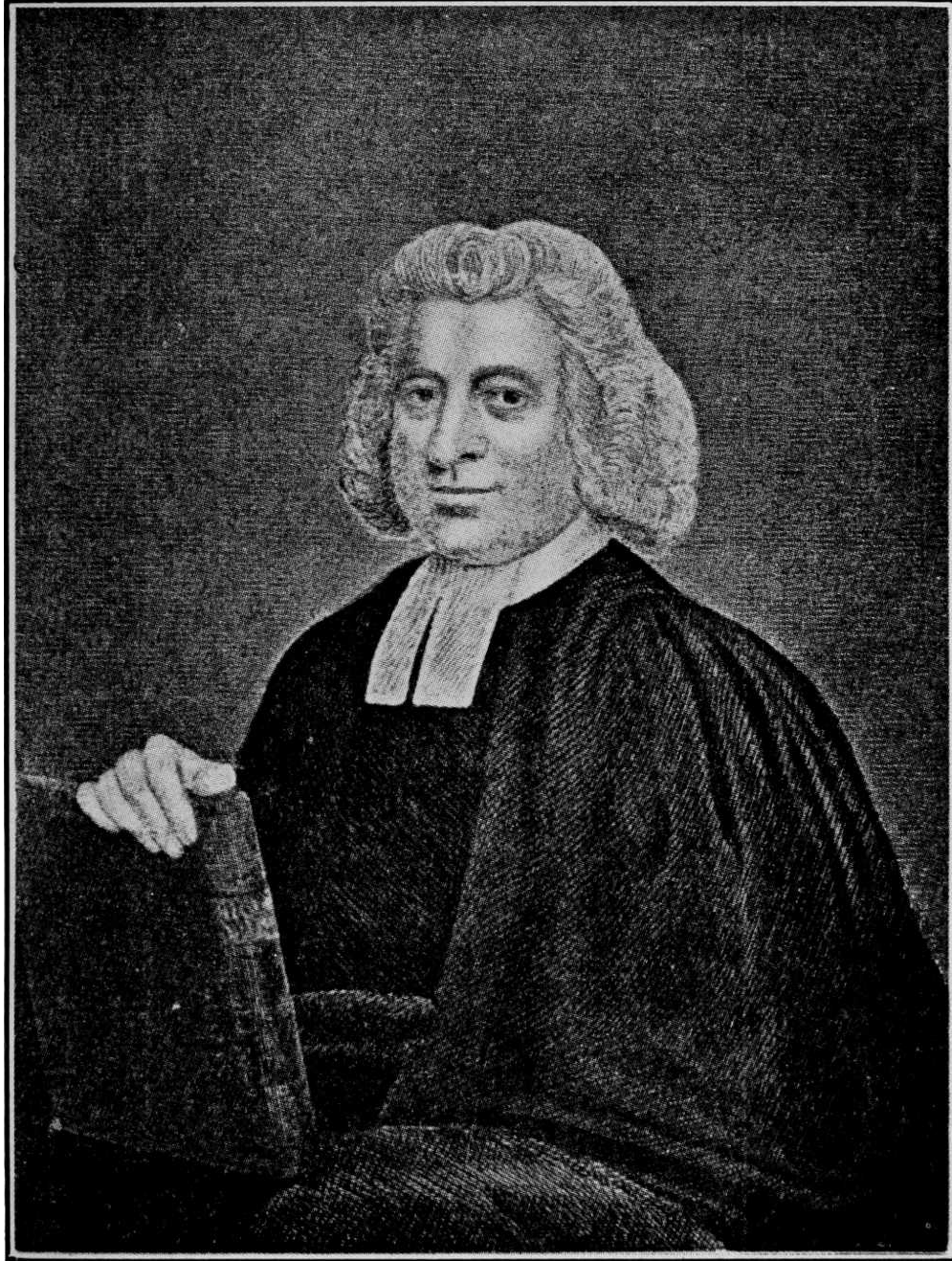
In the course of the narrative of the circumstances connected with the writing of this hymn, it will be observed how pastor and people are far more attached to one another than either is aware of, till they come to part. The relation between pastor and people seems to be so sacredly close and so ten-

derly affectionate, that it cannot be broken without great pain. So it was, at least with John Fawcett, the author of the above hymn. It is related that after he had been a few years in the ministry, his family (as is often the case), “increasing far more rapidly than his income,” he determined to make a change in his pastoral relations by leaving the congregation he had been serving, and settling in a Baptist church in London. Accordingly, much to the regret of his people, he delivered his farewell sermon to them, and shortly thereafter made final preparations for the removal of his family and household goods. On the day appointed for the moving, surrounded by his weeping parishioners, he was busily engaged in loading furniture, boxes and bundles, on six or seven wagons which were to carry him and his to his new field of labor. All the while this was going on his poor people stood around him weeping, and praying him that he would even yet change his mind, clinging to him and begging him to remain with them. The last wagon was finally loaded, and the pastor and his wife sat down on an empty box, to weep with the people before saying a last goodbye to them. “Oh, John,” said the good wife, “I cannot bear this. I know not how to go.” “No,” said he, “nor I either. And — well — and we won’t go, either! Unload the wagons and put everything in the place where it was before!” The London church was at once informed by letter that the Rev. John Fawcett had changed his mind and would not become their pastor, and while the unloading of the six wagons was going on, and amid such rejoicing as we may imagine, he sat down and wrote, with a full heart and a trembling hand, that beautiful hymn of Christian fellowship which will be sung until all the saints are reunited in Heaven, —

Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love!

2. “Jesus, Lover of my Soul” by Charles Wesley

THE STORY of the very favorite and beautiful hymn, “Jesus, lover of my soul,” has often been told, but as it will bear frequent repetition, we venture to tell it once again. Your hymn book will probably tell you that it was written by Charles Wesley in the year 1740, but it will not tell you the circumstances of trouble and danger by which it was wrung out of his heart, a knowledge of which alone will enable one to grasp the full meaning and power of this deathless hymn.



CHARLES WESLEY.

◇ Charles Wesley

The story runs that Charles Wesley and his brother John were one evening holding an open air meeting on the common. It was during the rise of Methodism in England, and the preachers of the new denomination were frequently assailed by the mob and pelted with stones. In the midst of the services the mob came down on the preachers and dispersed the meeting, compelling the Wesley brothers to flee for their lives. They at first took refuge behind a hedge where they protected themselves as well as they could against the shower of stones rattling around them, and shortly after, in the gathering darkness, found a safe retreat in a certain spring-house. Here they struck a light with flint and tinder, dusted their clothes and bathed their bruises in the water of a spring which there bubbled forth in a refreshing stream. This done, they sat there listening and waiting for a safe time to go to their homes; and while thus at leisure, Charles Wesley pounded a piece of lead into a rude pencil and wrote on a scrap of paper his immortal hymn,

Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly.

If the hymn be read carefully, it will be observed how the circumstances of danger and trial under which it was composed have been, as by a masterly inspiration, woven into its very warp and woof. The angry mob furnished the conception of the “nearer waters,” “the tempest,” and “the storm.” With reference to their having sheltered their heads behind the hedge, he wrote

Cover my defenseless head
With the shadow of Thy wing.

The spring-house and the hedge suggested the line, “Safe into the haven guide,” and the cool waters of the spring became a type of Him who is the “Fountain opened in Israel for sin and uncleanness,” of whose waters if a man drink he shall never thirst again, and of whom the poet wrote those words which will never cease to be sung until we all drink of the waters of the “River of Life” in Heaven —

Plenteous grace with Thee is found,
Grace to cover all my sin;
Let the healing streams abound,
Make and keep me pure within.

Thou of life the fountain art.
 Freely let me take of Thee,
Spring Thou up within my heart.
 Rise to all eternity.

This hymn, especially when sung with some knowledge of its historical origin, is the prayer of the persecuted believer fleeing to Christ for protection and help. To the true believer the world often appears not only a desert, but a desert swept by a continual storm. It is only in Christ that we find refreshment and safety. "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

A War Incident

A party of Northern tourists formed part of a large company gathered on the deck of an excursion steamer that was moving slowly down the historic Potomac one beautiful evening in the summer of 1881. A gentleman, who has since gained a national reputation as an evangelist of song, had been delighting the party with his happy rendering of many familiar hymns, the last being the sweet petition so dear to every Christian heart, "Jesus, lover of my soul."

The singer gave the first two verses with much feeling, and a peculiar emphasis upon the concluding lines that thrilled every heart. A hush had fallen upon the listeners that was not broken for some seconds after the musical notes had died away. Then a gentleman made his way from the outskirts of the crowd to the side of the singer, and accosted him with, "Beg pardon, stranger, but were you actively engaged in the late war?"

"Yes, sir," the man of song answered, courteously; "I fought under General Grant."

"Well," the first speaker continued with something like a sigh, "I did my fighting on the other side, and think, indeed am quite sure, I was very near you one bright night eighteen years ago this very month. It was very much such a night as this. If I am not mistaken, you were on guard duty. We of the South had sharp business on hand, and you were one of the enemy. I crept near your post of duty, my murderous weapon in hand. The shadows hid me. Your beat led you into the clear light. As you paced back and forth you were humming the tune you have just sung. I raised my gun and aimed at

your heart, and I had been selected by our commander for the work because I was a sure shot. Then, out upon the night rang the words —

Cover my defenseless head
With the shadow of Thy wing.

Your prayer was answered. I couldn't fire after that. And there was no attack made on your camp that night. I felt sure, when I heard you sing this evening, that you were the man whose life I was spared from taking."

The singer grasped the hand of the Southerner, and said, with much emotion: "I remember the night very well, and distinctly the feeling of depression and loneliness with which I went forth to my duty. I knew my post was one of great danger, and I was more dejected than I remember to have been at any time during the service. I paced my lonely beat, thinking of home and friends and all that life holds dear. Then the thought of God's care for all that He has created came to me with peculiar force. If He so cares for the sparrow, how much more for man created in His own image? And I sang the prayer of my heart, and ceased to feel alone. How the prayer was answered I never knew until this evening. My heavenly Father thought best to keep the knowledge from me for eighteen years. How much of His goodness to us we shall be ignorant of until it is revealed by the light of eternity! 'Jesus, lover of my soul,' has been a favorite hymn to me; now it will be inexpressibly dear."

The incident given in the above sketch is a true one, and was related by a lady who was one of the party on the steamer.

3. “Nearer, My God To Thee” by Sarah Flower Adams

TRIAL, TROUBLE, AFFLICTION, SORROW — out of these have come our sweetest songs of Zion. Who is there but knows that the most beautiful and touching of the Psalms were written at times when their authors were in the depths of distress and anguish? So true is the general principle that Sorrow and Song go hand in hand, like twin sisters, that a careful analysis of our hymnbooks will show that those hymns which are most endeared to us all were composed at times when their authors were in the greatest possible trouble of mind and heart. At this we need not be at all surprised as though it were something strange or unusual; for it seems to be a general law, prevailing in the world of nature, even, and much more in the world of mind, that low things are the necessary antecedents of high things. In God’s creation chaos goes before cosmos, always, and the night before the morning. As the lark that soars the highest builds her nest the lowest; as the nightingale that sings so sweetly, sings, not under the noonday sun, but in the shade where all things rest — and sings best, too, when a needle is thrust through her eye; as the branches that are most laden with ripe fruit bend the lowest; as the lowly valleys are fruitful while the lofty mountains are barren, and the most fragrant spices will not yield their most precious perfumes until they are crushed and bruised — even so it seems with the human soul. This, too, like the olive, must be crushed ere it yield its fruit, and, like the nightingale sings its sweetest songs only when suffering the keenest anguish.

The lives of the song-writers of Zion show, as few other lives show, that “through much tribulation must we enter into the kingdom of God.” For, the Latin word, *tribulum*." (from which the English word “tribulation” has evidently been derived,) was the name for a flail. And so, what are “tribulations” but the blows of the heavenly husbandman’s flail, threshings, as it were, of our inner spiritual man, whereby whatever is light, trivial, and poor

in us is separated from what is solid and true, the chaff from the wheat? As a quaint old poem saith —

Till from the straw the flail the corn doth beat. Until the chaff be purged from the wheat.
Yea, till the mill the grains in pieces tear,
The richness of the flour will scarce appear.
So, till men's persons great afflictions touch.
If worth be formed, their worth is not so much;
Because, like wheat in straw, they have not yet
That value which in threshing they may get. For, till the bruising flails of God's corrections
Have threshed out of us our vain affections;
Till those corruptions which do misbecome us
Are, by the Sacred Spirit, winnowed from us;
Until from us the straw of worldly treasures,
Till all the dusty chaff of empty pleasures.
Yea, till His flail upon us He doth lay,
To thresh the husk of this our flesh away,
And leave the soul uncovered: nay, yet more —
Till God shall make our very spirit poor.
We shall not up to highest wealth aspire:
But then we shall — and that is my desire!

Through such threshings of God's hand, through such uncovering of the soul and making poor of the very spirit of man, our sweetest songwriters evidently passed at the time when they composed these immortal hymns, which will never cease to be sung until God's children sing the new song in heaven.

One remarkable illustration of this we have already noticed in connection with the distressing circumstances in which Charles Wesley wrote the hymn, "Jesus, lover of my soul." Closely allied to this, both in its substance and in the nature of the circumstances in which it originated, is that other beautiful hymn so dear to every believer's heart, "Nearer, my God, to Thee." This was composed in the sick room. The author of it was Mrs. Sarah Flower Adams, who for many weary months watched and waited by the bedside of a sister dying with consumption, until she was so enfeebled by a disease which she thus contracted, that she herself, shortly after the death of her sister, died, and so passed into that nearer relation to God for which she in her beautiful song so ardently longed. As one reads over the touching words of this undying song of the dying, as it may well be called, the image of the patient watcher, pale and haggard, rises to the view. Perhaps it was in some lone night watch, when weary and faint, while all

the house was hushed and all the world was still, she sat and wept, that that sweet song burst forth from her overburdened soul —

Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee.
E'en though it be a cross
That raiseth me.
Still all my song shall be
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee!

Though like a wanderer.
The sun gone down.
Darkness be over me,
My rest a stone —
Yet in my dreams I'd be
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee!"

The writer once heard this hymn, "Nearer, my God, to Thee," sung under very remarkable circumstances. It was during the Civil War. On June 18th, 1864, in one of our terrible battles in front of Petersburg, Va., one of my company fell. A ball had shattered his leg. Two of us picked him up and carried him on a stretcher to the Field Hospital in the rear. There were many wounded men there, all waiting their turn at the amputating table, and the surgeons were busy. When his turn came, we lifted him up on the table, and the surgeon said, "Sorry, my boy, but your leg must come off, for the bone is all shattered by the ball." "All right," said the comrade. The chloroform was about to be administered when the boy said, "Wait a moment. Doctor, I want to pray." "Yes," was the answer, "but be quick about it, for others are waiting." The boy covered his face with his two hands for a few moments, and then said, "Now, I'm ready. Go ahead."

Quickly sinking into merciful unconsciousness he lay under the knife, and with the first thrust of the long knife through his leg the patient broke into singing "Nearer, my God, to Thee." He sang with a clear voice and an apparently unerring memory, missing none of the stanzas and singing the hymn through to the end. The surgeon worked swiftly and surely, and with the skill of a hand long used to the terrible work, pausing only twice during the operation to wipe the gathering mist from his eyes, for while he worked the boy sang on. When the operation was concluded, tears were on many a

cheek weatherbeaten and bronzed in long and hard service, and the surgeon said, "I venture to say that that boy comes from a Christian home somewhere away up North — and may God bless him."

Akin to the general tenor of the hymn mentioned above, is that ever beautiful even-song which is almost without a rival amongst our sacred melodies —

Abide with me; fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens: Lord, with me abide!

For this truly splendid and classical composition the Christian world is under lasting obligations to the Rev. Henry Francis Lyte, who was born at Kelso, Scotland, June 1, 1793, and died at Nice, 1847. Liberally educated at Trinity College, Dublin, he entered the service of the Master as a curate in the Church of England. In the earlier part of his ministry he settled in a dreary Irish parish, where he had many struggles with poverty. He seems, at this time, to have had but little hearty interest in his labors, and acknowledged afterward that he went through with the functions of his sacred office in a merely mechanical and lifeless way. But God took good care to arouse Henry Francis Lyte to a warmer zeal, for He had a grand work for him to do for the Church. For, about this time, that is while he was yet a curate in an obscure parish in Ireland, being called one day to the bedside of a neighboring clergyman who was dying, and had sent for Lyte in great agony, "because he was unpardoned and unprepared to die," this sad scene left so deep an impression on Lyte's mind that he says "I was deeply affected and brought to look at life and its issues with a different eye than before; and I began to study my Bible, and to preach in another manner than I had formerly done." It was to this revival in the heart and mind of this gifted man that we are indebted for the well known hymn —

Jesus, I my cross have taken,
All to leave and follow Thee;
Destitute, despised, forsaken —
Thou from hence my all shalt be.

Compelled at length by ill health to resign his charge, he settled at Brixham, a seaport town in the county of Devon, having probably chosen this location

for the advantage which the sea air, as it was hoped, would afford him. The population was largely composed of rough, but warm-hearted fishermen, amongst whom he spent the remainder of his days, in many and sore struggles with poverty. Here he “made hymns for his little ones, hymns for his hardy fishermen, and hymns for sufferers like himself.” It was here too, that he wrote “Abide with me,” which was the last, as it was also the finest hymn which he ever composed.

The story of the composition of it is truly touching, and sheds great light upon its meaning. He had been in ill health a long time — scarcely able any more to preach to his dear people. But though, as he says, “I was scarcely able to crawl, I made one more effort to preach and administer the Holy Communion.” As his people surrounded the table of the Lord, they were all made to feel, both by the deep solemnity of his manner and by the earnest words with which he addressed them, that their pastor was amongst them for the last time. Many tearful eyes witnessed the distribution of the sacred elements as given out by one who already stood on the borders of the blessed land beyond. Having with his dying breath given a last adieu to his sorrowing flock, he retired to his chamber fully aware of the near approach of the end; and shortly afterward, as his sun was drawing near to his setting, he handed to a friend this immortal hymn, which, accompanied by music which his own hand had prepared, is indeed like the song of the swan, his sweetest as it was also his last —

Abide with me; fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens; Lord! with me abide;
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless! Oh, abide with me!

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day,
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
Oh Thou who changest not, abide with me! ...

Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies;
Heaven's morning breaks and Earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me!

To the end of all time, or certainly until the English language shall cease to be spoken, this unparalleled version of Christ's twilight walk with the two disciples to Emmaus will be sung. It will be the favorite even-song of worshipping congregations, and will never cease to cheer the souls of believers as they come, at last, to walk through the dark valley of the shadow of death.

We turn attention to one more masterpiece of sacred song, which, like the one above, was inspired by sickness, suffering and unutterable weariness of soul. This is—

“Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead Thou me on.”

To one who has watched the setting sun, as it goes down amid a flood of crimson and gold, bathing the clouds in splendor, and opening up vistas of beauty unsuspected in the garish light of noon-day, there is something in this grand close of the day infinitely suggestive of the glories of heaven. It may be but a few moments ere this swiftly vanishing vision of heaven's pearly gates and jasper walls and golden streets will pass away, but evanescent though it be, it is, to every pious and thoughtful soul, a standing and oft repeated promise of the glories which await the faithful in the better land beyond.

It was the sight of the setting sun that suggested the hymn we are presently considering. It was written by John Henry Newman. In 1833, while recovering from a severe illness, he was upon the Mediterranean for his health. One evening when the warmth had died out of the air, he sat upon the deck of the vessel wrapped in a shawl, weak and homesick, watching the sun descend through the Italian sky, and sink into the sea. As the last traces of light faded away in the west, the memory of home and of the past came strongly upon him. Retiring to his cabin, he at once composed the splendid hymn —

Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead Thou me on;
The night is dark and I am far from home.
Lead Thou me on.
Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene: one step enough for me.

How much the Church of all ages has been, and ever to the end will be, dependent on the sufferings of her people for her purest and sweetest songs of praise, no one can tell. We only know that such is the case. It is in accordance with God's law everywhere manifest, that the sorrow must go before the song, as the darkness goes before the day, and the cross before the crown. Even in heaven, when God's people sing the new song which none save the redeemed of all ages can sing, it will, no doubt, be the preceding sorrows and sufferings endured on earth which alone will properly fit that mighty host to swell "the song of them that triumph and the shout of them that feast."

Here is another hymn, a most touching song of Christian resignation, wrung out of the very heart of a pious man by affliction and suffering — "My Jesus, as Thou wilt." Its author, Benjamin Schmolke, was born about 1675. He was the son of a poor minister in Silesia, was educated for the ministry by some benevolent person, became his father's assistant in 1694, and was afterwards himself pastor at Schweidnitz. In 1730, he was paralyzed and in part lost his sight. Then his home burned down, and all his little property was destroyed. Next his wife died, and one by one all his children passed away — and then, homeless and friendless, as the nightingale sings most sweetly in her pain, and as the olive yields no oil till beaten and bruised, he gave to the Church throughout the world a classic song of Christian resignation which will be loved and sung until sorrow shall be no more. This grand old German hymn has been most admirably translated by Miss Winkworth —

My Jesus, as Thou wilt!
Oh, may Thy will be mine!
Into Thy hand of love
I would my all resign;
Through sorrow, or through joy.
Conduct me as Thine own.
And help me still to say —
My Lord, Thy will be done!

My Jesus, as Thou wilt!
Though seen through many a tear.
Let not my star of hope
Grow dim or disappear:
Since Thou on earth hast wept
And sorrowed oft alone,
If I must weep with Thee —
My Lord, Thy will be done!

My Jesus as Thou wilt!
All shall be well for me;
Each changing future scene
I gladly trust with Thee:
Straight to my home above
I travel calmly on.
And sing, in life or death.
My Lord, Thy will be done!

This hymn, we think and venture to say, should always be sung to “Jewett” — one of Carl Maria Von Weber’s exquisite flights of song — for this is like no other in its intimate interpretation of the prayerful words. The tune, arranged by Joseph Holbrook, is from an opera — the overture to Weber’s “Der Freischiitz.”

4. Isaac Watts

NOWHERE, PERHAPS, is the feeling of fellowship and communion with all of God's people everywhere so prominent as in the hymns we sing. It has often been remarked that a true hymn must not express what is peculiar to the individual who composes it, nor even to the class or community to which he may chance to belong. It must breathe a broad and truly catholic spirit. It must give expression to feelings or sentiments which are common to all Christians. It must give voice to the conscious faith of the whole church. Such a hymn will live: and if you will look into the matter carefully, you will find, too, that only such do live. A distinctively Methodist hymn, for example, is doomed to an early death. A strongly Presbyterian hymn will never live to be twenty-one years old. But a truly catholic hymn, that is, one that breathes a broad and liberal Christian spirit, and expresses feelings, hopes, fears, confessions, such as are common to all Christian people, will live forever. Charles Wesley wrote "Jesus, lover of my soul," but there is nothing said in it about the peculiar tenets of the Methodist denomination. Sarah Flower Adams wrote "Nearer, my God, to Thee," and she was a Unitarian, but we fail to find any traces of Unitarianism in her beautiful hymn. Denominationalism seems to be very good and proper in the catechism or in the confession of faith, but it seems quite out of place in the hymn book. If there is one point where people of different church relations do meet on common ground, and hold sweet communion and fellowship with one another, it is in the hymn book. All Christian people seem to have vested rights in the songs of Zion, for they have all contributed their portion to the general collection. Here Luther's hymn "A mighty fortress is our God." stands side by side with the beautiful songs of the middle-age monks, as

Jesus, the very thought of Thee
With sweetness fills my breast,

and

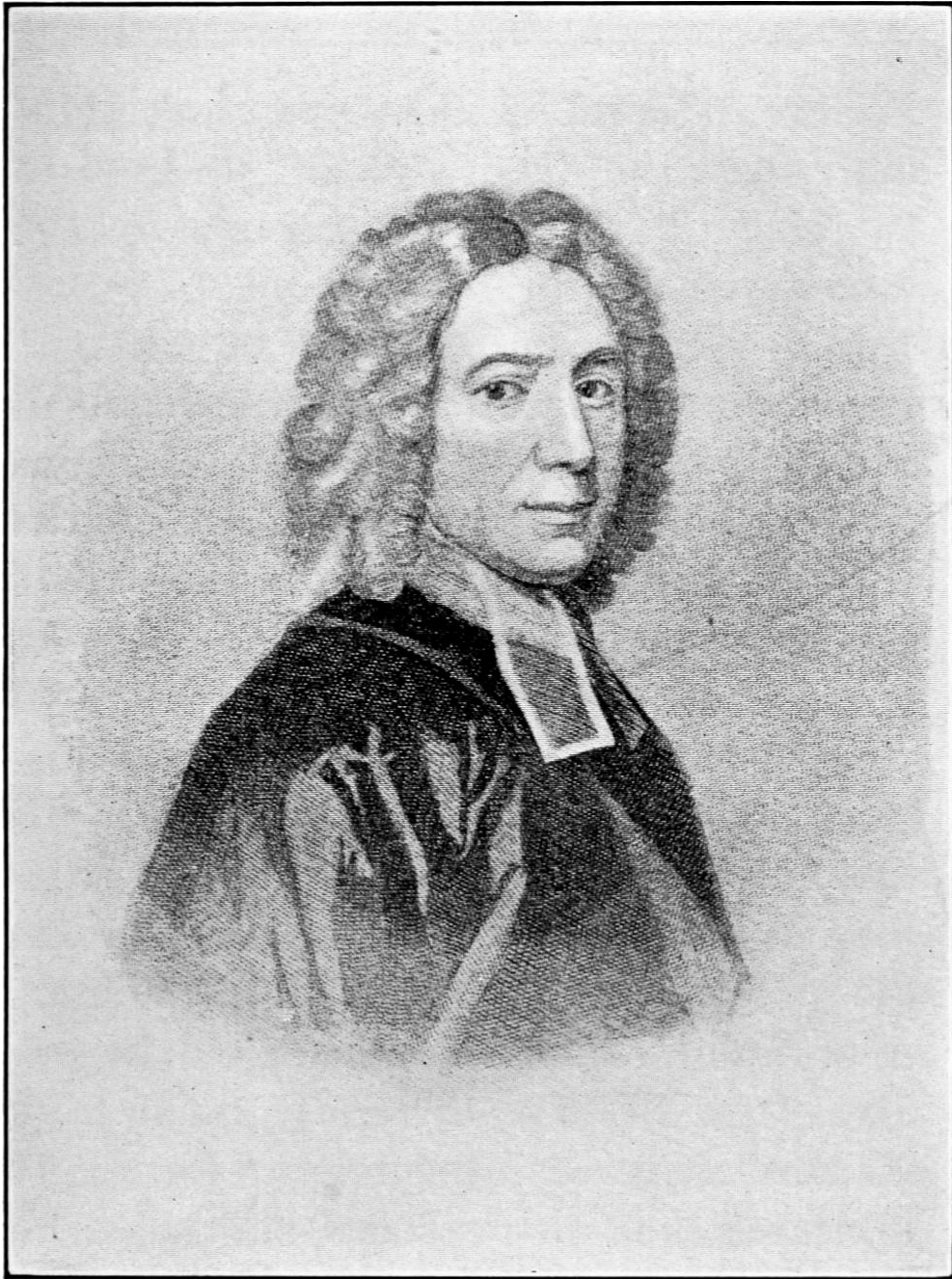
Jerusalem, the golden,
With milk and honey blest.

Here the author of “Nearer, my God, to Thee” stands side by side with the author of “I love Thy kingdom, Lord.” Here the Baptist sings “Blest be the tie that binds,” and the Methodist “All hail the power of Jesus’ name.”

We are different in our ways of worshiping and in our theology, but we hold to the same Bible and use essentially the same hymns of praise.

A very large proportion of our best hymns we owe to the remarkable genius of the Rev. Dr. Isaac Watts. He was born in England, 1674, and was a minister of the Gospel in what was known in those days as the “Independent Church” — a body of believers which arose in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and which was distinguished from Episcopacy on the one hand and Presbytery on the other. From his earliest years he was noted for his piety as well as the remarkable brilliancy of his mind. Like Zaccheus of old, he was a very small man physically, being both short of stature and slender in form. It is related that on one occasion, when he was stopping over night at a hotel, some curious stranger, on ascertaining who the little man was, exclaimed, in a somewhat louder tone than he had intended, "What! is that great Dr. Watts!" It was not designed that this should be overheard; but the little man had very sharp ears, and at once turned toward his critic and replied:

Were I so tall to reach the pole,
Or grasp the ocean in my span,
I must be measured by my soul —
The mind's the measure of the man.



ISAAC WATTS.

◇ Isaac Watts

Watts is only one example out of many of the general truth that it hath pleased the good Lord to make use of the weak things of this world to accomplish His wonderful purposes. Like many other great and useful preachers, Watts was very weak physically, being in fact an invalid; and yet he served his church faithfully for a period of fifty years. After preaching he was frequently so much exhausted as to be obliged to go directly to his house and retire at once to bed, having his room closed in darkness and silence. Yet, though physically small to insignificance, and often sick and weak to utter prostration, he placed the Church of Christ, in all lands and in every age, under lasting obligations for the most excellent hymns which came from his pen. He wrote a great many hymns, of which some, of course, are of inferior merit; but at the same time it is calculated that “more hymns which approach to a very high standard of excellence may be found in his works than in those of any other English writer.” Among these may be mentioned,

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

- - -

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Does his successive journeys run:
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.

- - -

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her king.
Let every heart prepare Him room.
And heaven and nature sing.

- - -

My soul repeat His praise.
Whose mercies are so great:
Whose anger is so slow to rise,
So ready to abate.

- - -

Oh God, our help in ages past.
Our hope for years to come.
Our shelter from the stormy blast.
And our eternal home.

- - -

Before Jehovah's awful throne,
Ye nations bow with sacred joy;
Know that the Lord is God alone,
He can create and He destroy.

Concerning the last example here given, which the reader will recognize as Watts' version of the One Hundredth Psalm, it may be well to remark that the first stanza is Wesley's, not Watts'. As originally written by Watts, the Psalm read,

Sing to the Lord with joyful voice;
Let every land His name adore:
The British Isles shall send the noise
Across the ocean to the shore.

The second stanza ran —

Nations attend before His throne
With solemn fear, with sacred joy.

The Church in all lands is under lasting obligations to Wesley for having swept all this away, and for substituting in its stead that truly grand and thrilling first verse, "Before Jehovah's awful throne."

The hymn, "There is a land of pure delight," also comes from the pen of Dr. Watts. He was sitting one evening looking out of a window over the

river Itchen in Southampton, and in full view of the beautiful Isle of Wight, when he composed it. The scenery which there greets the eye of the beholder, it is said, is indeed a type of that Paradise of which the poet sang. The country beyond the river rises from the margin of the flood, and swells into a boundless prospect, all mantled in the richest verdure of summer, checkered with forest-growth and fruitful fields under the highest cultivation, and gardens and villas, and every adornment which the hand of man, in a series of ages, could create on such susceptible ground.

As the poet looked upon the scenery thus presented to view, he was inspired to sing of the fairer prospect of that blessed and beautiful Canaan which to the eye of the believer, rises beyond the swelling flood of the Jordan of Death, and where —

Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood
Stand dressed in living green;
So to the Jews, old Canaan stood
While Jordan rolled between.

5. William Cowper and Augustus Toplady

FROM HYMNS written by a man who was feeble physically let us pass to those of a man who was feeble mentally. The poet William Cowper was born 1731. He was the son of an English clergyman. From childhood he was shy, nervous, and physically feeble. At the age of eighteen he began the study of law, but did not well succeed. He gradually became melancholy, and made several attempts at suicide. Twenty times he put a bottle containing poison to his lips, but did not drink. Then he attempted to drown himself, and at last he tried hanging himself by a rope at the top of his door; but the rope broke, and other means failing he was forced to live on in spite of himself, for God had work for William Cowper to do. At length his friends placed him in an insane asylum, where after a period of two years he was restored mentally, and saved spiritually. Before his days ended, however, his malady returned, and he died insane.

And yet, to this poor mentally deranged man are we indebted for such masterpieces of hymnology as “God moves in a mysterious way,” “There is a fountain filled with blood,” and “Oh, for a closer walk with God.”

The first of these, strange as it may seem, was composed while the author was under a cloud of temporary insanity. It is related that “when under the influence of the fits of mental derangement to which he was subject, he most unhappily but firmly believed that the divine will was that he should drown himself in a particular part of the river Ouse, some two or three miles from his residence at Olney. One evening he called for a post-chaise from one of the hotels in the town, and ordered the driver to take him to that spot, which he readily undertook to do as he well knew the place. On this occasion, however, several hours were consumed in seeking it, and utterly in vain. The man was at length reluctantly compelled to acknowledge that he had entirely lost the way.” Cowper returned to his house, and was so impressed with the strange providence which had frustrated his design and

prevented his rash intention, that he immediately sat down and wrote the hymn so admirably descriptive of God's mysterious providence. Considered by itself, and quite independently of the circumstances in which it was written, this hymn of Cowper's must always rank among the masterpieces of sacred poetry. Grand in conception and chaste in diction, each stanza presenting a new and striking image, and every line forcibly developing the underlying thought of the whole composition, it cannot fail to be regarded as a perfect gem of sacred song. God's planting His footsteps in the sea and riding upon the storm — treasuring up His bright designs deep in unfathomable mines — the dark and dreadful clouds of affliction big with mercy, and ready to break in blessing on the heads of God's people — the hiding of God's smiling face behind a frowning providence — it is not often one finds such exquisitely expressive and brilliant imagery as this woven into the warp and woof of sacred song, and with such consummate skill.

Besides this, Cowper wrote a great many other hymns, of which we shall mention only two. Cowper lived during the times when Methodism arose in England, and some of his best compositions were due to the inspiration of this religious movement. The Rev. John Newton, a friend of his, held meetings of a Methodistic kind which Cowper frequently attended. On one occasion Newton requested him to prepare a hymn for his prayer meeting, and shortly thereafter the Olney prayer meeting sang for the first time a hymn which has long since encircled the globe with its hallowed influences —

There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.

The hymn, "O, for a closer walk with God," we also owe to Cowper. It was probably written at a time when he had relapsed into deep melancholy and was wandering on the borders of insanity. Sadly and sorrowfully seeking again for the blessedness he knew when first he saw the Lord, and pitifully praying for the return of the Holy Spirit, he at last succumbed to his malady, but died quietly and peacefully. Entering thus into rest at last, and joining the blessed company of the redeemed of all ages, he no doubt realized as never before the beauty and sweetness of his own words, first sung in the humble Olney prayer meeting,

Then, in a nobler, sweeter song,
I'll sing Thy power to save,
When this poor lisping, stammering tongue
Lies silent in the grave.

The truth that it pleases the good Lord to employ the meanest agencies for the accomplishment of His purposes, is well illustrated in the history of the writer of the well-known hymn, "Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me." It was written by the Rev. Augustus Toplady (born 1740), and first appeared, March, 1776, in "The Gospel Magazine," which he edited. But little is known of the immediate circumstances connected with the composition of this widely known hymn; but Toplady himself acknowledges that the hymn was, in a large measure, at least, indirectly due to the agency of an illiterate man, who, although he did not himself write the hymn, yet was the providential means of its being written by another. Toplady relates that when he was a boy, only sixteen years of age, while on a visit to Ireland in company with his widowed mother, he one day happened to stroll into a barn, where an earnest, but uneducated layman was preaching from the text: "Ye who sometime were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ." The sermon made a deep and lasting impression upon the lad's mind; it led to his conversion; he became a useful and celebrated preacher; and, although he did much good work besides, he will in all probability be best and longest remembered as the author of "Rock of Ages." Strange, that the influence of a sermon preached in a barn to a handful of people, by a man who could hardly spell his own name, should render possible, and indirectly produce, a hymn which should be translated into almost every tongue spoken by man, and which will continue to bring comfort and cheer to God's people in every age to the end of time.

The life and the work of a minister often seems discouraging enough. Often and often the preacher, seeing so little immediate results of his labors, is tempted to sit down in despair. Yet, who knows how great good may be done through his humble instrumentality of which he will never hear in this world. See what was accomplished by one sermon, and that by a poor, uneducated man! Perhaps he never heard of it. Perhaps he was in his grave, this poor illiterate Irishman, before "Rock of Ages" found its way into every home and every church in England, and set out on its mission of comfort and cheer to the whole world. Only let us labor on, in season and out, and God will no doubt care for the results. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in

the evening withhold not thy hand, for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, this or that, or whether they shall be both alike good.”

6. William Williams; The Titanic

WE HAVE SEEN that many of our best hymns were originally suggested by the peculiar circumstances or special experiences of the persons who composed them. This seems to have been the case with the hymn, "Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah." It was written by the Rev. Dr. William Williams, who was an itinerant Methodist minister in the time of Whitefield during the eighteenth century. He was born in the year 1717 in Wales, was well educated, became a poet of no little celebrity, studied medicine, was converted during the Methodist movement then prevailing, and at length devoted himself to the work of the ministry. He labored diligently for over half a century in the service of the Master, traveling on an average nearly twenty-five hundred miles a year for more than forty years. His numerous and extended journeys were generally made either on foot or on horseback, for in those days there were no railroads, and in the country in which he labored there were few stagecoaches. There can be little doubt that his long and solitary journeys among the hills and over the moors, where he frequently lost his way and was forced to spend the night, in cold and hunger, under the open sky, suggested that ever beautiful song of the Christian pilgrim —

Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but Thou art mighty.
Hold me with Thy powerful hand;
Bread of Heaven!
Feed me now and evermore.

Open now the crystal fountain
Whence the healing streams do flow;
Let the fiery, cloudy pillar
Lead me all my journey through;
Strong Deliverer!
Be Thou still my strength and shield.

This may well be called the prayer of the Christian pilgrim. God's children in every age are "strangers and pilgrims." They are aliens in the world. They seek a country which heth afar, and a "city whose builder and maker is God." They often lose their way, and fall into many misfortunes on their journey, and well may they daily pray and sing, "Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah!"

It may be here well worthy of remark that this hymn is usually sung to the good old tune of "Autumn," and that this was the tune played by the heroic band of musicians standing in water up to their waists on the deck of the ill-fated steamer, "The Titanic," as she was sinking to her grave in the ocean, Sunday night, April 14-15, 1912, carrying with her 1635 men, women and children. What a pathetic appeal was not that playing of "Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah" — a prayerful petition to the great and almighty God who "holds the winds in His fist, and the seas in the hollow of His hand."

An additional very significant incident in connection with this greatest of all marine disasters may here be very appropriately recorded. The incident is narrated in several newspapers of Philadelphia, by Mr. Laurence Beasley, of New York City, a survivor. Mr. Beasley says:

"One incident has occurred to me during the week that has elapsed since we landed in New York, that may be of interest especially to those who had friends on board. Among the passengers were the Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Carter, who were on their way to Canada. Mr. Carter was instrumental in arranging on the Sunday evening, a few hours before we struck, what he called 'a hymn sing-song.'

"There was no evening service, and he invited to the saloon such passengers as cared to come to sing hymns. Anyone was allowed to choose a hymn, and as many were present and were thoroughly enjoying the quite informal gathering, the singing went on to a quite late hour.

"Mr. Carter was apparently well acquainted with the history of many of the hymns, their authors, where they were written and in what circumstances, and he interested all present with his remarks on each hymn before it was sung. I recollect that many chose hymns dealing with safety at sea. 'For those in peril on the sea' was sung by all with no hint of the peril that lay but a very few miles ahead.

"Mr. Carter closed with a few words of thanks to the Purser for allowing him to use the saloon, made a few remarks as to the happy voyage we had

had on a maiden trip and the safety there was in this vessel, and then the meeting closed with an impromptu prayer by him. This cannot have been more than two hours before the Titanic struck. My motive in mentioning this is that some of those who have lost relatives may like to know that their friends must have been helped and cheered at the last by the words they had sung but a short time before; the sound of singing voices must have been still a conscious one to many as they stood on the deck faced with the Peril on the Sea.”

Closely allied to this in point of sentiment is that other well-known hymn, “My faith looks up to Thee.” The author of this was Dr. Ray Palmer, a native of Rhode Island. He graduated at Yale College in 1830, and after graduation found his way to New York city, in great poverty, and there opened a school for young ladies. He had many struggles for a livelihood, was much alone and often weary and sad at heart, but he was a most earnest Christian. In December of the year in which he went to New York, he sat down in his lonely room and after a period of meditation on the Saviour’s infinite love, and the need of more earnest self-consecration to His service and praise, he wrote this hymn in his pocket memorandum book, never intending that it should be seen by another person. He wished no one’s eyes ever to rest on those beautiful words of self-surrender to Christ, because he regarded his hymn as a sacred prayer of his own to his Saviour, and would as little have thought of presenting it to the public as of making known the secrets of his own devotions. For two years he carried this hymn in his pocket, next to his heart. But the good Lord had need of that hymn, and took good care that the light and comfort there was in it for millions of sorrowing souls the world over, should not remain hidden under a bushel, but be put on the candlestick that it might give light to all in the house. For, one day. Dr. Lowell Mason met young Ray Palmer on the street in Boston, and asked him to write a hymn for his “Spiritual Songs” which he was then preparing for the press. The young college graduate then modestly drew from his pocket the lines “My faith looks up to Thee,” and gave them to Dr. Mason. The latter took them home with him to his room, and catching an inspiration similar to that of the hymn, he composed a tune called “Olivet,” to which the hymn has been wedded to this day.

Dr. Mason met the author a few days afterward, and said: “Mr. Palmer, you may live many years and do many good things, but I think you will be best known to posterity as the author of this beautiful hymn.” This predic-

tion has long since been fulfilled. The man who first out of the fullness of his heart sang this sweet song of Calvary has composed many tender and beautiful poems and discourses, but “his devout mind flowered out in one matchless lily whose rich odors have filled the courts of our God with fragrance.” On the shelves and counters of our booksellers this immortal composition takes its place, beautifully bound and illustrated, as one of the “Holiday books.” and is to be found side by side with such masterpieces as Newman’s “Lead, Kindly Light.” Lyte’s “Abide with me.” and Keble’s “Sun of my soul, Thou Saviour dear.” With these we well may rank Ray Palmer’s hymn —

My faith looks up to Thee,
Thou Lamb of Calvary,
Saviour divine;
Now hear me while I pray;
Take all my guilt away;
Oh, let me from this day
Be wholly Thine!

This is not the only instance on record of a man writing many hymns that are good and but only one that will live long; and the above incident is quite in line with what we have so often noticed in these brief sketches — that our best and finest hymns have been fairly wrung out of the soul of the composer by some great sorrow, grief, or trouble. Remember, when you sing this hymn, that Ray Palmer was poor, alone in a great city, unfriended, naturally timid and reserved, not knowing what hardships might be before him in the great world, and feeling his loneliness and helplessness, turned in whole-hearted, trustful faith to God and Christ.

7. Henry Harbaugh

TO THE PEN of the late Rev. Dr. Henry Harbaugh, the president of the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church, located at the time at Mercersburg, Pa., we are indebted for several most beautiful and enduring hymns. The first of these is —

“Jesus, to Thy cross I hasten,
In all weariness my home;
Let Thy dying love come o’er me.
Light and covert in the gloom.
Saviour, hide me, Saviour, hide me,
Till the hour of gloom is o’er!”

The hymn comprises three stanzas, and appears in many collections anonymously, for it is only of late that the authorship has come to light. In leafing over a book of poems by the author of this hymn, entitled, “Harbaugh’s Poems,” a friend marked its first appearance in that collection.

Dr. Harbaugh died in 1867, while president of the Seminary above named. He was a diligent student and scholar as well as a fruitful writer, especially of lyric poetry. He wrote quite a number of hymns in addition to the one above mentioned, of which, however, none seems likely to rival the excellency of the following, which has found its way into the hymnals of most of the churches, and bids fair to be in favor while time shall last —

"Jesus, I live to Thee,
The loveliest and best.
My life in Thee, Thy life in me.
In Thy blest love I rest.

Jesus, I die to Thee,
Whenever death shall come.
To die in Thee is life to me
In my eternal home.

Whether to live or die,
I know not which is best.
To live in Thee is bliss to me —
To die is endless rest.

Living or dying. Lord,
I ask but to be Thine.
My life in Thee, Thy life in me,
Makes heaven forever mine."

That is truly a hymn that will live. Like Ray Palmer's, this hymn breathes the spirit of utter and absolute self-consecration to Christ. It is full of "sweetness and light." Perhaps the author's own triumphant death was the best exemplification of his hymn. The beloved president of the Seminary lay dying in the darkened chamber at Mercersburg, and anxious and affectionate friends moved about with noiseless tread and eyes suffused with tears. Could it be that he who, as man looked upon it, was so much needed, and without whom it was feared by many the Church could not successfully carry forward its work, must be taken away? Just when the dying, weary man seemed to be passing away, as he lay in a deep and apparently unconscious state, some one wishing to arouse him that he might speak yet one more word to his sorrowing household, called him with a loud voice. Opening his eyes wearily, as if he had come from far away, the dying man said with a smile, "Oh, why called ye me back from the golden gates?" Then he relapsed into that deep sleep which knows no waking for the believer until he wakes in the blessed land beyond. The hymn commencing

"Jesus, and shall it ever be
A mortal man ashamed of Thee?"

apart from the real value of the composition, is remarkable for the fact that it was written by a boy only ten years of age. The author of it was Joseph Grigg. It first appeared in an English magazine, and was entitled "Shame of Jesus conquered by love. By a youth of ten years." It was, no doubt, originally suggested by the shame which young people often experience in making an open and public confession of Christ's name, and in witnessing the same in the company of godless companions. This feeling of shame of religion is one of the devices of the evil one to lead the souls of men astray. It

is a very common obstacle in the way of young believers particularly, and in many cases it proves almost insuperable. With this terrible threat of "what the world will say." the evil one frightens many poor souls away from the open door of mercy. Young men are ashamed to confess Christ's name lest their godless companions make sport of them. If these lines should chance to fall under the eye of any such young people we kindly ask them, for their own soul's sake, to read this hymn, and to remember that it was written by a young boy who was in the same case as themselves. It is related that a young person who had made a profession of religion and was much teased and persecuted by godless companions, stood firm; and on being asked by his pastor why he did not give way, he said: "Sir, I once heard you say in a sermon that if we let the wicked laugh us out of heaven into hell, they could not laugh us out of hell into heaven again."

The author of this hymn was much persecuted, for he was compelled to live and work in circumstances in which he was obliged to associate with profane persons to whom all religious belief was a standing theme of jest and mockery. But the boy clung to Jesus, well content not to be ashamed of Jesus, and only hoping that Jesus would not be ashamed of him.

"Jesus! and shall it ever be,
A mortal man ashamed of Thee?
Ashamed of Thee! whom angels praise,
Whose glories shine through endless days?

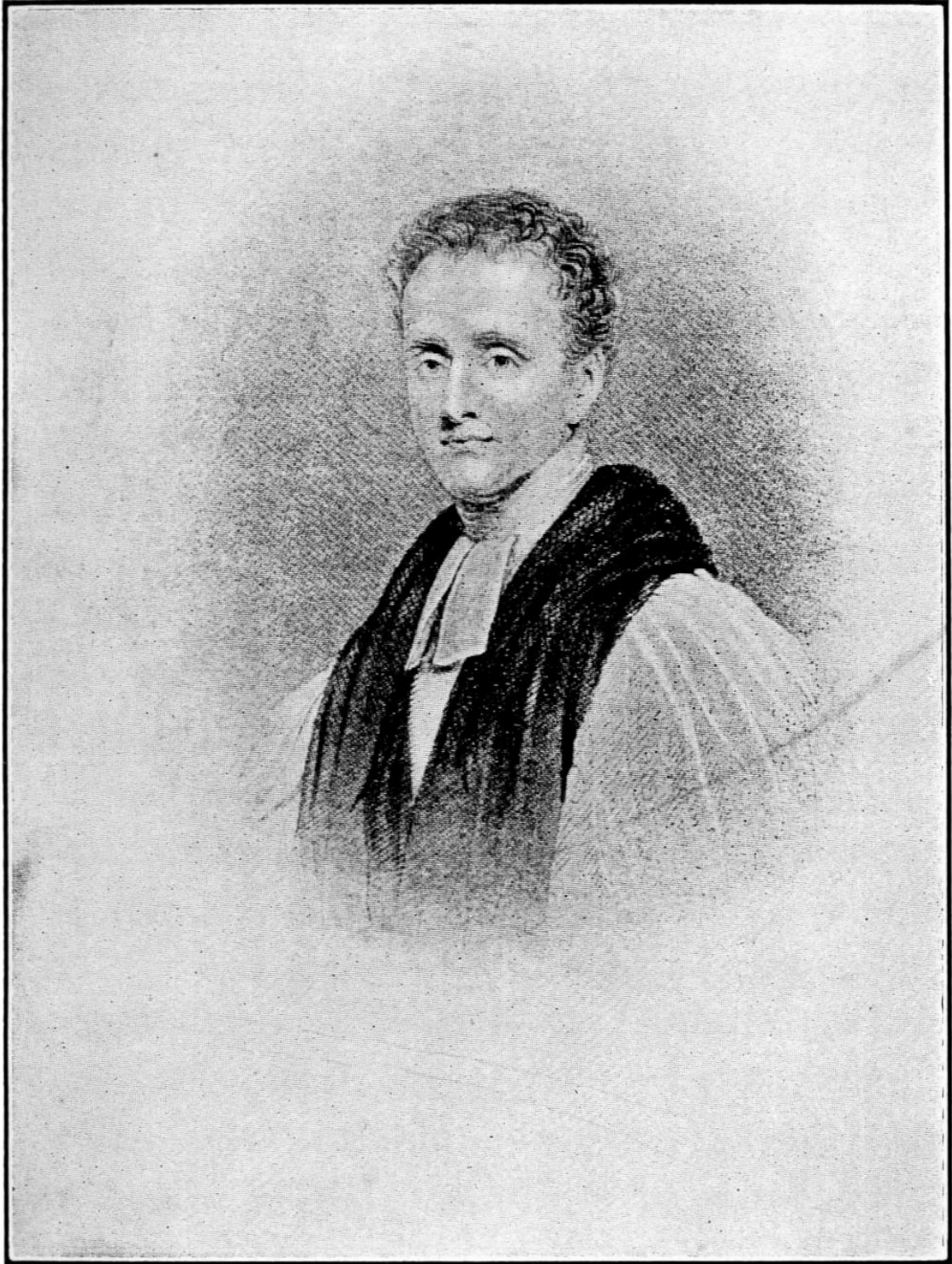
Ashamed of Jesus!
Sooner far Let evening blush to own a star;
He sheds the beams of light divine
O'er this benighted soul of mine.

Ashamed of Jesus!
Just as soon Let midnight be ashamed of noon;
'Tis midnight with my soul, till He,
Bright morning star, bids darkness flee."

8. Heber. From Greenland's Icy Mountains

EVERYBODY KNOWS the good old missionary hymn, "From Greenland's icy mountains." but not everybody has heard the story of its composition. The author of it was Reginald Heber, D. D., who after the composition of the hymn himself became a missionary to India, and died Bishop of Calcutta. He was one of the most accomplished scholars whom the University of Oxford ever produced. He was born at Malpas, in Cheshire, England, in the year 1783. At the age of seventeen he was entered at Brasenose College, Oxford, where he became a distinguished student, carrying away many of the highest prizes for poems and essays. His prize poem on Palestine is generally considered the best ever written at Oxford. His fame rests mainly upon his hymns which, as literary compositions, rank among the best in the English language. From his very earliest years he was remarkable for his piety and great kindness and affection. So great and accurate was his knowledge of the Bible that "when only five years old, when his father and some friends were discussing as to the book of the Bible where some particular passage could be found, they turned to little Reginald for information, and he soon laid finger on chapter and verse." As an instance of the pious turn of his mind, it is related that when very young, hearing the conundrum, "Where was Moses when the light went out," he solemnly said, "On Mount Nebo; for there he died, and it may be said that his lamp of life went out there." He was also so benevolent that he would give all that he had to the poor, so that his parents had to sew the bank-notes, which they gave him for his half-years school money, in the lining of his pockets, that he might not give all his money away in charity on the road to school. In 1807 he was admitted to orders, and after sixteen years of faithful labor in the ministry in England, he went to India as a missionary in 1823, where he labored for a period of three years, with such devotion to his work among the heathen

that, from over exertion in an unfavorable climate, he died in an apoplectic fit while in his bath, April 13, 1826.



REGINALD HEBER.

Heber was the author of many hymns, all alike distinguished by finish and style, pathos, and soaring aspiration. To his poetic genius we are indebted for "Lo, He comes, with clouds descending," "By cool Siloam's shady rill," "Jesus Christ is risen today," "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty." "Thou art gone to the grave, but we will not deplore Thee." and others: among which we pause to mention briefly that ever delightful Christmas hymn, "Brightest and best of the sons of the morning." In some hymn books this hymn begins "Hail the blest morn when the great Mediator," but in the greater number of the books it stands as above —

"Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,
Dawn on our darkness and lend us Thine aid;
Star of the East, the horizon adorning,
Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid.

Cold on His cradle the dew drops are shining.
Low lies His head with the beasts of the stall,
Angels adore Him, in slumbers reclining.
Maker and Monarch and Saviour of all.

Say, shall we yield Him, in costly devotion.
Odors of Edom and offerings divine.
Gems of the mountain, and pearls of the Ocean,
Myrrh from the forest or gold from the mine?

Vainly we offer each ample oblation,
Vainly with gifts would His favor secure;
Richer by far is the heart's adoration,
Dearer to God are the prayers of the poor."

When or why the first stanza of this hymn was changed, the writer has been unable to discover: but whether sung in the old way or the new, it is in every regard one of our choicest Christmas hymns.

And now we come to the story of the composition of "From Greenland's icy mountains." For many years before he himself went to India, Heber was an enthusiast on the subject of missions. In 1819, four years before he went out amongst the heathen to preach the gospel, a letter was sent forth by the king, authorizing an offering to be taken in every church and chapel in England, connected with the Church of England, for missions. On the evening of WhitSunday, which was the day appointed for this purpose, Heber had

engaged to deliver the first of a series of evening lectures in the church at Wrexham, which was in charge of his father-in-law, the Rev. Dr. Shipley. On the Saturday previous, as they were seated around the table at the parsonage. Dr. Shipley requested his son-in-law to write something for them to sing in the morning, suitable to the missionary service. Heber at once retired from the little circle, and withdrew to a corner of the room. After a while Dr. Shipley asked, "What have you written?" Heber then read the first three stanzas of that magnificent hymn which he had so quickly written:

"From Greenland's icy mountains,
From India's coral strand,
Where Africa's sunny fountains
Roll down their golden sand;

From many an ancient river,
From many a palmy plain,
They call us to deliver
Their land from error's chain.

What though the spicy breezes
Blow soft o'er Ceylon's isle,
Though every prospect pleases,
And only man is vile;

In vain with lavish kindness
The gifts of God are strewn;
The heathen in his blindness
Bows down to wood and stone.

Can we, whose souls are lighted
With wisdom from on high —
Can we to men benighted
The lamp of life deny?

Salvation! O Salvation!
The joyful sound proclaim.
Till each remotest nation
Has learned Messiah's name!"

There, there!" joyfully and triumphantly exclaimed Dr. Shipley. "That will do— that will do!"

“No, no.” said Heber, “the sense is not yet complete.”

Taking the manuscript again in his hand and retiring a second time to his nook in the corner, in a few moments he wrote that magnificent fourth stanza,

"Waft, waft, ye winds. His story.
And you, ye waters, roll.
Till like a sea of glory
It spreads from pole to pole;

Till o'er our ransomed nature
The Lamb for sinners slain.
Redeemer, King, Creator,
In bliss returns to reign."

The next morning, in the church at Wrexham, this great missionary hymn was sung for the first time and it was not long before it was adopted all over the world, and it will never cease to be sung so long as there is a single heathen to be converted. Like many of our finest hymns, it was born on the instant, coming by a sudden flash-like inspiration; and the original copy still shows that it was so accurately written that the poet afterward changed but a single word. Let it be remembered, when we sing this hymn, that the author of it died a missionary among the heathen in India.

9. “Just As I Am, Without One Plea.”

A FAITHFUL PASTOR of a small flock once met one of the young ladies of his congregation on the street, as she was on the way to her dressmaker to have a dress made for a ball. Stopping her, he frankly asked her mission and she frankly told him. “I wish.” said he, “you were a Christian woman; that you would forsake all these frivolities, and learn to live nearer to God. Won’t you stay away from this ball, if for nothing else, because I ask it?” She replied, “I wish you would mind your own business, sir. Good day.” The young lady went to the ball and danced all night. She went home, and when her head was at rest upon her pillow, conscience began to do its work. She thought how she had insulted her pastor, the best friend she had, perhaps, in all the world. The torment of conscience was kept up for three days until she could endure it no longer. Going to her pastor’s study, she told him how sorry she was that she had said words that had caused his heart to ache. “I have been the most miserable girl in the world for the past three days,” she said, “and now I want to become a Christian. I want to be saved. Oh! what must I do to be saved.?” The old pastor, with his heart full of compassion and sympathy and love for the contrite spirit before him, pointed her to the Lamb of God, and told her how she must give herself to God just as she was. “What! just as I am, and I one of the most sinful creatures in the world? You surely do not mean to say that God will accept me just as I am?” “I mean just that.” was the pastor’s reply; “God wants you to come to Him just as you are.” The young lady went home, and retiring to her room, knelt beside her bed and prayed God to take her just as she was. Reaching to a chair that stood by the bed, she took a piece of paper and a pencil that were there, and under these holy influences wrote the verses of that hymn so dear to the heart of every Christian:

"Just as I am, without one plea.
But that Thy blood was shed for me.
And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come!

Just as I am, and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come!

Just as I am, though tossed about
With many a conflict, many a doubt,
With fears within and foes without,
O Lamb of God, I come!

Just as I am! Thy love unknown
Has broken every barrier down;
Now, to be Thine, yea, Thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come!

The lady was Miss Charlotte Elliot. The poem was written in 1834.

The Hymn, “Stand up, Stand up for Jesus.”

It is to be regretted that we know so little of the circumstances under which many of our hymns were written. In many instances, unfortunately, all that can be ascertained is the author's name and the date of the composition. It would certainly add much to our interest in and our intelligent use of very many of the hymns if there had been preserved for us some particular account of the conditions and circumstances under which they were first given to the Church.

We are thankful that it has happened differently with the hymn we are presently considering — “Stand up, stand up for Jesus.” It was written in the year 1858, by the Rev. George Duffield, Jr., a Presbyterian minister in Philadelphia; and we are fortunate in having preserved to us a well authenticated account of the origin of this deservedly popular hymn, written for “*The Sunday School Times*,” some years ago, by the Rev. Samuel Duffield, the son of the composer. The article says:

"The hymn, 'Stand up, stand up for Jesus,' has had such a history, and has been so honored of the Lord in the work of the Church, that these facts absolve me from any feeling of delicacy in offering, for the first time, its complete history. Its author, my dear and honored father, could scarcely do more than give the mere unadorned facts. I think it is possible for me, in these columns, to correct certain errors, and to add certain elements of interest to the account. And when I remember that the same hand now pens these lines which once copied that hymn for the printer, I feel glad that it is permitted to me to tell the story of the hymn.

"In the great revival of 1857-58, Jayne's Hall, on Chestnut street, Philadelphia, was the largest room which could be procured for the noon prayer-meeting. In this some three thousand persons were used to assemble, and there, one day, I saw a distant, slight figure, rise, and heard for a few moments a silvery and resonant voice. It struck upon my ear with a peculiar power, and I have never forgotten the person nor the tone.

That was the first and the only time that I saw or heard Dudley Atkins Tyng, rector of the Church of the Epiphany, Philadelphia. It was only a few weeks, indeed as I recall it, it was only but a few days after this, that we had the news of his accident. It was in 1858. He had left his study, wearing his study-gown, of silk and very strong, and had gone to the farm, where a mule was at work in a 'horse-power' which drove a corn-sheller. Every Pennsylvanian of those days knows the great cogged wheels at the side of such a machine, and the danger of being caught in them. But Dudley Tyng, with a natural and self-forgetful kindness, reached over to pat the mule, and the cogs dragged his sleeve, and then his arm, into them. It was all over in a flash... The injury (as I have always understood) was met by amputation; then by another, then by a third at the shoulder, but all to no effect. The sinews and muscles had been too deeply involved, and the man died. He was a member of the Young Men's Christian Association, of which Mr. George H. Stuart was then president. So also was I a member, with other boys and lads of my age. To us he sent the stirring message: 'Tell them to stand up for Jesus.'

"I need not say how wide was the lamentation, nor how his sermon on Exodus 10:11 — "Go now, ye that are men, and serve the Lord," preached to a great audience on the Sunday before his death, was recalled by many. On the Sunday succeeding his death, my father, the Rev. George Duffield, Jr., who was the pastor of the Central Presbyterian Church, Northern Liberties,

at Fourth and Coates streets, and who had been a close and warm friend of Mr. Tyng, preached a sermon from the text, Ephesians 6:14 — " Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness." At its conclusion he read the hymn, which he had written by way of peroration. Mr. Benedict D. Stewart, at that time superintendent of the Sunday School, requested a copy for publication. This I made, by my father's direction, in a rude, boyish, scrawl, and carried it to the printing-office of a Mr. Thompson, who was a member of the Coates street church, and whose place of business was, I think, in the historic building on the corner of Sixth and Market streets. There were a number of the leaflets printed. I remember just how they looked and I would give a good deal to get one now as my own. "The hymn had six stanzas. It was first copied into the columns of a Baptist paper. Shortly afterward it found its way into the hymnal of the Presbyterian Church and gradually into the hymnals of all the churches. It has been translated into several other languages, including the Latin. The latest rendering now lies before me, written with a brush, Chinese characters. It is a version of three stanzas by the Rev. W. J. McKee, of Ning-po." My father went to the barn-floor shortly after the accident, saw the place and heard the story from an eye-witness. It was on his return that he composed the hymn."

10. O Little Town of Bethlehem

IT IS NOT OFTEN that a good and lasting hymn is written with intention and design. Very generally the best hymns have come, as it were, suddenly and unaccountably, as if by a divine inspiration, and very often their authors neither anticipated nor could account for their subsequent popularity. To this general rule, however, there have been some notable and conspicuous exceptions. The grand old missionary hymn, "From Greenland's icy mountains," for instance, was, as we have seen, written by request. And the same is true also of that stirring Processional hymn, "Onward, Christian Soldiers." This, strange as it may seem, was written to order. Its author, the Rev. S. Baring Gould, an English clergyman, himself tells us that "It was written in very simple fashion, and without a thought of publication. Whit-Monday being a great day in Yorkshire for school festivities, it was arranged, on the anniversary of 1865, that our school should unite with that of a neighboring village, and wishing them to sing as they marched along, I vainly tried to find something suitable for the purpose. At length I resolved to write something myself, the result being 'Onward, Christian Soldiers'. It was hurriedly composed and had some faulty rhymes, and certainly nothing has so much surprised me as its popularity."

There is a hymn, or Christian song, entitled "Shining Shore," which, though falling somewhat short of any high hymnological standard, has yet been greatly blessed in the experience of God's people for many years past

"My days are gliding swiftly by,
And I, a pilgrim stranger,
Would not detain them as they fly,
Those hours of toil and danger.
For, Oh, we stand on Jordan's strand.
Our friends are passing over.
And just before the shining shore
We may almost discover."

Perhaps the music to which these words were set and have always since been sung have had quite as much to do with the popularity of the song as the words themselves.

As for the words — they were written by David Nelson, born in Tennessee, 1793; a physician, an army surgeon in the war of 1812; professed religion, became an infidel; repented of his infidelity and became a Christian again; became a minister; preached in Tennessee and Kentucky; founded Marion College in Missouri, 1830, of which he was the president. He strongly favored emancipation, and that brought him into so much trouble that he removed to Illinois, where he died 1844.

He had a charming voice, it is said, and used it with great effect, thus anticipating the singing evangelist of a later day. He was so much interested in the colonization of the negro that he frequently got into trouble. On one occasion, at the close of the meeting, he asked all who wished to remain so to do and discuss the negro problem of his day with him. Quite a number tarried and disorder followed, as a matter of course. How could it be otherwise in those days of hot blood. Nelson was driven from his home, he had to flee for his life. After long wandering, he reached the Mississippi river and concealed himself in the shrubbery on its banks, at a point where passengers were conveyed to the opposite shore. As he lay there with hungry eyes watching them so easily passing over to the landing which he could “almost discover,” he took out an envelope from his pocket and there wrote this song of the Christian’s longing for a safe and blessed passage to the “Shining Shore.”

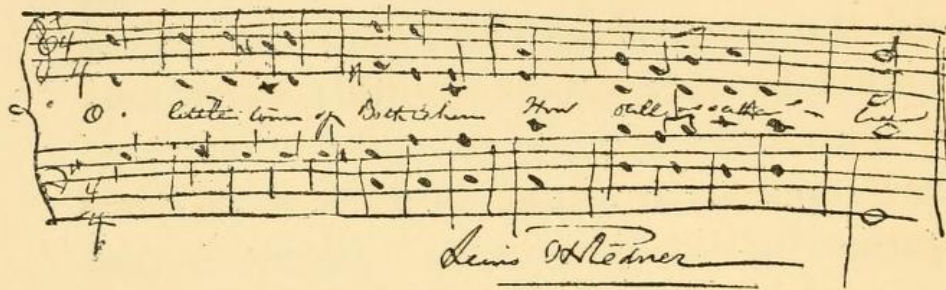
But the words without the music would probably have been lost or overlooked. However, a directing providence took care that they should be wedded to suitable strains of stirring and inspiring song. They were like a seed thrown broadcast and at hazard, which, finding a favorable soil, springs up and grows into a noble tree.

It is queer how such things come about. Massachusetts is a good way from Missouri, but one day, George F. Root, a musical composer, was at the home of his parents at Willow Farm in that New England state, for there the scattered children gathered every summer from far and wide.

“I was at some work at some songs, one morning,” the composer afterward said, “when my mother, passing through the room where I was at work, laid a slip from a religious paper before me, saying, ‘George, I think that would be good for music/ As I looked at the poem beginning, ’My days

are gliding swiftly by,' a simple melody sang itself into my mind. I jotted it down and went on with my work. Later when I took it up to harmonize it, the tune seemed so commonplace that I hesitated, but finally deciding that it might be useful to somebody, I completed it. When in after years it was sung in all the churches and Sunday Schools in the land, and in every tongue where missions were established, thus demonstrating that it had the mysterious thing called vitality, I tried to see why it should be so, but in vain."

Original Score of Hymn by Lewis H. Redner



O little town of Bethlehem
Now still we see thee lie
Above thy deep & dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The Everlasting Light
The hopes & fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight

Dr. Philips Brooks wrote the famous hymn, "O, Little Town of Bethlehem," and at his request Mr. Redner set it to music.

Of course; for man seeth not as God seeth.

Speaking, now, of the singular providence of God, who thus caused an inspiration of a sacred song to be given in one part of the world and its melody in another part far away, we recall what we have read about that favorite Christmas hymn —

“O little town of Bethlehem!
How still we see thee lie:
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.”

As is well known, it was written by Phillips Brooks, at that time the Rector of Holy Trinity Church, Philadelphia. Dr. Brooks received his inspiration for this Christmas carol one evening in Christmas week in 1865. He was traveling in the Holy Land and on this evening was riding on the historic plain of Bethlehem from which the shepherds beheld the star. The inspiration was there given, although the words were not written until a year later. The circumstances in which they were set to music are related by Mr. L. H. Redner, who at the time was the organist of Holy Trinity, the superintendent of the Sunday School, and a teacher of one of the classes.

“As Christmas of 1868 approached,” Mr. Redner said, “Mr. Brooks told me that he had written a simple little carol for the Christmas Sunday School service, and he asked me to write the tune to it. The simple music was written in great haste and under great pressure. We were to practice it on the following Sunday. Mr. Brooks came to me on Friday and said, ‘Redner, have you ground out that music yet to ‘O little town of Bethlehem?’ I replied that I had not, but that he should have it by Sunday. On the Saturday night previous my brain was all confused about the tune. I thought more about the Sunday School lesson than I did about the music. But I was roused from sleep late in the night hearing an angel strain whispering in my ear and seizing a piece of music-paper, I jotted down the treble of the tune as we now have it, and on Sunday morning, before going to church, I filled in the harmony. Neither Mr. Brooks nor I thought the carol or the music to it would live beyond the Christmas of 1868.

“My recollection is that Richard McCauley, who then had a book store on Chestnut street, west of Thirteenth, printed it on leaflets for sale. The Rev. Dr. Huntington, the Rector of All Saints Church, Worcester, Mass., asked permission to print it in his Sunday School hymn and tune book, entitled “The Church Porch,” and it was he who christened the music, “Saint Louis.”

11. Home Sweet Home

WHAT STRANGE CONTRADICTIONS, what veritable ironies there are in this mysterious Life of ours. Here is the hymn or song — call it what you please — “Home, Sweet Home.” The author was John Howard Payne, an American dramatist and actor, born in New York, 1792, died at Tunis, Africa, 1852. He had no home of his own and died in a foreign land, being U. S. Consul to Tunis. There his body was buried and for many long years lay in a grave unmarked by a tombstone. “How often,” said he, “have I been in the heart of Paris, Berlin or London or some other city, and heard persons playing or singing ‘Home, Sweet Home,’ without a shilling to buy the next meal or a place to lay my head.

The world has sung my song till every heart is familiar with its melody, yet I have been a poor wanderer from my boyhood. My country has turned me from office, and in old age I have to submit to humiliation for my daily bread.” And yet, before he died he had one high and memorable tribute paid to him, as the following will show:

The First Singing of “Home, Sweet Home.”

Perhaps the most thrilling quarter of an hour of John Howard Payne’s life was that when Jenny Lind sang “Home, Sweet Home” to him. The occasion was the Jenny Lind concert in Washington, the night of December 17, 1850. The assembly was, perhaps, the most distinguished ever seen in this country. The immense National Hall, hastily constructed for the occasion on the ruins of the burned National Theater, was filled to overflowing. Among the notables present and occupying front seats were President Fillmore, Daniel Webster, Henry Clay, General Scott and John Howard Payne.

Jenny Lind opened with the “Casta Diva,” and followed with the “Flute Song” (in which her voice contested rivalry for purity and sweetness with a flute in the duet), then the famous “Bird Song” and next on her program the

“Greeting to America.” All the selections were applauded apparently to the full capacity of an enthusiastic audience and Mr. Webster, who was in his most genial after-dinner mood, emphasized the plaudit by rising from his seat and making Jenny a profound bow, as if responding for the country to her “Greeting.” But when the “Swedish Nightingale” answered the encore by turning in the direction of John Howard Payne and giving “Home, Sweet Home.” with all the wonderful tenderness, purity and simplicity fitting both the words and the air of the immortal song, the difference was at once seen between the mechanical applause called out by a display of fine vocalization and that elicited by the “touch of nature that makes the whole world kin.” Before the first line of the song was completed, the audience was fairly off its feet and could scarcely wait for a pause to give expression to its enthusiasm. People ordinarily of the undemonstrative sort clapped, stamped and shouted as if they were mad, and it seemed as if there would be no end to the uproar. Meantime all eyes were turned upon Payne, a small-sized, elegantly-molded, gray-haired gentleman, who blushed violently at finding himself the center of so many glances.

Something About “The Star Spangled Banner.”

INQUIRIES HAVING BEEN MADE in the columns of the Philadelphia “*Evening Bulletin*.” from which the following is quoted, Katherine Durang Fisher says:

“I would like to tell the story as my dear father, the late Charles Durang, told my sisters and myself. He and his brother, Ferdinand Durang, both well-known actors in their day, at the time of the attack of Fort McHenry were serving a ten day engagement there. That was on September 14, 1814, and both were then about twenty years old. When the poet, Francis Scott Key, came in, he held a piece of paper in his hand and calling to my father and uncle to listen, he read the original poem of ‘The Star Spangled Banner’ to them. My father and uncle were so much interested that they took the verses and hummed several airs to them, in their endeavor to adapt the words to music. Then my uncle, Ferdinand, suddenly exclaimed, ‘I have it!’ and hummed the words to the music of ‘Anacreon in Heaven,’ a well-known hymn that was then widely sung. Then the brothers Durang mounted

a chair in Fort McHenry and sang the song until the whole garrison joined in. Later they sang the anthem again in the old Holliday Street Theater and the whole audience, in which was Francis Scott Key, also sang with the actors.”

12. “Closing Hymns”

THE HYMNS WHICH WE SING in the evening, particularly those with which the evening service of the Lord’s day is concluded, seem always to possess a peculiar charm and power. And this seems to be the case because, to every thoughtful mind and reverent heart, the close of the day is, perhaps, more than any other time, the natural hour for calm thought and reverent devotion. Evening is the season of rest, of reflection, of quiet meditation. Then the day’s work is done; its harrowing cares are over. Darkness comes over the face of the earth, the stars come out in the sky and both mind and heart, as by an irresistible impulse, run up toward God, the creator of all, while feelings of gratitude for past mercies possess the soul, and thoughts come into the mind of the approach of that night which, sooner or later, must envelope us all in its impenetrable gloom and that great and endless day of God which shall know no setting sun.

The evening of the Lord’s day is, in a double sense, a time well suited for devotional purposes and the hymns which we then sing should be, as we believe they for the most part are, sung heartily. The evening hymns we are accustomed to sing in church — how sweet they are! How they seem to give expression to our otherwise pent-up and voiceless feelings of adoration and praise to our Heavenly Father! Then, if at any time during the Lord’s day, we should join heartily, earnestly and prayerfully in the sacred songs of Zion.

Have you never noticed what a power the last hymn of a worshiping congregation has over both mind and heart? If it be an appropriate evening hymn, and is sung to some well-known melody — how it lingers about one for days afterward! You find yourself humming it, perhaps audibly, perhaps only inwardly, “making melody in your heart unto the Lord,” while you are walking home from church. If you live in the country and have several miles to drive home in your carriage, as you roll along under the light of the full moon or through the gloomy forest, you find yourself or your wife or children breaking out involuntarily in the strains still floating in your mind

and memory, as if wafted from God's assembled people. You will find that same parting song of Zion following you during the week with its sacred melody, as a breath from heaven. The wife at her work in the house hums it, the husband whistles it as he shoves his plane or follows his plow, while, when silent, the sacred echo of the song is heard far back in the mind or deep down in the heart.

Whoever writes a good evening hymn confers a great blessing on God's people throughout the world. Difficult as is the composition of a true hymn of any kind, the preparation of a good closing, evening hymn seems to be particularly a matter of rare accomplishment. We have, as you may have perchance already observed, very few good hymns suitable to the close of the Lord's day, as will be found on consulting any hymn book. We propose to call attention to a few of the best.

We have already noticed the classic composition — "Abide with me: fast falls the eventide" — which is indeed an evensong of most surpassing beauty. Then, there is the good old hymn, "I love to steal a while away," which has been in use among Christian people of all denominations for nearly a century. Of this hymn it is related that it was written in answer to the fault-finding of a meddlesome gossip. It was written by Mrs. Phoebe H. Brown, who lived near the village of Ellington in Connecticut, and it was first published in the year 1824. Mrs. Brown was, at the time of the composition of this hymn, a care-worn mother of a large family of children. It was her custom every evening, when the weather permitted, to set her house in order about the hour of sunset, and, leaving the children alone at home, to go out by a well worn path to a quiet and secluded spot by a neighboring mountain stream and there hold sweet communion with God beneath the overarching trees. There she was wont to pour forth her soul in supplication for her children, herself and her friends; to tell over her sorrows and trials, and seek grace and strength sufficient unto her need. One summer evening on her return home from her leafy closet, she learned that a neighbor woman, a great gossip, had been for some time watching her and had been sharply criticizing her apparent neglect of her family. Deeply pained at this, she sat down and wrote an apology for her conduct, in the form of a poem which was soon adopted as a hymn:

"I love to steal a while away
From every cumb'ring care.
And spend the hours of setting day
In humble, grateful prayer.

I love in solitude to shed
The penitential tear,
And all His promises to plead.
Where none but God can hear.

I love to think on mercies past,
And future good implore.
And all my cares and sorrows cast
On Him whom I adore.

Thus, when life's toilsome day is o'er.
May its departing ray
Be calm as this impressive hour.
And lead to endless day. "

This she entitled "An apology for my twilight rambles." and addressed it to her lady critic, who, let us hope, was profited as well as reproved. One of the little ones for whom this Christian mother prayed in her leafy seclusion by the brook-side was the Rev. Samuel R. Brown, D. D., who was for many years an efficient missionary in Japan. It may also be interesting to know that the author of this hymn had been in early youth a servant girl; her life, from nine to eighteen being spent in poverty and slavish drudgery. She never went to school, seldom got to church and learned to write after she was married. She was one of the many persons whose lives have so forcibly illustrated the truth that it often pleases God to use the humblest instruments to accomplish His purposes, and that "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings He has perfected praise."

In very striking contrast with the lowly origin of the above hymn, we may mention that masterpiece of evensong, "Sun of my soul. Thou Saviour dear." Scarcely ever can one join with God's people in the use of this hymn without feeling himself brought into close fellowship with the most gentle and loving spirit of its renowned author, as well as being lifted up into an atmosphere of sweetest communion with our blessed Lord and Saviour. There is something so exquisitely tender in this sacred song — it brings Christ so near — that we feel quite certain, even before we know anything

of its author, that it must have been written by a man not only of the finest scholarship, but also of the deepest piety. In this our natural expectation we are not disappointed. The author of this hymn, the Rev. John Keble, was indeed a man of the highest scholarly attainments, ennobled and purified by the power of Christian faith to a rare degree. If ever "sweetness and light" were harmoniously blended in the character and life of any man in this poor world of ours, John Keble was that man. In the absence of all information as to the immediate circumstances which gave rise to the hymn we have in hand, it will be at least interesting to our readers to know something of its author.

John Keble was born on St. Mark's day, April 25, 1792, at Fairford, Gloucestershire, England. His father was rector of the church in this village during a period of fifty years. Himself a good scholar, the elder Keble did not send his son away to school while very young, but conducted his early education himself, and he did his work so well that his son John was elected a scholar in Corpus Christi College, Oxford, at the unusually early age of fifteen. He obtained a fellowship in Oriel College in his nineteenth year, and the year previous to this he received double first class honors, a distinction which had been obtained only once before in the history of the university, and then by Sir Robert Peel. He also gained the university prizes, and "achieved the highest honors of the university at an age when others were frequently but on the threshold." During his days at Oriel College he had for his fellow students some whose names became subsequently widely known throughout all Christendom; for the college, at the time when Keble entered it, was the center of all the finest ability in Oxford. Sir John Taylor Coleridge had been his fellow-scholar at Corpus Christi and at Oriel he was surrounded with such men as Copleston, Davison, Whateley, Arnold (of Rugby fame), Pusey and Newman. Not only in point of scholarship was he distinguished amongst men such as these — "he was more remarkable for the rare beauty of his character than even for his academic distinctions." Great purity of spirit, sweetness of disposition, simplicity, humility, characterized him throughout his college days and ever afterward. When he entered on the pastoral work he was renowned for his great kindness to the poor and for the unwearied interest he took in the sick and unfortunate. Late at night he would be seen, lantern in hand, on his way to or from the home of some poor, sick or sorrowing cottager. There was in him not only great culture of the mind, great illumination of the intellect, — but also great cul-

ture of the moral nature; not only "light," but also "sweetness," without which all intellectual light is, after all, only darkness indeed. One feels this to a remarkable degree in all of his writings. Whatever may be said of his theological opinions, there can be no doubt as to the great piety of the man. His "Christian Year," a volume of sacred song which will be found in nearly every cultured home, has had probably a wider circulation than any other book of the last century. Between 1827 and 1872 one hundred and fifty editions were printed. In all the sacred songs in this volume, one feels the excellence to be this same exquisite gentleness of touch, this same deep, tender, saintly sweetness which so attracted to him all with whom he came in contact while he was yet alive. "The real power of 'The Christian Year' lies in this — that it brings home to the reader as few poetic works have ever done, a heart of rare and saintly beauty. We may well believe that ages must elapse ere another such character shall again concur with a poetic gift and power of expression which, if not of the highest, are yet of a very high order." All this the reader feels as he reads this beautiful hymn. He feels that he is here very close to the heart of a man whose walk was close with God. Unbounded trustfulness in Christ — "the perfect love which casteth out fear" — are felt to thrill the soul as the congregation sings, ere it goes down from the house of God at the eventide, while the darkness of night is gathering around,

"Sun of my soul, Thou Saviour dear. It is not night if Thou be near; O may no earth-born cloud arise To hide Thee from Thy servant's eyes.

When the soft dews of kindly sleep My wearied eyelids gently steep, Be my last thoughts how sweet to rest Forever on my Saviour's breast.

Abide with me from morn to eve. For without Thee I cannot live; Abide with me when night is nigh, For without Thee I dare not die. "

13. “Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow.”

WE COME NOW, finally, to the chief of all closing hymns, — the good old “Long Meter” doxology, “Praise God from whom all blessings flow.” For more than two hundred years this single stanza has probably been sung oftener and by more people than any other composition with which we are acquainted. It is the chief of all the doxologies, and it is not likely that it will soon be outworn, or superseded by any other. It never grows old. It never wearies. It is perennially fresh and sweet. It is very intimately associated with the most sacred scenes and hallowed memories of the past. And it bids fair to be the favorite closing hymn for all of God’s people to the end of time. Did you ever stop to consider who wrote this dear old doxology, or to inquire how long it has been in use?

It was written by Thomas Ken, a Bishop of the English Church, about the year 1697, that is more than two hundred years ago. Now, if you ask who Thomas Ken was, then let me ask you, do you not remember having read in Macaulay’s History of England about seven English Bishops who were once imprisoned in the Tower of London and afterward brought to trial for treason, because they had refused to read in their several churches the famous Declaration of Indulgence to Roman Catholics, which King James II had published? These seven men were — the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lloyd, Turner, Lake, Ken, White and Trelawney. They refused to read the King’s declaration, not only because they were opposed to Roman Catholicism, but especially because they felt that the King, by his arbitrary action, was compromising the spiritual freedom of the Church. After a long consultation they drew up a paper in which, with every assurance of loyalty, they ventured politely to state their reasons for declining to read the Declaration. This paper they presented to the king on their knees. On reading it King James flew into a terrible rage, called them rebels, and eventually ordered them to the Tower, there to await their trial for treason. The whole

city of London was aroused in behalf of the Bishops, who were regarded as martyrs for the common cause. Followed by an immense crowd of people who cheered loudly and repeatedly cried, "God bless you!" they were with difficulty conducted to the Tower, where, before the gates closed upon them, the very guards bared their heads and craved their benediction and blessing. You may remember also how, subsequently, they were brought to trial and acquitted and how wild all the country was over the good news.



THOMAS KEN.

Now, one of these was Thomas Ken, at that time the Bishop of Bath and Wells, and we have mentioned the above circumstance partly in order to locate the author of our good doxology historically and partly to show what kind of man he was. That he was a man having in him the stuff of which martyrs are made is evident not only from the above narrated facts, but also from what is elsewhere related as belonging to his early history. In 1679 he had been appointed chaplain to the Princess Mary, the wife of William of Orange, and for a short time lived in Holland. In 1680 he returned to England and was made chaplain to the King, Charles II. Having his residence at Winchester, in 1683 the King and his court of fine people of questionable morals once paid a visit to Ken, and it had been arranged that his house should be the abode of the famous Nell Gwynn, the King's favorite. But Ken at once objected to this arrangement, refused admittance to her and compelled her to look for lodgings elsewhere. One would naturally think that such an act would have been visited by the king's certain and severe displeasure, as no doubt Ken expected it would; but strange to say, it indirectly led to his promotion to the office of a Bishop. For, only the next year after the above occurrence, when there fell a vacancy in the see of Bath and Wells, and different names had been proposed for the place, King Charles said one day, "Where is the good little man that refused his lodging to poor Nell? and resolved that he and no other should be Bishop of Bath and Wells.

I have his picture before me as I write — a smooth shaven face it is, high forehead, strong chin, well-developed nose and a very pleasant expression in general. One only wonders why he never married. But he was a bachelor, — traveled considerably and always carried his shroud in his valise with him wherever he went, and whenever he took seriously sick, he at once put it on. This may well illustrate that part of his celebrated evening hymn, where it says:

“Teach me to live, that I may dread
The grave as little as my bed.”

He is celebrated as one of the “non-juring bishops” who refused to take a new oath when William of Orange came in — an act which cost him his bishopric and led to his retirement, in which the rest of his days were spent.

But, good Bishop Ken will be best remembered to the end of all time, not as one of the seven bishops once imprisoned in London Tower, nor as a " non-juror," nor as a chaplain of King Charles II., but as the author of the noble song of praise to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." As one of the fathers of modern English hymnology he has always held high rank. Scarcely even Keble himself, though possessed of much rarer poetic gifts, surpassed him in his own sphere. He wrote a volume of prayers for the use of the scholars of Winchester College about the year 1674. To this volume were added three hymns of his composition — one for the morning, one for the evening and one for midnight. Of these, the first two are household words wherever the English tongue is spoken. The morning hymn is familiar to all:

"Awake, my soul, and with the sun
Thy daily stage of duty run;
Shake off dull sloth, and joyful rise
To pay thy morning sacrifice."

The evening hymn is equally well known:

"All praise to Thee, my God, this night,
For all the blessings of the light;
Keep me, O keep me, King of Kings,
Beneath Thine own almighty wings.

Forgive me, Lord, for Thy dear Son,
The ills which I this day have done;
That with the world, myself, and Thee,
I, ere I sleep, at peace may be.

Teach me to live, that I may dread
The grave as little as my bed;
To die, that this vile body may
Rise glorious at the awful day.

Oh, when shall I, in endless day,
Forever chase dark sleep away;
And praise with the angelic choir
Incessant sing, and never tire?"

This is indeed a very beautiful hymn, and one endeared to us all by long use; but as it was originally written, when composed for the boys at Winchester school, it contained just one more stanza — and this last stanza was our longmeter doxology, “Praise God from whom all blessings flow.” This last verse, in course of time, became separated from the rest of Ken’s evening hymn and was assigned to service as the leading doxology in all churches the world over. If Thomas Ken had never been chaplain to the King, a bishop and a non-juror, and had done nothing more in all his life, save only the composition of this last verse of his evening hymn, his Life, even so, would have been well spent and a lasting source of blessing to all the world. Pray, do not forget good Bishop Ken when you sing

“Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise Him all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye Heavenly Host —
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.”

14. “O Mother Dear, Jerusalem”

“O Mother dear, Jerusalem,
When shall I come to Thee?
When shall my sorrows have an end?
Thy joys when shall I see?”

IN NEARLY EVERY COLLECTION this hymn, which in varied form has come down to us from the earliest period of the Church, will be found to have a well established place. Ordinarily its authorship has been attributed to David Dickson, who was a Scotch Presbyterian minister, born at Glasgow, 1583, became a Professor of Divinity at Glasgow 1640, and later in the University of Edinburgh. He was deprived of his office at the Restoration for refusing the Oath of Supremacy, and died 1663.

In the opinion of scholars, however, Dickson was not the author of this beautiful hymn, but rather its very excellent translator. The hymn comes from a very early period, just how early no one can tell; for, from the day when St. John on Patmos beheld “The Holy City, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven,” the blessed vision of the Heavenly City continued ever present to the faith and hope of the Church. In the form in which we have this hymn in our collections, it may be well to note, it is but a very small portion of a much more lengthy composition, well known in the Middle Ages in the Latin form. And it seems probable that, in the form in which it was then known, “it had received contributions from various hands, additions which were mostly translations from the Fathers or from Mediaeval Latin hymns, having been made by one author or another at various times.” The similarity of both sentiment and expression between certain parts of the hymns and the writings of the Fathers, especially St. Augustine and St. Gregory, would seem to warrant the belief that “David Dickson only put into shape, and polished a little, the work of his devout predecessors.” The hymn is, therefore, a growth, and embodying as it does the faith and the hope of so many long ages, it commends itself all the more from this circumstance, to the faith and the hope of the Church of the present day.

As has been said, the hymn, as we have it in our day, is only a small part of the composition as it stood in the Middle Ages, and as few of our readers have ever, in all probability, had the privilege of seeing it in its entirety, we take the pleasure here to insert it as a whole.

The New Jerusalem

I

O Mother dear, Jerusalem!
When shall I come to thee?
When shall my sorrows have an end —
Thy joys when shall I see?
O happy harbor of God's saints!
O sweet and pleasant soil!
In thee no sorrows can be found.
No grief, no care, no toil.

II

In thee no sickness is at all.
No hurt nor any sore;
There is no death nor ugly sight,
But life for evermore.
No dimmish clouds o'ershadow thee.
No cloud nor darksome night;
But every soul shines as the sun.
For God himself gives light.

III

There lust nor lucre cannot dwell,
There envy bears no sway;
There is no hunger, thirst, nor heat.
But pleasure every way.
Jerusalem! Jerusalem!
Would God I were in thee!
Oh that my sorrows had an end,
Thy joys that I might see!

IV

No pains, no pangs, no grieving grief.
No woful wight is there;
No sigh, no sob, no cry is heard —
No well-away, no fear.
Jerusalem the city is
Of God our King alone;
The Lamb of God the light thereof
Sits there upon His throne.

V

Ah God! that I Jerusalem
With speed may go behold!
For why? the pleasures there abound
With tongue cannot be told.
Thy turrets and thy pinnacles.
With carbuncles do shine.
With jasper, pearl, and chrysolite,
Surpassing pure and fine.

VI

Thy houses are of ivory,
Thy windows crystal clear,
Thy streets are laid with beaten gold —
There angels do appear.
Thy walls are made of precious stones,
Thy bulwarks diamond square,
Thy gates are made of Orient pearl —
O God, if I were there!

VII

Within thy gates no thing can come
That is not passing clean;
No spider's web, no dirt, no dust.
No filth may there be seen.
Jehovah, Lord, now come away,
And end my grief and plaints;
Take me to Thy Jerusalem,
And place me with Thy saints.

VIII

Who there are crowned with glory great.
And see God face to face;
They triumph still and aye rejoice —
Most happy is their case.
But we that are in banishment.
Continually do moan;
We sigh, we mourn, we sob, we weep —
Perpetually we groan.

IX

Our sweetness mixed is with gall.
Our pleasure is but pain.
Our joys not worth the looking on —
Our sorrows aye remain.
But there they live in such delight.
Such pleasure and such play.
That unto them a thousand years
Seem but as yesterday.

X

O my sweet home, Jerusalem!
Thy joys when shall I see?
Thy King sitting upon His throne.
And thy felicity?
Thy vineyards and thy orchards are
So wonderful and fair,
And furnished with trees and fruit.
Most beautiful and rare.

XI

Thy gardens and thy goodly walks,
Continually are green;
There grow such sweet and pleasant flowers,
As nowhere else are seen.
There cinnamon and sugar grow.
There nard and balm abound;
No tongue can tell, no heart can think.
The pleasures there are found.

XII

There nectar and ambrosie spring —
There musk and civet sweet;
There many a fair and dainty drug
Are trod down under feet.
Quite through the streets, with pleasant sound.
The flood of life doth flow;
Upon the banks, on every side.
The trees of life do grow.

XIII

These trees each month yield ripened fruit —
For evermore they spring;
And all the nations of the world
To thee their honors bring.
Jerusalem, God's dwelling-place.
Full sore I long to see;
Oh that my sorrows had an end,
That I might dwell in thee!

XIV

There David stands, with harp in hand.
As master of the queir;
A thousand times that man were blessed
That might his music hear.
There Mary sings Magnificat,
With tunes surpassing sweet;
And all the virgins bear their part.
Singing about her feet.

XV

Te Deum doth St. Ambrose sing,
St. Austin doth the like;
Old Simeon and Zacharie
Have not their songs to seek.
There Magdalene hath left her moan,
And cheerfully doth sing,
With all blest saints whose harmony
Through every street doth ring.

XVI

Jerusalem! Jerusalem!
Thy joys fain would I see;
Come quickly. Lord, and end my grief,
And take me home to Thee!
Oh print Thy name in my forehead,
And take me hence away.
That I may dwell with Thee in bliss.
And sing Thy praises aye!

XVII

Jerusalem, thrice happy seat!
Jehovah's throne on high!
O sacred city, queen and wife
Of Christ eternally!
O comely queen, with glory clad.
With honor and degree.
All fair thou art, exceeding bright —
No spot there is in thee.

XVIII

I long to see Jerusalem,
The comfort of us all;
For thou art fair and beautiful —
None ill can thee befall.
In thee, Jerusalem, I say,
No darkness dare appear;
No night, no shade, no winter foul —
No time doth alter there.

XIX

No candle needs, no moon to shine,
No glittering stars to light;
For Christ, the King of Righteousness,
There ever shineth bright.
The Lamb unspotted, white and pure.
To thee doth stand in lieu Of light —
'so great the glory is
Thine heavenly King to view.

XX

He is the King of kings, beset
In midst His servants' sight;
And they, His happy household all
Do serve Him day and night.
There, there the quier of angels sing;
There the supernal sort
Of citizens, which hence are rid
From dangers deep, do sport.

XXI

There be the prudent prophets all,
The apostles six and six,
The glorious martyrs in a row,
And confessors betwixt.
There doth the crew of righteous men
And matrons all consist;
Young men and maids that here on earth
Their pleasures did resist.

XXII

The sheep and lambs that hardly 'scaped
The snares of death and hell,
Triumph in joy eternally.
Whereof no tongue can tell;
And though the glory of each one
Doth differ in degree.
Yet is the joy of all alike
And common, as we see.

XXIII

There love and charity do reign.
And Christ is all in all,
Whom they most perfectly behold
In joy celestial.
They love, they praise — they praise, they love;
They "holy, holy," cry;
They neither toil, nor faint, nor end,
But laud continually.

XXIV

O happy thousand times were I,
If, after wretched days,
I might with listening ears conceive
Those heavenly songs of praise.
Which to the eternal King are sung
By happy wights above —
By saved souls and angels sweet,
Who love the God of Love!

XXV

Oh passing happy were my state.
Might I be worthy found
To wait upon my God and King,
His praises there to sound;
And to enjoy my Christ above.
His favor and His grace,
According to His promise made.
Which here I interlace.

XXVI

“O Father dear,” quoth He, “let them
Which Thou hast put of old
To me, be there where, lo, I am,
Thy glory to behold;
Which I with Thee before the world
Was made, in perfect wise,
Have had; from whence the fountain great
Of glory doth arise.”

XXVII

Again: “If any man will serve
Then let him follow me;
For where I am, be thou, right sure.
There shall my servant be.”
And still: “If any man love me.
Him loves my Father dear;
Whom I do love, to him myself
In glory will appear.”

XXVIII

Lord, take away my misery.
That there I may behold
With Thee in Thy Jerusalem,
What here cannot be told.
And so in Zion see my King,
My Love, my Lord, my All;
Whom now as in a glass I see,
There face to face I shall.

XXIX

Oh! blessed are the pure in heart.
Their Sovereign they shall see;
And the most holy heavenly host.
Who of His household be!
O Lord, with speed dissolve my bands.
These gins and fetters strong;
For I have dwelt within the tents
Of Kedar overlong!

XXX

Yet search me. Lord, and find me out,
Fetch me Thy fold unto,
That all Thy angels may rejoice,
While all Thy will I do.
O mother dear, Jerusalem!
When shall I come to thee?
When shall my sorrows have an end—
Thy joys when shall I see?

XXXI

Yet once again I pray Thee, Lord,
To quit me from all strife,
That to thine hill I may attain.
And dwell there all my life.
With cherubims and seraphims
And holy souls of men.
To sing Thy praise, O God of Hosts!
For ever, and Amen!

16. “The Celestial Country”

WHILE SPEAKING OF HYMNS of aspiration for the heavenly state, we naturally recall certain other hymns which are to be found in nearly if not quite every good collection, such as —

“The world is very evil,
The times are waxing late” —

“Brief life is here our portion,
Brief sorrow, short-lived care” —

“For Thee, O dear, dear Country,
Mine eyes their vigils keep” —

“Jerusalem, the golden.
With milk and honey blest” —

These, and some others of the same tenor, will be found in nearly all the hymn books as accredited to John Mason Neale, Translator. John Mason Neale was born in London, 1818, graduated Trinity College, Cambridge, 1840. He was a prolific writer, especially of hymns and translations of hymns, and made the above translations from a very beautiful Mediaeval Latin hymn known as “The Celestial Country.” It may be of some interest to us to know that he made his very worthy translation of this splendid hymn “while inhibited from his priestly functions in the Church of England on account of his high ritualistic views and practice. He was so poor in consequence that he wrote stories for children, and composed and translated hymns for his living, but his poverty was overruled to the enrichment of all Christendom.”

As in the case of the former hymn, “O Mother dear, Jerusalem,” so here: these hymns above indicated are not to be supposed to be the work of John

Mason Neale. He simply extracted them and most intelligently and skillfully translated them from a very lengthy but very beautiful Mediaeval Latin hymn known as “The Celestial Country,” dating to the middle of the twelfth century.

The authorship of “The Celestial Country” is commonly by scholars accredited to Bernard of Cluny, He was of English parentage, though born at Morlaix, a seaport town in the north of France. The exact date of his birth is not known; probably about 1100. He lived the Monastic life at Cluny, and but little is known of his history. He is not to be confounded with his contemporary of the same name, Bernard of Clairvaux.

Bernard of Cluny lived at a time when the Church was torn by conflicting powers, when prelates and monks were alike corrupt, and the spiritual life of the Church was committed to the faithful few, and by them was kept alive. To his peace-loving heart the strife and turmoils of the world were a source of great sorrow, and as he lacked power or position to suppress them by force, he spent his time in writing, as by a divine inspiration, the “*De Contemptu Mundi*” (“On The Contempt of the World”), a satire upon the iniquities of the age.

This Latin poem, of nearly three thousand lines, he dedicated to his Abbot, Peter the Venerable. It is a bitter satire upon the corruptions of the times, but opens with a description of the peace and glory of heaven, and this part of the poem is so exquisite that it has for centuries excited universal admiration. “The meter of the original is very strange, each line being broken up into three equal parts — a most difficult meter, and one which only a special grace and inspiration enabled the author, as he believed, to master. The following arrangement of the first lines will make this intelligible:”¹

“Hora novissima || tempora pessima || sunt: vigilemus
Ecce! minaciter II imminet arbiter || ille supremus!”

John Mason Neale made a most excellent translation of a part of this wonderful hymn of Bernard of Cluny, and the hymns above indicated are simply brief extracts from this translation. As the author of this little book is persuaded that comparatively very few of his readers have ever seen the whole of Neale’s rendering of this famous hymn, he thinks well here to insert it. Its date is about A. D. 1150.

The Celestial Country

The world is very evil;
 The times are waxing late:
 Be sober and keep vigil;
 The Judge is at the gate:
 The Judge That comes in mercy,
 The Judge That comes with might,
 To terminate the evil.
 To diadem the right.
 When the just and gentle Monarch
 Shall summon from the tomb,
 Let man, the guilty, tremble.
 For Man, the God, shall doom.
 Arise, arise, good Christian,
 Let right to wrong succeed;
 Let penitential sorrow
 To heavenly gladness lead,
 To the light that hath no evening.
 That knows nor moon nor sun,
 The light so new and golden,
 The light that is but one.
 And when the Sole-Begotten
 Shall render up once more
 The Kingdom to the Father
 Whose own it was before, —
 Then glory yet unheard of
 Shall shed abroad its ray,
 Resolving all enigmas,
 An endless Sabbath-day.
 Then, then from his oppressors
 The Hebrew shall go free.
 And celebrate in triumph
 The year of Jubilee;
 And the sunlit Land that recks not
 Of tempest nor of fight.
 Shall fold within its bosom
 Each happy Israelite:
 The Home of fadeless splendor,
 Of flowers that fear no thorn,
 Where they shall dwell as children.
 Who here as exiles mourn.
 Midst power that knows no limit,
 And wisdom free from bound,
 The Beatific Vision
 Shall glad the Saints around:
 The peace of all the faithful,
 The calm of all the blest,
 Inviolate, unvaried,
 Divinest, sweetest, best.
 Yes, peace! for war is needless, —
 Yes, calm! for storm is past, —

And goal from finished labor,
 And anchorage at last.
 That peace — but who may claim it?
 The guileless in their way,
 Who keep the ranks of battle.
 Who mean the thing they say:
 The peace that is for heaven.
 And shall be for the earth:
 The palace that re-echoes
 With festal song and mirth;
 The garden, breathing spices,
 The paradise on high;
 Grace beautified to glory.
 Unceasing minstrelsy.
 There nothing can be feeble.
 There none can ever mourn,
 There nothing is divided.
 There nothing can be torn:
 'Tis fury, ill, and scandal,
 'Tis peaceless peace below;
 Peace, endless, strifeless, ageless,
 The halls of Syon know:
 O happy, holy portion.
 Refection for the blest;
 True vision of true beauty.
 Sweet cure of all distress!
 Strive, man, to win that glory;
 Toil, man, to gain that light;
 Send hope before to grasp it,
 Till hope be lost in sight:
 Till Jesus gives the portion
 Those blessed souls to fill.
 The insatiate, yet satisfied,
 The full, yet craving still.
 That fullness and that craving
 Alike are free from pain.
 Where thou, midst heavenly citizens,
 A home like theirs shalt gain.
 Here is the warlike trumpet;
 There, life set free from sin;
 When to the last Great Supper
 The faithful shall come in:
 When the heavenly net is laden.
 With fishes many and great;
 So glorious in its fulness,
 Yet so inviolate:
 And the perfect from the shattered,
 And the fall'n from them that stand,
 And the sheep-flock from the goat-herd
 Shall part on either hand:

And these shall pass to torment.
And those shall triumph, then;
The new peculiar nation,
Blest number of blest men.
Jerusalem demands them:
They paid the price on earth.
And now shall reap the harvest
In blissfulness and mirth:
The glorious holy people,
Who evermore relied
Upon their Chief and Father,
The King, the Crucified:
The sacred ransomed number
Now bright with endless sheen.
Who made the Cross their watchword
Of Jesus Nazarene:
Who, fed with heavenly nectar,
Where soul-like odors play.
Draw out the endless leisure
Of that long vernal day:
And through the sacred lilies,
And flowers on every side,
The happy dear-bought people
Go wandering far and wide.
Their breasts are filled with gladness,
Their mouths are tun'd to praise
What time, now safe for ever,
On former sins they gaze:
The fouler was the error.
The sadder was the fall.
The ampler are the praises
Of Him Who pardoned all;
Their one and only anthem.
The fulness of His love.
Who gives instead of torment.
Eternal joys above:
Instead of torment, glory;
Instead of death, that life
Wherewith your happy Country,
True Israelites! is rife.

Brief life is here our portion;
Brief sorrow, short-lived care;
The life that knows no ending,
The tearless life, is there.
O happy retribution!
Short toil, eternal rest;
For mortals and for sinners
A mansion with the blest!
That we should look, poor wand'ers,
To have our home on high!
That worms should seek for dwellings
Beyond the starry sky!
To all one happy guerdon [reward]
Of one celestial grace;
For all, for all, who mourn their fall,
Is one eternal place:
And martyrdom hath roses
Upon that heavenly ground:
And white and virgin lilies
For virgin-souls abound.
There grief is turned to pleasure;
Such pleasure, as below
No human voice can utter,
No human heart can know:
And after fleshly scandal.
And after this world's night.
And after storm and whirlwind,
Is calm, and joy, and light.
And now we fight the battle.
But then shall wear the crown
Of full and everlasting
And passionless renown:
And now we watch and struggle,
And now we live in hope,
And Syon, in her anguish.
With Babylon must cope:
But He Whom now we trust in
Shall then be seen and known.
And they that know and see Him
Shall have Him for their own.
The miserable pleasures
Of the body shall decay:
The bland and flattering struggles
Of the flesh shall pass away:
And none shall there be jealous;
And none shall there contend:
Fraud, clamor, guile — what say I?
All ill, all ill shall end!
And there is David's Fountain,
And life in fullest glow,

And there the light is golden,
And milk and honey flow:
The light that hath no evening,
The health that hath no sore,
The life that hath no ending,
But lasteth evermore.

There Jesus shall embrace us.
There Jesus be embraced, —
That spirit's food and sunshine
Whence earthly love is chased.
Amidst the happy chorus,
A place, however low.
Shall shew Him us, and shewing.
Shall satiate evermo.
By hope we struggle onward,
While here we must be fed
By milk, as tender infants.
But there by Living Bread.
The night was full of terror.
The morn is bright with gladness
The Cross becomes our harbor.
And we triumph after sadness:
And Jesus to His true ones
Brings trophies fair to see:
And Jesus shall be loved, and
Beheld in Galilee:
Beheld, when morn shall waken,
And shadows shall decay.
And each true-hearted servant
Shall shine as doth the day:
And every ear shall hear it; —
Behold thy King's array:
Behold thy God in beauty.
The Law hath past away!
Yes! God my King and Portion,
In fulness of His grace.
We then shall see for ever.
And worship face to face.
Then Jacob into Israel
From earthlier self estranged.
And Leah into Rachel
For ever shall be changed:
Then all the halls of Syon
For aye shall be complete.
And, in the Land of Beauty,
All things of beauty meet.

For thee, O dear, dear Country!
 Mine eyes their vigils keep;
 For very love, beholding
 Thy happy name, they weep:
 The mention of thy glory
 Is unction to the breast,
 And medicine in sickness,
 And love, and life, and rest.
 O one, O onely Mansion!
 O Paradise of Joy!
 Where tears are ever banished,
 And smiles have no alloy;
 Beside thy living waters.
 All plants are, great and small,
 The cedar of the forest.
 The hyssop of the wall:
 With jaspers glow thy bulwarks;
 Thy streets with emeralds blaze;
 The sardius and the topaz
 Unite in thee their rays:
 Thine ageless walls are bonded
 With amethyst unpriced:
 Thy Saints build up its fabric.
 And the corner stone is Christ.
 The Cross is all thy splendor,
 The Crucified thy praise:
 His laud and benediction
 Thy ransomed people raise:
 Jesus, the Gem of Beauty,
 True God and Man, they sing:
 The never-failing Garden,
 The ever-golden Ring:
 The Door, the Pledge, the Husband,
 The Guardian of his Court:
 The Day-star of Salvation,
 The Porter and the Port.
 Thou hast no shore, fair ocean!
 Thou hast no time, bright day!
 Dear fountain of refreshment
 To pilgrims far away!
 Upon the Rock of Ages
 They raise thy holy tower:
 Thine is the victor's laurel,
 And thine the golden dower:
 Thou feel'st in mystic rapture,
 O Bride that know'st no guile.
 The Prince's sweetest kisses.
 The Prince's loveliest smile;
 Unfading lilies, bracelets
 Of living pearl thine own;

The Lamb is ever near thee.
The Bridegroom thine alone;
The Crown is He to guerdon.
The Buckler to protect.
And He Himself the Mansion
And He the Architect.
The only art thou needest,
Thanksgiving for thy lot:
The only joy thou seekest,
The Life where Death is not:
And all thine endless leisure
In sweetest accents sings,
The ill that was thy merit, —
The wealth that is thy King's!

Jerusalem the golden,
With milk and honey blest,
Beneath thy contemplation
Sink heart and voice oppressed:
I know not, O I know not.
What social joys are there;
What radiancy of glory.
What light beyond compare!
And when I fain would sing them.
My spirit fails and faints;
And vainly would it image
The assembly of the Saints.
They stand, those halls of Syon,
Conjubilant with song.
And bright with many an angel.
And all the martyr throng:
The Prince is ever in them;
The daylight is serene;
The pastures of the Blessed
Are decked in glorious sheen.
There is the Throne of David, —
And there, from care released,
The song of them that triumph.
The shout of them that feast;
And they who, with their Leader,
Have conquered in the fight.
For ever and for ever
Are clad in robes of white!

O holy, placid harp-notes
 Of that eternal hymn!
 O sacred, sweet refection,
 And peace of Seraphim!
 O thirst, for ever ardent.
 Yet evermore content!
 O true peculiar vision
 Of God cunctipotent!
 Ye know the many mansions
 For many a glorious name.
 And divers retributions
 That divers merits claim:
 For midst the constellations
 That deck our earthly sky,
 This star than that is brighter, —
 And so it is on high.
 Jerusalem the glorious!
 The glory of the Elect!
 O dear and future vision
 That eager hearts expect:
 Even now by faith I see thee:
 Even here thy walls discern:
 To thee my thoughts are kindled.
 And strive and pant and yearn.
 Jerusalem the onely,
 That look'st from heaven below
 In thee is all my glory;
 In me is all my woe:
 And though my body may not,
 My spirit seeks thee fain.
 Till flesh and earth return me
 To earth and flesh again.
 O none can tell thy bulwarks,
 How gloriously they rise:
 O none can tell thy capitals
 Of beautiful device:
 Thy loveliness oppresses
 All human thought and heart.
 And none, O peace, O Syon,
 Can sing thee as thou art.
 New mansion of new people.
 Whom God's own love and light
 Promote, increase, make holy,
 Identify, unite.
 Thou City of the Angels!
 Thou City of the Lord!
 Whose everlasting music
 Is the glorious decachord!
 And there the band of Prophets
 United praise ascribes.

And there the twelvefold chorus
Of Israel's ransomed tribes:
The lily-beds of virgins.
The roses' martyr-glow,
The cohort of the Fathers
Who kept the faith below.
And there the Sole-Begotten
Is Lord in regal state;
He, Judah's mystic Lion,
He, Lamb Immaculate.
O fields that know no sorrow!
O state that fears no strife!
O princely bow'rs! O land of flow'rs!
O realm and home of life!

Jerusalem, exulting
On that securest shore,
I hope thee, wish thee, sing thee.
And love thee evermore!
I ask not for my merit:
I seek not to deny
My merit is destruction,
A child of wrath am I:
But yet with Faith I venture
And Hope upon my way;
For those perennial guerdons
I labor night and day.
The Best and Dearest Father
Who made me and Who saved,
Bore with me in defilement.
And from defilement laved:
When in His strength I struggle,
For very joy I leap.
When in my sin I totter,
I weep, or try to weep:
And grace, sweet grace celestial,
Shall all its love display,
And David's Royal Fountain
Purge every sin away.

O mine, my golden Syon!
O lovelier far than gold!
With laurel-girt batallions.
And safe victorious fold:
O sweet and blessed Country,
Shall I ever see thy face?
O sweet and blessed Country,
Shall I ever win thy grace?
I have the hope within me
To comfort and to bless!
Shall I ever win the prize itself?
O tell me, tell me. Yes!

Exult, O dust and ashes!
The Lord shall be thy part:
His only, His for ever.
Thou shalt be, and thou art!
Exult, O dust and ashes!
The Lord shall be thy part:
His only, His for ever.
Thou shalt be, and thou art!

1. Schaff-Herzog Cyc. ←

17. Conclusion

IN CONCLUSION — it is well worthy of our thankful observation that the hymns of Christendom present an array of piety and scholarship truly admirable. They were written by some of the wisest and best men that ever lived; by writers of the highest literary qualification, by theologians of the profoundest ability, by College presidents and by University graduates. In the olden time God required of the Jews that they should bring only “beaten oil” for the light of His sanctuary and He still cares that the best talent and the most unquestioned piety should be employed in His Church, while at the same time He has not failed to set the seal of His approval to the fervid tributes of song offered by some who were ignorant and illiterate in the things of man but wise in the things of God. For it must be conceded by every thoughtful and reverent person, that the hymns of the Church, whether written by men of culture or by men of no education, have ever been under the direction of divine providence. As some one has said — “Men may discuss the nature and the scope of the inspiration of the scriptures, but of the inspiration of the hymn book I, for one, am fully persuaded. Here, surely, as well as in the scriptures, ‘Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.’”

But, how strange it seems that of all the exquisite hymns known and loved by the Church of the present day, not one was known to the Church of the first century of the Christian era. Even St. Paul never heard nor used any of our hymns. Not even the long-meter doxology was sung in his day. In the Philippian jail “at midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises to God.” and it is a matter of regret that “Jesus, lover of my soul,” was not known to them — it would have been so strangely fitting.

Moreover, unknown as all of our hymns were to the early Church, equally unknown will they be to the Church in Heaven. They are our Pilgrim songs in our journey through the wilderness of this world, but not one of them will serve when we have at last crossed the Jordan and have laid the pilgrim’s staff aside forever.

The hymn that will there be sung — “the shout of them that triumph, and the song of them that feast,” — will be a song that has never yet been written, at least by mortal man. As is said in the Book of Revelation, it will be “A New Song” that the redeemed will sing.

“Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly,
While the raging billows roll” —

that will no longer do; for there the raging billows will no longer roll, in that blessed haven of eternal rest. And —

“Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee;
E’en though it be a cross
That raiseth me” —

this will no longer serve in that land where the cross will be forever exchanged for the crown of everlasting rejoicing. Nor will it fare any better with —

“Sun of my soul. Thou Saviour dear,
It is not night if Thou be near” —

for “There will be no night there.”

No, no. It will be a new song the redeemed will sing, and it will be “written in heaven.” “And no man could learn that song but they that are redeemed.”

““And I heard as the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying — ’Alleluiah: for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.”

Amen!

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594 – v5

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How Can You Find Peace With God?

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Benediction

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen. (Jude 1:24-25)

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